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Multicultural Worship

Theory and Practice

Edited by
Eunjoo Mary Kim

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Multicultural Worship: Theory and Practice

Multicultural Worship: Theory and Practice

Editor

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About the Editor

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Eunjoo Mary Kim is the Charles G. Finney Chair and Professor of Homiletics and Liturgics at Vanderbilt University Divinity School. Prior to coming to Vanderbilt in 2022, she was the Norman E. Peck Chair and Professor of Preaching and Communication at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. Dr. Kim is the author of *Preaching the Presence of God: A Homiletic from an Asian American Perspective* (Judson Press, 1999) and *Women Preaching: Theology and Practice through the Ages* (Pilgrim Press, 2004). She is also the author of *Preaching in an Age of Globalization* (Westminster Knox Press, 2010) and *Christian Preaching and Worship in Multicultural Contexts* (Liturgical Press, 2017). She is a coeditor of *Women, Church, and Leadership: New Paradigms* (Wipf and Stock, 2012). Professor Kim is a recipient of the 2022–2023 Louisville Institute Sabbatical Grant for Researchers. The title of her grant book project is *Preaching Jesus: Postcolonial Approaches*. Kim's scholarly concern is developing the theology and methods of preaching and worship relevant to contemporary cultural contexts. Her current research interests include postcolonial and multicultural approaches to preaching and worship and preaching social and ethical issues such as race, gender, sexuality, immigration, disability, and ecojustice. Dr. Kim was the president of the Academy of Homiletics in 2018. As an ordained Presbyterian minister, Kim served local churches and has worked on various Presbytery committees.

Preface

We live in a world that is rapidly becoming a globalized, multicultural community. Cultural and religious diversity are everyday life experiences in most local communities, which are themselves microcosms of the global village. We frequently experience racial tensions, hate crimes, and cultural hegemony related to differences in appearance, skin color, language, and religion, at individual and communal levels. Our multicultural society is also radically imbalanced, socially and economically, between descendants of Western colonizers and diasporas of the colonized, and the gap between the privileged and the marginalized is growing ever wider. In addition, Christian and other religious communities struggle to handle different beliefs and practices in our pluralistic society and to find harmonious ways to live together.

This reality is the context for exploring the theme of this special issue, "Multicultural Worship: Theory and Practice." Our globalized multicultural society challenges worship leaders to reconsider their theology and practice of worship and to probe paradigms that are more relevant for the contemporary context for worship. It is no longer realistic for religious communities to treat their worship services as exclusively monocultural and monoracial. Instead, they need to be sensitive to demographic changes and other critical issues occurring in our multicultural reality, locally and globally, and to consider seriously how their rituals, prayers, and worship services can contribute to fostering justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Ritual and worship are often understood as already formed, finished, and attributable to a particular social group or cultural system with its "historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols." (Geertz 1973, p. 89). However, multicultural worship is grounded in the belief that culture is neither finished nor attributable to a particular social group. Instead, it is open-ended and flexible, constantly changing the dynamic pattern of society, and mutually influencing other cultures that coexist in that society. Culture is fluid, and as a cultural expression, so too should worship be.

Prayers and worship services prepared from a multicultural perspective can help worshipers expand their interests and concerns beyond racial and cultural boundaries and participate in God's work, which is the peaceful living of all creatures in the world. Even if congregations are monoracial and monocultural, their worship needs to be multicultural if they are to consider themselves God's partners invited to work for this vision. The task of worship leaders is thus to investigate the complexity of the relationship between culture and worship, and to create vital multicultural worship that is meaningful and memorable, through which worshipers may renew their identities and life purposes and be inspired to live these out.

The term "multicultural worship" is important for worship leaders who take the current multicultural realities seriously. Yet it is also as ambiguous as the term "multiculturalism," for it is loaded as a political, social, and cultural construct. While multiculturalism often refers to a current social condition, some understand the word in a negative way as signifying "a disruptive, unsettling, and dangerous force" against the dominant racial and ethnic group in a multicultural society (ibid.). By contrast, some consider multiculturalism an affirmative and constructive "social model for the future," in which people are equally recognized and mutually respected, regardless of their differences of race, ethnicity, and religion (Collet 1994, pp. 28–29). Moreover, there is no consensus about meanings of the words "multicultural," "intercultural," and "cross-cultural," which are used as synonyms in many cases. Some scholars in cultural studies distinguish between them, though their distinctions are not universally accepted. Thus, for some, a multicultural approach has negative connotations of segregation and even alienation, while intercultural and cross-cultural

approaches denote collaboration and mixing. For others, a multicultural approach is more positively understood as a minority-oriented cultural approach, while an intercultural approach is “biased towards the majority.” (Parekh 2016, p. 277).

While acknowledging the existence of these dilemmas around the word “multicultural,” this volume uses the word as an umbrella term for a number of approaches, such as intercultural, cross-cultural, and transcultural ways of dealing with more than one culture in worship services. Hence, “multicultural worship” in this volume refers to various worship services designed using one of these cultural approaches. Multicultural worship is not like a buffet table offering a variety of ethnic and cultural foods with exotic tastes, however. Rather than the token expression of various cultures in singing, praying, preaching, and other liturgical elements, multicultural worship is a holistic theological work that helps worshipers encounter the presence of God and discern what God is doing in our multicultural world beyond our limited sociocultural experiences. In other words, multicultural worship aims to help worshipers and their communities expand the horizons of their concern and compassion toward those who are racially and culturally different and provide new ways of worshiping God with and for them. In this sense, multicultural worship is a form of liturgical renewal in order to worship God in theologically appropriate, culturally relevant, and ethically responsible ways in our globalized world.

Although there are some resources available for the study of multicultural worship, this volume is unique in providing new paradigms of worship created from diverse cultural approaches. Each of the ten essays in the volume analyzes fundamental liturgical issues emerging from a particular multicultural context, and explores new possibilities for multicultural worship by responding to the following questions: What does multicultural worship mean? Why is it necessary? How can it be designed for relevance to a particular liturgical context? How can culturally diverse liturgical elements (e.g., participants, worship space, symbols, words, prayers, music, etc.) be used creatively to fulfill the purpose of worship? The ten essays offer not only theological and biblical foundations for answering these questions, but also concrete examples of ecumenical, intergenerational, and interfaith/interreligious rituals and liturgies.

In his essay, “Intercultural Worship and Decolonialization: Insights from the Book of Psalms,” Safwat Marzouk insists that justice and liberation should be the goal of multicultural worship. He takes an intercultural approach to interpreting the Book of Psalms and presents it as a rich resource for multicultural worship, through which transformation, justice, and healing can occur in our postcolonial world.

Namjoog Kim and John Yu focus on the Korean American cultural context, in which worshipers struggle with intergenerational issues, such as the different languages and worldviews of the first-generation immigrants and their descendants. In “Exploring Intergenerational Worship of Interdependence in a Korean American Context,” Kim suggests that a model for intergenerational worship should be based on the five characteristics of the Trinity—flexibility (innovation), communication (sharing and empathy), interconnection, ubiquity, and holistic artistry—and provides a sample liturgy designed for intergenerational communion worship.

Yu’s essay, “Bilingual, Intergenerational Worship and Ministry for Unity,” deals with the issue of separate worship services catering to the different needs of the different age and language groups within a congregation. Although separate worship services are typical among Korean American churches, Yu critically analyzes the negative consequences of this practice. Based on the results of qualitative research into his own church’s congregational worship, he convinces readers that different generations can be brought together in unity when they worship together regularly. He also offers liturgical insights into and strategies for a creative and engaging bilingual, intergenerational worship

service with the capacity to create one community with a common spiritual identity.

In "Finding Rhythm for Multicultural Worship: Heartful Indwelling with God and God's Creation," Hyuk Seonwoo stresses that justice seeking is an indispensable component of multicultural worship. He is concerned about ways multicultural worship can help the faith community build solidarity with others, and suggests that the Tai Chi rhythm of "loosen-empty-push" can be used as a liturgical movement. He also provides a sample liturgy designed for his predominantly white congregation.

In "Toward the Vision of Revelation: Multicultural Worship in a Korean Context," Hwarang Moon is concerned with the fast-growing multicultural situation of South Korea. He encourages Korean churches to be aware of the changing cultural context for worship and to shift their liturgical patterns from the monocultural to the multicultural. He also provides the Korean church with theological and liturgical guidance for preparing Sunday worship aimed at developing unity with racially and culturally different people.

Swee Hong Lim explores multicultural worship in an ecumenical setting. In "Potting Christianity: Ecumenical Worship in Its Multicultural and Multi-Ethnic Context," Lim uses the term "potting" as metaphor for ecumenical multicultural worship and points to an assembly worship celebration of the World Council of Churches as an illustration of one of the best practices. Based on his experience as a member of the 2022 assembly worship planning committee of the World Council of Churches, Lim shares "theo-liturgical principles" and provides liturgical resources effective for designing multicultural worship for reconciliation and unity.

Pierre Hegy's "The Multicultural Church of 'Le Jour du Seigneur'" and Heather Murray Elkins and Jeffrey S. Allen's "Public Lament and Intra-Faith Worship in an Appalachian Context" discuss multicultural worship in ecumenical and secular contexts. Hegy introduces readers to a Catholic television program, *Le Jour du Seigneur*, on the French state television, which is run by Catholic and Protestant lay leaders who are secular writers and university professors. He analyzes worship services offered by that program and concludes that the strategy of neutrality in avoiding theological arguments in worship services appeals to contemporary worshipers in the multicultural secular world. He also discusses other examples of multicultural worship adapted to our times of religious decline.

In their collaborative essay, Elkins and Allen interpret the entire process of the public memorial service for twenty-nine coal miners who died in an explosion in West Virginia in May 2010. They trace how the pastoral, political, and relational response to trauma shaped this multicultural public rite and examine conflicting or competing cultural values involved therein. They present this public service as a liturgical model of cross-participation that offers the possibility of healing and pastoral care for a trauma-shaped community.

The last two essays provide wisdom about and insights into interfaith worship. In "A Liturgical Model for Worship in the Multireligious Context: A Case Study Based on the Interfaith Service Held on September 25, 2015, at 9/11 Museum in New York City," Sunggu A. Yang proposes the "Pilgrim's Service" as a model for multicultural interfaith worship with three humanitarian liturgical principles—story-sharing, agreed symbols (metaphors), and de-centering. He expounds his proposed model in light of the interfaith service held at the 9/11 Museum in New York City on September 25, 2015, which he analyzes and annotates. Yang emphasizes the significance of interreligious dialogue and radical hospitality in developing multicultural interreligious worship.

In "Interfaith/Interreligious? Worship/Prayer? Service/Occasions? Interfaith Prayer Gatherings," Kathleen Mary Black looks at various interfaith gatherings and the complex theological and liturgical issues around them. She explores the models of host/guest, serial interfaith occasions,

and "inter-riting" for interfaith gatherings, and illustrates them with the Lantern Floating Hawaii event, a largest Buddhist interfaith ritual gathering, designed for the purpose of fostering healing and peace.

Each of these essays is unique in exploring the theological and liturgical meaning of multicultural worship in a particular multicultural context. The case studies and the models for worship presented in each essay enrich the theory and practice of multicultural worship. They invite Christian and other religious communities to critically reflect on their current worship services and think about creative new ways of worshiping God in our globalized multicultural world. Therefore, this volume contributes to a paradigm change in worship services from monocultural to multicultural, and eventually participates in transforming our multicultural society into a better world, where people who differ in race, ethnicity, culture, and religion can worship together and live together peacefully with equally respected recognition of their diverse cultural identities.

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Article

Intercultural Worship and Decolonialization: Insights from the Book of Psalms

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Abstract: This essay unpacks the relationship between an intercultural approach to worship and the vision of decolonization. It argues that for justice and liberation to be front and center in intercultural practices, there is a need to analyze the power dynamics that are present in the midst of a diverse worshipping community. Equally important is that the vision of decolonization needs the intercultural approach because of its ability to build bridges between people who are different, so that the faith community can overcome fragmentation by experiencing truth telling, healing, and transformation. The essay goes on to suggest that the book of Psalms offers rich resources for envisioning an intercultural worship that seeks to embody alternatives to oppressive, exclusionary, and alienating politics of assimilation and segregation. The book of Psalms, which was, for the most part, composed or redacted in the shadow of different empires, proclaimed God's reign as a faith posture in the face of oppressive empires. This central motif of God's reign, which appears in psalms of lament and psalms of praise, restores the agency of the oppressed by giving them a voice and holds those who abuse their power accountable. Practices such as lament and praise allow a diverse worshipping community to pay attention to how people experience power differently, and it calls them to be authentic and truthful so that these diverse people may work together towards transformation, justice, and healing.

Keywords: worship; intercultural; decolonization; psalms; lament; praise; God's reign

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1. Introduction

The vision of forming intercultural worshipping communities focuses on the identity of faith communities in light of the increasing awareness of the injustice caused by politics of assimilation and the limitations that exist within the model of multiculturalism. In the former approach—that is, assimilation—a dominant culture is assumed, difference is perceived as a threat, and those who are different are welcomed as long as they repress their cultural identity and become absorbed by the dominant culture. Minoritized communities experienced injustice because they were expected to abandon their traditions and praxis that have sustained them throughout different periods of their history in which they experienced various forms of oppression and marginalization. In the latter approach, multiculturalism, difference is recognized and accepted, but people of different cultural backgrounds coexist on islands, with little interaction or attempts to know one another in deep and transformative ways. Tokenism, such as singing a song from a different culture, or praying a prayer in a different language, scratches the surface of encountering the other, without digging deeper or making visible the spiritualties, the struggles, the triumphs, and the stories of the communities that stand behind these songs and prayers. Intercultural approaches to worship that are concerned about the identity of a faith community seek to create mechanisms for these transformative encounters to take place by way of helping the members of a diverse community to become more competent in navigating theological and cultural sameness and difference. That is, communities that are serious about becoming interculturally competent need to continue to wrestle with the questions of how to find a common ground that does not turn unity into a hegemony of the dominant culture,

and how to celebrate, integrate, and adapt to difference so that all who are involved are mutually transformed by encountering one another, and together they may imagine new possibilities.[1] The work of interculturalism and decolonization is an ongoing journey of transformation that seeks to embody an alternative to the politics of assimilation and segregation in a polarized world.

2. Interculturalism and Decolonialism: Conversation Partners

A crucial concern that relates to this intercultural approach about the life, worship, and witness of the church suggests that the "intercultural language" does not go far enough in naming and resisting racism and other forms of oppression, and that the "intercultural" model may end up reproducing the dominant culture; it might turn minoritized communities, the ethnic other, and their traditions into a commodity consumed by people with power, or it might force minoritized communities to lose the space in which they preserve the peculiarities of their cultural identities. The validity of these concerns resides in the acknowledgment that whenever diverse people form a worshipping community, there are power dynamics at play that shape their relationships and practices. Therefore, while it is important to reiterate the point that being intercultural does not mean a loss of one's identity and traditions, there is, still, a necessity for a complementary approach to the intercultural one that analyzes power dynamics, that seeks to repair the damage of the past, and that centers the work of justice and liberation at the heart of intercultural encounters. Equally important, the work of analyzing power dynamics, striving towards reparation and healing, and envisioning processes of liberation and justice needs the intercultural approach that allows for diverse embodied experiences to converse and to build bridges of understanding for the sake of transformation and overcoming fragmentation in the society or the church. This way, an intercultural church lives up to Hyung Jin Kim Sun's assessment that "intercultural engagement and practice in a white dominant society and churches is at the same time an inherently anti-racist engagement and practice. This means that becoming an intercultural church is becoming an anti-racist church as well" (Sun 2022, p. 146). For an intercultural worshipping community to become anti-racist, it must engage insights from the work of postcolonial and decolonial analyses.

In some of its manifestations, postcolonial criticism that focuses on the cultural aspect of colonialism intersects with interculturalism in that both deal with how the self and the other, the colonizer and the colonized, construct and are constructed as they encounter one another. Postcolonial and decolonial analyses expose how the construction of the self and the other was used by colonizers to legitimate domination and how it was used by the colonized to envision resistance, liberation, and healing from the hegemony of the empire. This avenue of inquiry yielded many subversive means of resistance, such as hybridity, third space, and mimicry. For some critics, even though these are legitimate ways to expose the colonial gaze, and even though these phenomena have unpacked some of the complex relations between the self and the other, they do not address head on the issue of power differential as decolonialization does. Becca Whitla evaluates two common notions of postcolonial criticism, those of "third space" and "mimicry". Although third space "has the potential to be both resistant and liberating", in some of its manifestations, it does not deal with the power differential between dominant and marginalized cultures. For mimicry, seeking to undermine the imperial justification for domination, quite often, it reproduces the imperial status quo, "because communities are still excluded and absent." (Whitla 2020, pp. 171–72). The alternative in her program of liberation and justice lies in a decolonial approach. Decoloniality restores "marginalized agencies" and it reclaims "other (non-European) ways of knowing, being, doing, and feeling. . . . Decolonial approaches strive to affirm the ways in which people's lived experience represents marginalized voices. Hence, a decolonial perspective would ask how the story would change should those on the underside participate by actually being agents in the story, changing the very nature of the story itself." (Whitla 2020, p. 172).

Decolonial analyses guide intercultural worship to investigate how power dynamics shape the relationships within the church, while intercultural worship makes it possible for people who have different experiences with power to construct a new identity as a result of encountering God and the other. Intercultural worship is a relational response to God's activity in the world; it also engages the realities of the world as experienced differently by diverse communities. This relational response celebrates the diverse ways in which people encounter God and how this encounter is shaped by their ethnic identity, cultural heritage, and linguistic traditions. Intercultural worship creates a space for the diverse relational responses to enrich one another as they are expressed in songs and prayers uttered in different languages and embodied in cultural and artistic expressions. These concrete means of worshipping interculturally are informed by a theology that celebrates difference as a gift, and that seeks the transformation of the self and other as they relate together to God. But this utopian articulation of what an intercultural worship is quite often clashes with old and new expressions of racism, oppression, colonialism, and imperialism. In addition to economic and political devastations, racism, colonialism, and imperialism have and continue to erode cultures and marginalize identities.[2] This is where intercultural work and decolonization meet. As they both investigate how the self and the other relate to one another and to God, decolonial and postcolonial approaches ask, how are these relationships shaped by power, sameness, and difference? An intercultural worship that is informed by the work of decolonization is honest about the hurt, the violence, marginalization, and erosion; it also celebrates what resistance, confrontational or subversive, has accomplished; it creates a space for the colonizer to be held accountable and for the colonized to be empowered; and it longs for God's reign to bring healing, justice, and mutuality.[3] With this background in mind, now, I turn to the book of Psalms in order to explain how the proclamation of God's reign in the book itself was a form of resisting the empire, which in turn will be fruitful for our considerations on the relationship between decolonization and interculturalism.

3. The Book of Psalms and Intercultural Worship

The book of psalms offers insights that deepen the wisdom of intercultural worshipping communities as they seek to do justice, work for liberation, and build bridges of mutual transformation across their cultural differences. It will become apparent from the discussion below that the dichotomy between political and social matters, on the one hand, and spiritual or theological worldviews, on the other, is nonexistent in the book of Psalms. The worship of God in the book of psalms always engaged the lives of the individuals and the communities that composed these hymns and prayers. Power struggles, oppression, justice, and liberation are essential threads in the fabric of the individual and communal songs and appeals. The identity of the worshipper(s) in relation to God, the enemy, or the other are front and center in words of lament, prayers of help, and shouts of praise. Thus, as contemporary worshipping communities seek to increase their intercultural competence in a decolonial mode, they ought to reflect on the socio-political contexts that have shaped the prayers of lament and the songs of praise in the book of Psalms. These reflections would function as a mirror for these communities to consider who they are and who they are called to be and do. It will become apparent from the discussion below that the languages of lament and praise are deeply connected with people's struggles, their agency, and God's sovereignty.

Intercultural worshipping practices that seek to decolonize the oppressed and to transform the oppressor invite the diverse members of the faith community to ask about how they enter into the words of the psalms. Given the diversity of genres within the psalter and the diversity of voices even within a single psalm, the book contributes to decolonization and to intercultural work by holding various voices, spiritualities, and theologies in tension. These psalms, which have come from the era of different empires, were the words of the oppressed Israelites, and have been appropriated into the worship lives of communities that have different power dynamics and experiences. Therefore, it is

important for contemporary worshipping communities to ask, how do the diverse voices of the different genres that are present within the book of psalms hold those who abuse their power accountable, and how do they give a voice to those who have been marginalized and oppressed? How does this anthology, which sought to decolonize the Israelites, but in doing so has reproduced some of the ideologies it sought to deconstruct, be instructive to contemporary worshipping communities as they seek to be transformed? How can we avoid taking the words of the oppressed to reproduce the status quo and conceal privilege and power? How can we be transformed by the words uttered or sung to God in the presence of a diverse crowd that have had a long history of colonialism and conflict? How have the texts been abused to maintain the status quo and how did they inspire various forms of liberation?

4. God's Reign, Intercultural Worship, and Decolonization

Reflecting on the motif of God's reign in relation to the colonial and imperial realities of the people of Israel creates a productive space to consider the relationship between intercultural worship and decolonization. The book of psalms shows that colonialism and empire are part of how the faith community is shaped, how it speaks about God, and how it constructs its identity in relation to the other. The motif of God's reign is central to the book of Psalms.[4] As early as Psalm 2, which is part of a programmatic introduction to the whole book, the audience of the psalter are called to respond to the proclamation of the reign of God.[5] The motif of God's reign is, naturally, a crucial component of the Royal Psalms, Enthronement Psalms, and Zion Psalms.[6] The motif also appears in psalms of praise, as well as psalms of lament, in which the psalmists put their trust in God's sovereignty to deliver them from their personal or communal distress. Even though the motif may reflect an ideology that centralizes power in the hands of the monarchy that seeks to subjugate its people and other nations, it still reflects the vulnerability of the people of Israel, who were subjugated to the powers of the surrounding empires. In the latter case, the belief in God's reign is a source of resilience and faith in the face of the empires.

In her study of the Zion Tradition, Beate Ego differentiates between two manifestations of the relationship between God, the Israelites, and the nations, or, put differently, between the self and the other, the center (Jerusalem) and the periphery (the nations). The Zion tradition, which appears in the psalms, the prophets, and the lamentation, speaks of "God as a royal ruler, residing in his temple palace on Zion, the holy mountain in Jerusalem. Zion is, therefore, the location of divine indwelling. Because God lives on Zion, divine blessing flows into the world. This blessed power is manifested in the provision of water for the city and the land, in nature's fertility, and in the security of the city's residence from internal and external enemies." (Ego 2016, p. 333).[7] The socio-political experiences of the people of Israel in relation to other empires shaped how the worshipping community proclaims God's reign and how they see themselves and the other. According to Ego's analyses of the Zion tradition, the first strand emerged during the time of the monarchy and the heightened power of the Assyrian empire. After a study of Psalms 46 and 48, Ego concludes that "center and periphery are related to each other in an antagonistic manner; however, the center can be described as being stronger than the power of the periphery." (Ego 2016, p. 336).[8] In these two psalms, chaos, whether natural disasters or tumult nations, threatens the well-being of those who dwell in Zion. Yet, the psalmists proclaim an unshaken trust in God's power to tame these chaotic forces. These psalms subvert the Assyrian propaganda of world dominion. According to these psalms, the empire may threaten the dwelling of God, but eventually God puts an end to war and restores order. The nations here are seen as a representation of chaos that needs to be defeated and tamed.

The psalms that come from the exilic or the Persian period reflect a new development in the articulation of the Zion tradition and theology. In this development, "the relationship between center and periphery is best described as complementary and harmonious." (Ego 2016, p. 337).[9] According to Psalm 102, the nations are not in enmity with YHWH or Zion. Instead, they fear the name of the LORD and all the kings of the Earth revere God's glory.

God's reign is manifest in rebuilding the destroyed Zion and in paying heed to the prayers of the marginalized. God, who is enthroned in Zion, is feared by the nations, "hears the groans of the prisoners", and "sets free those who were doomed to die" (Psalm 102:20).[10] Nations, kingdoms, and peoples gather in Zion to praise this God. In a similar way, in Psalm 68:31–32, the kingdoms of the Earth are called upon to praise YHWH, and even though they march towards Zion, they do not come to attack, but to present their gifts to the God of Israel. That the nations acknowledge the sovereignty of YHWH is possibly a result of monotheism. If YHWH is the only true creator of the world and its nations, then YHWH must relate to these nations in one way or another. This theological development that includes the nations as worshippers of YHWH corresponds to some ideological facets of the Persian empire. Persian iconography shows images of representatives of the vassal states of the Persian empire "voluntarily" bringing gifts from their respective regions to honor their emperor. If this ideology indeed influenced the changes in the Zion tradition, then, suggests Ego, this theological claim may have functioned as "an anti-imperial impetus. Instead of the Persian Emperor, the true ruler of the world is the God of Israel!"(Ego 2016, p. 343).[11]

In his study of the enthronement psalms, Royce M. Victor situates the book of Psalms as a whole and this genre of psalms in the context of empires. Even though these psalms may have different originating dates, they, along with the whole book, essentially continued to be compiled and edited down to the Second Temple period (Victor 2018, p. 235). The language used in these psalms leaves the reader in a tension: are these words those of resistance or are they words of dominance? On the one hand, these psalms reflect the hopes of the oppressed Israelites—namely, that their God is a sovereign deity who will liberate them from the tyranny of the oppressive empires and will usher a new era of justice, peace, and dignity. Victor writes, "The psalmists' proposal is to replace the present tyrant ruler, who denies freedom and rights, with a new benevolent and just ruler, who has all the authority over the universe." (Victor 2018, p. 236). In this way, these psalms become a voice of resistance to the empires that subjected the people of Judah to their military, economic, and political control. Victor adds, "These psalms thus become a powerful protest against the imposing of imperial power and its allies." (Victor 2018, p. 236). While these psalms functioned as a voice of resistance for those who had been colonized, they tend to reproduce the ideology that they sought to deconstruct. Victor refers to the danger of identifying a particular people or a human ruler with the divine reign. Thus, he notes, "When Israel's God becomes the universal deity through his great enthronement, Israel gets a special privilege to have a mandate from her God to subjugate other peoples and occupy their lands in the name of her God. The conquest and invasion of land becomes justifiable according to this authorization Israel received from her God." (Victor 2018, pp. 236–37).[12] Even though these texts may have, for a brief time in Israel's history, given a justification for the expansion of the so-called Davidic or Solomonic empires, it is crucial to remember, as Victor reminds us, that these texts were written or redacted at times when Israel was under the rule of foreign empires. "As mentioned earlier, the Psalter was compiled in the Second Temple period, when the community was struggling to rebuild with a specific identity as the people of God. The people were still under the shadow of the empire. In fact, it was an ardent hope of a colonized and subjugated people who envisaged having absolute dominance over the universe including their present masters. The genre of enthronement psalms emerged out of the pain, suffering, and anxiety about the future of a subjected people. It envisions the emergence of a new divine ruler who will dethrone the present empire and help his people to have universal dominion." (Victor 2018, p. 237).[13]

The discussion above shows that worship in the book of Psalms always engaged the political realities of the community. Whether in conflict or harmony, domination or resistance, inclusion or exclusion, hope or despair, praise or lament, the proclamation of God's reign addressed the power differential between the colonized and the colonizer. The psalms that emerged for the most part out of the powerlessness of the ancient Israelites as a language of faith in the face of the empire have been used in worship by the colonizers

and by the colonized, in separate worship spaces or in the same worship space. In an intercultural worship setting, in which the colonized and the colonizers worship together, the language of God's reign in the psalter creates fertile soil on which to reflect on power dynamics among a diverse worshipping community. The language of God's reign in the book of Psalms, which is pervasive in psalms of praise, but also appears in psalms of lament, as will see in the following paragraphs, creates a challenge and an opportunity. Worshipping through the psalms that proclaim God's reign challenges intercultural worship to expose the ways that this motif might have been used to justify colonialism and imperialism. Worshipping though the psalms that proclaim God's reign gives a voice to the oppressed to lament and protest against the oppression they have experienced, and it calls onto those who have abused their power to surrender to God's righteous justice. Whether in lament or praise, God's reign liberates, heals, and repairs through a worship that is honest, diverse, and authentic.

5. Responses to the Reign of God

In an intercultural worship setting, in which the colonized and the colonizer sing together, the book of Psalms creates a space for people who have different experiences with power to speak truth to God and to one another. The book of Psalms creates a space for people who are different to be honest and authentic about the history they carry with them into the worship space. Those, or their ancestors, who have experienced oppression can voice their pain, and those, or their ancestors, who have abused their power can repent. An intercultural worship that seeks decolonization ought to create a space for people to reflect on their cultural location with the hope that, through this embodiment, they may find healing and transformation as they encounter one another and as they encounter God. Proclaiming God's reign does not mean repressing voices of protest and lament; instead, it should be viewed as the foundation upon which the faith community has the courage to hope for a new reality in the midst of chaos. Celebrating God's reign in songs of praise does not mean that the faith community is oblivious to the damage that colonization has committed, nor is it complacent regarding how the other is often excluded or marginalized. Celebrating God's reign puts God at the center of a diverse faith community, and in doing so, it animates the hope that when humans fail, God is sovereign to save the oppressed and to judge the oppressors who persist in their wickedness.

6. Psalms of Lament and the Agency of the Oppressed

The book of Psalms is not oblivious to suffering, trauma, and violence. The book preserves a bold tradition of prayers of lament and protest, sometimes directed towards God and in other times directed towards other humans who have violated the well-being of the psalmist.[14] Psalms of lament make visible the wounds, disorientation, trauma, suffering, and hopelessness. They speak of narrow spaces of oppression (Ps. 3:1), emotional distress and physical illnesses (6:5–7), injustices (10:2), sorrow (13:2), enemies (22:12–13), mortality and estrangement (39:1–13), shame and defeat (44:9–16), persecution (55:3), rejection (60:1), being overwhelmed (69:1–4), the destruction of communal identity (74:1–9), loss and loneliness (88:8, 18). They also bring to the fore the longing for belonging, healing, justice, and liberation. They express a sense of trust in God's faithfulness to the covenant and they rely on God's steadfast love as the ultimate assurance that God will listen and deliver. Even though they raise questions about God's justice because of the harm that they have endured at the hands of their enemies, the fact that they still approach God in prayer is a sign of bold trust in God. In many of these psalms, and despite the chaos that the worshipping community experiences, proclaiming God's reign over creation and history is the foundation for their longing for justice. In Psalm 74:12, for example, the psalmist declares, "Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the earth".[15]

Psalms of lament have been marginalized in Christian worship for various reasons.[16] For some, complaint is usually confused with murmuring. Complaint, for them, reflects an ungrateful posture towards God. For others, complaint and lament are signs of a weak

faith and a lack of trust in God. For some, the spirituality of giving thanks and praise in the midst of suffering and chaos is considered a sign of a stronger faith than the spirituality that allows for words of complaint and protest. For others, worship and spirituality are reduced to be only about joy, and they can simply achieve this state if they focus on God and leave behind their suffering. For others, God's sovereignty means that one should not question what God is doing. Some of those who have been deprived of their agency as a result of being subjugated to different forms of oppression find it hard to speak back to God as an authority figure. For some, who have lost all possibilities of help, God is their ultimate resort in the midst of suffering and complaint will not change the reality that they are experiencing. Whether for theological or sociopolitical reasons, prayers of lament have been marginalized in worship practices and spaces.[17]

Through prayers of lament, the vulnerable ones restore some of their agency as they raise a voice of protest to God concerning various manifestations of interpersonal or systemic oppression and alienation. This kind of discourse is crucial for individuals or communities that have experienced racism, colonialism, forced migration, or xenophobia. These oppressive systems have tried to deprive them of their dignity and humanity. An intercultural worship that is attentive to the diversity of the experiences that are present in the worship space ought to integrate psalms of lament into its public worship so that these individuals and communities see themselves in a new light, as partners with God in doing justice in the world. This practice reflects a theology of a dynamic and a relational God who responds to prayers and who freely chooses to work through human agents. Thus, prayers of lament are not about venting; the process itself is transformational because humans who have experienced marginalization start to claim a new identity as covenantal partners. Prayers of lament are formational.[18] Lisa Allen explains the formational role of worship in the life of the black church when she writes, "Worship was not just an opportunity to come and shout or cry and then leave, content in whatever station in life one was. It was about knowing that there was a better life, not just somewhere in the sky, but in the here and now, and the Black church stood as a testament to God's faithfulness that we, as a people, could live into the fullness of our humanity." (Allen 2021, p. 12).

One of the contributions of Walter Brueggemann to the theology of the book of Psalms is the recovery of the validity of the language of lament as faithful discourse that is grounded in a covenantal relationship with God. Two losses, argues Brueggemann, occur when the language of lament is marginalized in the theology and practice of faith communities. The first loss focuses on the genuineness of the covenantal relationship, in which the human party is supposedly taken seriously by God. If humans are only allowed the language of praise, and they are not permitted to cry out in the midst of injustice, not only does this create a bad faith that is built on fear, guilt, or false self-righteousness, but it also turns humans into an object, not partners with God. The second loss suggests that the absence of the language of lament stifles the question of theodicy, which essentially has to do with the work of justice in the world. By recovering the language of lament and protest as a language of faith, the oppressed become a partner with God in the work of justice. Hence, Derek Suderman tried to recover the place of the faith community in the process of lament, a topic not addressed by Brueggemann. "In effect", writes Suderman, "raising one's voice in lament not only calls on God to act but also invites social discernment and the response of the social 'other' to the speaker's claim ... More than simply being '*addressed to God against neighbor*' or '*addressed to God against God*', laments are also *addressed to a social audience* and thus function rhetorically as warnings, threats, accusations, and appeals for empathy and support. Thus, in addition to providing an empowering voice and significant social critique, the function of lament requires the attentive, discerning ear of those who hear or hear about the pained cries." (Suderman 2012). Hearing these cries, then, calls onto the audience to respond, by way of doing justice for the oppressed or repenting for violence done to those who have been marginalized.[19]

Prayers of lament in an intercultural setting become the voice of the oppressed, and they create a space for not only an acknowledgement of wrongs done, but also a space

for grief, which, as Sunder John Boopalan states, "engenders positive agency" that one hopes would lead to the transformation of identities (Boopalan 2017, p. 115). Boopalan notes, "In calling agents to take cues from the grief of those who suffer wrongs, the internal work of grief invites persons from privileged backgrounds to undertake the task of identity-transforming grief.". (Boopalan 2017, p. 118). Indeed, it has been noted that the psalmists in psalms of lament construct an identity in relation to God and in relation to an other who is hostile.[20] "[T]he concept of shaming the enemies means to relate to them openly, in the public sphere. The honest voicing of negative attitudes towards the other is a more real and more genuine way of relating to them than not doing so. There is an authenticity about the voicing of a response to harmful actions of others, which bolsters relationship and paves the way for the impairment in relationship to be addressed restoratively. The voicing of a psalm can have a ritual aspect to it, which speaks of its efficacy in making real change possible. In the case of the psalmist's relationship to their enemy, a psalm of lament can reorient the perception of the pray-er (and potentially all those who hear it too). It turns the enemy from being a problem, a thing, to being a person to be addressed and brought into the ambit of the psalmist's relationship with God and with the wider community." (Stocks 2021, pp. 133–34). An intercultural worship that seeks decolonization, that seeks justice and mutuality, ought to allow for this authentic dialogue with God and the other. An intercultural worship that integrates prayers of lament does not shy away from confronting pain in the name of unity. Intercultural worship that seeks justice will be unsettling. Yet, it is through this courageous and dialogical, truth-telling worship that a diverse faith community may begin to experience healing and transformation.

7. Psalms of Praise and the Relationality of God's Reign

Songs of praise and adoration are common in intercultural worship practices. Short and simple songs are easier to translate into another language and they are easier to handle across cultural and theological difference. Sometimes, this gives the impression that songs of praise are shallow and are not as sophisticated theologically as other types of hymns or songs. In these manifestations of intercultural worship, it is assumed that praise and adoration are centered and focused on God's otherness. And this focus does not always connect with daily lives that are distraught with violence, chaos, and oppression. Worship in this sense becomes a vertical relationship between the worshipper and God. Praise is isolated from people's struggles; God is remote and can only be thought of as a transcendent God. In this kind of intercultural worship, although it sometimes celebrates ethnic and linguistic diversity, its articulation of praise of this awesome God is separated from God's liberating activity and justice-making on behalf of the powerless. Psalms of praise, however, challenge these reductionist assumptions. Indeed, they are a rich theological resource for intercultural worship that does not confuse diversity with justice, because, when God's reign puts things in the right, this means liberation for the oppressed, inclusion of the marginalized, and judgment on those who act unjustly.

It has been argued that psalms of praise are witnesses to God's incommensurability and God's incomparability. Praise is an invitation to be in awe and wonder. It calls onto the worshipping community to reflect on what it means to be a human being in relation to this wonderful, powerful, mysterious God. Brueggemann discusses an enigmatic tension that is present in the psalms. For him, there is a tension, a mystery, concerning how God's incommensurability relates to mutuality. He assigns God's incomparability to psalms of praise and hymns of thanksgiving, and when it comes to mutuality, he turns to psalms of lament in which the psalmist assumes the upper hand or at least a parity with God.[21] Although Brueggemann acknowledges the relationality of the God worshipped in the book of Psalms, he dissects these two aspects of the theological witness of the psalms and houses each side in one particular genre. These two sides of the theological enigma, however, are present in both of these genres, lament and praise. God's celebrated power is what makes the psalmist petition to God to interfere and change reality, and the God who is praised is

also a relational God who is connected to the powerless and to the righteous and who holds the wicked accountable for the oppression that they have imposed on the marginalized.

The final psalms of the psalter are psalms of praise that celebrate God's reign, which rescues the oppressed and that judges the oppressor. A psalmist declares, "The LORD will reign forever" (Psalm 146:10), and another one exhorts the children of Zion to "rejoice in their king" (149:2). The singer in Psalm 145 shouts, "I extol you, my God and King". God's everlasting reign is mentioned three times at the heart of the psalm: "the glory of your kingdom; the glorious splendor of your kingdom; your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom" (145:1, 11–13).[22] These psalms emphasize God's otherness, to the point of saying that God's greatness is too great for human minds to examine it and human words to capture it (Psalm 145:3). Indeed, the psalmists overwhelm the worshippers with words such as splendor, majesty, wonder, and awesomeness. Yet, this same God is involved in the world by doing *tsedeqah*—"righteousness or justice". God's otherness never separates God from revealing Godself by putting things in the right. God reveals God's righteousness when God upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down (Psalm 145:14) and when God "judges the wicked" (145:20).

In a similar way, Psalm 146 celebrates God's relational reign. God the creator, who brings order out of chaos in the vast non-human world, is also involved in the margins of society. Words of praise speak of a God "who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow" (Psalm 146:7–9).[23] God's reign is an ongoing jubilee year. God's reign liberates, feeds, lifts up, heals, repairs, and restores. At the center of God's activities are those who are not usually seen at the center of the concern of the empire. Yet they are the ones most affected by the hegemony of the empire. God's reign reshuffles the social and political arrangements.[24]

Worshipping this God is a political statement. Rolf Jacobson notes that "Israel's praise evokes a world in which the Lord alone reigns, biblical praise is always both praise of the true Lord and praise against all false lords—human and non-human—who seek to set themselves up in God's place." (Jacobson 2000, p. 383). Songs of praise that declare God's reign call on the worshipping community to decide if they will put their trust in the power of rulers and empires or if they will put their ultimate trust in this God who defends the oppressed. Such a call was declared early on in the psalter, in Psalm 2, and now here, towards the end of the psalter, the hymns of praise confront their audience with the fragility of human rulers and empires: "Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help. When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish" (Psalm 146:3–4). And in the following psalm, the singer reminds the worshippers that God's "delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner" (Psalm 146:11; see Exodus 15:21).

Psalms of praise that speak of God's relational incomparability, that vindicate the oppressed, expose the fragility of the human oppressor. Indeed, God's righteous reign "lifts up the downtrodden, and brings the wicked to the ground" (Psalm 147:6). The oppressor is often called the wicked, the *resha'im*, in the book of Psalms. The wicked ones are the ones who abuse their power against the marginalized. "In arrogance the wicked persecute the poor—let them be caught in the schemes they have devised. For the wicked boast of the desires of their heart, those greedy for gain curse and renounce the LORD" (Psalm 10:2–3).[25] In contrast to doing justice on behalf of the righteous, the oppressed ones,[26] whom God loves (Psalm 146:8), God destroys the wicked (145:20), brings to ruin the way of the wicked (146:9), and brings the wicked down to the ground (147:6). For the most part, God is the actor of this judgment that comes over the ones who oppress the poor. Yet, Psalm 149 speaks of the role that the *hasidism*, the faithful, will play in bringing about God's judgment over the kings and nobles, who will be removed from their thrones and halls of power and will be put to chains and tamed. With words and swords, they will execute vengeance, rebukes, and justice. That the psalm ends with an emphasis on vengeance,

rebukes, and putting an end to the arrogance of these foreign rulers as a way of restoring the dignity and honor of the oppressed *hasidim* reflects the common motif in which the reign of God is an upside-down reality (e.g., 1 Sam 2:1–10; Luke 1:46–55). In this new order, those who were oppressed are restored to honor and dignity, and those who abused their power are tamed and receive justice.[27]

This image of the vengeance and justice that are brought over the kings and the nobles of the nations, which dominates Psalm 149, should be contrasted with another image from Psalm 148. These kings and rulers are not violently subjugated. Instead, they are called to participate in the worship of YHWH because YHWH is an exalted God. Obviously, these kings and nations might have their own Gods. So, one wonders if this language is that of inclusion or intrusion. It depends on what one compares it to. If it is compared to a theology that allows other peoples to preserve their religious traditions (e.g., Deuteronomy 32:8–9; Micah 4:5), then this text would seem intrusive. If one compares it to the vengeance of Psalm 149 or other exclusionary views in scriptures in which other nations are excluded from the worship of YHWH (e.g., Deuteronomy 7, 23), then calling onto these foreign kings to participate in this worship chorus is indeed an inclusive language. Interestingly, Psalm 148 calls onto all of God's creation to participate. It even includes the primoradial water and the dragons or monsters, the *tanninim*.[28] That is, the agents that disturb God's ordered creation, whether mythological creatures or historical figures (the nobles and the kings of Psalm 149), are included in the worship of YHWH, who reigns above Heaven and the Earth. This very language, which includes all nations and peoples, preserves a peculiar place for Israel and its relationship with YHWH. Thus, while the text is inclusive, it does not do this at the expense of peculiarity. Praise, here, then, is intercultural, as it brings people who are ethnically and linguistically different to worship God together, without a loss of those identities and their peculiarities. Praise is also decolonial, as it brings to the center not a particular culture, but God's reign, which liberates the oppressed, judges the wicked who persist in oppression, and restores even the enemies of God's creation, cosmological or historical, to a harmonious relationship with God and with others.

8. Conclusions

This paper suggested that intercultural worship becomes transformative when it becomes intentional about addressing people's experiences with power. In order to reach this goal, intercultural worship ought to engage in a decolonial mindset and practices that empower the marginalized and hold those who abuse their power accountable. This kind of work does not repress the voice of the oppressed in the name of unity, and it does not simply focus on diversity without doing the work of justice. An intercultural worship that seeks decolonization and liberation creates a space for honest and authentic encounters between diverse worshippers, God, and one another. As much as it is important in an intercultural worship to integrate different languages, diverse worship styles, and multiple theologies, it is crucial for the experiences of the members of the worshipping community to be visible and integrated. Through its diverse genres, the book of Psalms offers intercultural worshipping communities a model of speaking truth about their hurt and privilege. God's reign in prayers of lament and in songs of praise addresses these diverse worshipping communities. It gives hope for the oppressed and marginalized, and it holds accountable those who abuse their power. Being formed by this multiplicity of voices within the book of Psalms, which reached its final form in a colonial and imperil context, intercultural worship becomes decolonial when it gives a voice to the downtrodden, and when it celebrates God's reign, which longs for God's restoration of all God's creation, even those cosmological and historical outsiders, monsters, and the human other.

The work of Whitla offers practical wisdom on how to integrate decolonial reflections in forming a diverse and a just worshipping community. A self-reflective worship takes place on the institutional and on the individualistic levels. As much as the worshipping community seeks to live into God's reign, it should reflect on the forces that work against creating God's beloved community. Whitla writes, "At their peril, churches, in their

eagerness to embrace a vision of what humanity is liberated *for*, often neglect this work, the work of liberating *from*." (Whitla 2020, p. 230). Whitla argues that three things ought to happen in order to live into this reality more concretely: firstly, churches should produce their "autobiographical narrative". Building up God's community requires liberation and reconciliation. As churches confront their past, the next step of work "will entail unmasking and confronting coloniality in our liturgies." (Whitla 2020, p. 231). Public and private acknowledgement, confession, and repentance for the harm that colonialism has and continues to cause is a step forward in confronting its forms of oppression. Repentance calls for actions. Thus, worship contributes to the church's decolonial work "by creating spaces for the voices of the marginalized and excluded to sing and be heard." (Whitla 2020, p. 231).

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Notes

1. For discussions on the difference between monocultural, multicultural, and intercultural church and worship, see (Brazel and de Guzman 2015; Marzouk 2019). The work of Mary Eunjoo Kim analyzes the impact of different cross-cultural models on preaching and worship. The four models that she focuses on are the melting pot, the salad bowl, the mosaic, and the kaleidoscope. See (Kim 2017, pp. 111–27).
2. Kwok Pui-lan explains the power dynamics that lie behind some of the intercultural encounters and realities that have been taking place: "Both in our faith communities and in the wider society, more and more people are living in intercultural realities. As a result of colonialism and slavery in the past and globalization in the present, cultures are not isolated from but are intertwined with one another." (Pui-lan 2021, pp. 151–52). In order to engage these realities of interculturalism and colonialism, Kwok Pui-lan suggests, with regard to preaching, but being equally applicable to all aspects of worship, "I would portray postcolonial preaching as a locally rooted and globally conscious performance that seeks to create a Third Space so that the faith community can imagine new ways of being in the world and encountering God's salvific action for the oppressed and marginalized." (Pui-lan 2021, pp. 152–53).
3. Postcolonial liturgical theologies "are ways in which praxis, theories, and theologies of religious groups are engaged in order to challenge those times when the imperial, colonizing power dynamics of domination use religious ideologies/reifications as instruments of an agenda of conquering and dismissal, undermining autonomies and destruction of people's lives, wisdom, and sovereignties." (Carvalhaes 2015, p. 2).
4. James L. Mays has argued that the motif of God's reign is *the center* of the book of Psalms. Mays summarizes his arguments in the following way: "The declaration *Yhwh malak* involves a vision of reality that is the theological center of the Psalter. The cosmic and worldly action to which it refers is the etiology of the psalmic situation. The psalmic understanding of the people of God, the city of God, the king of God, and the law of God depends on its validity and implications. The psalmic functions of praise, prayer, and instruction are responses to it and articulations of its wonder, hope and guidance." (Mays 1994b, p. 22).
5. J. Clinton McCann notes, "As scholars have begun to take seriously the shape of the Psalter, they have realized that Psalms 1 and 2 together form an introduction to the Psalms. While Psalm 1 informs the reader that the whole collection is to be approached and appropriated as instruction, Psalm 2 introduces the essential content of that instruction—the Lord reigns! Nothing about God, the world, humanity, or the life of faith will be properly learned and understood apart from this basic affirmation." (McCann 1993, p. 41).
6. Enthronement psalms such as Psalms 93, 96–99 have the common phrase *YHWH Malak*, which can be translated as "the LORD reigns". These psalms are closely related to another set of psalms known as royal psalms (Psalms 2, 45, 72). While enthronement psalms celebrate YHWH's kingship, royal psalms speak of YHWH transferring this power to a human king. Despite their distinction, they are both tied in their celebration of kingship either that of God or that of a human representative of God, and the celebration of this sovereignty is reflected in the subjugation of the powers of chaos, whether natural (creation) or historical (the nations), under the power of God or God's people. Zion psalms (e.g., Psalm 46) celebrate the inviolability of Jerusalem and its temple, because YHWH is in its midst. No enemy, cosmological or historical, would be able to invade it or terrify its people because YHWH reigns from the temple, which is the microcosm of order in the midst of the chaos.
7. For various perspectives on the origins and implications of the Zion tradition in the Hebrew Bible, in general, and in the book of Psalms, in particular, see (Ollenburger 1987; Roberts 2002, pp. 282–57; Laato 2018).

[8] In a similar vein, Laato notes, "As in Ps. 48:9–15 so also in Ps. 46:9–12 the old mythical tradition has been interpreted as being realized in the mighty actions of Yahweh in history, apparently in the year 701 BCE when the Assyrian Army could not conquer Zion." (Laato 2018, p. 170).

[9] A necessary clarification is in order here. That the nations would come and worship YHWH can be understood in two different ways. Nations lose their religious identity and submit to the reign of YHWH. This would certainly be a notion that counters the orientation of interculturalism. Indeed, there is a challenge here with regard to the inclusion of the nations in the worship of YHWH. The challenge centers on envisioning an inclusion without complete loss of identity for both the Israelites or the nations. This inclusion of the nations in the worship of YHWH, however, is a step forward towards tolerance and mutuality when we compare it with other psalms in which the nations seek to destroy Israel and the response was that YHWH the sovereign would destroy the nations.

[10] Verses 12–22 of Psalm 102 contrast "human impermanence and the permanence of YHWH's Kingship". Despite human fragility, the reign of God gives hope to the psalmist for the salvation of the community and the restoration of Zion. "This renewal from God will bring hope to those in despair, and the response of thanksgiving narrating this salvific action will make it possible for the nations to understand and come to worship YHWH as king." (Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014, p. 437).

[11] W. Dennis Tucker, Jr. explains how Psalms 107–150 critique the Persian empire when he writes, "Amid the praise of Yahweh as the God of Yehud there is a secondary claim meant to discredit the power associated with other nations and peoples. The psalmists challenge the Persian notion of a worldwide empire governed by an Achaemenid ruler under the watchful eye of Ahuramazda and instead assert that kingship belongs to Yahweh alone (108:4–7) and that his 'glory is over the whole earth' (108:6). The political powers that surround those in Yehud cannot match the power of Yahweh and will be shattered utterly by the Divine King as he stands alongside his people (e.g., 109:31; 110:5; 124:6–8). The psalms also discredit any claim that those subjugated to the Persian Empire do so in joyous participation. To the contrary, the psalmists employ vivid imagery that reflects the toll that such subjugation has taken upon the people." (Tucker 2014, p. 188).

[12] Indeed, the connection between divine reign and human kingship is a matter of debate in biblical scholarship. David M. Howard, Jr., for example, draws tight connection between YHWH, King, and Zion, when he writes, "The Zion, royal, and Davidic traditions displayed prominently and placed strategically throughout the Psalter take their place alongside the traditions of YHWH as King to portray the fact that YHWH's rule extends everywhere: to the nations, the cosmos, nature, and even Israel." (Howard 1997, p. 207). Ben Ollenburger has shown that "within the Jerusalem cult tradition Zion symbolism was able to function independent of any reference to David. This is evident from the fact . . . that the three Songs of Zion (Ps 46, 48, 76) make no mention of David, or of any earthly king at all." (Ollenburger 1987, p. 60). Ollenburger continues to describe the conclusion of his study of Zion as a symbol: "We have found in the Zion symbolism of the Jerusalem cult tradition a constant, pervasive concern for justice, a consistent and radical criticism of royal attempts to pervert justice, a theologically motivated attempt to ground this justice in the action and character of God." (Ollenburger 1987, p. 154). Ollenburger emphasizes an important component of the Zion tradition of the Jerusalem Cult—namely, the divine freedom to possess all power: "Yahweh reserves to himself the exclusive prerogative as the effective agent in providing security and refuge for his people. That is, he reserves power to himself in the exercise of his dominion." (Ollenburger 1987, p. 84). The divine kingship and the divine power set the limits for the human kingship and power.

[13] A similar tension appears in the work of Jon Berquist, who acknowledges that even if some psalms have emerged from the monarchic period, the assemblage of the book of Psalms is certainly post-exilic and thus it is part of the post-monarchy, colonized province of Yehud that was under the power of the Persian empire (Berquist 2007, pp. 195–202). Berquist writes, "Reading the Psalms needs to be a *postcolonial* reading, so that interpretation would take into account the colonized nature of Yehud. . . . The contradictions of postcolonial life must be considered the proper context for interpreting these psalms and prayers. . . . attention needs to be given to how such images [e.g., monarchy] function in an empire and in a culture that resists empire." (Berquist 2007, pp. 197–98). As the psalms participate in perpetuating empire and they simultaneously resist empire, readings of the psalms require "a *plural* perspective. Each text is only one view into a postcolonial mindset; scholarship must attend to the variety of ideas and expressions that coexist within the colony. Just as there is no one imperial domination, there is no singular form of resistance to it. A postcolonial world is pluralistic, in that the society includes multiple positions and positionalities that exist next to each other. . . . Thus such readings must also be *partial*. . . . this requires an admission that all ideologies in Yehudite literature are incomplete. . . . No ideology in Yehud explained everything, and thus every ideology is one of many minority positions that coexist in a pluralistic society. . . . these ideologies are also partial in the sense that they are partisan. Each reading of each text creates skewed observations that argue for specific aspects of reality. The images and metaphors are used to support social movements of varying kinds. Texts are partial, not neutral." (Berquist 2007, p. 198). He adds, "The acts of identity within the Psalms deploy old, previous, or nostalgic identities that have been found useful, reclaimed, and taken over. In this sense, ethnicity has become a consumer good. It is a commodity to be made, exchanged, and acquired. The empire finds ethnicity a way to keep people in their imperial spaces and within their imperial roles. The acts of identity are also resistances to empire: the invention and celebration of national history, the establishment of local autonomy, and insistence on God as controlling empires of the past. God takes the role of the King, both displacing the human king and making sure that the empire does not have to face war against a king who could lead a colony in revolt." (Berquist 2007, p. 200).

[14] The psalter contains individual prayers of lament and communal prayers of lament. These prayers usually have all or some of the following literary features: a question (why or how long), a poetic description of the suffering that the psalmist is enduring, a plead for God to act and to deliver, a statement of confidence or trust that God will listen, a reminder that God has acted and delivered in the past, and words of praise or thanksgiving. With the exception of Psalms 39 and 88, most of the psalms of lament end with words of praise or thanksgiving. Not all the psalms report a divine response or a change in the reality of the crises that the psalmist was experiencing. Whether this is a biblical realism, as Ellen Davis calls it, or the psalmists themselves have been transformed and their view of the reality and God's activity has been transformed is left open to interpretation (Davis 2001, pp. 14–22).

[15] Psalm 10:16, which also begins with a language of lament and protest, declares, "The LORD is king forever and ever; the nations shall perish from his land". See also Psalm 22:28. Berquist underlines the centrality of God's reign for psalms of lament when he writes, "Laments call back to responsibility after abandonment; thus, God saves the people, forming the community of God's saved and therby granting an identity tied to God, while returning to an older mythic time. The solutions to God's abandonment lie not with the old traditions of Israel's kings but with older notions of God as their King." (Berquist 2007, p. 200).

[16] In addition to the need to change the theological misconceptions and sociopolitical realities that shape people's posture towards prayers of lament, there is a need for accessible resources that would enable worship planners to integrate prayers of lament in church's liturgy (Carvalhaes 2020).

[17] John D. Witvliet notes a resurgence of interest in prayers of lament: "Recent years have witnessed a recovery of prayers of lament, generally thought to be a neglected mode of prayer." (Witvliet 2007, p. 31). There are still long ways to go in integrating the theologies and praxis of the prayers of lament in public worship.

[18] A crucial element of this formational process lies in the recognition of the dialogic nature of psalms of lament. The fact that they contain multiple voices within the same psalm allows for various theological worldviews and sociopolitical experiences to be expressed. See (Mandolfo 2002).

[19] Brueggemann raises a pivotal question: "What difference does it make to have faith that permits and requires this form of prayer? My answer is that it shifts the calculus and *redresses the redistribution of power* between the two parties, so that the petitionary party is taken seriously and the God who is addressed is newly engaged in the crisis in a way that puts God at risk. As the lesser petitionary party (the psalm speaker) is legitimated, so the unmitigated supremacy of the greater party (God) is questioned, and God is made available to the petitioner. The basis for the conclusion that the petitioner is taken seriously and legitimately granted power in the relation is that the speech of the petitioner is heard, valued, and transmitted as serious speech. Cultically, we may assume that such speech is taken seriously by God. Such a speech pattern and social usage keep all power relations under review and capable of redefinition" (Brueggemann 1986, 1995).

[20] Amy Cottrill raises a concern about the language of violence in psalms of lament, when she warns that the language of lament may become "dangerous in their desire to enlist God as a personal champion in order to relieve suffering by imposing suffering." (Cottrill 2008, p. 160). A similar concern is mentioned by Joel Lemon, in relation to imprecatory psalms (LeMon 2011, pp. 93–111). See the discussion (de Claissé-Walford 2011, pp. 77–92).

[21] Incommensurability, for Brueggemann, means "that Goel is for God's self, concerned for God's own life and honor, whereby Israel is aware of the huge, decisive differential between itself and the God whom it praises." (Brueggemann 2005, pp. 581–602).

[22] After a detailed literary analysis of Psalm 145, Nancy L. Declaissé-Walford suggests that the theme of God's reign is at the center of this acrostic psalm. "In Psalm 145, the acrostic form leads the reader to the center of the alephbeth and to the central message of the psalm found in the kaph, lamed, mem lines (vv. 11–13), the kingship of God. In addition, it leads the reader from an individual worshiper's praise and blessing of God as king (vv. 1, 2), through the praise and blessing of the covenant partners (v. 10), and finally to the praise and blessing of all flesh (v. 21)." (Declaissé-Walford 2012, pp. 55–66).

[23] Brueggemann and Bellinger observe, "In the series of participial statements that explicitly name YHWH, the recurring subject is the socially vulnerable and powerless who stand in need of an advocate: prisoners, the blind, the bowed down, strangers, widows, and orphans. This is indeed 'God's preferential option for the vulnerable and needy, the ones who are outsiders and who are kept outsiders in familiar economic arrangements in order to maintain a certain social power and social possibilities." (Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014, p. 607).

[24] A similar connection between praise and social justice for the oppressed (the widow, the orphan, and the migrant) appears in the book of Deuteronomy 10:12–22. The identity of the worshipping community ought to be shaped by the identity of the God whom they worship. Since God loves the oppressed and the marginalized, the worshipping community that praises this God ought to embody the politics of justice, inclusion, and empowerment.

[25] Jerome F. F. Creach offers helpful remarks on the wicked and the righteous in the book of Pslams. "The stance of the righteous before God sets them apart from the wicked. While the righteous praise God (33:1) and pray to God when in trouble (37:39–40), the wicked 'flatter themselves', as Ps 36:3 puts it; 'greedy for gain', the wicked 'curse and renounce the LORD' (10:3). This contrast between the righteous and the wicked is ubiquitous in the Psalms and appears in a variety of expressions. Thus, I am proposing that these two radically different ways of life constitute the basis of the theology of the Psalter, that virtually every theological problem or conviction in the book may be traced to the character of the righteous and to their uncertain future in relation to the wicked." (Creach 2011, pp. 50–51).

26 Jerome F. F. Creach notes, "The term ṣaddîq ('righteous') in the Psalms refers to those who depend on God for protection (34:7), those who plead to God for forgiveness (38:18), and those who worship God in humility (17:15). Such persons are not morally pure; rather, they call on and align themselves with the righteousness of God (5:9). But perhaps most importantly, this word identifies a group of people powerless before an oppressive enemy and therefore seeking God's mercy and justice (143)." (Creach 2011, p. 50).

27 Commentators warn against the abuse of this psalm for the sake of waging a holy war in the name of God. James L. Mays writes, "Used as hymn and Scripture, Psalm 149 also provokes two unreconciled responses. Its call to eschatological war is of course the provocation. The call is heard, and must be heard, with an apprehension, because wars launched in the name of God and attempts to force the coming of the kingdom have brought cruel disaster." (Mays 1994a). This apprehension, asserts Mays, does not mean that the faithful will not confront the abuse of power. Faithfulness will in many cases mean being in conflict with the "purposes of the nations and their rulers". Words of truth to power may function as "powerful weapons against those who cause or allow others to suffer injustice." (Declaissé-Walford et al. 2014, p. 1008). Hossfeld and Zenger go on to note that "not only Israel but also the nations of the earth will be freed from violent and exploitative regimes, and YHWH will exercise his just royal rule on and from Zion." (Hossfeld and Zenger 2011, p. 652).

28 Biblical perspectives on the sea monsters vary. In the creation story in Genesis 1, sea monsters were created by God (Genesis 1:21). In other traditions, such as Psalm 74 and Isaiah 51, these sea creatures represent chaos that threatens God's created order. Psalm 148 "not only deprives the monsters of chaos and the primeval floods of their menace but, on the contrary, exhorts them, through their praise of YHWH, to make a constructive contribution to the world as YHWH's creation." (Hossfeld and Zenger 2011, pp. 637–38).

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Exploring Intergenerational Worship of Interdependence in a Korean American Context

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Abstract: Formed alongside the arrival of the first Korean immigrants in Hawaii in 1903, the Korean American Protestant Church has played a significant role in the social, political, and religious lives of Koreans in the United States. However today, membership is declining and the newer generations represent a smaller part of the movement leading the Korean American Protestant Church to review and reform its current respective practices of ministry in terms of language, teaching, preaching, worship, and theological orientation. This article focuses on the critical issues that the Korean American Protestant Church is facing and examines the current common practice of Korean American worship. Additionally, this article proposes theological and liturgical suggestions that could be utilized to help realize the goal of Korean American intergenerational worship. These suggestions are formed against the background of five notable characteristics of the Trinity—flexibility (innovation), communication (sharing and empathy), interconnection, ubiquity, and holistic artistry—which are essential to achieving intergenerational worship and its design. As a sample liturgy, worship combined with a meal invites children and young adults, born and raised in the United States, to participate in leadership roles with first-generation adults, which directly correlates with the aforementioned characteristics. As such, in essence, liturgies like these will lead worshippers to experience the embodied theology of intergenerational worship, based on a practical and theological concept of interdependence and awareness.

Keywords: independence; intergenerational worship; worship combined with a meal; Korean American Protestant churches; justice; healing; transformation

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1. Introduction

1.1. Understanding Korean Immigration History

There have been three waves of Korean immigration into the United States. The first wave of Korean immigration occurred from 1903 to 1905. During this period, Japan made Korea a protectorate in 1905 and officially colonized Korea in 1910, a situation that lasted until the end of World War II in 1945. Thus, between 1910 and 1945, it was impossible for Koreans to migrate to the United States as Korean citizens. Koreans were also forcibly moved to Japan during World War II because Japan faced a severe labor shortage. Consequently, the first wave of Korean immigrants in the United States was significantly concerned with the oppression of their home country. This concern led to a high number of Korean immigrants to be actively involved in the Korean Independence Movement. Through their participation, the immigrants were able to raise a large sum of money that was sent to Korea for further liberation movement support (Kwon 2003, pp. 22–31).

The second wave of Korean immigration was directly tied to the Korean War. When Japan was defeated in World War II in 1945, Japan lost control of its colonies, including Korea. However, Korea was immediately occupied by the U.S. (1945–1948). Eventually, the original Korea was divided into two countries (North and South Korea) along the 38th parallel. This division took place because of the escalating Cold War tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States. After five years of division, the Korean War then

broke out between North and South Korea, lasting from 1950 to 1953. This war took place because of conflicting societal ideals. Korea has now been divided for more than seventy years (Kwon 2003, pp. 31–37).

As a result of this war, the second wave of Korean immigration to the United States occurred. Initially, the Immigration Act of 1924 banned immigration from Asia. However, after the Korean War, Koreans fulfilling certain requirements were allowed to enter the United States. Thus, between 1953 and 1965, approximately 28,000 Korean military brides (Rhee 2009, p. 253), 13,000 Korean and mixed-race adoptees (Kwon 2003, p. 33) (who were the children of Korean women and U.S servicemen), and six thousand students came to the United States to study abroad.[1] Many of the students remained in the United States (Yoon 1997, p. 230).[2]

The third (and largest) wave of Korean immigration differs in that it did not result from conflict in the homeland. Instead, it resulted due to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which allowed Koreans to freely enter the United States. Thus, today more than 95% of current Korean Americans consist of post-1965 immigrants and their children (Min 2011a, p. 1), due in large part to a consistent welcoming environment for immigrants that allowed family reunification and occupational immigration.[3]

There are many other reasons why Koreans decided to come to the United States after 1965, such as low standard of living, lack of job opportunities, political insecurity, and lack of political freedom. Additional motives that led Koreans to immigrate to the United States included access to better education and better job opportunities by escaping highly competitive education systems and the lack of safe or stable job positions. Furthermore, media images of the United States (which were advertised as a stepping stone for wealth and lifetime success) acted as a motive for Koreans to come to the United States. In sum, we might say that Korean immigrants came to the United States seeking a common goal: a better life (Kwon 2003, pp. 37–41; Min 2011b).

1.2. Korean American Christianity, Generational Conflict, and Purpose of this Article

From a religious perspective, Korean Protestants moved to the United States because of their belief that the Christian God blesses the United States through its material abundance and scientific advancements. Essentially, Korean Protestant immigrants saw the United States as a land of opportunity; indeed, a promised land. Additionally, Protestant Christianity urged Korean Protestant immigrants to feel a religious homogeneity and spiritual unity with Americans, due to the shared religious experience of Christianity. Many Korean American Protestant churches have rented American church facilities for worship and education before constructing their own church buildings. As a result, Korean American Protestant Christianity has often had the most rapid religious growth in the United States (Shin 2002, p. 128). However, today the growth of the Korean American Protestant Church has begun to decline. For example, as of August 2019, 3514 Korean American Protestant churches had been established throughout the United States, but as of October 2021, that number had declined to 2798.[4] This decline was not solely due to intergenerational conflict, but due to several complex reasons. And this decline is based only on first-generation Korean immigrant churches.

Even though its total membership is currently declining, the percentage of Christians among Korean immigrants of Korean Americans in the United States is still higher than the percentage of Christians among Euro-Americans. For instance, by 2010, 71% of Korean immigrants are Christians: Protestant (61%) and Catholic (10%).[5] These statistics show an unprecedented phenomenon. Among Korean immigrants, Korean American Protestant churches play a significant role in creating an extended family, offering religious and social gatherings and providing direct sources of help. These churches also function as places for information about how to live as immigrants and what business types can be successful in the United States (Min 1992, p. 1370).

The rapid growth in Korean American churches can be viewed as a success, but there is a phenomenon to be considered from a critical perspective. The Korean American Protestant

church, as an ethnic–religious community in the United States, is mostly characterized by the fact that it is for the first generation, by the first generation, and of the first generation. In this regard, it can be said that the growth or the success of Korean American Protestant churches has been due to the first generation of Koreans. This is an issue, as members of the 1.5 and 2nd generations have begun to drift apart from their parents in terms of language, religious ideals, and societal perspectives, and little effort has been made to make the church more relevant to members of these generations.

There are issues on both sides of the generations of Korean Americans. For example, issues that 1.5- and 2nd-generation Korean Americans associate with their parents in the church include a male-dominated church management (patriarchy and gender hierarchy), frequent division and conflict, inconsistency in action and belief, exclusion from policymaking, lack of engagement with the wider community, and deprivation of autonomy (Kim 1999; Hong 2021). On the other hand, the first-generation parents have concerns about their children in the church, such as a loss of family solidarity, severance from Korean tradition and culture, a decrease in same-ethnicity marriage, a shortage of bilingual pastors who understand both cultures, and teachers for second-generation education (Kim 2010, pp. 21–49).

Because of these profound and complicated issues, Korean American Protestant churches are constantly challenged to review and reconsider the current pattern and style of the Korean Christian ministry in terms of language, education, content, the type of sermon, the form of worship, and the theological perspectives being conveyed through their actions. To address one of these challenges, this article critically examines the current common form of traditional Korean American Protestant worship and theologies in worship.

There are many types of case studies and suggestions about intergenerational worship among scholars in South Korea and the United States. Overall, they focus on biblical validity and Christian educational effectiveness of intergenerational worship (Yoon 2021, pp. 15–23). Thus, it is difficult to find studies dealing with justice issues or intergenerational liturgies.

I propose research to design communal intergenerational worship that is rooted in God's call for doing justice as a way to resolve conflicts, which could be the bridge between the division of generations. This article suggests the five characteristics of the Triune God's relationship as the core of the theology of intergenerational worship services. These are flexibility (innovation), communication (sharing and empathy), interconnection, ubiquity, and holistic artistry. These characteristics provide a rationale for designing intergenerational worship and will be the core elements in an intergenerational worship service.

This article articulates the idea that worship combined with a meal, such as a church dinner, is an effective Christian practice to embody this theology of intergenerational worship (Schmemann 1973, pp. 14–16). Traditionally, in the Korean church, an important value has been for each age-group to listen to the language, music, and sermons appropriate for their age. Consequently, this tendency has stimulated conflicts and divisions among generations in churches. To overcome this situation, this article suggests that intergenerational worship is possible in which all can joyfully participate by conversely implementing the liturgy of worship combined with a meal.

It is hoped that this research can articulate a theology of intergenerational worship that addresses its nature, purpose, and character appropriate to intergenerational congregations. It is also expected that this research project can propose creative liturgical ideas and strategies for intergenerational worship practices in particular liturgical contexts.

2. Theological Framework of Intergenerational Worship in Korean American Congregational Contexts

2.1. Some Critical Aspects of Common Form of Worship and Sermons within the Traditional Korean American Immigrant Church

The purpose of intergenerational worship is not to grow the church, but to heal relationships among the separate Korean generations. Thus, this article illumines three critical aspects of common worship and sermons within the traditional Korean American

immigrant church that need to be reconsidered. These three critical aspects can be generally observed in the Korean American Protestant congregational contexts, regardless of their denominational differences.

Firstly, shamanistic faith, individual spiritual blessings, and a limited understanding of pneumatology tend to be aimed towards church growth rather than healing and reconciling relational conflicts. Shamanism has had an influence on the Korean American Protestant congregational context and church worship.

As Jung Young Lee points out, most Korean people who seek shamanistic faith almost always have a one-dimensional desire such as physical health, material blessing, blessings for descendants, or Han-resolving (Lee 1997, pp. 54, 73). Additionally, shamanistic and capitalistic elements combine and give birth to a prosperity-centered/materialistic worship of success. This materialistic success worship is one of the fundamental influences on the history of Korean American Protestant churches and congregations. Even to this day, it affects growth, construction of ever-larger facilities, and the mindsets of church members to show both success and blessing as interpreted through shamanism. These values are then passed on to the congregation in worship and the preaching of a prosperity gospel message.

Korean sermons have influenced the faith, theology, and way of thinking of the older and younger Korean American generations (Smith 2008, pp. 98–115). The combination of the doctrine of church growth and the shamanistic blessing orientation and individual spiritual blessings significantly contributes to Korean American Protestant preaching and worship that are oriented toward church growth. This type of worship and preaching tends to bless the "haves," rather than the "have-nots," and the individuals of vested rights, rather than the marginalized (Aycock 2000, p. 32).

This kind of worship and preaching that focuses on the individual spiritual life also justifies and supports the present political and economic structure rather than focusing on community transformation and progression. It also consciously or unconsciously compels the Korean American Protestant congregations to adapt to the current political and economic system. This kind of worship and preaching does not contribute to reconciliation and peace in the church and human society. Such worship and preaching justify the status quo by intentionally or unintentionally joining the oppressive/dominant structure (De La Torre 2004, p. 96). Girim Jung reveals in his empirical research that these aspects shape "1.5 and second generations consider themselves no longer Christians; they leave both the Korean American and Korean immigrant churches to attend other Christian churches" (Jung 2020, pp. 52–77).

Secondly, worship in Korean American Protestant congregational contexts is rooted in the key tenets of Fundamentalism established in the United States in 1904. One of those tenets is that the authority of the Bible is paramount. Essentially, the Bible is inerrant and is to be interpreted through a lens of strict literalism. In worship and preaching, this biblical perspective results in a separation of the Bible and the context of the worshipping community. The content of worship and sermons does not consider the context of the lives of the members, such as Asian hate crimes, the Black Lives Matter movement, solidarity with Native Americans, discrimination against Islamic people, or other discriminatory viewpoints and behaviors. Rather, worship and sermons generally have a dismissive attitude regarding the practical issues related to their context's cultural, socioeconomic, and political dimensions.

Interestingly, pneumatology and the Pentecostal movement in the context of Korean American Protestant churches today contribute to the enlargement of secular materialism. However, the issue becomes serious when this materialistic behavior turns in the direction of the nonhistorical, and anti-social consumption-oriented economic system of capitalism. The Holy Spirit is seen as a means of church growth. Therefore, the Pentecostal movement, blessing-oriented behavior, and church growth are interwoven. However, the younger generations' disappointment in the public sphere with the Church's inaction means that the number of members is still decreasing. One of the main reasons for this issue is the restricted understanding of pneumatology of the Korean American Protestant congrega-

tions. This version of the popular understanding of the Holy Spirit follows the teachings and sermons of the preachers from the Korean American Protestant churches (Anderson 2004, pp. 136–56).

A third contributing factor and perhaps the most crucial characteristic of the Korean American Protestant Church is that the theology of worship pursues "the Prefabricated Colonial Method" (England 1984, p. 206). Liturgical imperialism (Aghahowa 2001, pp. 357–59) produced Christian supremacy.[6] It promoted exclusivity, arrogance, and closed-mindedness. The Western-oriented value system, as a privileged/superior culture, has formed the basis of many Korean American Protestant churches today. Furthermore, Western notions on church structure and physical objects such as church buildings, pulpits, robes, stoles, hymns, musical instruments, liturgies, choirs, the structure of preaching, and Western scientific language, have greatly propagated Western values among Korean American Protestant churches. As a result, Korean American Protestant churches have fostered the cultural imperialism of the West and devalued the Korean and Asian cultures.

Transmitting Korean cultural traditions and heritage through Christian faith is difficult for Korean Protestant immigrants. It is not only because there is a great dissociation between Korean Protestantism and Korean secular culture, but it is also because second-generation Korean American evangelical Protestants have embraced the white American evangelical subculture (Min and Kim 2005, p. 263). This embrace of Western culture without Koreanization shows there is no enduring link between the Christian faith and Korean culture, so Korean American Christian youth, inspired by evangelical zeal, may assert that Christianity is the only true religion and may fail to understand and fail to respect other cultures and religions. This attitude is consistent with the colonial and imperialistic mission: to propagate the Gospel to all non-Christians in an attempt to convert them to Christianity. The result is that the youth are growing up with a dualistic worldview about religion and culture; perhaps a dichotomy that may be characterized as black and white. This worldview can be intolerant toward other cultures/religions and gives a false sense of superiority, making the second-generation Korean Americans colonizers attempting to conquer the world in the name of Jesus Christ (Choi 2015, pp. 46–64).

The Korean American Protestant church is largely ignorant about Korean culture and history, and except for the Korean language and food, still considers learning about Korean culture or other religions as irrelevant. Additionally, many Korean Protestant immigrants, for instance, are more knowledgeable about the history of the Hebrew Scripture and New Testament than knowing about their Korean history and religious heritage. Ultimately, the issue here is whether the Christian faith and Korean culture are to be in a dialectical dichotomy in terms of an either/or choice.

2.2. Theological Framework of Intergenerational Worship: Communal and Interdependence

It is important for Korean American Protestant churches today to review their theology of worship, theologies in worship, and various practices in worship as they move toward God's call for doing justice and healing conflicts. When one interprets the current culture in the United States from a critical perspective, one can say that various forms of conflict and discrimination are deeply woven into the current culture in many ways, such as ideological conflicts, class conflicts, gender conflicts, conflicts of sexual preferences, ethnic conflicts, church division, the destruction of the ecosystem, sexism, classism, ageism, racism, and other tensions. One can also observe that hate and discrimination, exclusion, indifference, and aggressive hostility, as well as segregation, are also the sources of conflict in the culture of contemporary society that one must overcome.

Korean American Protestant churches are continuously experiencing conflicts in their current culture and context as well, such as the patriarchal system resulting from Confucianism, neo-capitalism and the consequent focus on materialism, prosperity-centered shamanism, and aggressive militarism, due to the partition of the Korean peninsula, ethnophobia, and other matters. These churches are also breaking down because communal experiences are not taking place in positive ways between generations.

To overcome various conflicts deeply rooted in the culture that impact their daily lives in many ways, communal intergenerational worship could be one possible place to start reforming and transforming generational conflict. To accomplish this goal, emphasis needs to be placed on the communal worshipping experience between generations in intergenerational worship. By embracing these goals, one can critically think, judge, and act in the quest to reform and transform these conflictual and discriminatory cultures within the limited bounds of a local congregation and in large settings and can lead to the design of desirable intergenerational worship in a Korean American Protestant congregational context.

In the New Testament, the word *koinonia* speaks of fellowship and solidarity (Yoon 2021, pp. 29–32). To be a Christian means to have a relationship with others and to be in solidarity with God's will and vision. The Bible refers to the Church as the body of Christ, and worship is a time and space to remember and experience the sacred communal spirit together as the body of Christ. Acts 2:42–47, Matthew 18:20, and Matthew 18: 15, each characterize Christian identity with the community and describe the characteristics of communal worship.

Worship has a communal character that means that all are interconnected and interdependent in God's love. Love is a good metaphor and one that the Bible best expresses. It repeatedly refers to the fact that worship was the time and place in which all generations experienced and learned how to love their neighbors and the world, like themselves, and how to love God.[7] In this respect, the theology of intergenerational worship, theologies in intergenerational worship, and various practices in worship, such as prayer, congregational songs, preaching, and holy communion, are all interconnected and interdependent so that we can experience and learn how to love each other, our neighbors, and the world like ourselves, and how to love God. Kathy Black sets out a theology of interdependence that helps inform the essence of intergenerational worship:

A theology of interdependence honors the value of all individuals, not by what they do, but by who they are, recognizing that each and every person contributes to the community by being, not by doing. Interdependence acknowledges not only our dependence on God and one another, but also God's dependence on us to be agents of God's healing compassion in the world (Black 1996, p. 42).

3. Communal Christian Identity and Trinitarian Understandings for Intergenerational Worship Design in Korean American Congregational Contexts

As one tries to identify who they are in terms of all the generations as a worshipping community in intergenerational worship, there are five features to consider: *anamnesis, prolepsis, epiclesis, rex vivendi*, and *egeiro*. These characteristics of worshipping communities can be helpful for intergenerational worshipping communities. One characteristic of a worshipping community is *anamnesis* (remembrance). A worshipping community remembers what God did in the past, what God is doing now, and what God will do in the future. Past, present, and future are interconnected and interdependent when younger and old generations worship together. Intergenerational worship honors the spiritual lives of the older generation, respects those who are in the active years of their lives, and intentionally nurtures the children among them who will carry the faith into the future. All ages are connected in God's time and interdependent upon each other in God's love (Stookey 2010, pp. 28, 31, 41).

Another characteristic of intergenerational worship is *prolepsis* (anticipation), that is, a worshipping community that foretastes and experiences the justice, love, peace, and feast of God's realm. This foretaste occurs in the present (Stookey 2010, pp. 31, 98). A third characteristic is *epiclesis* (invocation). Joel 2:28–32, one of the scriptures, speaks of a worshipping community where younger generations see the vision, where older generations dream, and where all generations experience freedom, liberation, and salvation (Stookey 2010, pp. 46, 56, 102, 117, 120). Fourth, *rex vivendi* (so we live) is a feature of intergenerational worship where the acts of worship and preaching are interconnected with

life itself (Martineau et al. 2008, pp. 28–29). Finally, one needs to think of a worshipping community as *egeiro* (to raise), that is, as a community of resurrection and as a worshipping community rising from the dead. Intergenerational worship seeks to transform all forms of discrimination and all dehumanizing powers (Malia 2013, p. 179), especially those that exist between generations. These five features can be essentially intergenerational Christian identities for Korean American Protestant churches that can help reform and transform their generational conflict and beyond.

Aspects of the doctrine of the Trinity can also be helpful in developing a theology of intergenerational worship and as guidelines for the design of these services. The Trinitarian aspects helpful to this discussion include flexibility (innovation), communication (sharing and empathy), interconnection, ubiquity, and holistic artistry (Stookey 2001, pp. 87–91; Segler and Bradley 2006, pp. 91–102).

Flexibility and Innovation: The Triune God is flexible and innovative. God is transformed into Jesus. Jesus is God. The Holy Spirit is God. God was present to Moses in a burning bush. God met the prophet Elijah in a small voice. The Holy Spirit was present like a raging fire, like a dove, and like a wind. Jesus came into a human body, lived with people on earth, and ate and drank with people. The Triune God coexists everywhere and is present in tangible and intangible ways. This points to the characteristics of flexibility and innovation in intergenerational worship that includes a meal.

Communication, Sharing, and Empathy: The three persons of the Trinity are distinct and yet, one in their communion. Communication and intimate sharing are such that the three persons function as one. The members of the Triune God empathize, resonate, and coordinate with each other. The key to this sharing is a compassionate heart and love. The Triune God's compassion and communication are not limited to the three persons within the Trinity. The Triune God also communicates with people in various ways and reveals God's revelation differently and desires our communication with God openly. Being empathetic and sharing with one another are important characteristics of intergenerational worship.

Interconnection: The three persons of the Trinity are organically connected to each other, but the Triune God also connects heaven and earth, men and women, children and seniors, human beings and nature, and individuals and communities. I Corinthians 12 speaks clearly about the interconnection that is essential to the body of Christ:

> As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. (NIV: 1 Cor. 12: pp. 20–25)

Likewise, all ages have different gifts and abilities, but they are all organically connected and interdependent. In the Gospel of John, Jesus himself is the vine and his disciples are branches, namely they are an interconnected community. Because of the differences in generations and the so-called generation gap, there is positive value in emphasizing the interconnections present among the various generations.

Ubiquity: The presence of the Triune God is ubiquitous. Times are interconnected. Place and space are also interconnected. God is omnipresent in all things. God's compassion and love are not limited by any particular time, place, space, or age. Valuing the presence of God in the youngest and oldest within the communities of faith is a theological foundation for intergenerational worship.

Holistic Artistry: God created existence out of nonexistence which is, itself, an awesome work of art. How wonderful is the holistic artistry of the invisible Word becoming a visible body! The fact that the Bible is the subject of works of art from Genesis to Revelation is

related to the fact that the Bible, itself, has an artful dimension and the Triune God, likewise, inspires artistic creation and the reception of artistic expressions. Thus preaching, worship and ministry are sacramental and special interconnected holistic forms of art. The Triune God's holistic artistry uses everything possible as material for revelation.

Here, the word "holistic" is an integrated concept encompassing all the senses. Holistic artistry is about beauty and emotion and feeling more so than informational thoughts/knowledge. Holistic artistry is a catalyst that helps one think deeply and feel intensely, experience wonder, and be inspired. One's senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting come alive in an integrated way when holistic artistry is employed effectively. Intergenerational worship, combined with a meal, needs to be designed with the characteristics of holistic artistry in view. Such a service can have an artful dimension (Duck 2013, pp. 77–96).

4. A Sample Liturgy with Annotations

4.1. Description of the Liturgical Context, Theme, and Uniqueness of a Sample Liturgy

The early Christian love feast, or agape meal, was conjoined to the Eucharistic celebration. The early Eucharistic meal was celebrated in the context of a common meal through to the fourth century. Nowadays we could see churches that practice various services in which the meal is the main part of the service and is accompanied by testimonies, praises, prayer, teaching, and Eucharist. The intergenerational worship retains the universal practice of having the Eucharist when all generations meet, and it tries to bring back the love feast into the Eucharistic celebration, but the sample liturgy does not indicate that all international worship should include a meal.

The liturgical context for intergenerational worship can come to life in any congregation where it is possible to prepare a meal or to have a meal provided.[8] One must refrain from assuming that one can receive God's revelation only in certain places and times. It need not take place on Sunday morning or in the church building. The purpose of intergenerational worship is to remember that God is with us always and everywhere.[9] Worship that includes a meal has no boundaries between the sacred and the secular. Thus, by celebrating the Eucharist or any meal at an ordinary table, all generations can encounter Christ, whether or not they have been baptized.[10] In intergenerational worship with a meal, people of all ages tell stories about Jesus from the past and explain how Jesus is currently present in the ordinary aspects of their lives, not just those marked as sacred or holy (Elkins 2006, pp. 11–16, 103–12).

The theme is intended to do justice and heal conflict. All generations today hope to live in a world of healing, peace, and reconciliation. The Bible calls this whole value "justice" (Allen et al. 2011, p. ix). The biblical concepts of healing, peace, and reconciliation embrace personal relationships with God, in human relations, among nations, and with God's creation. Justice, healing, peace, and reconciliation belong together since the right relationship involves them. That is a reason for the special concern for the poor and the oppressed that is evident in the Bible (Deut. 24:10–22; Matt. 20:1–16; James 2:5).

The heart of the Bible and Christian tradition embodies God's desire and vision. The key in intergenerational worship, combined with a meal, is to design and experience acts of worship and preaching that participate in God's vision, that can be expressed as justice: as we are fed by God, so we feed others. God's vision, not only for the church community, but for the whole of the national community, and, indeed, the world is that all communities and individuals heal each other, reconcile, and live together in love and peace (Allen et al. 2011, pp. ix–xxv).

This justice-oriented direction can be the purpose of intergenerational worship and preaching. If this justice-centered goal is clear, the worshipping community of the local church can design intergenerational worship and preaching in creative ways and methods. The role of all generations is to help construct an entire life lived in harmony with each other. Loving, healing, reconciling, and living with each other represent the core and central

direction of intergenerational preaching and worship. Preaching and worship convey what it means to love one another, heal, and bless each other.

As James F. White articulates in his book *The Sacraments in Protestant Practice and Faith*, the Eucharist, that is, "remembering the death and resurrection of Jesus in the context of a ritual meal, sharing communion or fellowship in the body of Christ as a sign of unity, and saying grace, have been recognized as one of the primary liturgies of Christianity and as the Sacrament of the Church's life" (White 1999, pp. 97–118). The church has practiced the Eucharist using various expressions, such as Holy Communion, the Great Thanksgiving, the Lord's Supper, and the Sacred Meal, for two millennia.

Christians in the early church gathered around a meal. A meal is sacramental in nature. A meal reminds us of remembrance, celebration, fellowship, and thanksgiving. The table, set with food and drink, is filled with the story of God, the story of Jesus, the story of the Holy Spirit, as well as all generations' life stories and faith. All ages' stories are about human suffering, joy, and celebration.

The natural rhythms of life and the crises which each age-group is going through will meet the story of the gospel in intergenerational worship combined with a meal around the table (Evans 2004). Don Saliers posits that there is "an encounter between human story and God's story" (Saliers 1994, pp. 21–38). For instance, although human sufferings (pathos) do not go away, human story meets God' story, which is God's ethos, which brings hope to overcome sufferings through the story of the gospel at the table. There are various seasons of the life cycle as well as during times of personal and community crisis. The expected or unexpected stories about different seasons of life and the different times of crisis of each age-group will encounter God's story around the table.

However, worship often lacks expressions of lament, including stories of suffering and conflict. Human suffering and conflict, individual and collective suffering and conflict today, and the memories of the past, have an important part in worship. The suffering and conflict that took place in history and that take place in life today can be the beginning of worship and preaching with a meal. For example, Jesus began to lament at the Last Supper when Judas betrayed him, and then later Peter denied him. He finally experienced his suffering on the cross. One can connect the Last Supper as a meal of the disciples when a story of betrayal/suffering is shared, stories around family dinner tables, where the joys and struggles of the day are shared, and how it is appropriate for those stories of suffering and conflict to have a formative place in intergenerational worship that is combined with a meal. When stories of suffering and conflict meet the story of the gospel, there will be a better chance that human beings can experience joy, celebration, hope, courage, healing, recovery, reconciliation, unity, and transformation.

As Andrea Bieler notes, "the body is at the heart of the Eucharistic celebration" (Bieler and Schottroff 2007, p. 131). Participants come to the table with bodies of persons who are of multiple ages and generations. They cannot separate themselves, their minds, or their spiritual lives from their bodily existence. In the intergenerational worship combined with a meal, these aspects of life can be all immersed in the narrative of Christ's body, and they can be united in the body of Christ.

4.2. The Full Manuscript of the Liturgy with Annotations That Call Attention to Distinctive Liturgical Characteristics

LOVE FEAST (AGAPE MEAL) AND PRAISE
IN THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION:
LIFE STORIES AND ARTS[11]
(Ecumenical)

(***Flexibility and Holistic Artistry****: All generations are included in the planning process. All ages are invited to cook and bring the meal, set the table, and clean up afterward.*[12] *All ages should naturally gather and welcome each other: children (12 and under), teens (13–18), and adults of various generations. A name tag with a colored dot will guide them to their designated table. As part of the liturgy, the people wash their hands as they come in, and each will bring a candle to the table.*[13] *They will join the praise(singing/music) that is already happening. An ordinary table is set with food and drink. Because all are interconnected and interdependent in God's love and all are made in the image of God. Someone from each generation can be the leader in this liturgy. They can choose one song that would be well-known and comfortable for the children, one for the adults, one for the youth,* etc. *This is an in-person liturgy, but some might meet online, and this setting can be flexible for both in-person and online participation. In this liturgy, the five characteristics of the Triune God will be applied as the core of the theology in intergenerational worship and as basic guidelines for intergenerational worship design: flexibility (innovation), communication (sharing and empathy), interconnection, ubiquity, and holistic artistry. The format can be customized to any cultural and generational context. Possible language translation can be applied.)*

GATHERING OF ALL GENERATIONS

Leader: Welcome! Those who already believe and those who seek faith.

People: We welcome those who live in hope and all who need it!

Leader: We welcome the joyful and strong and the mourning and fragile all!

People: Welcome to those who know Christ and all who want to know Christ!

Leader: We believe that God's grace comes to all generations.

People: We want to tell all who have not been welcomed or rejected elsewhere. We all welcome you with open arms and hearts! (Cheer together!)

OPENING PRAYER:

ALL: **O God, you who desire our healing and transformation, be with us at this table as we seek your will and your vision for ourselves and for one another and for our church and world. Soften the hard places in our hearts as we are fed by your love. Strengthen our resolve to let go of hurt and anger as we feed each other. Open us to the energy of your compassion and hospitality. We count on your grace and mercy. Amen.**

OPENING PRAISE: Songs and Prayers from Taizé[14]

(***Sharing****: Congregational songs need to be easy and simple to sing together. Global music such as Taizé and other international music such as Korean or African traditional song is recommended. I chose Taizé for this liturgy because that music is short, easy to remember, and comfortable to sing with others due to its repetitive nature.)*

Bless the Lord (*Songs & Prayers from Taizé* #9)

Laudate Dominum (Taizé Chant: *Songs & Prayers from Taizé* #35)

Magnificat (*Songs & Prayers from Taizé* #45)

WORD I: Eucharistic Blessing of the Meal and the Meal Community

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*(**Flexibility**: The prayer continues on the basis of the liturgical theme related to God's justice and healing conflict. It would be desirable for persons of all generations to prepare prayers in advance as that will help them develop materials that relate directly to the theme.)*

Children and Teens:

We are grateful because God is always with us.

From the beginning, God made the world and all its creatures.

God made us to live for God's justice and for one another.

Adults:

Jesus came as one of us,

first an infant, then a child,

later a youth, then an adult.

He rejoiced with those who rejoice and wept with those who wept.

To the despairing, he spoke a word of hope.

To the sick, he gave healing.

To the suffering, he was a friend.

Still, people turned away from him.

They betrayed Jesus and nailed him to a cross.

But you lifted him from the grave and restored him to life,

that he might be with us and we with him, alive forevermore!

Therefore, we join our voices

with the whole creation to praise the glory of Your name:

ALL: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might

H**eaven and earth are full of your glory.**

H**osanna in the highest.**

B**lessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

H**osanna in the highest.**

(The Word of Institution for Bread: If the church by its rules or tradition designates certain persons such as ordained people to only preside the administration of the Word of Institution, participants, who belong to that tradition, need to respect that arrangement. If the church is free from such regulations, any generation can read it as a story.)

We gather at this table to remember that on the night before he died, Jesus ate with his friends, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it, he broke it and gave it to them, saying: "Take, eat. This is my body, given for you. Each time you do this, remember me."

PRAISE: "*Eat This Bread/Drink This Cup*" UMH 628

(While signing, the first course of the meal, bread, and salad, is served family-style)[15]

MEAL SERVED ABD EAT

WORD II: ***Sharing and Holistic Artistry**: The congregation will engage this part of the service after eating. The pastor and/or persons of any generation can freely share the meaning of eating and drinking from the Bible. There are great stories of God's justice and healing from conflicted relationships related to eating and drinking in the Bible, such as the story of Manna and Quail, the*

tale of the two fish and five loaves, the wedding at Cana, the Last Supper, eating with tax collectors, and sinners, or eating with Zacchaeus. The pastor and/or people of any generation can share its meanings and life applications with images, music, films, poetry, dance, body language, or any other visual arts. People can share any real-life stories, local and global news, related to the issue of eating and drinking with participants (Byars 2011, pp. 183–307).[16]

PRAISE: *Confitemini Domino* (*Give Glory to the Lord: Songs & Prayers from Taizé* #28)

(While signing, the main course of the meal is served, family-style)

MEAL SERVED ABD EAT

WORD III:

*(**Ubiquity and Sharing**: This part of the service will take place while the congregation eats. All generations share their reflections, feelings, and thoughts/concerns with one another at each table on the particular liturgical theme of the day*[17] *and they may suggest the life applications with each other. They can talk freely while they eat.)*

PRAISE: Ubi Caritas (*Songs & Prayers from Taizé* #49)

(While signing, the last course of the meal, tea and dessert, is served)

CONTINUING WORD

(The Word of Institution for the cup: If the church by its rules or tradition designates ordained people to only preside the administration of the Word of Institution, participants, who belong to that tradition, need to respect that policy. If the church is free from such regulations, any generation can read it as a story.)

That same night, Jesus also took a cup, and after giving thanks, passed it to his friends, saying: "Drink. This cup, poured out for you, is the promise of God. Whenever you drink it, remember me."

A small serving of grape juice can be placed in their cups for the blessing and sharing of the cup.

CELEBRATING THE FAITH

(The group drinks the cup at this point and proclaims the mystery of faith)[18]

Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again!

INTERCESSORY PRAYER WITH PRAISE

*(**Flexibility**: Any prayer types, forms, modes, traditions, and structures with responsive song and/or praise can be used for the intercessory prayers, such as "O, Lord hear our prayer when we call answer us" or "Lord, have mercy." Each generation can pray for a particular context and subject related to God's justice and healing conflict with eyes wide open.)*

GRAND SILENCE *(The leader introduces the purpose of the grand silence that will last at least 30 s)*

PEACE *(Leader introduces the purpose of the passing of the Peace and how to share peace with each other.)*

SERVANT MINISTRY OF CLEAN UP WITH PRAISE

Sing Praises (*Songs & Prayers from Taizé* #48)

*(**Interconnection**: As an integrated part of the liturgy, the meal is the holistic process of the people's work, which literally means liturgy. This liturgy emphasizes the sense of unity that results from communal worship. In this regard, liturgy has a deeper meaning as communal worship created by the community rather than simply a typical formal written ritual.)*

RE-GATHERING PRAISE

Laudate Dominum (*Songs & Prayers from Taizé* #35)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLOSING PRAISE *"The Lord's Prayer by Albert Hay Malotte"*[19]

BENEDICTION

*(**Flexibility and Sharing**: The Benediction can be led by a person from any generation or the ordained pastor, if only ordained people can give the benediction. This depends on each church's regulations. It would probably be advisable to have one member prepare the benediction ahead of the service to ensure that the benediction is appropriate and clear. So, if there is a written benediction with parts to be read/said by different generations, there will be a chance that the people from the varying generations will bless one another.)*

4.3. Evaluation of the Liturgy with Its Benefit and Challenges

Eucharistic agape meal worship services have been practiced as "a primary form of worship by various Christian denominations in the world through the centuries" (Taussig 2009).[20] This liturgy with a meal encourages worship leadership that includes all generations, especially the younger generations. It advocates intergenerational worship in which people of all ages are equally important. This liturgy illuminates that each generation has the same significance and value as members of the body of Christ in God's love and in the worshipping community. All generations are considered to have an active role in planning each particular part of the worship service. It pays attention to inclusive language and vocabulary that all ages can understand to make them feel included, not excluded. Storytelling and narratives related to eating and drinking illustrate appropriate references to all generations, including children and youth so that they can comprehend.

This liturgy includes each generation within its prayer elements. By utilizing a clear intergenerational planning process, the liturgy includes visual images, symbols, and any nonlinguistic elements for each generation to experience God from their own perspective. It equips parents and adults to help their children experience God. This liturgy gives the opportunity to all generations to share their continuing stories of faith and life at each table. It helps one to consider the younger generations worthy leadership in the worshipping community by asking them to be prayer leaders, scripture readers, witnesses to share their stories of faith and life, and as part of a creative worship planning team offering music, drama, dance, worship set up, clean up, and benediction. This intergenerational liturgy continues to ask: (1) Which generations are here? (2) Which generations are not here? (3) How can worship express that all generations are equally important to the planning and leading of worship? (4) Can all ages in worship experience God's presence in various and flexible ways? (5) Who will prepare the meal? (6) Who will pay for the meal? (7) Whose preferred food will be served? and (8) How will the intergenerational worship with a meal be designed taking into consideration real existing tensions/differences between the generations?

As we have noted, many elements of conflict and division exist in the cultures in which one lives. Generational conflicts, class conflicts, gender conflicts, ethnic conflicts, church divisions, and ecosystem destruction are all factors generating conflict today. There are also real divisions among the generations in theology and music styles. Therefore, restoration as a worshipping community and the various acts of worship that seek to engage justice and heal conflicts need to be the essential purpose and mission of intergenerational worship that includes a meal. But without clear leadership roles for the younger generations, younger people might feel intimidated by the older generations and may not speak up or offer their opinions. If that happens, then justice and healing might not be experienced.

As concluded, some components of the sample liturgy will need to be evaluated with its challenges and limitations: music, communal experience, and the sharing of stories. In the sample liturgy, Taizé music might be unfamiliar to Korean American congregants, or the use of the entire Western music in Korean American worship can be criticized from the perspective of Western colonialism and imperialism. Thus, if any person/group can create

lyrics with a familiar tune such as Korean folk songs or foreign and international gospel songs in advance, before the actual intergenerational liturgy, it will be desirable from the perspective of inclusivity. In addition, three questions are needed to choose the appropriate music: (1) Is the music familiar to all generations? (2) Do all generations know this music? (3) Is the music well-known to and comfortable for the children, for the youth, and for the adults?

To experience communal worship that feels equal and fair with the sample intergenerational liturgy, pastors or worship design committee members need to help the community create the liturgy, rather than doing nothing more than following a formal written ritual. The planners need to support the intergenerational groups or have people volunteer to participate in the intergenerational groups, determine who will establish a theme, choose scripture texts/stories, create the artistic expressions of the theme/text(s), prepare questions for conversation at the tables, cook the meal, set the table, and clean up. Or they can construct three intergenerational groups: one that will choose the theme and work with the text and prepare the artistic expressions, one that will prepare the space (table, candles, visual art, etc.), and one that will cook the meal and clean up, or they can ask the various tasks to be done by different generations (one generation group will pick the theme/text/questions for conversation/artistic expressions, one generation will set the space, one will cook, etc.).

The pastors or worship design committee members could assign a specific generation for each part of the worship in advance. Otherwise, they have to interrupt the liturgy in order to decide which generation or which persons will do it. As such, the following questions need to be considered as a sample liturgy is designed: (1) Will one of the adults take control and make the decision? (2) Will it be dependent on someone from the younger generation speaking out and volunteering to do it? and (3) How will these decisions be made and by whom and when?

Sharing stories in each age-group needs to take place. In ordinary circumstances, the sharing will most likely be an adult who knows the Bible fairly well. The pastor and worship planners need to broaden participation. It is doubtful that the younger generations will freely share their opinions without someone asking them questions such as What Bible stories do you know that involve food? Thus, it is possible for youth groups in the church to study the given texts of this service in advance and prepare artistic expressions of these texts to share in the service. They can also do this on the spot, but the liturgy will likely be better if they know in advance and can prepare a specific contribution to the worship and bring it to the worship service.

A major challenge is how conservative Korean American Protestant congregations can respond to issues of social justice in a way that is acceptable to the community. Intergenerational worship that includes a meal can be designed to be more tolerant, inclusive, less dogmatic, less judgmental, and more open-minded by respecting each generation's leadership. Hopefully, intergenerational worship can instill a sense of respect for other cultures, traditions, religions, and religious practices. As Procter-Smith articulates, the liturgy is "a humanly created form in a particular but ever-changing historical context, not made in a vacuum and, therefore, critical questions must be continually asked of the liturgy and its claims to truth" (Procter-Smith 1990, pp. 117–18). This continues to be a concern and challenge.

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Notes

[1] Rhee (2009, p. 253): "The social impact of the U.S. military on Korean life can be seen in that approximately 28,000 Korean women who married U.S. G.I.s between 1950 and 1972 and became the largest group of Koreans to emigrate to the United States."

[2] Yoon (1997, p. 230): "Between 1945 and 1965, about 6000 Korean students came to the United States to seek higher education at colleges and universities. Many of them, however, settled in the United States after finishing their studies and laid the foundation for chain migration from their homeland."

[3] Gebeloff, Robert, Denise Lu and Miriam Jordan. 2021. Inside the Diverse and Growing Asian Population in the U.S. Available online: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/08/21/us/asians-census-us.html (accessed on 1 December 2021).

[4] Available online: http://koreatimeshi.com/?p=10418 (accessed on 1 February 2022); Oh, John J. 2022. From "Silent Exodus" to "Silent Divergence": How Immigration is Changing the Unchanging Immigrant Church. Available online: https://sola.network/article/from-silent-exodus-to-silent-divergence/ (accessed on 1 March 2022); Oh also articulates that "Along with decreasing church attendance, the number of Korean churches has decreased from 4500 in 2017 to only 2800 in 2021 for a precipitous decline."

[5] Munoz, Anabel. 2021. Korean American Churches, in Los Angeles since 1906, continue to shape the community's story. Available online: https://abc7chicago.com/koreantown-la-korean-christians-american-churches-koreans-in-los-angeles/10557685/ (accessed on 1 June 2021): "By 2010, 71% of Korean Americans living in the U.S. identified as Christian, including 61% who are Protestant and 10% who are Catholic, according to Pew." Available online: https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/archives/religious-diversity-in-korea/ (accessed on 7 February 2022): "A 2012 survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found that 61% of Korean–Americans are Protestant Christians. Another 10% are Catholic."

[6] Aghahowa (2001, p. 357): "For African Americans to affirm their own distinctiveness in no way constitutes a denial of others. On the contrary, to deny the uniqueness of Black worship constitutes a kind of liturgical imperialism." Aghahowa defines liturgical imperialism as a paradigm that states that the worship of Black people should be similar to the worship of a prevailing culture. This definition suggests that those of another culture who currently possess greater power and privilege may enforce a type of worship practice that diminishes the diversity of their individual relationship with God. I would expand this definition to encompass any denomination that creates legalistic regulations that limit and exclude the meaningful worship of any other members of the Body of Christ—the Church. Any person or group of persons that claim their worship style is superior to another commits liturgical imperialism.

[7] e.g., in Matthew 14:13–15, 19–21, 19:13–15, 22:35–40; Mark 5:19; John 8:9; 1 John 4:7–11; Acts 16:15, 33–34; and 1 Corinthians 12:13, 13:4–7.

[8] e.g., Dinner Church: https://dinnerchurch.com; St. Lydia: https://stlydias.org/ (accessed on 7 May 2022).

[9] e.g., in Joshua 1:9; Exodus 3:12; Matt. 1:23.

[10] There are still debates and conflicts about open and closed tables in Korean American Protestant churches.

[11] This sample liturgy combines the Eucharist and the Love Feast. According to the Last Supper, the very first Eucharist was instituted in the context of a meal. The first book of Corinthians (11:20–34) indicates that the Eucharist was celebrated at the end of the love feast. In the *Didache* (which illustrates the conditions of the early church around A.D. 100), there is, yet, no sign of separation between the Eucharist and Love Feast. As a whole, the Eucharist and Love Feast were the core of early Christian communities' life and worship. This sample liturgy is intended to experience both so participants can understand the Triune God's stories through the Eucharistic Blessing and the Word of the Institution. Additionally, this liturgy is intended to show how to love each other through an Agape meal as early Christians experienced.

[12] The language of invitation is very appealing, but it may occur that few may accept the invitation to cook, set the table, or choose to clean up, etc. Thus, some will have to sign up in advance to cook, set the table, and clean up unless there is a committee within the church that will do that for this service to take place.

[13] For this liturgy, each participant can find a place to wash their hands. However, there could alternately be a washing station in which people could either pour water on their hands or another's. Each person can bring a candle with them from home, which can be placed on each table in advance. All the candles can be the same or they can be, for example, different colors, different sizes, and different shapes. Someone can hand them a candle, or each participant can choose their candle.

[14] Berthier, Jacques. 1991. *Songs & Prayers from Taizé*. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc.

[15] The first, main, and last courses are not already on the table. The decision needs to be made about who will be doing the serving, because either way, it will be served in the end.

[16] Byars (2011, p. 18): He provides the readers with various biblical implications, imaginations, associations, and connections on Eucharist from both Testaments, even though they "may not immediately appear to have anything to do with the sacraments." It encourages all ages to pay attention to other biblical texts that may have informed or influenced the passage or to be sensitive to other passages that may simply come to mind amidst the process of storytelling, related to eating and drinking in the Bible.

[17] Questions, such as: how many people will take, who would attend, how we invite people, what food should be served, when the meeting time should be, and what the liturgical themes related to doing justice and healing conflict are needed, will be considered as this liturgy is designed. There can be given questions that will guide the conversations in Word III.

[18] In this liturgy, there will be an introduction to the mystery of our faith. Throughout this liturgy, there will be transitions from one section to the next. Instructions by the pastor or anyone in the congregation could provide leadership.

[19] *The Lord's Prayer* was composed by Albert Hay Malotte in 1935. It is a well-known musical setting of the biblical Lord's Prayer, on the basis of the book of Matthew 6:9–13 (KJV). It was also translated into Korean, and it is included in *Korean New Hymns* #635, published by the Hymn Society of Korea in 1962.

[20] His book title, *In the Beginning Was the Meal*, reminds us of the origin and essence of Christian worship.

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Article

Bilingual, Intergenerational Worship and Ministry for Unity

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Abstract: Many Korean American churches have several different worship services on a given Sunday that cater to different age and language groups. The intent is to cater to the different needs of each group, where each group can worship in an age-appropriate setting with the language they are comfortable with. However, it has also had the unintended consequence of creating factions and divisions within the church. It is not uncommon to hear about conflicts and quarrels between Korean Ministry (KM) and English Ministry (EM), from the leadership level down to the congregation members. While there may be several other contributing factors to church conflicts, one key reason is worshipping separately, which creates different spiritual identities within the church. This article proposes that through a creative and engaging bilingual, intergenerational worship and ministry, different generations in Korean American churches, and perhaps other immigrant churches in multilingual and multicultural settings, can worship and learn together as one community with a common spiritual identity. Careful planning of liturgy that is meaningful to different age and language groups is the key. A project conducted at True Light Community Church, a Korean American congregation in the Metro-Denver area, shows that different generations can be brought together in unity as they worship together regularly. In this project, basic qualitative research tools were used to plan a six-month worship and ministry program. The results show that while it is difficult to provide a meaningful, spiritual experience for every single person or generation, bilingual, intergenerational worship and ministry can bring different generations together.

Keywords: bilingual; intergenerational; Korean; Korean American; worship; spiritual identity

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1. Introduction

True Light Community Church (hereafter "TLCC") conducts two worship services each Sunday: one in English, and the other in Korean. Having multiple worship services each Sunday is typical of Korean American churches. The language gap forces different generations of Korean Americans to worship separately from one another. Furthermore, many churches also divide the worship services according to age groups. It is not uncommon to find a decent-sized American church that has several different worship services that cater to different groups. One of the previous churches I served had nine different worship services that catered to different age and language groups, each ministered by its own pastors.

The intent of having multiple services was to serve the different needs of each group. Each group can worship in an age-appropriate setting with the language they are comfortable with. However, it has also had the unintended consequence of creating factions and divisions within the church. This became apparent when the second-generation, English-speaking members grew and became adults. According to Sharon Kim, "as the second generation started coming of age, generational tensions and challenges began to emerge and occupy center stage within immigrant churches" (Kim 2010, pp. 21–22). Because they were never fully integrated into the life of the church, they felt out of place, and soon began to leave Korean American churches.

What happens when these second-generation members leave Korean American churches? Some of them join mainstream American churches. However, soon they feel uncomfortable in those churches. Many of them leave Korean American churches because

they do not feel like they are Korean enough. However, many of them feel too Korean to be worshipping with other ethnic people, especially the whites (ibid., p. 2). Therefore, some settle in ever-increasing Pan-Asian churches. Some are fashioning a faith of their own—"a hybrid second-generation spirituality that incorporates elements of Korean Protestantism and various expressions of American evangelicalism" (ibid., p. 3). Moreover, many of them return to Korean American churches. This is called the "Boomerang Effect," whereby second-generation members who have left Korean American churches return a decade or so later.

When some of these second-generation members do return to Korean American churches, they find themselves marginalized. Because of language and cultural differences, they cannot fully engage in Korean Ministry. However, they also feel uncomfortable participating in English Ministry, because they are much older than many of its members.

And what about the churches that have sent their English-speaking members out on their own? What usually happens in those churches? Shortly after sending out the second generation to form their own independent congregations, the first generation often starts another English-speaking ministry (Cha et al. 2006, p. 151). They have the next cohort of young adults who need care and nurturing.

Is there any sense in repeating this cycle of ministering to the next generation, only to see them leave, and then maybe come back when they grow older? Or is there another way, in which people of different generations can take ownership or stewardship of the church together? I believe there is another way. Rather than splitting into different ministries and worship based on language preferences, what if Korean Americans worshipped and learned together in a bilingual setting?

This project sought to find out if different generations of Korean Americans can indeed stay together through bilingual, multigenerational ministry and worship. True Light Community Church, a Korean American congregation in Aurora, CO, conducted a six-month project, engaging in different bilingual ministries. A group of participants participated in surveys and interviews before and after the project.

This paper will look at the context of Korean American Christianity at large and at True Light Community Church in particular. It will then explore the theological framework for why it is desirable for different generations of Korean Americans to stay together in the church. Then, the paper will present True Light Community Church's six-month project and its implications.

My thesis is this: As Korean American church demographics continue to shift from a first-generation majority to a second-generation majority, a formation of a creative and engaging bilingual, intergenerational worship and ministry will be pivotal in providing a way for different generations in Korean American churches to worship and learn together as one community with a common spiritual identity, without splintering into independent worshipping communities.

2. Context

2.1. Korean American Christianity

A significantly high percentage of Korean Americans are Christians. While only 29% of the South Korean population identify themselves as Christian (11% Catholic and 18% Protestant), 71% of Korean Americans consider themselves Christian, with 10% being Catholic and 61% Protestant (Connor 2014). This number may not hold true anymore. Unfortunately, there is a lack of recent data concerning Korean American demographics. However, anecdotally, one can observe that many Korean Americans are affiliated with a church in some form.

So why are Korean Americans overwhelmingly Christian? There are a number of factors that have contributed to the high percentage of Korean Americans identifying themselves as Christian. The church was one place where Korean immigrants could speak Korean freely. For Korean Americans, the church has become the most stable and coherent institution available to them. It has become a reception center for Korean immigrants. It

was also a place where Korean culture and heritage were maintained. It was a place of social support and services. Pastors often served the dual role of spiritual leader and social worker. The church was the place to go if one needed help (Rah 2009, p. 174).

Perhaps one of the most significant reasons why a large number of Korean Americans are Christians is that the church was a place that provided a social status and leadership for Korean immigrant adults. Many Korean immigrants are highly educated. However, when they immigrated to the United States, they experienced downward mobility in terms of their social status. One place where Koreans, men in particular, could regain their social status was the church.

Against this backdrop, one can easily see the generational gap and conflict within Korean American churches. The two generations embrace differing paradigms on church leadership. For the immigrant generation influenced by Confucianism, and having the church as the only place to regain their social status, the line of authority is top-down, drawn along age and gender lines. For the second generation, influenced by Western ideals of egalitarianism, an emphasis on hierarchical authority is more consistent with Korean cultural values than Christian values (Kim 2010, p. 30).

The language gap between the generations also plays a big role in Korean American churches. The generational gap is often described as EM (English Ministry) vs. KM (Korean Ministry). The issue of language seems to encompass all other gaps and conflicts. Such a language gap exists in many immigrant communities, but it seems to affect Korean Americans more than others.

The most likely reason is that Koreans consider themselves as “one people,” with “one language.” In many other countries, there are lots of different people groups who speak various languages. For them, dealing with another language comes more naturally than Koreans. For example, Chinese Americans would have to deal with Mandarin, Cantonese, English, and other dialects when Chinese American communities from different regions gather together. For Korean Americans, it is always Korean and English. When there is a dichotomy in a given issue, I believe it tends to be more pronounced than when there are multiple sides.

2.2. True Light Community Church

True Light Community Church (TLCC hereafter) is a predominantly Korean American church in Aurora, CO, with 40 years of history. The church adopted its new name in 2016, with the hopes of shining Christ’s light to the community. The church’s previous name was Korean Central Presbyterian Church. It was once the largest Korean church in the Metro-Denver area. Just like many other Korean churches, it had different worship services for different ages and different languages.

Unfortunately, the church was not united and began to experience various issues. Different conflicts led to fights and splits. The church’s finances were in a dire state. The Presbytery of Denver, to which TLCC belonged, considered closing down the church.

However, things began to turn around in 2015, when TLCC adopted a new vision to be a united body of faith. The Vision 2020 of TLCC was to be “a community of faith dedicated to building the body of Christ.” TLCC seeks to be a community of faith, which includes people of all ages and generations, that builds up the body of Christ, which means we desire to be one, unified family of God.

Even though TLCC is a small congregation, it is very diverse. There are English speaking and Korean speaking, as well as bilingual groups. The youngest member is 2 years old, and the oldest is 94. Some have just become Christians, while others have been Christians all their lives. The challenge is how to build a unified community amid various diversities.

3. Theological and Theoretical Framework

A key theological framework for the unity of Korean American churches is that the church is the unified body of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 2, Paul speaks about

the divisions between the Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Paul reminds the church that Christ has broken down the barrier between the two and has created one new humanity from the two. "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:19–20).

Cha, Kim, and Lee make an interesting observation about the Ephesians passage. They say that Paul does not call people to work out their differences to achieve Christian unity. In fact, Christian unity is not the goal, but a reality Christians need to live into. Paul reminds the church in Ephesus that Christ has already achieved their unity and has broken down the walls of hostility when he died on the cross. Because of what Christ has done, Christians need to appropriate this new reality and enjoy a life of reconciliation and unity (Cha et al. 2006, p. 149). Even though Christ has already achieved unity amongst the believers, Christians have not yet lived into that reality completely. It requires continued efforts, in working out one's salvation, to live into this reality.

One area this reality of unity needs to be lived out is between the generations. The Bible speaks a lot about generations and families living out spiritual life together. In Acts, the households of Lydia, Cornelius, and a Philippian jailer were all baptized together (Acts Chapters 10, 16). In Deuteronomy, Moses commands Israel to teach the next generation that the "Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4ff). A failure of passing down faith and spirituality from one generation to the next caused lots of turmoil in the book of Judges.

Unfortunately, many Korean American churches face similar struggles to the Israelites in the book of Judges. Since parents and children are worshipping separately, mainly due to language differences, parents often fail to model or teach their children about the Lord or what the Lord has done for them. The language barrier has been an excuse for its failure to pass down the faith. Families would usually split up into different worship services. Each group worships separately, hears different Bible lessons or sermons, and goes home without knowing what the others have heard or learned.

Too many Korean Americans think this is the best way to provide a spiritual experience for the second generation. Because of language and cultural gaps, they believe Korean-speaking and English-speaking groups cannot worship or do any sort of ministry together consistently. They assume that the language gap is too big to overcome, so they do not even attempt to bridge the gap.

But the power of the Holy Spirit can break down the language barrier and bring the two groups in Korean American churches together. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit empowered the Apostles to speak in tongues to reverse the effects of Babel. In John 1, the Word became incarnate. This is the ultimate translation of the wholly Other. Is this not good news, that Jesus has narrowed the gap between us and God? With dedication and the help of the Holy Spirit, language gaps in Korean American churches can be bridged.

In order for the gap to be bridged, Korean Americans must feel the need for it. One of the reasons for bridging the gap is that it provides stability in Korean American churches. Simply, a church is more stable when there are multiple generations present. Practically, it provides financial stability as well as theological stability (Kim 2010, p. 36). The first generation is known for their generous and sacrificial giving, which is somewhat lacking in the second generation. Furthermore, since the second generation tends to be less connected with denominations and church traditions, there is a danger of not learning from the richness of collective experiences and wisdom of those who have gone before us.

Another reason for bridging the gap is that it is necessary for the survival of Korean American churches. Korean Americans experience liminality and marginality in society. The L.A. Riots, or "Sa-I-Gu.", is an example of such marginalization. Coupled with the fact that many churches are experiencing a diminishing and aging membership, the faith and spirituality must be passed down to the next generation.

One of the things that need to be developed to bridge the gap is a Korean American Worship model. Russell Yee argues that worship services need to be contextualized (Yee

2009, p. 139). However, despite the need for the contextualization of worship services and a large number of Korean or Asian American Christians, one does not find a Korean American or Asian American worship. By and large, worship in Asian American settings is a slight variation of majority-white culture, theology, and worship. A new Korean American Worship model would be invaluable to Korean American churches. If Korean American culture develops and matures, and a distinctive Korean American Worship model emerges, taking the best practices of both Korean and American Christianity and spirituality, different generations could own up to it and claim it as theirs.

One of the ideas that might be helpful to think about Korean American churches is the idea of "confluence." Merriam-Webster defines "confluence" as the "flowing together of two or more streams." Within Korean American churches, there are many "rivers." There are first and second generations; Korean and English speaking groups; the children, youth, college, young adult, and senior adult groups; and many more. The vision of confluence is for these groups to flow together in one unified direction. There will be some convergence, and some new hybrid identity might form. Each stream will inform the other. Moreover, in the end, it will contribute to the larger flow, and that larger combined stream is that much stronger. This is where Korean American churches should be headed.

Korean American churches are still trying to discover their own identity. Working through the generational, cultural, and language gaps that exist between first-generation Korean Americans and subsequent generations, Korean American churches are figuring out what it means to be a household of God in their context. To have a common spiritual identity between the generations, people have to spend time together in worship and ministry. Creative worship and ministry that not only transcends the language gaps but is distinctively Korean American will be helpful. While the task is difficult, from the liminal place where Korean American churches currently are, such worship and ministry can be the result; and through it, Korean Americans of all generations can experience true *communitas*.

4. Six-Month Project

This project sought to find out if different generations of Korean American Christians can develop common spiritual identity through creative and engaging bilingual, intergenerational worship and ministry. When measuring one common spiritual identity, the following three criteria were used: (1) bilingual, intergenerational worship and ministry were found to be meaningful in participants' spiritual journeys, meaning that their relationships with God had grown stronger; (2) participants formed intergenerational relationships; and (3) a sense of ownership or stewardship of the church was created.

Bilingual, intergenerational ministries consisted of monthly bilingual worship services (see Appendix A for a sample liturgy), a family retreat, a fellowship dinner, and a mission fundraiser bazaar. The program lasted six months from July 2019 to December 2019. During these six months, the participants experienced six, monthly bilingual intergenerational worship services, a three-day family retreat, a Thanksgiving fellowship dinner, and a mission bazaar fundraiser.

While all members of TLCC participated in the program, 10 individuals, around 20% of church members, volunteered to participate in the research portion of the program. This group represented a good range of demographics of TLCC, from the third generation to internationals. The age of the group ranged from 18 to 60 years old. There were four females and six males. However, most importantly, they represented a good range of immigration experiences and generations. These participants participated in surveys and interviews both before and after the program. Participants were asked to answer the interview questions solely based on their experience of these programs. All 10 participants were able to attend all programs.

Out of the 10 participants, six of them had been attending TLCC for more than 15 years, which means they had gone through the struggles and splits the church had experienced. The other four had been attending TLCC for less than three years when the six-month program began. Whether they had been at the church for 15 plus years or less than three

years, they shared a common view that, before this study, the church was not all that united. When asked to rate between 1 and 10 the close connectedness of the two generations, with 10 being the most closely connected, all but one of them gave a rating between 1 and 3. One person gave a 5, but he stated that the church is always split across the generational line.

These participants also did not have any meaningful intergenerational relationships. If they did have any, it was either their parents or parents of their close friends. No one had any meaningful relationships across the generational lines, apart from their family members or family members of their friends.

Eight of the participants were very invested in the church, however. They felt like this was their church and they wanted to see it succeed. They felt that it was up to them to lead the church in the right direction. Two who did not feel that way were two college students. They had grown up in the church, but only because this was the church their parents attended. Had they had their choice, they did not know whether they would have attended this church.

4.1. Improved Relationships

After going through six months of intentional bilingual, intergenerational worship and ministry together, everyone agree that the intergenerational relationship had become better. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, the range was 6.5 to 8, whereas they were mostly between 1 and 3 before the program. The majority agreed that the bilingual, intergenerational worship service was most effective in bringing the two generations together. The family retreat and Thanksgiving fellowship dinner were next in the ranking. Finally, the mission fundraising bazaar was the least effective. The worship was the most effective because it was on a regular basis.

On the question about building a meaningful relationship, half of the participants said that they had built a new relationship, while the other half did not. Those who did not form any new relationship stated, however, that they at least got to know who the other people were, and sometimes even knew their names. Furthermore, in terms of a sense of ownership and stewardship, the whole series of programs conducted for six months did not make any impact. These participants were already serving the church in various capacities. Therefore, this project did not have any positive or negative impact.

There was a constant theme that emerged as one element that helped to improve the unity of the church across the generations. That one thing was time spent together physically. One participant mentioned that it was not that the worship was bilingual, but the fact that people were in the same room at the same time that brought them together. Physical contact and being in the same physical space made a huge impact. Eight out of ten said that the passing of the peace, when people got up and greeted each other, made a big impact. It was the physical act of moving, shaking hands, and giving hugs that made them feel closer to each other. Furthermore, being in the same physical space forced one to at least think about and observe the other generations.

4.2. Difficult to Provide a Meaningful Spiritual Experience

While these bilingual, intergenerational ministries helped to bring two generations together, it was difficult to provide a meaningful spiritual experience. Using two languages made it difficult for people to concentrate. This was especially true of the bilingual group. They felt that they were hearing everything twice. One bilingual participant mentioned that switching back and forth between Korean and English is mentally draining. Moreover, for those who were not bilingual, they tuned out when the other language was used.

For some, it was really difficult to get into praise. One participant mentioned that when she was about to get into a song, the language switched, and it became difficult to concentrate and connect with God. For the praise leader, it was a constant struggle trying to select songs that both generations could appreciate, and also lead them in two languages.

4.3. Different Generations, Different Perspectives

When discussing the bilingual, intergenerational ministry, it was interesting to note that the two generations gave two very different perspectives, particularly concerning the worship service. Simply put, the first generation enjoyed it more than the second generation, even though both thought that this was needed for the church to be united. It had a lot to do with how much each person was serving, and how much they perceived that they were sacrificing in order to make this bilingual service work.

For the first generation, bilingual, intergenerational worship service was great. They mentioned that the larger group of people worshipping together added to the mood of the worship service. It was also a chance to see their children and grandchildren. One older participant stated that he really enjoyed the bilingual services because he was able to worship with his grandchildren. For another participant, this was an opportunity to broaden her perspectives. She had never experienced bilingual worship before, but for her it was refreshing to see different attempts to bridge the cultural gap that exists between the generations.

However, it was quite a different story for many of the second generation. Most of them felt that, even though the worship was bilingual, it was still mostly in Korean. For example, the sermon was in Korean, with the English version played through a transmitter. While the transmitter was helpful, the second generation did not find it as effective compared to hearing a live person. They also felt that they were making more sacrifices and serving more than the first generation, since they performed various tasks during bilingual worship services, such as setting up and running the multimedia.

The first generation also felt that they were making sacrifices. For them, hearing English is very stressful. The church is one place outside of the family where they can find relief once a week. Having to listen to English, even at church, was hard, but they were dealing with it because they felt it was important. They also met together more often than the second generation to pray for the church. They were willing to do their part, even in bilingual services, if they were capable of performing those tasks.

5. Implications

This project has shown that different generations within Korean American churches can indeed worship and learn together, with a common spiritual identity, without splintering into different worshipping communities, through creative and engaging bilingual, intergenerational ministry. There will still be disagreements and difficulties, but the goal is not uniformity; it is living into the reality of Christian unity amid diversity. Through bilingual, intergenerational ministry, Korean American churches can live into that reality more.

5.1. Need for Physical Interaction

One of the key findings from this project is that people of both generations appreciated the time spent together. It may have been uncomfortable in the beginning, but as both generations spent more time together, they became closer to each other. There is something about being together in the same room and interacting with each other physically.

For Korean American churches to bridge the gap between the generations, it is important, therefore, to encourage people to spend time with one another. Worshipping together on regular basis, whether it is once a month or once every other month, is important. A celebration of various holidays and anniversaries can be a useful tool to not only eat together but to serve the community; to do what families do. If the church is a family of God, then think about what families do together. Families go on trips together. They eat out together. They play games together. They create traditions together. The point is to get people together and interact with one another. Do something interesting with as many people as possible, keeping in mind that some accommodations will need to be made to cater to certain people.

5.2. Need for Korean American Worship

For first- and second-generation Korean Americans to worship together in a bilingual, intergenerational setting, a new Korean American worship and spirituality must be formed. While both generations appreciated the presence of each other in the worship service, both had difficulty concentrating and focusing on the worship, because it was conducted in a bilingual form. For Korean American churches to meet the needs of both Korean-speaking and English-speaking congregations, they must develop a new liturgy that will speak to the spiritual needs of both. This new liturgy must provide an experience that transcends language issues.

This is a perfect example of the potential of people in liminal space. What will free Korean Americans, so that they can think radically about what their spiritual needs are? Because once this is figured out, a genuine communion between the generations is possible (Lee 2010).

5.3. Minimize the Language

What participants enjoyed the most was the non-verbal portion of the program. It involved physical movements and touch. The "passing of the peace" portion of the worship service required only a few words: "Peace of Christ be with you." This is something that both groups can learn quickly in each other's language, especially when done consistently. More than words, it required physical movements and touch. People can communicate through non-verbal means. Even during the retreat and fellowship dinner, it was spending time and engaging in activities together, such as games, that brought the two generations together. These are things both generations can enjoy without using words. These physical communications are universal and intergenerational.

One of the solutions to the language issues might be to minimize the use of language. One example might be preaching through other means of communication, and not using so many words. Videos, art, music, etc., can replace or supplement sermons. Pedagogically, non-verbal communication can be just as effective as verbal communication. Spiritual practices like *Lectio Divina* can be effective in minimizing one person speaking so much in one language.

Finally, more emphasis could be placed on visible means of grace. The sacraments are where the Word becomes alive. Throughout church history, the church renewal movements were based upon the renewal of the sacraments (Huh 2006, p. 15). Oftentimes, the sacraments are an afterthought in Korean churches. However, if the true meaning of the sacraments can be renewed, the church can gain a sense of unity through this visible means of grace.

Of course, there are several things to be mindful of when replacing words with non-verbal methods, especially if they involve actions. For one, one needs to be mindful of the type of action. There are people with a limited range of movements, whether that is through age or other physical limitations. Some people may be sensitive about touching and hugging. However, considering these things, it would be worthwhile for a congregation with multiple language preferences to explore ways to use non-verbal means of communication to exposit upon the Word of God. After all, that is what our Lord Jesus Christ has done: the Word turned into action. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

5.4. Sacrifice in Gratitude

Both generations felt like they were making lots of sacrifices to make these bilingual, intergenerational ministries work. This is true. There was bitterness as well, with each side thinking that they are making more sacrifices than the other. Both generations need to recognize the importance of the other, the sacrifices that the other side is making, and also empathize with others. They also need to be thankful that Jesus Christ made the ultimate sacrifice to bring about reconciliation between us and God, and serve with gratitude.

6. Conclusions

Can different generations within Korean American churches flow together? The answer is yes. The examples are innumerable. There are many examples of Korean American churches fracturing along the generational lines. The silent exodus and language issues affect Korean American churches more than any other immigrant group. However, creative and engaging ways to spend time together in ministry can bring unity to Korean American churches.

For its part, TLCC continues to worship bilingually at least once a month. Small adjustments are made in the liturgy. For example, it no longer relies on the transmitter for an English sermon, but a preacher preaches for 10–15 min in English and then in Korean. Korean-speaking members are encouraged to pray for English-speaking members to hear God's voice during the English sermon, and vice versa. While it may not always be easy, and sometimes downright uncomfortable, they are doing this for the other group. Members are committed to each other. They have learned to coexist with one another.

Spend time together. Use physical movements. Non-verbal communication can be effective. Be considerate towards others. Most importantly, look to Jesus, the Word incarnate, who made his dwelling among us. Then, first, second, and subsequent generations of Korean American Christians can learn to coexist as a family of God.

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Appendix A

Bilingual Worship Liturgy

Welcome and Announcement (Korean and then English, or vice versa)
Call to Worship (Korean and then English, or vice versa)
Invocation Prayer (Korean and then English, or vice versa)
Responsive Reading (Usually from Psalms—alternating Korean and English verse by verse)
Confession of Faith—The Apostles' Creed (Simultaneously bilingual)
Praise (Simultaneously bilingual)
Prayer of Confession (Simultaneously bilingual)
Declaration of Pardon (Korean and then English, or vice versa)
Children's Sermon (English)
Passing of Peace (Physical movements and touch, but people can learn to say "Peace" or "Pyeonghwa" to one another easily. Children used to be dismissed to classes but now stay in the worship until the end. They are provided a worship bag, which contains lessons and activities for that week.)
Prayers of People (Language preference of the person leading it)
Scripture Reading and Sermon (Used to be live in Korean, English recorded and then broadcast via transmitter with earphones. Now in English first for 10–15 min, and then in Korean. Korean-speaking members are asked to pray for the English-speaking members, while the sermon is delivered in English, and vice versa.)
Holy Communion (some elements in Korean and others in English. Every month, the languages are switched. For example, if the words of institution for the bread portion are in Korean and the cup in English, they will be switched the following month. Also, different members help distribute the elements. Servers come from Korean speaking or English speaking or mixed. Sometimes it is intergenerational, and sometimes it will be students. Various groups have opportunities to participate throughout the year. Finally, the elements are consumed together, after the last person has received them, to signify unity.)
Offering and Doxology (Simultaneously bilingual)
Hymn (Simultaneously bilingual)

Benediction (Old Testament Benediction words in English, New Testament Benediction words in Korean)

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Article

Finding Rhythm for Multicultural Worship: Heartful Indwelling with God and God's Creation

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Abstract: Justice seeking is an indispensable component of multicultural worship. How can multicultural worship help the faith community worship God heartfully, indwelling with God, one another, and creation? In this article, the Tai Chi rhythm of "loosen-empty-push" will be employed as both a metaphoric and embodied way of integration and mutual indwelling in heartful worship. For example, in the rhythm of multicultural worship, we humbly recognize our brokenness and vulnerability while being receptive to God's initiative love and grace (loosen). We continue to learn how to let go and surrender ourselves to the works of the Holy Spirit, also becoming part of a multicultural and mutually embracing body of Christ, whose entire life embodied God's reconciling and self-giving love (empty). One of the characteristics of multicultural worship is solidarity with others including God's creation through worshipers' daily compassionate, justice-seeking lives (push).

Keywords: multicultural worship; contemplation; culturally conscious; Tai Chi rhythm of "loosen-empty-push"; reconciling with creation; compassionate and justice seeking; reign of God

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1. Introduction

"Are Egyptians bad people?"

A long time ago, my then 5-year-old son asked me this from the back seat of the car. The previous Sunday, he had heard the story of the Exodus and the Red Sea in Sunday School. I remember being surprised that the Bible stories we often hear at church can stereotype people of different races or nationalities from an early age. After a while, my curious son asked, "Is God a man?"

It is not surprising that Stephen G. Ray, Jr. noticed that church children unconsciously learn, accept, and absorb privilege and discrimination as natural. According to Ray, "The scriptural imagination of most Christians past a certain age is shaped and formed by character and historical depictions that are almost exclusively white" (United Church of Christ 2016). Along with the stained glass, Sunday School materials, and many other iconographies, "the Christian faith has long been an arch defender of the privileges and prerogatives white people" (Ibid.). No wonder established music, the loaded language of ritual, and non-verbal actions in worship have also intensified the White Eurocentric norm.

My son is now 23 years old. Time has passed, and awareness of multicultural worship has been growing in faith communities, although efforts to combat systematic injustice often unconsciously echo and reinforce what they oppose. A rising question is how the faith community worships God heartfully, concurrently pursuing a "heaven on earth" community, where people indwell with a loving, reconciling, and justice-seeking God, one another, and creation.

This article is written based on my pastoral vision and experiences regarding multicultural worship. It also reflects my spiritual journey as a pastor serving in a multicultural context, a scholar-practitioner, and an immigrant living "in-between," "in-both," and "in-beyond" two different societies.[1] I will invite readers to participate in this journey towards multicultural worship and ministry, intentionally calling them "we." Calling them "we" is an invitation to locate themselves as members of a multicultural community while reading

this article, not necessarily to agree with my views or to assimilate into the multicultural community I am proposing.

As part of multicultural worship, the contemplative dimension along with the Tai Chi rhythm will be integrated. This vital component will help worshipers find a spiritual fountain in worship while abiding in God and offering (and sharing) diverse gifts from one another in worship and beyond. During worship, we are invited to breathe in ("Let God") and out ("Let Go") slowly, noticing that we are a uniquely and beautifully crafted embodiment of God's breath.

The Tai Chi rhythm of "loosen-empty-push," a moving contemplation and a discipline of living in the moment, leads us to enter God's presence in and through worship. This Tai Chi rhythm will also serve as outline and flow of Section 3 (Practice of Multicultural Worship) of this article. The structure of this article is as follows:

Section 2: Theology of Multicultural Worship

The terms "multicultural" and "intercultural" have been defined in various ways without reaching scholarly consensus. While using the term "multicultural," which is an umbrella term of this Special Issue, titled *Multicultural Worship: Theory and Practice*, I use it as synonymous with "intercultural," defined by the United Church of Canada (UCC hereafter). The UCC's "intercultural" worship and ministry is the most comprehensive, relevant, and practical alternative that I have found. However, since many local churches and denominations still use the word "multicultural," especially in the USA, I will continue to use "multicultural," focusing more on how to apply the UCC's "intercultural" approach to multicultural local churches, and leaving the definition of academic terminology to the scholars. According to the UCC, "multicultural" worship and ministry in the UCC's definition celebrate cultural differences but do not address (or superficially touch) justice issues, unlike "intercultural" worship and ministry that invite people to see power differentials in the church and beyond. Replacing the UCC's "intercultural" with "multicultural" in this article, the UCC's intercultural vision will significantly supplement and enrich current multicultural approaches to worship and ministry.

Section 3: Practice of Multicultural Worship

Along with *Wuji* stance, a standing posture for preparing for Tai Chi movements, the Tai Chi rhythm and flow provide both metaphoric and embodied ways of understanding and experiencing multicultural worship, and mutual indwelling with God in and through heartful worship. For example, following the gentle flow of worship mindfully, we learn who we are and whose we are before God. When we humbly recognize our brokenness and vulnerability, while being receptive to God's initiative love and grace (loosen and empty in the Tai Chi rhythm), we can also see our strong desire for control, privilege, and power in the church. This recognition among worshipers will lead to taking bold steps towards justice-seeking efforts and transformation. As we continue to learn how to let go and surrender ourselves to the works of the Holy Spirit, we become part of a mutually embracing body of Christ, whose entire life embodied God's reconciling and self-giving love. One of the characteristics of multicultural worship is solidarity with others, including God's creation through worshipers' daily compassionate, justice-seeking lives (push, in the Tai Chi rhythm).

Section 4: Case Study

In this section, I will present an example of virtual multicultural worship in the context of the United Methodist Church of Martha's Vineyard, where I serve as a pastor. The Tai Chi rhythm allows us to experience gentle but powerful dynamics in worship and "worship after worship," which means our daily lives on holy grounds. The evaluation of the liturgy will address the strengths and challenges of the sample case of multicultural worship.

2. Theology of Multicultural Worship

The terms "intercultural" and "multicultural" have different meanings, but they are sometimes interchangeably used. For example, Eunjoo Mary Kim, professor of homiletics

and liturgics at the Iliff School of Theology, prefers "multiculturalism" to "interculturalism" (Kim 2017). Kim's why is revealed in her quote of the British political theorist Bhikhu Parekh, who sees the intercultural approaches as "biased towards the majority" and the multicultural approaches as having a "pro-minority provenance and orientation" (Ibid.). Kim's vision and preference for multiculturalism depict "a movement that aims to change the multicultural society into a better world where people who differ in race, ethnicity, culture, and religion can live peacefully with equally respected recognition of their diverse cultural identities" (Ibid., 5)

Kim's vision is not much different from the approach that the United Church of Canada calls "intercultural." The UCC encourages churches to become "intercultural," in which "mutually reciprocal relationships among and between cultures" are deeply implanted and grown. In this vision of wholeness in diversity, the UCC strives to become a joyful, hospitable, justice-seeking, and life-giving church that also embraces painful, vulnerable, and uncomfortable challenges in God's grace-filled presence (see UCC 2011a, 2012).

The UCC warns that a multicultural approach—which it describes as honoring differing cultures living side by side—often remains in tolerating and celebrating outward and superficial expressions of culture such as food, dress, music, and dance without addressing "power differentials" (UCC 2011c). Another approach, which the UCC believes is least desirable, is the "cross-cultural" approach. In cross-cultural worship and ministry, "one culture is deemed superior or inferior to another" and individual or mutual transformation rarely happens (Ibid.). In cross-cultural environments, many people still believe they value reciprocity while implicitly or explicitly saying, "This is our tradition you need to learn." In America, this approach is easily recognized by the term "melting pot," in which the hegemonic majority culture "welcomes" people of diverse peoples to "melt" into an idealized homogenous whole. "We worship XYZ in this church (or country)." Or, "You will be assimilated into this sooner or later."[2] Warning against a superficial path without seeking justice, the United Church of Canada views it as "multicultural" or "cross-cultural" when the church celebrates cultural differences without addressing "racial and cultural power imbalances."[3]

The UCC's vision statement for becoming an "intercultural church" is inspiring and applicable to congregations that seek multicultural/intercultural transformation:

... We strive to become an intercultural church to deepen our understandings and experiences of God and of one another. Within the United Church, a variety of cultural expressions of faith are affirmed and welcomed. Part of the vision of the intercultural church is to create a space where we can sustain our own cultural identities while also affirming those of one another.

Using the term "multicultural" as synonymous with "intercultural," as defined by the UCC, I have found that it is helpful to replace the term "intercultural" used by the UCC with "multicultural" to see how the UCC's perspective supplements and enriches multicultural worship and ministry in the USA, where the term "multicultural" is widely used. Replacing the UCC's term "intercultural" with "multicultural" would result in the following summaries:

(1) Becoming a multicultural church means to grow together not only by embracing differences but also by engaging in difficult conversations and healthy critiques of each other's viewpoints, of opening up to listening, learning, and becoming vulnerable. "Justice seeking" addresses racism, White privilege, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, environmental injustice, and much more with its intersectional convergence. The multicultural church affirms and encourages diverse cultural identities and leadership, avoiding pressure to assimilate into the dominant culture. Participating in God's multicultural mission, the church will become a joyful, accepting, and life-giving body of Christ (UCC 2012, 2011a, 2016).

(2) The Bible provides foundations for becoming a multicultural church. A story in the New Testament captures the characteristics of the multicultural church at a glance: "The Syro-Phoenician woman challenged Jesus's own assumptions. She dared to ask

Jesus, a man—and one from a different culture—to heal her daughter. Jesus allowed these kinds of encounters with the marginalized people, which helped shape and change him". (Mark 7:24–30) (UCC 2011b, Adapted).

(3) Jesus' border-crossing, multicultural encounters, especially with the outcast, marginalized, and powerless, broke down human-made dividing walls, embracing all people with God's love. The UCC states, "Jesus himself broke barriers of race, class, gender, and social norms to create a community of believers where all were welcomed." At Pentecost, the Spirit of God enabled the female and male disciples to speak in different languages (Acts 2:1–13). From the beginning of Church history, God envisioned a multicultural, multilingual Church, where diverse gifts and common humanity are celebrated and affirmed. Becoming a multicultural church is our journey together to listen, learn, and live out God's vision here and now as it is in heaven.[4] Multicultural worship and ministry lead people to mutual transformation in which "no one is left unchanged" (UCC 2016).

The primary concern of multicultural worship is not about worship style, but the relationship to God and one another. Multicultural worship is living and dynamic, where renewed relationships, spiritual depth, love, justice, reconciliation, and healing are experienced, and those experiences are embodied in daily lives as a continuation of worship. Although multicultural worship styles and components cannot be prescribed, due to their openness to contextual variations, I would like to focus on vital but often neglected areas such as rhythm, contemplative silence, and bodily expressions in worship. I believe they enhance multicultural worship experiences.

Suppose we narrow the scope of the discussion for a moment to contemplative prayer. In that case, we find that worship, contemplative prayer, and life have been compartmentalized for a long time throughout the history of Christianity. Paul F. Bradshaw maintains that a "happy balance" in worship between the "cathedral prayer" engaging the whole congregation and "monastic prayer" that is essentially contemplative has not often been achieved:

> Sadly, the Christian tradition in the West, both Catholic and Protestant, has tended to value one way of prayer more than the other. The meditative road of "monastic" prayer is seen as the way for the highly "spiritual" individual, and liturgical worship regarded as much inferior to it. Participation in liturgy, it has been thought, is a Christian obligation, which of course cannot be neglected, but it is private prayer that is truly beneficial. (Bradshaw 1995)

Depending on the contexts, there are reverse cases, where contemplative components have been neglected. Some efforts to reconcile the two have persisted, as seen in the example of the 1989 United Methodist Hymnal, in which "the nucleus is clearly 'cathedral' in character, with more 'monastic' additions enclosed within brackets as an optional extension to the celebration."[5] However, in the broader span of the history of the Church in the West, the separation between worship and contemplation has become increasingly reinforced. Bradshaw suggests that both cathedral and monastic prayers have "something vital to contribute to our understanding of prayer [and worship] and to our Christian living."[6]

Although contemplation, if it is considered at all, has often been viewed as optional, in recent years, the integration of worship, contemplation, and our daily life journey is no longer new or surprising (Ibid., 25). For example, Don E. Saliers invites us "not to construct a dualism of 'inner' experience and 'outward' language and ritual act."[7] Saliers also believes that "our lives and our liturgies are incomplete until we learn solidarity with others who suffer, and allow others to touch our suffering . . . [and where] liturgical celebration of word and sacrament and the domain of social justice are equally grounded in the self-communication of God in Jesus Christ."[8]

Through worship and our daily Christian living, we are invited to deeply breathe in and out the breath of life, becoming part of the divine tapestry of new creation in each moment. Christian mindfulness and the Tai Chi rhythm of "loosen-empty-push," which will be elaborated on in the following section, are helpful and critical to understanding and

implementing flow, rhythm, kinesthetic expressions, and silence, all of which deepen the spiritual dimension of Christian worship and life. They can be beautifully integrated into multicultural worship, boosting the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

3. Practice of Multicultural Worship

In the contemporary world, the significance of Christian mindfulness and contemplative wisdom has increasingly been embraced among Christians in general.[9] Since COVID-19 broke out, more people have been sitting in front of Zoom screens to practice contemplative prayers, including centering prayer, welcoming prayer, and *lectio divina*, finding peace and deepening their relationship with God. The Upper Room's *One-Year Online Academy for Spiritual Formation in Today's World*, starting in 2021 (Upper Room program hereafter), reflects the same trend and need. It also reflects the significance of integrating spiritual nurture and social holiness.

I was one of the participants of the year-long Upper Room program. Interestingly, I found the *Wuji* (to be explained further below) and the Tai Chi rhythm of "loosen-empty-push" in session themes:

- *Wuji*: "Meeting God in Our Longing" (February 25–27);
- Loosen: "Meeting God in Our Healing" (May 20–22);
- Empty: "Meeting God in Our Reconciling" (August 19–21);
- Push: "Meeting God in Our Justice-Seeking" (November 4–6).

The presenters' ideas and the flow will explicitly or implicitly become the background of a case study for multicultural worship, the next section of this article. I will paraphrase some of the presenters' wording without changing the content if possible.

3.1. Meeting God in Our Longing (Wuji, in the Tai Chi Rhythm)

Tai Chi is often used synonymously with Tai Chi Chuan. Tai Chi means "Supreme Ultimate," and adding Chuan, "fist," signifies Tai Chi as a martial art. Traditional Tai Chi begins with a *Wuji* posture, though today's simplified Tai Chi often omits it. *Wuji* (無極) is a Chinese word meaning "without ultimate," which is also described as a bottomless emptiness before the birth of Tai Chi (太極), the "Supreme Ultimate" from which the interaction of yin and yang expanded to various phenomena in the universe. *Wuji* is an indispensable standing posture for preparing for Tai Chi movements. For a *Wuji* stance, you make the feet parallel with shoulder width. The body is loosened and the arms naturally drop, making the whole body take on a lemon shape. Eyes gently look straight ahead. Imagine that there is a tall chair right behind of you. Sit lightly in a chair with your body, not with your knees. The center of gravity of your body, located 3 inches below your navel, is called *Dantian*. The *Dantian* also becomes the supporting point of your body when you practice Tai Chi. Also, imagine a string gently pulling the top of your head, making you stand tall. Stay three to five minutes in that posture. Once you get used to this pose, you can stand for 15–20 min. From this posture, Tai Chi movements begin with the rhythm of loosen-empty-push, and with the ongoing interaction of yin and yang.

During the first session, I asked the session presenter, Amy G. Oden, about effective ways to facilitate a contemplative prayer meeting. At the time, I had been facilitating a contemplative prayer meeting through Zoom for months. One of the resources I was using was Oden's book, *Right Here Right Now: The Practice of Christian Mindfulness*, along with the United Methodist Women's Mission U resource, *Finding Peace in an Anxious World* (Oden 2017; James-Brown 2020). Oden answered that if facilitators authentically become mindful, longing for God and rooted in God, participants will feel it, joining it in depth—it is about me rather than them. I could immediately connect her answer to the *Wuji* stance, because without *Wuji*, Tai Chi becomes a performance of skills lacking internally mindful equanimity.

Oden's answer was consistent with her invitation for the participants to listen to their deep longing for God, their deep "rootedness" in God. Oden shared Howard Thurman's "Sound of the Genuine," the 1980 commencement address at Spelman College. Thurman

invited the graduates to hear the "sound of the genuine" without being deceived by external noises and impulses. Oden said that if we do not listen carefully to the "sound of the genuine," our deep rootedness in God, we can easily spend our days being puppets manipulated by the pleasing sounds in the world.

As applied to worship, worship leaders are invited to repeatedly listen to the sound of the genuine not only during worship but in their daily routines, remembering and returning to their longing for God, and meeting God in their longings. In other words, worship preparation needs to be woven with weekday prayer life, noticing that God is present in every moment of our daily lives. A contemplative prayer once or twice a day, sometimes with a group, would deepen worship leaders' (and participants') rootedness in God. In this way, when people come together, standing or seated, for Sunday worship, their hearts are like the *Wuji* stance, being ready to enter into the presence of God. In a nutshell, "liturgy after liturgy" is applied to prayer life on weekdays, too. Even during informal greetings, rehearsals, and conversations, congregants understand that they are already engaged in worship initiated by God.

To become more receptive to God's presence, in the beginning stage of worship, leaders may say gently, "Be still and know that I AM GOD. Be still. Be." (Psalm 46:10), inviting people to be centered, to be aware of the presence of God as they go deeper into meeting God in worship.

3.2. Meeting God in Our Healing (Loosen, in the Tai Chi Rhythm)

You will continually follow a cyclical loosen–empty–push rhythm when you begin Tai Chi movements. "Ready-set-go" might be a more accessible term for the rhythm of loosen-empty-push. Or, you may want to call it a rhythm of potential energy-momentum-kinetic energy (that is, potential energy followed by momentum followed by kinetic energy). Many people do not notice that there is always momentum in the interactions between yin and yang. When you swim, when you hit or throw the ball in baseball, during boxing, when you lift heavy objects, or when you shovel snow, you use the rhythm of loosen-empty-push for effectiveness and protecting yourself. "Loosening" in the Tai Chi rhythm prepares and fosters a basic kinesthetic principle embedded in us from the beginning, but that needs to be noticed, practiced, and released. Likewise, worshipers need time to loosen and settle down themselves before God. As Ruth C. Duck explains, in African American preaching, there is also a flow of "Start low; go slow; go higher; strike fire. Sit down."[10]

Safiyah Fosua, the second-session presenter of the Upper Room program, invited participants to recognize their fear, lamentation, suffering, and the frailty of the human condition, which she calls an "uncomfortable light." Fosua said we live in a season of uncomfortable light, especially amid isolation caused by the pandemic, our contemporary valley of shadows.

To reflect on a deeper level, Fosua shared Walter Brueggemann's three typologies in the psalms: psalms of orientation, psalms of disorientation, and psalms of reorientation. According to Brueggemann, we need to wear helping lenses of "orientation, disorientation, and reorientation" when we read Psalms. "Psalms of orientation" express joy, goodness, thankfulness, and the reliability of God and God's creation. On the other hand, "Psalms of disorientation" express fear, anxiety, anger, resentment, disappointment, isolation, despair, and God's seeming absence. They exclaim, complain, and lament, "Why, O Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?" "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?"

However, that is not the end of the story. People realize that God has been there with them all the time when they were lost and could not feel God's presence. "Psalms of new (re) orientation" praise God again, becoming grateful for the new start of their life journey in God. The Psalmists confess, "Hope in God; for I shall again praise my God and my help." "O God, create in me a clean heart, and put a new and steadfast spirit within me" (also see Brueggemann (2002)).

Fosua invited participants to reexamine themselves before God, like Moses standing in front of a bush that will not be consumed by fire, asking God who God is, and beginning to grasp who he is. In the Tai Chi metaphor, we may call it the stage of "loosening." Praying or singing for illumination, we humbly loosen ourselves, asking God to make scripture reading and the sermon reach us as works of the Holy Spirit. We also pray to God, saying, "Let the words of our mouths, and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer."[11]

As Fosua implied, we, both preachers and listeners, need to recognize our lives as broken vessels, as we stand before God, being grateful for God's waiting and calling for us with unconditional love and grace, and as we respond primarily through worship. We loosen ourselves, sitting, listening, waiting, and being open to be molded by God's gentle touch. Through the Concerns and Prayers, we lay down our personal and communal needs, burdens, and weaknesses, and the needs of the world before God. The Peace and Offering are embodied signs of gratitude, love, and reconciliation. We loosen ourselves to embrace and are embraced by God.

3.3. Meeting God in Our Reconciling (Empty, in the Tai Chi Rhythm)

All of the above prepare us to become "multicultural" worshipers. As Jesus humbled and emptied himself, we come forward to worship with humble hearts. One of the most beautiful images to describe the multicultural worshipping community is a dream catcher, a handmade willow hoop woven to a web, which Ray Buckley, the third-session presenter of the Upper Room program, introduced. Of Lakota/Tlingit/Scot descent, Buckley said he learned Christian faith with Native American (especially Lakota) wisdom from his grandmother. The latter taught him that everybody is a sacred being, because God's grace is deeply embedded in every human being and creature.

According to Buckley, a dream catcher is believed to drive bad dreams and fevers away, especially from children. Parents, grandparents, and neighbors make dream catchers as gifts and give them to children with fevers, as a symbol of care and support. The dream catcher also symbolizes the connection of all life. We are all the knots interconnected inside the hoop. According to Buckley and his grandmother, God is strong like the hoop. Buckley said, "The hoop is so strong, so you cannot push and pull it out of the shape of a circle. Likewise, you cannot push God out of shape. You can't pull out God, either. We are tightly connected and surrounded by the strength of God. God's love, grace, and power are strong. Unbroken and unbreakable." According to Buckley's grandmother and Lakota tradition, nothing can block or destroy our relationships with God, with fellow human beings, and with other creatures. As God-bearers, Christians are all called to be reconciled to God, others, and ourselves, living in the robust and unbreakable hoop.

If I add multicultural dynamics to this dream catcher, the Tai Chi rhythm gently and naturally bridges interrelatedness in the sacred hoop. "Emptying," in the Tai Chi rhythm, means loosening slightly more to create momentum. This can be analogized with surrendering ourselves to God's presence and actions that lead us to participate in what God does within and among us during worship and beyond.[12] Emptying also teaches us to let go, listen, learn, and embrace instead of becoming stiff. In this beloved community of sacred hoop, common humanity and reciprocity are valued, unique and/or cross-boundary cultural identity is affirmed, heard, and respected. And diverse gifts are incorporated, providing a joyful, compassionate (sometimes "suffering with"), reconciling, and life-giving worship. Holy Communion becomes a great opportunity to reconcile broken relationships, experiencing a "dream catcher" heartfully and tangibly in the body of Christ.

3.4. Meeting God in Our Justice Seeking (Push, in the Tai Chi Rhythm)

Push is the "Go" action of the "ready-set-go" or "loosen-empty-push." During and after worship, Christians are called to become a beloved, justice-seeking community of faith, embodying the reign of God, in which love, compassion, and justice prevail. Luther Smith, the final-session presenter of the Upper Room program, asked how seriously committed we

are to offering ourselves to be in covenant relationship with God. "Can I claim myself a God-fearing or a God-loving person without committing myself to the life of justice-seeking?"

Smith said the struggle for justice, such as dismantling racism, often becomes disturbing, overwhelming, exhausting, and painful because we come to a deeper awareness of the reality—different from what we saw from a distance. In a worship setting, according to Smith, one of the barometers for justice-seeking congregations is whether the door is fully open to everyone—open to "every" one from the heart! Smith believes justice seeking is a spiritual matter; it is the journey where we can meet God. Justice seeking is also a vision for the "beloved community," a phrase that to my ears is a synonym of the multicultural community of faith that characterizes God's dream for us. According to Smith, God of love is waiting for us on the way to justice and compassion.

Justice seeking is challenging, but Smith still claimed that it is a work of joy, hope, faith, and love that we celebrate and have been called to walk together. With a big smile, Smith said, "Let's become the spirit of the beloved community, the spirit of jubilee, and rejoice in it." He reminded me of the United Methodist Baptismal Covenant in which we said yes to God's invitation "to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves."

For Christians, worship and justice work are unbrokenly linked and circulate like a breath of life flowing into one another. The Tai Chi rhythm of loosen-empty-push also helps people understand the continuous flow and rhythm between worship and the justice-seeking engagements in the world, metaphorically and kinesthetically. Ruth A. Meyers, in her book *Missional Worship, Worshipful Mission*, uses the Möbius strip as a metaphor for the relations between worship and mission. Like the Möbius strip, "mission and worship flow into and out of one another" and *Sending Forth* rather than concluding worship invites a worshiping assembly to "participate in God's mission, embodying God's healing, reconciling, and saving love for the world, and proclaiming the good news of God's reign" (Meyers 2014).

4. Case Study

4.1. Liturgical Context

The United Methodist Church of Martha's Vineyard (UMCMV) is a small, predominantly White, but still multicultural congregation. Our members are mostly older, hoping and envisioning a congregational family embracing diverse cultures and generations as the ever-hanging rainbow flag and Black Lives Matter yard sign show. I have been serving in this multicultural appointment since 2019. My wife, two Korean-American sons, and I also have added diversity. The UMCMV members and community volunteers have actively supported people in need on the island. As in our mission statement, UMCMV is invited to carry out the mission and ministry of God's reign, especially works of compassion and justice. We humbly walk together to grow "as a healthy disciple-making congregation, in which everybody is welcomed, respected, cared about and embraced".

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the UMCMV worshiped through Zoom for over a year, from March 2020 to April 2021. Gratefully, we could worship in person (still live-streaming for a while) starting 2 May 2021. In January 2022, we decided to choose the virtual option again amid the rapid and extensive spread of COVID-19 on the island. Whether in person or virtual, the Basic Pattern of Worship of the United Methodist Church (Entrance-Proclamation and Response-Thanksgiving and Communion-Sending Forth) has been maintained as a platform for Sunday worship.

Along with the account on Christian adaptation of the ancient synagogue service, the UMBOW invites worship leaders to reflect on Luke 24:30–35, which provides a biblical reference concerning the Basic Pattern as follows:

- Entrance: The two disciples were joined by the risen Christ; so in the power of the Holy Spirit, the risen and ascended Christ joins us when we gather.
- Proclamation and Response: As the disciples poured out to him their sorrow and in so doing opened their hearts to what Jesus would say to them, so we pour out to him

whatever is on our hearts and thereby open ourselves to the Word. As Jesus "opened the Scriptures" to them and caused their hearts to burn, so we hear the Scriptures opened to us and out of the burning of our hearts praise God.

- Thanksgiving and Communion: As the disciples invited Jesus to stay with them and joined the risen Christ around the table, we can do likewise. As Jesus took, blessed, broke, and gave the bread, so in the name of the risen Christ, we do these four actions with the bread and cup. As he was "made known to them in the breaking of the bread," so the risen and ascended Christ can be known to us in Holy Communion.
- Sending Forth: As he disappeared and sent the disciples into the world with faith and joy, so he sends us forth into the world. And as those disciples found Christ when they arrived at Jerusalem later that evening, so we can find Christ with us wherever we go.[13]

While the Basic Pattern provides essential worship guidelines, the United Methodist Book of Worship (UMBOW) invites us to be flexible, creative, inclusive, and culturally conscious. The Tai Chi rhythm and flow help congregants understand the basic worship pattern more organically than mechanically. It allows the assembly to experience ample room for the rhythm and flow of worship, making the worship culturally conscious and inviting. Living on an island, we experience difficulties with the inconvenience of ferry transportation and a lack of resources, but there is always a sense of gratitude as we experience the beauty of God's creation every day. During worship, worshipers often share that they are most grateful for and most feel the presence of God in nature, such as sunlight, trees, and the sound of sea waves and birdsong. We believe we are called and entrusted to take good care of God's creation, which Diana Butler Bass calls "the embodiment of God's breath" (Bass 2017).

4.2. A Manuscript of the Liturgy with Annotations

The following worship order and its components are for the Zoom worship brought by the pandemic, but it can also be applied to in-person worship with contextual considerations. It is contemplative and participatory worship, and the flow moves along with the basic pattern of worship in general.

Contemplative and Participatory Virtual Worship (Sample)

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C

UMH (United Methodist Hymnal) (United Methodist Church 1989) *TFWS* (The Faith We Sing) (United Methodist Church 2000)

1. **Entrance (Be Still/*Wuchi*)**

In this virtual worship, we follow the rhythm and flow of "call and response" that connect worshipers with God and with one another (Hickman 2007). Worship begins when people gather together, responding to God's initiative call. "Welcoming all" is the primary feature of multicultural worship.[14] As Smith reminds us, hospitality is characteristic of loving and justice-seeking congregations. A question we need to ask ourselves is if we consciously or unconsciously send an unwelcoming message to newcomers: "You may join us, but we are still in control."[15] When selecting hymn lyrics, prayers, projected images, or any other liturgical language, worship leaders are invited to avoid inherited and nuanced words/hymn lyrics/expressions originated in cultures of slavery, sexism, chauvinism, White privilege and racism, discrimination against people with disabilities, or discrimination based on sexual orientation, etc.

Whether in person or virtual, public worship is the moment for praising and thanksgiving to God heartfully. In a way, simplified Zoom worship during the pandemic has reminded us of the simplicity of earliest Christian worship in the context of the house-church and persecution before the appearance of an imperial Christianity (White 1993). The 19th- and 20th-century efforts of the liturgical movement also invite churches to recover

the simplicity as ordered in the early church: Gathering; Scripture Reading and Preaching; Eucharist; Sending Forth. These reflect the basic pattern of worship across denominations.[16]

In multicultural worship, we also recognize the significance of non-verbal expressions. We agree with Don E. Saliers, who said, "A certain tone and rhetoric alongside gestures in preaching, in singing, and in prayer often forms us more deeply than do words. . . . The key to all such gestures is that they be clear, loving, and wise, and that they graciously serve the liturgy of Jesus Christ" (Saliers 1994b). A worship leader's multicultural sensitivity and non-anxious presence embodying energy and flow of worship are essential to worship leadership.[17]

In this worship, we provide room for silence, to invite worshipers to be aware of God's presence moment by moment, in depth. After greeting one another, we share two or three culturally diverse images related to the church year or scripture reading on a PowerPoint screen. Although brief, people can gaze at those images prayerfully, like *visio divina*. Worshipers are also invited to be centered, listening to pre-recorded Music Voluntary through the PowerPoint. On the same screen, the following welcome message appears: "This is time and space for mindful and heartful indwelling with God. In our worship and our beloved community of faith, 'every' one is welcome no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey."

Opening Voluntary (Pre-recorded music. We sometimes begin worship singing Mark Miller's *Welcome to God's Love*.)

Holy Moment for God's Presence (Longing and Noticing)

Be still and know that I AM GOD . . . Be still . . . Be . . . (Psalm 46:10)

(UMBOW recognizes the significance of both "an outward and visible gathering of the people and an inward and spiritual gathering—a focusing of awareness that they are people gathered in the presence of the God known to us through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit."[18] As the worship leader facilitates this contemplative moment, worshipers are invited to breathe in and out slowly, noticing and welcoming God's presence. We do not attempt to call for God's presence, because God is already present with us. A simple "Be" invites us to notice God's presence, reminding us to be grateful for who we are and whose we are before God. 1–2 min.)

Hymn of Praise (Together) "Santo, santo, santo, mi corazón/Holy, Holy, Holy, My Heart"[19]

(In multicultural worship, hymns from various cultures worldwide are strongly encouraged. This week, we invite people to make a joyful noise in Spanish, Korean, and English, being reminded that we are called to become a beloved community of faith rooted in God's unwavering and nondiscriminatory love. Hymns for this corporate praise and gratitude should generally be "familiar, upbeat, and affirming." (United Methodist Church 1992, p. 18.)

Opening Prayer (Together)

(A worship leader may want to invite people to bring their attention to folded hands as follows: "Praying hands joined, fingers intertwined or thumb over thumb, flat against each other . . . For now, these hands do nothing . . . Pressed to each other, there is no space for holding anything. For the moment, these hands, empty and still, hold compressed the mystery of myself before the Lord who made me.[20] Now I invite you to open and extend your hands. Please join with me on the opening prayer!")

Creating and sustaining God,

In your presence there is life.

Living water springs up,

and deserts blossom where you pass.

Seeking the life that comes from you,

we have gathered before you.
Our hearts are ready, O God,
our hearts are ready.
Delight us with your presence,
and prepare us for your service in the world;
through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.[21]

[In this way, *Entrance* (or *Wuchi*) settles down and invites worshippers to meet the living God in their longing, noticing, and celebrating God's presence "here and now." We often save a prayer of confession and pardon for Lent, locating it either in Entrance or as a response to the Word.[22]]

2. **Proclamation and Response (Loosen)**

Hymn for Illumination "Spirit of the Living God" (UMH 393)

Spirit of the living God,
Fall afresh on me. (x2)
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God,
Fall afresh on me.

(To pray for illumination, we sing a hymn for Spirit's touching and transforming us.)

Breath Prayer

Breathing in: I listen . . . Breathing out: . . . Speak, Lord.

(This is a continuation of prayer for illumination. Before reading and listening to the Scripture, worshipers are invited to breathe together with the Holy Spirit. Breath-prayer also prepares us to listen to God's Words more attentively.)

Scripture Reading Luke 5:1–11

(Unlike in-person worship, we invite any volunteers to read one or two verses slowly, in turn. Bible verse numbers are highlighted with background colors to minimize confusion. A time for interactive participation and mutual listening.)

Sermon "Into the Deep"

(Both preachers and participants need listening ears and hearts. Sermon preparation is a prayerful process of listening to and interacting with God's guiding and inspiring presence. Biblical exegesis, pastoral contexts, prophetic messages, and multicultural sensitivity are vital components of sermon preparation and preaching itself. To share my experience, as a preacher who speaks English as a second language, I spend considerable time on sermon preparation, making extra efforts for clearer delivery. I believe multicultural sensitivity also invites listeners to appreciate and celebrate linguistic diversity as a gift that adds color and dimension that makes worship more joyful and enriched. Humbly listening to a sermon, as in the Tai Chi rhythm, we loosen and surrender ourselves and let the Spirit of God work in and through us.)

Hymn "Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore" (UMH 344)

(People can sing in Spanish or Korean, making a joyful noise.)

Concerns and Prayers (Together)

Psalm Prayer/Ps. 17

We rest, dear God, in the hope of your love and protection, for our help comes from you. You will not let our feet slip, you watch over us day and night, you keep us in the safety of your eternal love, Now and forevermore (Eslinger 2006).

(Continue to pray) *Loving God, I am (we are) thankful that . . . (Complete the prayer in turn) I (We) feel your presence when . . . (In turn) . . . "Thanks be to God!" (Together)*

Please help . . . . (Names) need your healing and comfort today. (In turn) "Lord, hear our prayer!" (Together)

Together: *Thank you for your grace working through us. May we walk into new life with a deeper awareness of your presence. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who makes us whole. Amen.*

(After praying Psalm Prayer together, we invite worshipers to complete the prayers for joys and concerns. When praying for joy, all say, "Thanks be to God!" When praying for concerns, all say, "Lord, hear our prayers." After the moment of silence, worshipers close the prayer together. As Kathy Black reminds us, people from non-European backgrounds may feel "great embarrassment" concerning openly sharing joys and concerns.[23] Some people from other cultures may feel uncomfortable and even invisible, unseen depending on the situations. This cultural difference needs to be addressed and respected in a multicultural worship context.)

Peace "Peace of Christ be with you!"

(Worshipers are invited to offer the peace of Christ with signs of reconciliation, love, and blessing with smiles and waving hands. It is worth noting that the passing of the peace is not expected in many cultural contexts (see Black 1998). The location of peace immediately before the offering evokes Matthew 5:23-24.[24])

Offering "As forgiven and reconciled people, let us offer ourselves and our gifts to God."

[People are invited to participate in online giving. Its placement between the Peace and the Holy Communion prepares people for the following acts of Thanksgiving (with/without Communion). According to Melva Wilson Costen, in many African American worship, offerings and other worship components are accompanied by various keyboard and percussion instruments and exuberant singing (Costen [1993] 2007). Multicultural worshipers are open to keep learning from one another.]

Offering Hymn "When We Are Living/Pues Si Vivimos" (UMH 356. Verse 1-2)

(Since our offering is a response to the gift of God's grace, this is the time of "paying prayerful attention in the present moment to God's abundant life," bringing worshipers into a deeper relationship with God and one another. In God's gracious and loving presence, we open our hands, loosening our stiffness, making a joyful noise!)

3. **Thanksgiving and Communion** (Empty)

"Taken, Blessed, Broken, and Given"

(We touch and taste God's visible and tangible love when receiving the bread and wine. Cultural variety of the vessels and elements is encouraged. Not only at the altar table, but also with the long tradition of the 'Community Supper of the UMCMV' (Take Out Supper during the pandemic), the Holy Communion feeds us to embody the lifegiving flow of "taken, blessed, broken, and given" of Christ's Body. Holy Communion nourishes and connects us to God's beloved people and creation.

Anamnesis, a Greek word for remembrance, means not only remembering the past but also means 'experience anew' or 'representing the past so that we experience the living presence of Christ here and now. When Jesus said, "remember me," it was also his promise that he would be ever-present among us when we celebrate Holy Communion. At the same time, we hope and foretaste God's future for us as we partake of the Lord's Table: we are waiting, longing, and seeking the coming of the ultimate, glorious reign of God, "until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet."[25] God's past and future permeate our present. Our memories and hopes are always experienced in the NOW moment as we chew and drink bread and wine mindfully and heartfully.

In Eucharist, we encounter and experience the self-surrendering and self-emptying (*kenotic*) love of Jesus Christ, who challenges us to live as the body of Christ, the "bread

connections."[26] Although we are all weak and broken, God the incarnate is strong enough to hold us in the unbreakable hoop (as we learned from Ray and his grandmother), in the beloved circle of community.)

4. **Sending Forth (Push)**

[This brief part of worship becomes "Push" in the Tai Chi metaphor, a bridge between the sanctuary (including a shared Zoom space) and God's creation on earth. As we answer yes to God's call, God will continue to encourage us to "move, live and grow" in God.[27]]

Hymn of Sending Forth "The Summons" (TFWS 2130)

Dismissal with Blessing

[A dismissal (literally meaning a "forth-sending") invites us to continue our mission in the world as God's beloved, compassionate, and justice-seeking community. We are called to live out the reign of God "on earth as in heaven" with God's blessing and empowering presence. The terms like "prelude" and "postlude" are avoided, because they signal that worship happens between those "starts" and "ends."]

4.3. Evaluation of the Liturgy with Its Benefits and Challenges

The unprecedented pandemic introduces various limitations to engage in a more contemplative and participatory worship. One of the most challenging parts is missing a tangible sense of community felt in hand shaking, hugging, and coffee hour. Zoom worship can also be distracting for some people. Virtual worship may either help or distract in nurturing each individual's willingness, patience, and loving spirit to understand and experience multicultural worship and ministry, depending on the congregational context. Not the ideal scenario, but we desire to become a "responsible, hospitable, and 'care-full' congregation" even while worshipping virtually at least for a while. We also want virtual worship to be a time and space for heartful indwelling with God and one another, including God's creation in our hearts and surrounding us.

Incorporating the Tai Chi rhythm and flow, with mindful breathing moments, can help the gathered people of God experience the sense of God's presence in every "present" moment of worship. Watering the seeds of multicultural worship and ministry requires listening hearts and a spirit of mutual respect. This contemplative, participatory, and multicultural worship also invites us to embrace all creation, enhancing our intrinsic connection to God's web of life. Breathing together with the Spirit of God in worship, we are sent to become the embodied breath of God to the world and God's creation. In this way, we become aware that we are beautifully and multiculturally woven together in God's circle of the hoop.

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Notes

1. Peter C. Phan, "Introduction," in (Phan and Lee 1999), p. xx.
2. Kathy Black recognizes that an assimilation is a subtle form of exclusion in which people "exclude the essence of the other by [explicitly or implicitly] forcing them to become like us." See (Black 2000).
3. UCC, Defining Multicultural, Cross-Cultural, and Intercultural.
4. Ibid. Other biblical references the UCC provides include Gen. 1:31; Lev. 19:33; Isa. 65:25; Rev 21–22.
5. Ibid., 121. Methodist scholars such as James F. White and Don E. Saliers see silence as an important element of worship. See (White 2000; Saliers 1994a). Also see (Zimmerman 2004). Methodist scholars adapted the Second Vatican Council's notion of "full, conscious, and active participation" in worship to the Methodist context.

[6] Bradshaw, 29–41.
[7] Saliers, 87. Thomas Keating also states that "the practice of exterior and interior silence as an integral part of liturgy needs to be restored." See (Keating 1997).
[8] Ibid., 135, 172. Aloysius Pieris, a Sri Lankan Jesuit priest and theologian, indicated in his book published in 1986 that liturgy, spirituality, and justice-seeking struggle had been compartmentalized and needed to be reconciled. See (Pieris 1992), 3. First published in book form in 1986. As also found in Ruth C. Duck's "five theological emphases in understanding worship," we are aware and participate in God's real presence in worship, sharing joy, tears, and vulnerability among worshippers, and also embodying and responding in love, justice, and reconciliation "toward God, one another, and the whole creation" (Duck 2013).
[9] A news article's title from Harvard Divinity School (2019) also recognizes a rapidly growing interest in mindfulness practice in the secular domain.
[10] Duck, 75. Duck quotes from Zan Holmes, quoted in (McClain 1990).
[11] The United Methodist Book of Worship, 22.
[12] There is a limit to fully understanding the concept of "emptying" without actually practicing Tai Chi. Joyce Ann Zimmerman's account of "full, conscious, and active participation" is still helpful to understand "emptying" and "surrendering" ourselves in worship. See Zimmerman, *Participation in Worship: More Than Doing*.
[13] United Methodist Book of Worship, 13–14.
[14] Duck also calls "an attitude of hospitality" a prime characteristic of a worship leader. See Duck, *Worship for the Whole People of God*, 66.
[15] Black, 49.
[16] Duck, *Worship for the Whole People of God*, 68, 73. The *ordo* reflects Justin's second-century gathering. According to Duck, "an overly long gathering time full of greetings, introductions, and announcements might give the impression that the gathering of the people and conduct of business is more urgent than encountering God in worship." See Ibid., 75.
[17] Duck 66; (Burton-Edwards 2013).
[18] UMBOW, 16.
[19] *Sing! A new creation* (Calvin Institute of Christian Worship 2001). Lyrics of the Hymn 19 are presented in five different languages (Spanish, English, Dutch, French, and Korean). Also see *United Methodist Hymnal* 64 (English) and 65 (Spanish), and *Come, Let Us Worship: Korean-English United Methodist Hymnal* 79.
[20] Janet Schlichting, OP in (Bernstein 1995). Adapted.
[21] Book of Worship: United Church of Christ (1986), p. 477.
[22] Hickman, 74.
[23] Black, 70.
[24] UMBOW, 26.
[25] According to Choan-Seng Song, "the purpose of Jesus was not to give the later church a sacrament to observe," but to "interpret" his mission and ministry of the reign of God. See (Song 1977).
[26] (Greer 1999). Saliers called Holy Communion the "divine vulnerability" because "all the heart of Eucharist are the broken symbol of suffering and death." See Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 61.
[27] (United Methodist Church 2000), 2130 (The Summons).

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Toward the Vision of Revelation: Multicultural Worship in a Korean Context

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Abstract: From the end of the 1980s, when foreign workers poured into Korea, until 1995, when there was a significant increase in international marriages, a multicultural situation has slowly been developing in Korea. However, because the traditional emphasis has been on a single-race nation, the Korean Church has not shown much concern for the multicultural situation. Apart from some megachurches and missionary groups, the Korean Church has not been concerned with inviting immigrants and receiving them as full church members. Recently, due to a rapidly aging Korean society and the influx of immigrants entering the workforce, Korea has abruptly changed into a multicultural society. Catching up with this change, the church has started to study building a multicultural church and shifting a congregation to a multicultural church; however, almost all of these studies focus on mission strategy, leadership, or working through conflicts in the church. Currently, there are a lack of studies on worship, specifically, how to facilitate worship among people from different cultural backgrounds and how worship can draw a multicultural congregation together as one body. This chapter will study how a multicultural church can plan its Sunday public worship from a liturgical and theological perspective. Additionally, I will research how a congregation made up of people whose cultural and theological backgrounds are different can become one body in worship. For this purpose, I will examine a multicultural church in Korea, mainly focusing on how the order and elements of worship can develop understanding and unity among the people. Based on this study, I will suggest some liturgical ideas and valuable strategies for multicultural worship in Korea with a sample liturgy of multicultural worship.

Keywords: multicultural worship; liturgy; inculturation; worship and culture; Korean church

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1. Introduction

In the Book of Revelation, there is a very emotional scene: "After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'" (Rev. 7: 9–10).

The vision which John the apostle saw—God's people from all of the world worshipping and praising God in one voice—leaves a deep impression and a challenge. Let us think about this scene: multitudes praising God before His throne, transcending nationality, race, gender, and social status. Is not it impressive? In Korea, a gospel song, inspired by this text, has been loved by many church people for a long time.[1]

However, when I see the reality of worship in Korea, there are invisible walls between people. There are not only racial conflicts, but also intergenerational conflicts, sharp oppositions in political positions, and conflicts among regions. Even though they are Christians who believe in one God, they do not enjoy unity. I studied in the United States for about 8 years and visited many American churches. It was not easy to find churches which embody true multicultural worship there. The same is true for Korea. Korea is a country that prides itself on being composed of a single ethnic group.[2] Although people

from many ethnic groups and many countries have come to Korea, it is not easy to find a multicultural church. My denomination (Kosin) has about 2100 churches with a long history and tradition, but only one multicultural church.[3] The situation of other denominations in Korea is not much different. Some mega churches offer special worship services conducted in another language, but in a strict sense, they are not multicultural churches.[4]

Is the vision in the Book of Revelation just an eschatological picture? The reality and the ideal are different; therefore, should we just wait for the day of the Lord's second coming in the tension between the already and the not-yet? Perhaps one of the chief characteristics of the image of worship in the Bible is inclusiveness (Vanderwell 2008, pp. 22–23). All generations, all abilities, and anyone can come to God. As an example, Acts 2 shows how the dispersion and scattering of language caused by the Tower of Babel incident in Genesis 11 is restored by God's grace.

While some ask if multicultural worship is necessary, I believe unity must be emphasized in our worship. Even if we have different national and cultural backgrounds, we should seek unity where we can worship God together with one faith, believing in one Bible.

In this respect, multicultural worship is a monumental task for the 21st century. In particular, Korea, which is rapidly transforming into a multicultural society due to migration and an increase in Korean marriages to foreigners, must be able to present a healthy theology and vision for a multicultural Korean church.

In this paper, the situation of multicultural churches in Korea will briefly be reviewed through case studies. Even though there are several multicultural worship services offered, they are operated by non-native Koreans. Therefore, in this paper, I will focus on mapping a proposal for a church in which both Koreans and non-Koreans participate in worship together and share leadership of multi-cultural congregations. Reflecting on various theological and practical issues related to multicultural worship, I will discuss how members from various backgrounds can be united in worship and in the life of the church, actively and positively participating in worship. Furthermore, through sample liturgy, I will present worship ideas that can be practiced in the multicultural context.

2. Case Study: City Center Church in Ulsan

Ulsan City Center Church[5] was established on 6 January 2019 in Ulsan. Koreans who split from the Ulsan Church, including English-speaking believers and various workers from Asia, gathered together to worship and start the new church. In the early days, senior Pastor Shin Chi-heon led the worship service twice, once for the Korean-speaking congregation and once for the English-speaking congregation. However, because the congregations were separated according to language, it did not represent true multi-cultural worship.

Fully bilingual pastor Kim Jeong-won took office in July 2019 and began to consolidate all worship services. All people, regardless of their nationality or language, gathered in one place to worship. As Pastor Shin gave the sermon in Korean, Pastor Kim translated it into English simultaneously. Although it was an advantage that all the congregation could attend one worship service, there was also the disadvantage because the preaching time was doubled. Additionally, the translating interrupted the flow of the sermon and made it difficult for people to concentrate.

Thus, in May 2020, worship was again divided into an English-speaking service and a worship service for Korean-speaking members of the congregation. However, they still wanted to promote the idea that all belonged to one church and were one body. To that end, a united worship and sacrament service were held on the first week of every month. Once a month, they could see each other face to face and worship together, and through the sacrament of sharing the body and blood of the Lord, they were able to confirm that they were one and reaffirm that everyone was a member of Center City Church.

In general, churches in Korea practice the Zwingli style of passing the elements, but this church seeks a more visible oneness as everyone comes forward and breaks bread. After

the service, a everyone shares a potluck meal. By eating, drinking, and socializing together, their mutual understanding grows despite differences in culture and language. Above all, the Lord's Supper and the fellowship meal presents a picture of how a relationship with God leads to unity among His people.

In this overall worship structure, they seek to harmoniously blend various cultures into one service via the order and elements of worship. One area where this can be seen is in the praise music. In the case of united worship, the leader of the praise team selects a Korean praise song as well as an English praise song. Many Korean hymns are foreign adaptations. Songs composed in Korea can also easily be translated into English. Modern technology has made it easy to see the lyrics in English or Korean on a large screen. Ideally, under the guidance of the praise team, the members participate in the singing of hymns and praise songs in their language without any trouble.

For the sermons in a united worship service, the pastor delivers the sermons in Korean and an English translation is displayed on the screen. For the remaining three weeks, the pastor preaches the same text in Korean in the morning and in English in the afternoon. In other words, they are doing their best to become a multicultural church in the truest sense possible.

3. Theology of Multicultural Worship

It is not easy for congregations containing diverse languages and diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds to truly unify in one church service and to feel a sense of belonging as one family. Many large churches in Korea have separate worship services and meetings with members who speak English, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Mongolian, but there is little fellowship among the groups—only event meetings (Cho et al. 2012, p. 144). A multicultural church in the true sense includes meeting together for worship and fellowship. Then, what theological considerations are needed for multicultural worship to be successfully established in the church? Before discussing the contents and forms of worship, we should carefully consider the following questions.

3.1. How Can We View the Relationship between Worship and Culture in the Context of the Korean Church?

Examining the relationship between worship and culture is an essential task for understanding the past path of church worship and forecasting future needs. Above all else, the "Nairobi Statement", presented at the Lutheran World Federation, offers a deep insight into the relationship between worship and culture, setting out four categories for this relationship: "transcultural worship", "multicultural worship", "contextual worship", and "intercultural worship" (Lutheran World Federation 2014, pp. 137–42). When worship is transcultural, we find common orders and texts throughout the whole church. When worship is contextual, cultural or indigenous symbols are incorporated in worship. When worship is countercultural, it contrasts biblical and worldly perspectives. When worship is cross-cultural, it uses various culture's hymn and expression. The Korean Church's worship has developed and expressed all four of these characteristics. Even though people tend to adhere to traditional texts or orders, worship will evolve while considering the epoch's culture and people's thought.

There are four factors to consider. First, it is necessary to examine the context of the Korean Church. Multicultural churches exist everywhere in the world, but they are greatly influenced by location and culture. Korean society is generally kind to guests from overseas, but because of the strong pride of being a single ethnicity, they are not used to fully accepting foreigners as members of the community. Statistics showing that there are few multicultural churches in each denomination prove this clearly (Kim 2021, pp. 112–28).

Korean conservative churches, which constitute the majority of all churches in Korea, have a very narrow theological views about contact with other denominations' cultures, except those of Reformed and Presbyterian churches of the Western tradition. In particular, there is an implicit fear that the influx of various cultures may result in syncretism.[6]

Therefore, in order for a multicultural church to take root in the Korean church, it is necessary to first analyze the boundary between worship and culture through biblical and theological studies.

Next, it should made clear that various forms of worship have existed throughout the history of Christianity, and worship can still evolve. In general, for Korean church members, the standard for proper worship tends to be limited to the worship they have experienced in the past and the form taught by the theologian or pastor whom they respect (Moon 2020b, p. 38). However, new forms of worship can emerge, and some practices can be excluded if they do not fit the cultural code of the day. Therefore, we must guard against the fallacy of hasty generalizations that limit the ideal model to the thoughts of the Reformers from the 16th century or for only certain types of churches.

Third, the theology of multicultural worship should incorporate praise and worship practices of other countries and churches with an open mind and be able to utilize the things that are necessary and useful for their context and circumstances. For example, various praise songs from overseas churches have a great influence on the worship music of Korean churches. In particular, various modern praises, starting with the "praise and worship movement", have been loved by Korean churches across denominations. Additionally, the Korean church needs to take a broader interest in the music of Third World churches and the singing of the Psalms. In addition, it is necessary to learn and study various forms of prayer of the liturgical church, ways to commemorate rites of passage, and traditions related to seasonal worship in order to create indigenous types of ceremonies (Moon 2020a, pp. 116–46).

Finally, tolerating and pursuing diversity does not mean to simply create another form of worship. Above all, we need to realize that true worship has a transcultural character and pursue the development of worship from a universal church perspective (Witvliet 2003, pp. 119–22). There are common elements in various worship services, such as the Word and the Lord's Supper as the center of worship; one profession of faith, one Bible, and one faith; and the confession of a Triune God. Being concerned about the transcultural character of worship while respecting cultural diversity will reflect the fact that all Christians are brothers and sisters in God.

3.2. Theological Reflections for Multicultural Worship

To build a theological foundation for multicultural worship, the following questions should be considered.

3.2.1. How Can the Cultural Conflict Problem That Occurs in the Context of Inculturation Be Solved?

For example, when a Korean congregation, an English-speaking congregation, and an Asian congregation gather, at least three cultures collide. In other congregations, the traditional church culture of Korea and the culture of young people collide. How can we wisely harmonize the various aspects of the relationship between worship and culture?

In multicultural worship, the cultures of the participants merge. Through this meeting, cultures are fused, although sometimes there is friction. Multicultural worship is not only a meeting of culture and culture, but more complex communication takes place (Kim 2017, pp. 111–12), i.e., differences in language, race, gender, generational gaps occur simultaneously in one place and time.

The success or failure of multicultural worship depends on how this conflict is handled. The clash of ideas about worship according to cultural differences is inevitable in some way. Even in the worship of a single ethnic church rather than a multi-ethnic church, there is a serious generational gap (Allen and Ross 2012, pp. 248–49). Worship with people from different countries, however, is more complex. How can we lead these types of conflict into creative fusion?

The leadership must manage conflicts within the congregation. The leadership can help solve theological issues and support the laity who share their thoughts with the leader.

Therefore, for the successful inculturation of worship, the worship team, including a lead pastor as well as an associate pastor or lay leader representing each language congregation, must develop multicultural worship through constant dialogue and experimentation (Duck 2013, pp. 51–55).

3.2.2. As at the Heart of the Sacrosanctum Concilium, How Will the Worship Be Properly Structured for "Active" and "Positive" Participation of the Congregation?

Sacrosanctum Concilium, the main document of the Second Vatican Council, emphasized the "active, active and full participation" of the congregation (Flannery 1975, pp. 16–17). This spirit has led the worship renewal movement since the 1960s and has had a profound impact on the worship in churches around the world. This spirit should be equally embodied in multicultural worship.

Multicultural worship does not happen automatically by simply placing different congregations in the same space. If two people are in the same room and do not have real relationship, there is no communion. However, if two people are in a different space, they can have a sense of unity regard of their physical location (Baillie 1957, p. 99). Above all, the worship service must be carefully planned so that the hearts and minds of the participants will be awakened to actively participate in worship. Consider these attributes of the congregation: What is the composition of the church?; What percentage of people speak each language?; What worship traditions are represented?; What are their thoughts on traditional and modern culture? Factors such as these should be sufficiently taken into account.

Furthermore, among the elements of worship, there should be various elements in which the members can directly move their bodies and open their mouths to participate. Instead of lip syncing, people need to offer praise with their voice. People should be able to hear their own voice and the voices of others when they sing together, and the appropriate ratio of familiar praise to unfamiliar praise should be considered.[7]

In addition, all the members of the church should be able to actually participate in the various elements of worship such as confessions of faith, prayers of penance, declarations of forgiveness, united prayer, reading, and offering. This requires the flexibility to break the mold of traditional thinking. In general, in Korea, those who majored in systematic and historical theology judge worship based on which practices are right (while focused on biblical and historical warranties based on their theological tendency) and which are wrong. However, a liturgical theological approach is different. Liturgical theologians tend to be interested in how to enrich worship by recognizing that various liturgies have existed through diachronic and synchronic studies (Senn 2012, pp. 17–41).

For active and positive participation in worship, it is necessary to look at the problem of worship from a liturgical theological point of view. Additionally, instead of simply following tradition, we must grasp the thoughts and characteristics of people living together in the same era and in the same region.

3.2.3. Because Worship Forms the Faith of the People, by What Criteria Will Worship Be Structured in a Congregation with Diverse Theological and Practical Backgrounds?

The last thing to consider is the principles that will guide worship in multicultural churches. It is by no means easy to plan a worship service for a congregation with diverse language, culture, and faith backgrounds. The various religious traditions and experiences of each individual can be thought of as like a beautiful pearl. The question is how to sew it into a beautiful necklace.

The problem is that there is no guarantee that multicultural worship will be successful by just accepting all the worship practices into one worship service. Of course, an open attitude toward everything is essential. However, it is necessary to seriously consider how to connect the elements rather than just having them parallel.

Standards will depend on the theology of the denomination, the traditions of the church, and the characteristics of the congregations of the newly formed multicultural church. However, the Word and the sacraments are the core components of worship. Wor-

ship is a two-way movement in which God comes to us, and we meet and fellowship with God; this will be the unchanging criteria for the structure and content of worship.[8]

The theology of multicultural worship will be derived from the field of multicultural worship. At the same time, the theology of multicultural worship will influence the practice of multicultural worship because practice and theology are closely interrelated (Anderson 2003, pp. 24–28). The theology of worship and the practice of worship shape the believer's faith. By participating in worship, the believer receives the message and meaning contained in the worship service. Additionally, that meaning accumulates in the mind of the believer and forms the character of the believer's faith (Anderson 2003, p. 58).

Therefore, multicultural churches must constantly engage in theological thinking and theological work. This is not just the work of academic scholars. The reflection on multicultural worship can be considered by everyone who attends the worship.[9] What they experience and feel should be shared and communicated with those who are constantly planning worship, and should become an important principle for guiding the worship of the church.

4. Practice of Multicultural Worship

Practice and theory are closely related, like a Möbius strip. A theory emerges from the practice, but the theory also changes the practice while correcting the process and making it anew. Practice itself has a formative power (Moon 2015b, pp. 19–21). We need to look at and envision the core practices of multicultural worship that play an essential role in forming a multicultural church.

4.1. Presenting Creative Liturgical Ideas

As we have seen so far, multicultural worship cannot have a uniform recipe. This is because each church has its own context, variety of languages, ethnic groups, and cultural environment. Of course, the structure of worship has similarities across cultures and times; however, the details of worship can be planned creatively. Creativity seems to be the most necessary element for the successful implementation of multicultural worship. How can the liturgy be both biblical and acceptable to members of the church? Can worship successfully be re-created while balancing between the context of this era and rooted in tradition?[10]

In this section, I will suggest some liturgical ideas which can impact on the formation of multicultural worship. All elements of worship and ideas will be aimed at the theme of unity of the congregation.

a. Welcome and Passing the Peace

The welcoming message of the host, proclaimed at the beginning of the worship service, should make everyone present feel that the Triune God is welcoming them. Furthermore, a handshake or a light hug among the members of the congregation visibly demonstrates God's acceptance and unity, which must be continually proclaimed and practiced (Witvliet 2005, pp. 10–11).

b. In the Lord's Supper

Rather than utilizing the distribution method of communicants passing the sacramental elements to one another, which is common in evangelical, free church, Baptist, and Pentecostal churches, the Lord's Supper should allow members to come to the front and see each other's faces, and possibly choose the method of intinction. As they look at each other's faces and share the bread and the cup, the members can feel the sense of unity physically and symbolically.

c. Hymn and Praise

The importance of praise has been emphasized in contemporary worship. While impacted by the praise and worship movement, the Korean Church's music in worship is considered as important as the sermon in a public worship (Duck 2013, p. 44). A hymn is sometimes called a tuneful prayer. The lyrics of the hymn and the act of singing together

can be a very important factor in unity. Therefore, careful consideration is required in the selection of songs. In addition, proper sound adjustment is necessary so that the members can participate fully in the singing and not merely be an audience, and it must be a true congregational hymn. The lyrics of the hymn should be clearly visible on the screen, and it is also necessary to organize the list of hymns that whole congregations know well.

d. Offering

Offering is not just a donation, but part of offering our whole self to God (Bradshaw 2002, p. 336). Although the method varies according to the church, the spirit of unity can be expressed in the act of dedication. Many Korean churches set the offering box in front of the sanctuary gate. However, it will be better to have an offering sequence in the worship service, to emphasize the unity.

The office of usher can allow people from various countries to form groups to serve. The people who serve in the worship service should be diverse, and it is necessary to demonstrate through the team of ushers that everyone can participate.

e. Prayer

There are many different prayer patterns. Among them, Korean tongsung kido, a vocalized form of group prayer with enthusiastic shouting or glossolalia, has received worldwide attention (Joo and Kim 2006, p. 486). During the regular prayer time, under the guidance of the moderator, various prayer topics are prayed out loud and fervently. As shown in Acts 2, if congregations who speak different languages pray aloud concerning the same topic, it is very special to feel one heart and one accord. Above all, because there are some people who sometimes speak a glossolalia, that time can be special that transcends many different languages. In addition, it is important that the order of intercessory prayer is provided and prayer topics are presented in the bulletin or on the screen, so that the members can know the prayer topics of the other members and feel unity while praying together.

f. Reading the Bible

Bible reading is not simply reading the text for preaching, but a reverent and holy moment in which God's will is proclaimed (Duck 2013, p. 65). Following the Reformed and the Korean church tradition, preachers and clergy usually perform the reading, but in multicultural worship, it is good for people of various backgrounds and age groups, such as children, young people, and older people, to participate through the reading of the Word.[11] Through this, we can show that our public worship is a group of people of all generations and of all abilities, and we can feel a sense of unity.

4.2. Strategies for Multicultural Worship

Multicultural worship requires the long-term effort, patience, and cooperation of the pastor, staff, and all members of the church. Above all, wise strategies are required for successful development.

a. Make the Congregation Cohesive Through the Message

For multicultural worship to be successfully established, it is important that the hearts of the members unite as one. For this, the senior pastor needs to emphasize the importance of unity during sermons and through various biblical texts. It is necessary to continuously reveal the pastor's pastoral philosophy through his column in the weekly bulletin as well as the sermon. Furthermore, it is critical to draw attention to unity through special lectures and discussion sessions.

A single drop of water is powerless, but a continuous drop of water can provide the power to change (Moon 2015b, p. 72). Likewise, if the message of the unity of the church is delivered from a long-term perspective rather than a one-time slogan, it can have a great impact on the members over time.

b. Teamwork through Worship Teams

In order to minimize conflict among members of various cultural backgrounds, it is necessary to systematize clergy, worship teams, and leadership groups so that diverse people can work together (Duck 2013, pp. 51–55). In particular, the worship planning team should consist of people from different countries. This team can identify in advance which hymns are familiar, which hymns the congregation needs to learn, what symbols might be useful in worship, and what cultural characteristics are present. If cultural clashes and differences are prevented through the planning team, experiences of unity and grace in worship can increase (Van Opstal 2016, pp. 81–90). This will eventually play a major role in establishing multicultural worship.

c. Connection between the Lord's Supper and Communal Meal

One of the precious traditions of the Korean Church is to serve lunch after Sunday morning worship. Lunch has become an essential element because many Korean churches offer Sunday morning worship and Sunday afternoon worship consecutively. However, this lunch has a unique meaning. It is not simply to fill the stomach, but is regarded as a central activity of the church community. Although early morning prayer is known to the world as a unique aspect of the Korean Church, I believe that the communal meal is also a key activity in the Korean Church (Moon 2015a, p. 231). However, if we examine it carefully, this communal meal is closely related to the Eucharist. If the Lord's Supper teaches that reconciliation with God should lead to reconciliation with other people, the communal meal can be regarded as a unique aspect of the Korean Church that is synthesized into the practice of the church from a hermeneutic point of view. It is to put the teachings learned during public worship into practice immediately after the declaration of blessing. In multicultural worship, this is essential. Eating together demonstrates a tangible unity, as people open themselves up to each other and come together as one family.

d. Solving the Problem of Different Languages

The most difficult problem in multicultural worship is that people who speak different languages are worshipping together in one place. As evident in the Tower of Babel incident, language separation is closely related to the scattering of people (Waltke 2001, p. 182). Conversely, using the same language is essential to unity. However, one language cannot dominate in a multicultural context. Of course, this is possible for a long-term strategy, but it is necessary to gather wisdom because the church must survive in a multicultural situation.

Mega churches, such as Willow Creek Church, provide Chinese, Korean, and Spanish services through wireless devices and translation teams. Even if the pastor preaches in English, the congregation simultaneously listens to the sermon in a language with which they are familiar, and there is no sense of alienation. However, in general, small-sized multicultural churches lack the finances and manpower.

However, using several languages in parallel during one worship service can make the worship time somewhat long, which is difficult for the congregation.[12] Thankfully, the developments of modern science and technology are of great help in realizing various languages in one worship using a large screen. Churches should make good use of bulletins and screens to familiarize the members with multiculturalism.

5. A Sample Liturgy with Annotations

Based on the practical and theological aspects of multicultural worship that have been discussed so far, I will design a sample liturgy that can be implemented in the context of the Korean Church. Various worship styles exist all over the world; thus, various worship services can be planned for a Korean context. While respecting the structure of traditional worship, I will consider the cultural background of people living in the present age and help the members to actively participate in worship.

5.1. Description of the Liturgical Context, Theme, and Uniqueness of This Liturgy

In general, Korean Presbyterian churches usually do not select a Bible text according to the Christian year or lectionary; instead, they preach thematic sermons or on a topic left up to the discretion of the pastor.[13] Public worship style is generally a mixed form of frontier tradition, evangelical worship, and Pentecostal worship, regardless of the denomination (Kim 2012, pp. 83–84). However, in a multicultural context, there are members who have experienced various worship styles; therefore, in this project, I would like to present a worship format that organically considers various things.

Assuming that there will be more multicultural churches in the future, I will present a worship plan for Second Sunday after Easter in 2024.[14] The texts presented by the lectionary are Acts 4:32–35, Psalm 133, 1 John 1:1–2:2, and John 20:19–31. The reason why I chose this Sunday is because the texts emphasize "the unity of the saints". The risen Lord has called us to the Church. We are called to be children of God. As children, we should seek unity and have a mission to embody in our life on earth.

In general, there are many English-speaking congregations and congregations from Asia in multicultural churches in Korea. Therefore, I will plan a Sunday morning service (with the Lord's Supper) in a situation where English, Korean, and Asian languages (Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, etc.) coexist.

5.2. The Full Manuscript of the Liturgy with Annotations That Call Attention to Distinctive Liturgical Characteristics

Opening Praise: The worship service begins with a contemporary style of praise and worship. To evoke a sense of unity and the theme of worship, it is important to incorporate songs familiar to the entire congregation. Playlists are as follows:

1. "Blessed be the Lord God Almighty" (Bob Fitts) (Key of C, 4/4); 2. "He is Our Peace" (Kandela Groves) (Key of E, 4/4); 3. "Let there be Love" (Dave Bilbrough)/"Shout to the North" (Martin Smith) (Key of F, 6/8, Medley)

These gospel songs are very familiar and have long been loved by congregations around the world. The songs are composed of simple melodies, so that various members of the congregation can easily sing with one voice. The first song is in 4/4 beat, and is a song that vigorously proclaims the reign of the Lord God Almighty.

The second song repeats the confession of 'He is Our Peace' in the verse and chorus, praising Jesus for breaking down barriers and becoming peace for all of us. The confession that He carries and cares for our burdens in the chorus leads to the prayer message of the next song.

The third song connects two songs in 6/8 beat as a medley. It has a bright and cheerful atmosphere, and as the song progresses from the previous to the next, the melody rises and ends with a powerful proclamation by adding rhythm (using syncopation) and accents. In the latter song, verse 1 and verse 2 can be sung alternately by male and female congregations (antiphone). The message is also clearly reinforced. The first song prays for the love of Christ to fill us and reflects the message of 1 John. The second song is a powerful praise in which brothers and sisters are united by the savior, the King, Jesus all over the land. The four songs flow as follows: doxology, confession, exhortation for each other, and praise and proclamation all together.

Confession of faith: There are several confessions, and among them the Apostle's Creed is most famous and widely used in Korean Church. Even though people's languages are different, the contents of faith are the same: this gives worship a transcultural character. English, Korean, and the corresponding language (Asian, for example) is displayed on the screen. All who are physically able stand and confess their faith.

Prayer for Illumination: The whole congregation reads the bulletin and the prayers on the screen together, with subtitles. Through the prayer for illumination, people pray that the Holy Spirit, the author of the Bible, will open people's hearts and make people understand the Word. In general, prayer for illumination is the responsibility of the minister in charge of the Word. However, because all the saints pray with one voice, it can engender

a feeling of unity. In addition, people could implicitly realize that preaching is not a time for listening to human words, but a moment when God's will is revealed through the preacher.

First Reading: Acts 4:32–35: The first reading is carried out by a Filipino among the congregation. On the screen, both Korean and English subtitles should be presented so that people can grasp the meaning at the same time.

Hymn Singing: Between the first and second readings, 6the whole congregation sings Psalm 133, which was published by the Christian Reformed Church.[15] Psalm singing between the readings comes from Church tradition. Singing Psalm 133 has several merits. First, the lyrics of the Psalm tune highlight the themes of worship. Second, while singing the Psalm, which is arranged with a modern tune, people can more vividly be immersed in the lyrics and can have enthusiasm for oneness.

Second Reading: 1 John 1:1–2:2: The second reading is carried out by a Korean from the congregation. Of course, at that time, English and Filipino subtitles should be presented on the screen.

Third Readings: John 20:10–31: The third reading is performed in English. Bible reading is a very important factor in worship. Therefore, each reader should practice, and their reading should be examined by minister before the worship service.

Sermon: The sermon delivers the message, focusing on Psalm 133. The main points are as follows: God wants a congregation to enjoy real unity; God said that it is so good and beautiful to live a faithful life with unity in the church, but, historically, church has had sinful divisions; there has been lack of real hospitality and union even though people have emphasized doctrinal correctness and theological opinion; ultimately, the whole church must fulfill the will of God, as revealed through the Word.

Lord's Supper: The overall structure of the sacrament is similar to that of any other church. However, all the members of the church come to the front of the chapel and receive bread and cups face to face. Of course, the method of intinction is also a possible choice. However, rather than passing bread and cup to one another after the deacons deliver the elements to people on the aisle from table, it will be better using a method that builds a sense of community. Above all, the order of offering is included during the Eucharist. The offering in the Eucharist is used for *diaconia*, as in the case of John Calvin, aiming to help poor people (Chapell 2009, p. 24). In particular, there are many cases of economic difficulties among multicultural families in Korea. It is stated in advance that it will be used for all members and the unbelieving families they recommend.

Congregational Hymn: At the end of the Lord's Supper, the whole congregation sings The Lord's Prayer, composed by A. H. Malotte, which is loved by Korean Church.[16] As the lyrics ask the Lord for His will to be done on earth, the members come to realize that prayer is not about putting our will to God, but rather our obedience to God's will. It will be an important opportunity to respond to the message of unity revealed throughout worship.

Benediction: Based on 2 Corinthians 13:13, the service concludes with the following benediction, emphasizing one body: "May the grace of Christ, which daily renews us, and the love of God, which enables us to love all, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, which unites us in one body, make us eager to obey the will of God until we meet again, through Jesus Christ, our Lord".

Procession: Committed to living a life of unity in the Lord, singing praises, the congregation moves to a place for a communal meal. The orchestra and worship team play this song until the whole congregation moves out from the sanctuary. The hymn to be sung at this time is "Come, Christians, Join to Sing".[17] This bright and cheerful hymn emotionally emphasizes the joy of oneness in the presence of God. This joy is connected to praise to the God.

Communal Meal: Through the Lord's Supper, the members learn and feel that fellowship with God should lead to fellowship with neighbors. This lesson is further reinforced and embodied in the communal meal. Although the church prepares basic food, it is advertised in advance that it is a potluck, and the members should bring their own food as well. People will have the opportunity to share special foods from different countries and

to have real fellowship. A phenomenon often observed in repeated communal meals is that people have a tendency to sit with their close friends. Therefore, the worship planning team should come up with detailed ideas for each communal meal so that various congregations can be mixed and members can develop real fellowship.

5.3. Evaluation of the Liturgy with Its Benefits and Challenges

The above sample liturgy is based on the theme of the unity of all the saints, and the Word, the Lord's Supper, and various elements of worship are juxtaposed. As Gordon Lathrop talked about the effect of juxtaposition, the Word and the Lord's Supper become the central thing, and the elements of biblical worship are arranged around it, producing the following effects (Lathrop 1998, pp. 51–52). The message "God has commanded us to be one, we have a mission to realize this unity in the church gatherings and in the lives of the saints" penetrates and echoes in the hearts of the participants.

The above liturgy is a delicate balance between modern worship and traditional worship. The overall structure of worship tends to respect the traditions of the church. However, its contents have a cultural form that can reach the saints living in modern times. For example, Bible reading is a traditional form, but it emphasizes the meaning of participation while expanding readers and including various people. Additionally, the use of various praises encourages members to voluntarily open their lips and actively participate in worship. The lyrics of the hymn called tuneful prayer permeate into the body and mind of the saints in the process of utterance (Harmon 1998, pp. 271–73).

Above all, when all the saints participate in the sacrament meeting together, see each other as they receive the elements, and confirm their unity, it reflects the message of the entire worship service. Furthermore, the connection between the Lord's Supper and the communal meal is great way to move worship from an idea to a practical reality on the spot (Moon 2015a, p. 233).

However, there are also several considerations. The presence of multiple languages in one worship service and conducting various sequences in the context of a limited worship time requires more careful consideration in the overall worship planning. We need to think about how to create a sense of inclusiveness and consideration for each other without the feeling of being tedious or cumbersome when using various languages.

Additionally, it is not good for the worship team to be monopolized by a certain language-speaking congregation. It would be better if members who come from various culture could participate in evenly. Above all, it is necessary to find common denominators among these members and expand them. When combining elements of worship from other cultures unfamiliar with one culture, it is necessary to check more thoroughly in the planning stage of worship, reduce the speed of change, and observe people's reactions (Van Opstal 2016, pp. 154–57).

The use of multiple languages in worship service can be quite stressful for the congregation. Other languages and unique elements can be surprising, but they can also be a factor that makes people lose their concentration in worship. Rather than having multiple languages juxtaposed in parallel, I think it is necessary to utilize a large screen and a weekly bulletin, so that preparation for the worship service can be concentrated and effective.

6. Conclusions

As the wave of globalization affects Korea, people from many countries are coming to the country. It is time for the Korean Church to pay great attention to the many workers who have entered Korean society and to multicultural families formed through international marriages. The Church should not regard them just as objects of evangelism, but as members of one church, one body of the Lord. This thought should lead to an interest in worshiping with them.

The Korean church should transcend beyond simply supporting a meeting place for a specific language congregation and think about how all members can enjoy organic unity in one worship service. To this end, as mentioned above, theological and practical

theological considerations of worship are necessary. I think that multicultural worship is the implementation of the vision of Revelation at this time and in this place. Of course, the process of mutual dialogue and understanding is necessary because of differences in language and culture. Additionally, this will require the patience of the saints, as well as time. Nevertheless, rather than waiting for the second coming of the Lord, it should be started and developed in the Sunday worship service with various people.

Korean society prides itself on being a homogeneous nation; therefore, it is not easy for people from other countries to become true members of the church. However, if the pastor and the saints adhere to the biblical values and intentionally pursue unity, they will experience the history of "the will of the Lord being done in this place". This begins with multicultural worship. The multicultural worship model presented by the author will be helpful to churches in multicultural scenarios.

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Notes

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PG2BQDyyoow, accessed on 14 September 2021.
2. https://www.dw.com/en/homogeneous-south-korea-deals-with-growing-multiculturalism/a-15858944, accessed on 16 September 2021.
3. http://kosin.org/page_OWxV37, accessed on 17 September 2021. As of January 2022, the statistics for multicultural churches among the three major Presbyterian denominations (Kosin, Hapdong, and Tonghap) in Korea are as follows. Kosin has 1 multicultural church among its 2113 churches, Hapdong has 1 multi-cultural church among its 11,686 churches, and Tonghap has 29 multi-cultural church among its 9341 churches. These denominations have no official records of any emerging multicultural churches in South Korea. Although some multicultural centers are operated by denominations, their primary function is not for worship, but for mission and social welfare. These centers may offer worship for immigrants, but are less likely to draw participation from the native-born Korean population. For this reason, denominations do not count those meetings as a "church". Strictly speaking, each denomination has had little concern about multicultural church growth until now.
4. Regarding types of Multiracial Churches, see Yancey (2003, pp. 51–70).
5. Regarding more detailed information on church, see https://ulinch0229.wixsite.com/ulinch?lang=ko, accessed 5 October 2021.
6. Regarding to danger and fear of syncretism, see Stauffer (2014, p. 40).
7. Check and organize the songs which are sung by the church every week. What songs are being sung, and how often? If you look at the hymn list, you will be able to figure out what the theological interests and characteristics of the church are. This is because a song is a melodic prayer, and the hymn influences the formation of the believer's faith. In regard to the relationship between songs and faith formation, see Saliers (2007, p. 9).
8. Regarding worship and trinity, see Witvliet (2005, pp. 3–4).
9. Reflection on worship is not just for the work of special scholars, but possible for any participants. Kavanagh (1992, pp. 74–75).
10. Regarding liturgy and creativity, see Anderson (2017, pp. 65–90).
11. https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/reading-scripture-in-public-worship/, accessed on 7 October 2021.
12. It is highly necessary to take the pressure off and stay out of hastiness. Slow and steady is the best policy in making for the multicultural worship. See Davis and Lerner (2015, pp. 158–59).
13. http://news.kmib.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0924170069&code=23111111, accessed on 8 October 2021.
14. https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu, accessed on 9 October 2021.
15. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2T62zdqo8xk, accessed on 15 Octboer 2021.
16. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkMVgKf3sC8, accessed on 23 October 2021.
17. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xeZLDY8fJ1Y, accessed on 11 November 2021.

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Article

Potting Christianity: Ecumenical Worship in Its Multicultural and Multi-Ethnic Context

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Abstract: In the gardening world, potting refers to the cultivation of plants by cutting, layering, and replacing nutrients-depleted soil with new soil in larger pots to accommodate the growth process. This understanding seems helpful in describing ecumenical worship. There are two perspectives about this phenomenon. On one end of the liturgical practice spectrum, it is perceived as a "least-common-denominator" worship form where contested expressions are cast aside and replaced by elements that are acceptable by everyone. As a result, ecumenical worship is held up as a product of complex negotiation but displays a remarkable lack of spiritual depth in its outcome. On the other end, there is the World Council of Churches—a fellowship of 350 churches that is regarded as the epitome of ecumenism in practice particularly its worship celebration. The assembly, convened every eight years, is seen as a "best practice" showcase for ecumenical worship. In fact, many of the "global songs" being sung by our congregation were premiered in this ecumenical setting. How might we make sense of these perceptions? To that end, this article seeks to describe a suitably appropriate method in planning ecumenical worship and to identify elements that this worship genre needs to consider in its rendition. The efforts of the 2022 assembly worship planning committee of the World Council of Churches serves as the case study. Theo-liturgical principles that define this worship design are examined and discussed. By this, insights may be garnered to help local congregations appreciate this distinctive liturgical form that has its raison d'etre as an expression of Christian reconciliation and unity and to understand what is needed to successfully design such services. In so doing, the work of congregations may be strengthened to face the resurgence of racism and xenophobia in their local contexts.

Keywords: ecumenical worship; interconfessional prayer; world council of churches; assembly; spiritual ecumenism; receptive ecumenism; best practice principle

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> Ecumenism is not about conformity on the lowest possible level. It should rather have to do with sharing spiritual and liturgical treasures.
>
> Liborius Olaf Lumma (Lumma 2018)

1. Introduction

In the gardening world, potting refers to the cultivation of plants through the introduction of new soil in larger pots to accommodate the growth process. In my view, this understanding seems helpful in describing the desired outcome for ecumenical worship—that of engaging the churches' worship practices to express ecclesiastical unity. Yet, not surprisingly, given inherent theological differences, there are competing opinions about such efforts. For this reason, this article seeks to present a suitably appropriate method in the design process and to identify elements that this worship genre needs to consider in its rendition. Drawing on the efforts of the 2022 assembly worship planning committee of the World Council of Churches, theo-liturgical principles that define this worship design are examined and discussed. In particular, there are the closely linked theological premise of both Spiritual Ecumenism formulated by Abbé Paul Couturier of Lyons in the 1930s

and the concept of Receptive Ecumenism postulated by British Catholic theologian Paul D. Murray in 2007 (Pizzey 2019, p. 62).

On one end of the liturgical practice spectrum, ecumenical worship is perceived as a "least-common-denominator" worship form where contested expressions are cast aside and replaced by elements that are acceptable by everyone. As a result, ecumenical worship is held up as a product of complex negotiation but displays a remarkable lack of spiritual depth in its outcome. In his article, Ecumenical Services—a Little Known Type, German-Austrian liturgical scholar Lumma offered this description of the practice of constituting ecumenical worship ordo. He surmised,

> Ministers from different denominations meet at a negotiating table. They come to mutual agreements on Scripture readings, hymns, intercessory prayer, the Lord's prayer, maybe they write new prayers. A preacher is chosen, and eventually, all the necessary offices in the liturgy are shared among the ministers. Done! The result is a newly created service consisting of elements that everyone can agree too. It is a "least-common denominator-" service. (Lumma 2018)

In this planning process, Lumma noted the extensive preparation for the complex undertaking results in a worship event that is seemingly lacking in spiritual depth. He proposes that perhaps ecumenical liturgical effort can be better served by taking seriously the call to "share more deeply in traditions which often have developed from common roots" (Article 117) from the *Ecumenical Directory: Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Eumenism* (Roman Catholic Church, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity 1993). Not surprisingly, this call for "a better practice" has been heeded by the organization known to be the epitome of ecumenism, the World Council of Churches (henceforth abbreviated as WCC).

This fellowship of three hundred and fifty confessional churches (or denominations) convenes every eight years to conduct its business. For this purpose, it draws on spiritual life expressions of prayers, song, and illustrative actions to aid in its deliberations. With this intention, the prayer life designed for the assembly has the important task of sharing "spiritual and liturgical treasures." In fact, an obvious first fruit of this sharing is the proliferation of newly composed "songs from the majority world or global south." In fact, many of these non-western songs that are now widely sung by our local churches were introduced in WCC assemblies.

Nevertheless, the comment of Lumma is insightful. Ecumenical worship is fraught with inherent tension. Roman Catholic liturgical scholar Teresa Berger, in investigating the practice of worship in the ecumenical movement through the reports of the Faith and Order conference of the WCC, noted that,

> In Lund (World Council of Churches, Faith and Order Commission 1952 conference report) ecumenical reflections on worship concentrated on the fact that in worship "disunity becomes explicit and the sense of separation most acute." The conference maintained: "In worship we meet the problem, nay, rather the sin of the disunion of the church in its sharpest form". (Berger 2003)

She observed that,

> Lund 1952 was a first attempt to formulate both the existing agreement and the unsolved problems regarding the meaning and practice of worship. The formulation of agreement appropriately and convincingly begins with the Trinitarian basis (see Trinity) and pneumatological context (see Holy Spirit) of worship. "We worship one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Triune God, by whose Spirit all true worship is inspired and unto whom all Christian worship is offered." The agreed statements which follow concern questions that are anthropological (worship involves the whole person), liturgical (a drawing together of the common elements observed in Ways of Worship), sacramental (the appreciation of both word and sacrament) and ecclesiological (worship always takes place within the communion of saints). Also mentioned is a theme that would be

> stressed repeatedly in subsequent ecumenical documents on worship: "However we view the church's worship, we are unanimous that its setting is the church's mission to the world." The section on unsolved problems takes up more specific questions (e.g., the precise relationship between word and sacrament and the place in worship of saints and the departed). (Berger 2003)

Ultimately, Berger concluded that,

> Lund's recommendations to the churches emphasize unity as the aim of all the studies on different patterns of worship. Some recommendations re-appear in later documents, indicating that in the meantime the member churches have not taken them seriously enough. (Berger 2003)

Eden Grace, a youth delegate from the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) to the 9th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998 observed that,

> Both the experience of worship in the World Council of Churches, and the WCC's discussions about worship, have developed, deepened, and changed emphases over the course of [time]. (Grace 2002, p. 3)

From the 1998 Assembly, she offered her perspective about ecumenical liturgical practice,

> The common worship at ecumenical events typically took the form of a rotation of confessional liturgies, "shared" with conference participants for the purpose of mutual edification. Yet even from the beginning there were attempts to express a shared worship of the ecumenical gathering itself, united even in its cultural and theological diversities. (Grace 2002, p. 3)

Clearly from these voices, ecumenical worship is complex in design yet yields uncertain results. Indeed, with multiple forces involved in constructing a meaningful ordo to speaking meaningfully to and for its diverse constituency, might there be some best practice principles we can appreciate from the design process? More importantly, might the approaches of Spiritual and Receptive Ecumenism be efficacious in this context? In my opinion, the regular gathering of the WCC serves as an appropriate setting for this opportunity of learning. Previous essays examining ecumenical worship tended to comment on the "finished product" of the worship phenomenon as experienced by the authors. While helpful, this perspective offers limited insight as to how the prayers were designed, how the planning team navigated through theological differences in the design process, and so forth. However, through my involvement as a member in the assembly worship planning team for the 11th Assembly of the WCC at Karlsruhe, Germany in 2022, I assert that my observation as an embedded participant-observer can offer insight into the design process. In so doing, I hope this account can help local congregations better appreciate this distinctive liturgical form that has its *raison d'etre* as an expression of Christian reconciliation and unity.

2. In the Beginning

Assembly worship planning at the WCC is a collaborative effort that begins in earnest approximately three years before the event. The WCC Central Committee that was elected at the last assembly in 2013 creates and populates the Assembly Planning Committee (henceforth abbreviated as APC). At the same time, suitable persons from various denominations are identified and invited to serve on the Assembly Worship Planning Team (henceforth abbreviated as AWPC) for a term of three years (World Council of Churches 2019). The AWPC serves within the APC. With their appointments, AWPC members are committed to attend both "In-Person" and video-conference meetings to plan and design the prayer services. However, it is important to understand that the worship design work of this committee is not carried out independently but informed by the assembly theme adopted by WCC leadership (Hammes 2021). As Verena Hammes, general secretary of the Council of Christian Churches in Germany, reminded us,

> Assembly themes are not simply random slogans, chosen by chance and therefore without significance. They serve as a guideline for the assemblies, as a word spoken to delegates and to the wider world as an orientation for debate, decision, and, not least, prayer. (Hammes 2021, p. 405)

Therefore, the theme is the backbone and essence of the assembly. It serves as the primary focus that theologically informs and shapes all activities at the assembly. The WCC publication, *Let the Spirit Speak to the Churches*, asserts that "in all WCC assemblies, reflections on the theme and its implications for the church's witness have provided an overall theological framework for the work of the assembly" (World Council of Churches 1990, p. xi).

Given that members of the AWPC come from all over the world, the first meeting of the AWPC was occupied with orientation of its members to the "big picture" overview of the forthcoming assembly. At the same time, having committee members from various parts of the global and being from different denominations ensured that worship design deliberations would intrinsically reflect diverse ecclesial perspectives, experiences, and theological ethos. Diversity is *fait accompli.* This manner of constituting the planning team resonates with the key principles of both the Spiritual and Receptive Ecumenism movements that shape church unity dialogical efforts of the World Council of Churches among its member churches. In essence, these movements ask, "what is it that we in our tradition need to learn and receive, with integrity, from others?" (World Council of Churches 2021, p. 31) These approaches call for the AWPC to be respectful and open to all Christian traditions in the spirit of John 17:21, where the scripture urges, "that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21, NRSV).

Also at the AWPC gathering, purposeful efforts were made to explain the key tasks of the committee, working groups were formed, timelines projected, meetings with the local host committee scheduled, and a visit to the proposed assembly site was held. Relevant WCC documents like the *Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC* were shared and clarified to ensure that there was explicit understanding of terminologies being used by WCC by AWPC members. In the Special Commission report, it defines two key terms used for the assembly, that of "Confessional common prayer" and "Interconfessional common prayer." The report states,

> "Confessional common prayer" is the prayer of a confession, a communion, or a denomination within a confession. Its ecclesial identity is clear. It is offered as a gift to the gathered community by a particular delegation of the participants, even as it invites all to enter into the spirit of prayer. It is conducted and presided over in accordance with its own understanding and practice. "Interconfessional common prayer" is usually prepared for specific ecumenical events. It is an opportunity to celebrate together drawing from the resources of a variety of traditions. Such prayer is rooted in the past experience of the ecumenical community as well as in the gifts of the member churches to each other. But it does not claim to be the worship of any given member church, or of any kind of a hybrid church or super-church. Properly understood and applied, this distinction can free the traditions to express themselves either in their own integrity or in combination, all the while being true to the fact that Christians do not yet experience full unity together, and that the ecumenical bodies in which they participate are not themselves churches. (World Council of Churches, Central Committee 2002, Final Report, article 42)

The WCC document elaborates,

> 15. When we gather to pray together at WCC events, there are occasions when the prayer has been identified with one confession or church within a confessional tradition—hence the term "confessional common prayer." More often, common prayer in ecumenical settings is prepared from a combination of traditions. Such common prayer has often been called "ecumenical worship," but this term can

be imprecise and misleading, and therefore should not be used. Instead, a more precise term would be "interconfessional common prayer." Distinguishing between confessional and interconfessional common prayer, along the lines drawn below, may provide a greater clarity—both spiritually and ecclesiologically—to the prayer life of WCC events.

- Confessional common prayer is the prayer of a confession, a communion, or a denomination within a confession. It has a particular ecclesial identity. Examples would include the Service of the Word of a Lutheran church, such as the ELCA; or the healing rite of a united church, such as the United Church of Canada; or the Uniting Church in Australia. It could be a Roman Catholic Vespers service or an Orthodox Matins service.
- Interconfessional common prayer is usually prepared for specific ecumenical events. It does not emerge out of a single ecclesial tradition or one church. It may represent patterns that churches have in common (Service of the Word, daily office), but it is not the established liturgy of one confession. It has no ecclesial standing; it is normally designed by an ad hoc committee (World Council of Churches, Central Committee 2002, Final Report, Appendix A, article 15).

It was also made explicit that the term "ecumenical worship" will not be used in the context of WCC. The report provides the rationale for this assertion. It states,

> The term "ecumenical worship" has caused confusion about the ecclesial character of such worship, the ecclesiological status of the WCC, and the degree of unity that has in fact been achieved. For these reasons, the phrase "ecumenical worship" will not be used. (World Council of Churches, Central Committee 2002, Final Report, Appendix A, article 2)

To build team cohesion for the task, time was also set aside to strengthen rapport and mutual understanding among committee members. Preliminary discussion of the committee centered on examining the theme and brainstorming on how it may be expressed in the scope of the "Interconfessional common prayer" setting. Given that denominations with local parishes at the assembly site would be invited by WCC to plan the "Confessional common prayer" gatherings, the AWPC focused its attention on the "Interconfessional common prayer" events. These consist of the Opening, and Closing, and the six morning prayers.

3. Towards Interconfessional Prayer Design

At its first meeting in 2019, members of the AWPC were scheduled to lead devotions from their ecclesial tradition at each morning and evening. Over six days, different types of prayers were experienced. The remaining time of this first meeting was spent on collecting ideas that speak to the theme. This included possible scriptural narratives, illustrative (symbolic) actions, and prayer components such as songs, prayers, etc. Smaller working groups were organized to ensure that all opinions were heard and documented. Musicians in the AWPC were formed into a group and tasked with developing the approach to call for new songs and to vet and recommend these songs to the AWPC when the prayer services were being designed. At regular intervals, working groups reported their progress. Towards the end of the first AWPC meeting, video-conferencing-based working meetings were scheduled. Particularly time-demanding was the musician working group that was tasked with setting up a schedule to have a process to review new music submissions. The meeting concluded with the recommendation of various scriptural narratives and approaches of the theme to the Assembly Planning Committee for consideration. These were favorably received.

In the midst of the global pandemic, the AWPC held its second meeting through video conferencing. In this meeting, held over multiple video conferencing sessions, the committee began deliberating in earnest the various scriptural narratives and approaches.

This gave rise to the proposal of an initial ordo for the "Interconfessional common prayer" that reflected the parameters provided by the WCC, which state,

> 22. Interconfessional common prayer in an ecumenical context is an opportunity to express together those things which we have in common and to rejoice that "what unites us is stronger than what divides us." We can experience the variety of cultural forms with which Christian faith is expressed. However, interconfessional common prayer should take care not to prejudge, implicitly or explicitly, those theological points on which the churches are still divided.
>
> 23. Interconfessional common prayer at WCC gatherings would be well served by the use of a structure or *ordo*, based on the ancient Christian patterns. In developing the *ordo*, the planning committee might draw, for example, on the daily offices or on the service of the word. Common prayer should strive for a coherence that integrates the various elements into a unified purpose. Committees might consult the work of the worship committee for the 1998 Assembly in Harare in regard to the application of an *ordo* in interconfessional common prayer. In discerning how to enact an *ordo* in a particular ecumenical context, committees should make use of elements that have been "ecumenically-tested" by prior use and reception, as well as provide opportunity to receive fresh offerings from the worship life of the churches. The balance between new and familiar elements must be carefully discerned.
>
> 27. *Use of symbols and symbolic action:* Symbols and symbolic actions chosen for prayer in ecumenical settings ought to be readily understood by a culturally and confessionally diverse ecumenical gathering. When using elements that are particular to one tradition, these should be presented in a way that honors the integrity of that tradition and is meaningful in ecumenical usage. Some symbols may not translate well between particular cultures and ecumenical settings, and some may be too contrived to be useful for common prayer. At ecumenical gatherings such as WCC events, we should expect to experience a variety of symbols, some of which are unfamiliar to some participants. Such symbols will require explanation.
>
> 30. *Leadership of women:* When common prayer is being offered in a confessional form, the practice of that confession in regard to leadership of women should normally apply. For interconfessional common prayer, a decentralized leadership and equality of participation allow for any participant—male or female and clergy or lay—to take any role. In an ecumenical context, we come together with a range of positions on the question of ordination of women, both between and sometimes within our churches, and we are not yet ready to reconcile these differences. Thus, planners should refrain from taking a confrontational stance on the question of ordination of women by implying that the current practice of a particular church is the only possible Christian position on the issue.
>
> 31. *Unfamiliarity:* Care should be taken that our common prayer invites participants into particular contexts and symbols rather than asking them to watch it done as a cultural display. For major events (and especially for first-time attenders), this will probably entail an orientation to the experience, explaining what will happen and what it means. The question of how to make common prayer accessible for those who are not familiar with the form is equally relevant for both confessional and interconfessional common prayer. Each individual enters into the experience according to his or her own conscience, yet we should strive to allow participants to move beyond being simply spectators of unfamiliar rites. The elements of common prayer should not themselves become the focus of common prayer but rather should serve to facilitate the genuine prayers of the community. (World Council of Churches, Central Committee 2002, Final Report, Appendix A, articles 22–23, 27, 30–31)

With these principles in mind, the AWPC proposed to be mindful of the pilgrimage imagery that was found in the "interconfessional common prayers" of previous assemblies. In particular, the 10th assembly at Busan, South Korea in 2013 with its theme of "God of life, lead us to justice and peace" (World Council of Churches 2013). At the same time, members of the AWPC finalized the scriptural narratives that could embody the assembly's theme, "Christ's love moves world to reconciliation, and unity." Following extensive discussion, the identified narratives were crafted into the interconfessional prayers for the assembly. At the same time, close attention was paid to the developing ordo to ensure appropriate transition between various prayer segments and to ensure that the ordo was coherent over the many days of the assembly. In this meeting, logistics for the assembly's "Interconfessional common prayer" were also discussed and recommendations given to the WCC leadership to finalize worship space design. Since the 6th assembly at Vancouver (Canada) in 1983, a tent-like prayer space has served to house the work of common prayers at each subsequent assembly (Pacific Mountain Regional Council Archives, United Church of Canada 1983, 2:18–2:45). Not surprisingly, a similar outdoor design was decided for the 2022 event in Germany as well. This structure will be used for all prayer events.

For its final meeting before the 2022 assembly, the AWPC will work on finalizing the design of the interconfessional prayers and preparing these for publication. AWPC members will also be assigned roles and responsibilities for interconfessional prayers. Some will serve as musicians, song leaders, and prayer leaders and coordinators. The committee will also work on identifying and recruiting additional song leaders to support the music-making work at the assembly. This is because one of the guiding principles of interconfessional common prayer is to have prayers spoken in the official languages of the WCC and songs taught and led in their original languages by leaders from where the songs originated. Once the songs have been finalized, the music working group will work to create musical arrangements for the selected songs. Concurrently, the AWPC will determine rehearsal times for musicians, worship presiders, local choirs, and even assembly delegates and share this information widely to facilitate participation in the prayer life at the assembly. It goes without saying that every aspect of the common prayers will be reviewed and rehearsed at the assembly prior to its rendering because of the multilingual dimension, its strong dependency on multicultural music-making, and use of symbolic (illustrative) actions.

4. Benefits for Local Context

How might the principles of designing "Interconfessional common prayer" strengthen the efforts of our local churches seeking to build bridges in their communities? In my opinion, I believe there are three valuable best-practice principles. First is the presence of power dynamics involved in planning ecumenical worship design. Failure to recognize the reality of this would surely doom any well-meaning effort resulting in the scenario of the "least-common-denominator" service rather than one that intentionally shares "spiritual and liturgical treasures." Concerted efforts to maintain open communication and willingness to grapple with liturgical differences are key to overt Christian unity. This is the desired outcome of Spiritual Ecumenism envisioned by its founder, Couturier, as well as Murray who postulated Receptive Ecumenism (Pizzey 2019, p. 65). At times, gracious acceptance of differences and the willingness to explore alternatives might prove helpful. Equally important is to recognize that this service design is distinctive for the occasion and not intended to be "confessional." Consider this thought guidelines from the WCC report,

> 17. In spite of these realities, preserving the distinction between confessional and interconfessional common prayer at WCC gatherings, and making it explicit (i.e., identifying each event accordingly), can be useful in addressing many of the ambiguities and tensions associated with common prayer. Properly understood and applied, this distinction can free the traditions to express themselves either in their own integrity or in combination, all the while being true to the fact that

Christians do not yet experience full unity together and that the ecumenical bodies in which they participate are not themselves churches.

- Confessional common prayer expresses the integrity of a given tradition. Its ecclesial identity is clear. It is offered as a gift to the gathered community by a particular delegation of the participants, even as it invites all to enter into the spirit of prayer. It is conducted and presided over in accordance with its own understanding and practice.
- Interconfessional common prayer is an opportunity to celebrate together drawing from the resources of a variety of traditions. Such prayer is rooted in the past experience of the ecumenical community as well as in the gifts of the member churches to each other. However, it does not claim to be the worship of any given member church or of any kind of a hybrid church or super-church. It is not (or ought not be) celebrated or presided over in such a way that would associate it with any one church or imply that it has an ecclesial status (World Council of Churches, Central Committee 2002, Final Report, Appendix A, article 17).

When all parties are aware of this power dynamics, the next matter would be rooting the design in a commonly shared liturgical ordo. In so doing, the ordo transcends confessional boundaries and is not the exclusive showcase for a particular denomination but can bear the gifts and treasures for all denominations. A helpful starting point would be to identify what worship elements are common and what elements are not. A valuable follow-up question would be to ask what elements can be shared. In my limited WCC experience, prayers (sung or spoken, the Lord's Prayer, Creed, etc.), congregational songs (psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs), symbols (water and fire), and certain postures and gestures (standing, sitting, kneeling, bowing, lifted hands, etc.) are commonplace. These can readily be woven together to create a meaningful ecumenical experience. Equally important is to remember that not all worship elements of one's denomination are readily understood or accepted by others—for example, the celebration of the Eucharist or the use of inclusive language for God. Being hospitable and willing to consider alternatives may help the process of reconciliation and building credible unity. Instead of celebrating the Eucharist, consider implementing the Moravian love feast in its place.

Finally, ensure the service design strengthens congregational participation by providing a variety of "toe-holds." Common solutions such as familiar congregational songs and prayers can be included. Other possibilities include instituting a brief time of rehearsal for the attending congregants a few minutes before the service, selecting proficient song leaders, musicians, and engaging worship leaders who can competently lead the gathering. It is important to remember that a well-designed ordo is only as good as its rendering in performance practice. To that end, providing sufficient time for rehearsal for all involved is paramount so that the worship of God can be meaningfully experienced.

5. In Closing

Ecumenical worship services have the tendency to take worshippers out of their comfort zones. For some, it is akin to the potting experience in the gardening world where such transplanting into new soil and larger pots usher in flourishing growth—if the work is done with much care. In this article, I sought to describe and showcase the AWPC of the WCC as it designed the various prayers for the 11th assembly to be held in Karlsruhe, Germany. The objective of this participant-observer approach was to offer best-practice principles in ecumenical worship in multi-ethnic and multicultural settings as gleaned from the working of the AWPC.

In this examination, I highlighted various points from an important document of the WCC. Created in 2002 following the 8th assembly of the WCC in Harare, this *Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC* provided guidelines for planning ecumenical worship. In this document, the WCC introduces the concept of

"Interconfessional common prayer" that it practices and explains why it discourages using the nomenclature ecumenical worship. This change is grounded in the distinctive context that the "prayer is rooted in the past experience of the ecumenical community as well as in the gifts of the member churches to each other. But it does not claim to be the worship of any given member church, or of any kind of a hybrid church or super-church" (World Council of Churches, Central Committee 2002, Final Report, article 42). Indeed, the ordo does not belong to any confession (or denomination), yet its use presents an opportunity for heartfelt mutual sharing of liturgical treasures and expressions as championed by Spiritual and Receptive Ecumenism in its journey towards overt Christian unity instead of being a "least-common-denominator" worship form. Aligned with that purpose, this article showcased a method in planning ecumenical worship and identified elements that this worship genre needs to consider in its rendition. It provided theological guidance for decision making in the worship design. Closing out this article, I offered three best-practice principles to strengthen ecumenical worship practice by local congregations keen to experience the tangible expression of reconciliation and be the visible sign of Christian unity.

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Article

The Multicultural Church of "Le Jour du Seigneur"

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Abstract: Multicultural worship is defined here as a form of worship that is attractive to both non-religious outsiders and religious insiders. It is most appropriate in our times of religious decline. This paper presents a Catholic television program which involves collaboration with Protestants, the secular state television, secular writers, and university professors. This Sunday service consists of two parts: a discussion called "le magazine" and the mass taking place every week in a different parish. During the pandemic, when there were strict restrictions from March 2020 to September 2020, the program aired innovative worship services, centered on music and images, broadcast from a small Paris studio. When in September 2020 the pandemic was thought to be over and the major restrictions were lifted, the program became theologically and pastorally more multicultural than ever before. The conclusion offers other examples of multicultural worship adapted to our times of religious decline.

Keywords: Catholic cyber church; lay-centered program; multicultural worship

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This paper describes the multicultural service of the Catholic television program, *Le Jour du Seigneur*, on the French state television. It is descriptive for the benefit of liturgists. It endeavors to be theologically neutral and wants to avoid theological arguments. My thesis that in our times of religious decline this program offers alternatives to the traditional monocultural services. Its organizational structure is unique: it is run by lay specialists working in harmony for members of a religious order. Each Sunday the program begins with a general discussion about a pressing social issue. The Sunday mass takes place in a different church every week which allows for variation. During the pandemic it showed exceptional creativity in worship and music. After the pandemic it emphasized the contribution of lay volunteers in the local churches. It is highly successful: each week it attracts about half a million viewers through television and the internet. Let me begin with a definition of multiculturalism.

1. Introduction: Monoculturalism vs. Multiculturalism in Worship

Mainline Protestantism and Catholicism have a long tradition of monocultural worship because their liturgies are strictly regulated by official church documents, such as the Book of Common Prayer or the Roman Missal. Before Vatican II, the Latin Mass was almost the same all over the Catholic world[1]. The Vatican II liturgical reforms, which sought to overcome this monoculturalism, experienced strong resistance—a resistance that has continued to this day. Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre opposed most Vatican II innovations. He created the Society of Saint Pius X from which emerged the Society of Saint Pius V, the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter, and numerous other resistance groups.

Today we witness a return religious sectarianism. In the United States, the religious issues of abortion and same-sex marriage are divisive political issues. On the international scene, Islamic terrorism propagates violence in order to establish a dictatorial form of Islam. In the Middle East, where Christians and Muslims have cohabited peacefully for centuries, the Shiites and the Sunnis kill one another. Of course, these conflicts also involve economic and ethnic tensions. In the Far East, one Buddhist nation persecutes the Muslims, elsewhere the Hindus persecute the Muslims, and elsewhere the Muslims persecute Christians. Within

Catholicism, traditionalists favor a return to pre-Vatican II forms of worship and reject, often in violent terms, what they see as unacceptable individual liberalism.

In the context of religious decline in the West, which is characterized by increased religious indifference of the masses and increased sectarianism of conservatives, I see multicultural worship as a form of worship that is attractive to outsiders while also satisfying insiders. It is a form of adaptation in which the outsiders are not coopted by the insiders, and the beliefs of the insiders are not watered down to the outsiders' lowest common denominator. Many English-speaking churches have services in Spanish or another foreign language, but this multiculturalism only adjusts to internal differences and does not extend beyond the borders of the church or denomination. What is needed is a new form of evangelism that is respectful of the outsiders' particularities while remaining loyal to the insiders' religious identity.

This paper presents an example rather than a theory of this form of multiculturalism. It is purely descriptive in order to avoid theological and theoretical disputes. It is geared to liturgists whose goal is to implement vital forms of worship, rather than theologians for their doctrinal evaluation. The example presented here is highly successful, which suggests that there is something valuable in it. Some American megachurches are good examples of worship attractive to outsiders, such as the seeker-friendly Community Church of Willow Creek and the purpose-driven Saddleback Church. They uphold different (and maybe questionable) theologies, but they are successful for reasons other than their theologies.

The example of multicultural worship described here is the Sunday worship program called *Le Jour du Seigneur*. It has the following characteristics. (1) Many of its programs are Protestant–Catholic co-productions on topics of common interest. (2) It is independent from yet maintains a friendly relationship with the French Catholic bishops and thus its orthodoxy cannot be questioned. (3) For the last 70 years it has worked in collaboration with the secular French State and remains respectful of French secularity but untainted by secularism. (4) The first part of the program discusses social, political, economic, and cultural issues of interest to non-believers, yet from a Christian perspective. (5) It offers the Sunday mass for believers, but each week in a different parish which stimulates interest. (6) During the pandemic, while most churches streamed lifeless liturgies in empty churches without music, this program created worship of exceptional artistic quality. (7) It is highly successful, attracting half a million viewers each week through television and the internet.

Le Jour du Seigneur (LJS) airs once a week on Sundays from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. by the French State television station, France-2. The mass is broadcast live Sunday morning for television viewers, and in recorded form a few hours later for internet viewers. Apart from worship, it involves multiculturalism in ethnicity, art, music, and general culture. It is ethnically and culturally diverse since the program can take place in any French-speaking country in Africa, the Middle East, and the New World. There is a variety of social media platforms where viewers can stream the event; half the program takes place in the Paris television studio and the other half each week in a different parish anywhere in the world. Musically, it is contemporary; drums and other modern instruments are more common than the traditional organ. Intellectually, it is diverse—the topics discussed in the first half of the program range from spirituality, psychology, social problems to politics, and more. Organizationally, the program is operated by a lay organization independent of the Catholic hierarchy but assisted by members of the Dominican order. Although it is aired once a week, this program attracts over half-a-million viewers each week. How can this program be so popular in a highly secularized and mainly agnostic country? The main reason for its success seems to be its multicultural dimension.

2. Past Practices and Theories of Multicultural Worship

Throughout the Middle Ages, devotions were mainly local, consisting of processions, pilgrimages, vigils, and the celebration of a saint's day. Some were individual or family practices, but many were organized by local lay confraternities that were independent of the parish clergy. Some of these confraternities still exist in Latin America (Rojas Lima

1988). It was a situation of geographical pluralism due to the lack of communication and centralization. After Trent, the papacy encouraged an ever-greater number of devotions. The first major innovation was the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary by Pope Pius V after the naval victory of Lepanto in 1571. In the 19th century, the practices related to the Eucharist became more prominent, namely the Forty Hours before the Blessed Sacrament, nocturnal adoration, devotion to the Sacred Heart, and the novena of First Friday masses. The popes granted indulgences to encourage these devotions. By the middle of the 19th century, most popular devotions had become clergy-centered (Francis 2014, p. 132). In the United States, the period from the end of World War I to the mid-1950s was the heyday of American devotionalism (Chinnici 2004, p. 52). Traditional devotions (to St. Anthony, the miraculous medal, and the scapulars (Traves 1986, p. 38)) and new ones (St. Jude, the novenas to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and to Our Sorrowful Mother) attracted ever more fervent prayers. Two new religious movements—the enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes and the common recitation of the rosary—made devotions part of family life. Launched in about 1943, the movement had achieved 500,000 enthronements by 1946 (Chinnici 2004, p. 61). At about the same time, Fr. Patrick Peyton propagated the rosary crusade on radio. It achieved exceptional success, with mass rallies in the U.S. and Canada. While devotions were now centralized and uniform, there was the multiculturalism of religious devotions on the one hand, and the official liturgy on the other.

While devotions were growing in the U.S., the liturgical movement in Europe called for the primacy of the liturgy, away from the centrality of devotions. One main promoter was Dom Guéranger, the abbot of the Benedictine Abbaye of Solesmes, whose primary function has always been the celebration of the liturgy. This spirit prevailed at Vatican II and was enshrined in its constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963), calling for "the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy [and] full and active participation by all the people" (#14). It required that devotions "be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, [be] in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them" (#13). Private devotions were devalued since the liturgy "far surpasses any of them". Within a decade or two, for a variety of reasons, devotions faded away in Catholic life. Since the 19th century, the clergy had taken control over most popular devotions, but now it progressively withdrew its support. This situation created a "piety void" in the life of many American Catholics. There increasingly came to be a gulf between traditional devotions that had inspired the faith of many generations, and the new liturgy which was "not yet sufficiently meaningful or satisfying to fill the void left by pious devotions". (Chinnici 2004, p. 82). The current situation today is a strange form of religious multiculturalism. One the one side, we find the majority of Catholic and Protestant believers who do not attend church worship or who campaign for a return to traditional church services, and on the other we have the public worship in declining churches which hold on to traditional monocultural liturgies. What is needed is to overcome past theological divisions and offer new forms of worship attractive to both insiders and outsiders.

At the theoretical level, there is the fundamental question of who owns, or who is in charge of, worship. Is it the body of believers, as suggested by the Greek meaning of *leitourgia*, or the church authorities? The Protestant denominations solved the problem by adopting either a denominational or an episcopal polity, or a mixture of the two. In the Catholic Church, there was a long tradition of local pluralism during the Middle Ages, which was followed by the monocultural worship initiated by the Council of Trent.

I will present an alternative to this monocultural type worship by presenting, first, the general rule of *lex orandi lex credendendi* (the law of prayer is the law of faith) and, second, two interpretations of it by Aidan Kavanagh and Kevin Irwin. Finally, I will present pragmatic solutions devised by innovative pastors.

The maxim of Prosper of Aquitaine (390–455), *Lex orandi lex credendi*, has been given two opposite interpretations. I will leave aside the historical setting (see Novak 2014) and avoid taking sides in this theological debate. From a monocultural perspective, the law of

prayer is the official liturgy and the law of belief is that of the official church. This was the position of Pope Pius XII, who wrote, "The epigram, 'Lex orandi, lex credendi'—the law for prayer is the law for faith . . . this is not what the Church teaches and enjoins". The law of belief is that of the Catholic tradition as taught by the Magisterium. Hence Prosper's maxim is reversed. According to the pope, the "perfectly correct" position is that "*Lex credendi legem statuat supplicandi*—let the rule of belief determine the rule of prayer". Pius XII made this point in his important encyclical on the liturgy, *Mediator Dei* (#46–49). This position is in fact implemented universally because the Catholic liturgy is that of the official missal. A rigid understanding of the pope's position leaves little room for multiculturalism. However, there are theologians who disagree.

In his treatise *On Liturgical Theology*, Aidan Kavanagh took the opposite position. He posited that prayer leads to belief, or, in his terms, "worship conceived broadly is what gives rise to theological reflection" (Kavanagh 1984, p. 3). This view is based on two assumptions: one, that liturgy produces "deep change in the lives of those who participate in [it]", and two, that this change leads to theological insights called *theologia prima,* from which academic theology or *theologia secunda* is derived. For Kavanagh, these assumptions are observable realities that he has witnessed "in a fairly regular way . . . all over the world" (Kavanagh 1984, pp. 73–76, 93). This view is both attractive and challenging. It is based more on personal conviction than theological arguments, being more mystical than academic.

A middle of the road position is presented by Kevin Irwin in *Context and Text: A Method for Liturgical Theology* (Irwin 2018). His method is one of contextual analysis. In his view, the liturgy is an event that varies geographically and historically rather than a text. Throughout his book, Irwin struggles with the various interpretations of Prosper's maxim. Instead of siding with one interpretation or the other, he added a new dimension, that of moral life, the *lex vivendi.* Now, *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex viviendi* becomes interactive rather than linear—i.e., prayer, beliefs, and moral life interacting with one another. This 650-page proposal is well balanced, but it will have little effect outside the circle of liturgical theologians. Hence, we have no universally accepted theoretical solution.

A third approach to the opposition between monocultural and pluricultural worship is pastoral and pragmatic. This position is not defended by intellectuals or organizations but is applied when the pastor sides for one position or the other or both. This is usually done without theological, canonical, or conciliar arguments. A basic fact of church life is that bishops and pastors can enjoy a fair amount of freedom when they want to or are innovative. Thus, Catholic bishops can abolish or change the structure of parishes without permission from Rome. Any parish pastor knows that the liturgy of the Eucharist is strictly regulated while that the liturgy of the Word is not, and non-liturgical services are wide open to innovations. Thus, a conservative innovation at a Catholic mass could begin with the recitation of the rosary and end with more prayers and another sermon. A progressive innovation could begin with a general discussion of the scriptural readings of the day, and end with a business meeting about church ministries. This pastoral conception of worship is what we find at *Le Jour du Seigneur*.

3. Practices of Multicultural Worship: The Structure and the Programs of the CFRT

Le Jour du Seigneur was created in 1949 by the Dominican Raymond Picard as a 90-min program on Sunday morning. It is aired on the state television France-2, in a country where half of the population does not believe in God, at least according to a recent survey by IFOP (*Le Monde* 2021) and Catholic weekly church attendance is in the single digits. The French state is secular or even secularist; it will support only religious programs that are non-sectarian and have some cultural value. LJS is ecumenical; it includes Protestant programs, usually in the form of Protestant–Catholic co-productions. Moreover, once or twice a year it holds an inter-religious conference that includes Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and atheists. LJS is run by a lay committee, thus avoiding the criticism

of clericalism. There is good collaboration with the state television which in fact covers half the production costs.

The great innovation is the inclusion of discussions into the Sunday worship. The 90-min program is divided into two parts: the first is called *le magazine* and the second is the mass. As in secular magazines, any topic can be brought up. Thus far, we have noticed several multicultural dimensions. It is a religious program for a public that is mainly non-religious. It is produced in collaboration with the secular state. The first half of the program, the magazine, is unregulated by Catholic canon law, hence open to innovation. The second half, the mass, is actually integrated into the magazine as we will see; hence there is no secular vs. sacred dichotomy, but a mutual integration of the two into a pluricultural perspective.

At its highest level, this program consists of two organizations: the CFRT (*Comité français de radio-télévision*), which produces religious videos, and LJS, which is the 90-min Sunday service using some of these videos. I will now present the organization of the CFRT and three of its productions, and in the next section the content of the Sunday program.

The CFRT has nine members, which includes three Dominicans. It is the ultimate authority of the organization. It can only function productively if there is collaboration between lay and clerical views. The stated mission of the CFRT is "to announce on television the message of the Gospel and to answer, in its own way, the quest of meaning of our contemporaries".[2] It presents itself as Christian rather than Catholic. The committee is independent of the Catholic hierarchy since it is lay and not clerical. Its mission is to share the values of the gospel, not to teach Catholic doctrine. Its programs must be creative but avoid controversial topics. It can offer a critique of social institutions, but without antagonizing the state, politicians, or the Catholic hierarchy. In this description we have noticed a few more multicultural practices: cooperation between clergy and laity, Christian rather than Catholic identity for greater intercultural dialogue with the secular public, non-polemical criticisms of the state and the church in implicit or explicit collaboration.

The CFRT is a production company of about 60 employees that creates audio and video material to be used in Catholic and Protestant schools and churches, or to be aired on French-speaking televisions stations in Europe and Africa. These productions are available at Vodeus.com. They are divided into *folders* regarding a specific topic (e.g., cathedrals, the Camino to Compostela, Christian–Jewish and Christian–Muslim dialogues, the effects of slavery, young people and faith—each of these may consist of several videos), *documentaries* (e.g., the Catholic Church in China and in various African nations, stained-glass windows, the American church in Paris, Kairos, Catholic vs. Protestant preaching, Taizé, etc.), and also *series*, i.e., topics developed in many videos (on icons, art and faith, St. Paul's missions, the bible in comic strips, Mary in the bible, the saints, the sacraments). I will present two short videos (Unexpected Words and The Pillars of Notre Dame) and a long documentary (Easter in Art).

The title *Parole inattendue* (Unexpected Words) is puzzling, maybe intentionally. It consists of interviews of personalities of the media during a two- to three-minute taxi ride in Paris[3]. The interviewees were asked to select a verse from the Sunday readings and offer comments, and explain their views about God and faith. Over 60 personalities have accepted so far. One would expect to find mainly Catholic intellectuals, but this is not the case. Among them we find quite a few writers but also several rap artists, a film maker, a theater producer, a professor of philosophy, a physicist, several singers, a caricaturist, a female bicycle runner, a professional football coach, a high-level state administrator, a psychoanalyst, a psychiatrist, a comedian, and a few more. Nearly all avoided commenting on the verse they had selected. A few, however, were moving. A non-practicing Jew selected, "My God, why have you abandoned me?" It represents the history of his life: his father, a member of the French resistance died in Auschwitz. Orphan at age 11, he turned to God at night, "God, God, are you here? Why have you taken away my parents? Why?" Equally moving were the testimonies of a two or three practicing Christians. Most of the interviewees were non-practicing, agnostic, a few were pantheists or atheists, but

none was anti-religious. All expressed having some faith, most of them in humanity. None mentioned Jesus Christ or salvation.

The puzzle of this series is why they were shown *after* mass like a continuation of the mass and its preaching. Maybe the producers simply wanted to show that they are listening to the people, whatever they say. This series can also be understood in the light of an important statement presented below, that the Holy Spirit is at work in all people. Can this be true of non-believers? The logic of the program leads one to believe so.

Les Piliers de Notre Dame (the Pillars of Notre Dame[4]) is another series presented at the end of the mass, besides *Parole inattendue*. There is national interest in the rebuilding of the Notre Dame cathedral after the fire of 2019. In each segment, we learn from an artisan or building expert about their work. All are proud of their achievements, and many see their work as a spiritual mission. Church renovation is a small national industry, as an estimated 45,000 French churches are maintained, partially or totally, by public funds[5]. The purpose of the series seems to be that all people through their professional work can contribute to the kingdom of God, because the Holy Spirit is at work in all people, even in their secular work. Here is one more multicultural dimension: the work of the Holy Spirit and the kingdom of God extend into secular work, even among non-believers.

On Easter Sunday of 2020, the documentary *L'Art de la Pâque* (Easter in Art[6]) was shown. The film was produced by the CFRT in collaboration with the state television. It included a Byzantine fresco, the paintings of Giotto, and those of Gruenewald; the baroque art inspired by Tridentine theology was not mentioned. The commentators of these works included an orthodox theologian, a historian from the university Paris-1, a female historian, a female pastor and theologian, and a Jesuit art historian. Here is what they had to say about the Byzantine fresco in the form of a quilt of quotations. "This Byzantine fresco shows Christ pulling humankind out of its graves. Christ descended into hell to grab Adam and Eve and take them with him because hell could not contain them anymore. Here is why he came: to take humankind with him. This going down into hell is the main theme of orthodox iconography; there can be no other. It shows the movement of Jesus going into the world of death to grab our lives to lead them to plenitude. We are at the center of a story of emancipation, of liberation from all forms of death, physical and spiritual. At the bottom of the fresco is Satan, Evil, the Enemy who now has not more power of humankind. Christ went to find what was dead, the old self which is to be reborn. What is suggested here is a new birth, a new baptism [in the spirit]". This is the theology of divinization or *theosis*, the heart of orthodoxy; it is the equivalent of the spirituality of sanctification in the West. The comments about the paintings of Giotto and Mathias Gruenewald are equally inspiring. What is significant here is that the baroque art inspired by the reform of Trent is not mentioned. We go back to pre-Reformation times to rediscover the universal messages of Giotto, Gruenewald, and Orthodoxy.

In summary, we noticed a few more intercultural practices. Most generally, we observed that the videos produced by the CFRT are multicultural, addressing a variety of publics: schools and churches, Catholics and Protestants, national and foreign television networks. The Easter video was created through the collaboration of academicians and pastors of various churches, Orthodox and Catholic. *Parole inattendue* invited personalities of the media to comment on the Sunday readings; they gladly accepted but ignored the readings, presenting their secular religion instead. The Pillars of Notre Dame glorified professional work, religious and secular. There seems to be no limit to multiculturalism when worship includes pre-evangelism, which is the purpose of the magazine. We must now turn to the content of LJS.

4. The Weekly Multicultural Worship

According to a French copyright law, the programs of the state television cannot be recorded for later public transmission. Hence, the past Sunday services of LJS are not available. One can, however, record them privately for personal use. I recorded 13 Sunday services between 2016 and 2017, five in March and April during the Covid shutdown, and

11 starting in September 2020, when the pandemic restrictions were slightly lifted. My presentation is limited to these recordings, plus personal notes about other Sundays.

Before the pandemic, the magazine and the liturgy were usually well integrated around a theme, but this was not possible during the pandemic. I will first present the content of the magazine, and next the Sunday worship.

4.1. The 2016–2017 Sunday Services

To call the first part of LJS a discussion would be misleading; it would suggest a debate about an intellectual topic, but this is seldom the case. Worship is mainly a community celebration; any community event can be the theme of a given Sunday. One moving example was a mass celebrated in a small chapel—maximum capacity of 20 people—which had been built by homeless people 50 years ago. They were invited to come back and offer their testimonies—that was not a discussion. I will give three examples of pre-pandemic services, from the most local to the most universal.

On 15 October 2016, the Sunday service took place in the Republic of Mauritius, a tiny island in the Indian Ocean, about 1200 miles east of Africa. The religion of the majority of Mauritians is Hinduism, the official language is English, the common language is Mauritian Creole, and only 2% of the population speaks French. The reason for the report was the not yet announced nomination of its local bishop, Mgr. Maurice Piat, as cardinal just days before the visit to Mauritius, as if LJS had received an advance notice through a back channel. In the long introduction about the history of the island, we learned about slavery introduced by the French governor François de la Bourdonnais and the plantation economy of the island. When slavery was abolished, the slave work of Africans was replaced by the exploitation of immigrants from India. During the first half of the documentary, it seemed that its purpose was to discuss French slavery; it is only in the second half that it became clear that its message was the work of the local bishop and the local church to alleviate the local consequences of slavery. In his first sermon as a cardinal elect, Mgr Piat did not preach about the pope's doctrine of social justice but about what his local church had been doing and what remained to be done[7]. This sermon was a local as local can be.

The 2016 anniversary mass for the 130 victims of the Bataclan massacre was not even about a local church but about the Parisian neighborhood where the massacre took place in 2015. The interview with the pastor of St. Ambroise where the Bataclan theater was located took place in the café whose owner was killed in the massacre. The interview recounted, in words and images, the aftershock among neighbors, and their spiritual struggle to cope with the disaster. The priest mentioned the Holy Spirit at work to bring unity in love. It was a message of hope to overcome anger and the sadness of death. The mass was celebrated in great solemnity with the participation of 8 priests and the presence of an imam.

There was also a universal dimension. On that day, the magazine presented a 26-min documentary entitled *Un Chemin vers la Lumière* ("A Road towards Light"), which showed the testimony of Fouad Hassaun in his struggle toward the light of forgiveness[8]. On 21 January 1986, a bomb exploded in a Christian neighborhood of Beirut, killing 30 people. Among the 250 injured was Fouad, a 17-year-old medical student. After an 11-h operation, he was taken to a hospital in Switzerland where he was declared permanently blind. Alone, he started his long struggle with God to find hope. "No, Lord, I cannot accept what is unjust; I refuse". He accepted, but it took him over 10 years to find the peace of forgiveness and overcome the desire for revenge. Yes, forgiveness is possible. Through it, Fouad found inner peace, happiness, and marriage. He returned to Beirut to revisit the scene of the massacre and testify to his peace of forgiveness. He founded an association of Muslims and Christians for mutual understanding. This long documentary is an example of what the magazine stands for: testimonies, not intellectual discussions.

An example of universal concerns is the program of 15 January 2017, which discussed the general theme of how to give a human face to the migrants[9]. At the beginning of the magazine, Jesuit Fr. Thierry Lamboley gave a theological explanation. The Bible is clear: "Do not exploit or oppress the immigrant because you have been immigrants in Egypt".

(Exodus, 20:20). A video showed the refugee camp of Aleppo in Syria where volunteers treated the displaced persons with respect and dedication. We next went to the parish of St. Paul in Hem in the North of France; it has no web page, no email, and no resident priest but an exceptional ministry to the immigrants. About 40 parishioners were involved, providing shelter and work to immigrants. Next, a documentary described the muddy and sordid refugee camp of Calais were Brigitte and Olivier are called Mom and Dad. They regularly visit the camp with food and supplies. They also take migrants to their home where they can take a shower, get their clothes washed, and enjoy a home-cooked meal. These refugees attempt to reach England which closed its border to them. We next follow Brigitte and Olivier in their tour to England to visit those of their adopted children—hundreds of them, we were told—who managed to enter the UK illegally. Significantly but not mentioned explicitly: Brigitte and Olivier do not belong to any church. At St. Paul church, on the day of the migrants and refugees, the mass was celebrated with banners and festive music; the whole assembly had even memorized the Our Father in Aramaic, the language of Jesus, which was recited by all parishioners with great conviction. On that day, the magazine and the liturgy were perfectly integrated. Needless to say, in these three examples we have many more dimensions of multiculturalism: the history of slavery and its consequences in Mauritius, testimonies about healing in the anniversary mass of the Bataclan massacre, and documentaries about helping migrants.

4.2. The Pandemic Liturgies

Because of the pandemic curfew imposed in March 2020, the planned Sunday mass in a parish had to be canceled. What to do? The Dominicans could improvise a Sunday mass because their convent happened to be located next door to the studio of LJS. Three Dominicans spent days and nights searching and rehearsing, and the following Sunday their mass was ready. From the Parisian studio turned chapel, a new type of liturgy was aired for several weeks.

At the beginning of the Mass on March 29, Fr. Thierry Hubert came forward to the camera for an important announcement[10]. "Welcome! Our studio is small, but we will proceed as if *you* invited us to come into *your* home. We will celebrate Mass in your midst, *for you and with you*. We are all getting tired and anxious [because of the shut-down]: we now seek words and songs that nourish us, gestures that give strength and courage, and moments of communion that give comfort". A similar statement was made the following weeks. No explanation was given, but to celebrate "with you and for you" stands in contrast to the Tridentine mass "for you but without you", which requires no attendance. "With you and for you" was not theoretical or a theological agenda, but the promise of seeking words and songs that nourish, and moments of communion for comfort and unity.

In these studio masses, most of the time was taken by polyphonic singing by the three Dominicans. The quality of their singing was very high. The singing was filmed in closeup shots, which increased its impact within the confined space of the small studio. There was no musical instrument for support or background; the purity of the voices gave them a heavenly quality. Most of the pieces were original or unusual to common ears. They seemed of Byzantine inspiration (one could see a small icon of Christ on a side table). Before the Preface, the friars sang the Byzantine *Trisagion*, "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us", and after the Preface, the *Sanctus* in French: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the God of the universe". At communion they sang verses from Psalm 33, "I will praise the Lord at all times", with the refrain, "Wisdom has set the table. She invites people to the feast. Come to the banquet of the son of man. Eat and drink the Pascua of God".

At the end of the Mass on May 3, the camera turned the viewers' gaze toward an icon of Mary during the singing of a joyful hymn, as it is the custom every Sunday at the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris. The last images of the day were the Byzantine icons of the teaching Christ, and of Mother and Child. These images of normalcy suggested that it was time to give voice again to people in the parishes, which happened as soon as the

restrictions were lessened a few weeks later. An important multicultural dimension was the use of Byzantine music and icons.

4.3. Post-Pandemic Innovations

Before the pandemic, the presenter, David Milliat, had often casually said, “Let us meet those women and men who have prepared the liturgy for us”. This introduction took a new meaning in the post-pandemic celebrations. In September 2020, LJS went back to parishes for the Sunday celebrations. For the first four weeks, we were taken to small parishes whose characteristic, not mentioned on screen, was that they had no resident priest. Sainte Catherine in a small town in the South of France that shared a priest with six other churches. Saint Martin in the North was one of 23 villages with three priests. Saint Rémi in the East was a village of 700 people, part of a parish of 11 villages. These churches were lay centered by necessity. The parishioners were the main actors of the Sunday services, and it is their example which conveyed the message of the day. Now it makes sense to say, “Let us meet those women and men who have prepared the liturgy for us”. In the first of these churches we met Analie, a 17-year-old convert who was enthusiastic about sharing God’s love, as well as deacon George and the nurse Françoise who catered to various needs of the church. The priest during mass showed exceptional musical talents, but he was not introduced. In this and other churches, the singing of the choir and the assembly was enthusiastic. The simple words “let us meet those who prepared the mass” had the effect of creating a continuity rather than a dichotomy between the secular magazine and the sacred Eucharist. This continuity was reinforced by the continued presence and even the active participation of the commentator, David Milliat, during mass. His intervention on 13 June 2021 was of special significance.

It is customary at LJS for David Milliat to make comments during the liturgy. Usually, he first gives information about the mass. After the homily, he often interrupts to give the internet address where one can find the text of the homily. At communion, he usually offers a reflection. In any Catholic parish, it would be shocking if a lay person would grab a microphone and offer a reflection. On 13 June 2021, at communion in the basilica of Marseille, David Milliat reflected on the exceptional situation of Marseille as a harbor open to both Eastern Christianity and Islam in North Africa. “This situation holds a message, because the theology of the Mediterranean is one of encounter, of a relationship of friendship, inspired by the conviction that the Holy Spirit is at work in all people of whatever religious convictions”. This exceptional statement must have been discussed previously and planned by the whole team of LJS. It stated that the Holy Spirit is at work not only in spirit-filled believers, but in all men and women of good will in their daily professional work, as presented in the magazine. The belief that the Holy Spirit is at work in all people is extended to Orthodox Christianity and Islam. What is remarkable is that this belief was stated by a lay person as a “conviction” rather than a debatable theological opinion. If it is a conviction of faith, who would oppose it?

5. Conclusion: Factors of Multicultural Worship

This paper was an implicit response to those who say, “It cannot be done. We have rules to follow”. The example of LJS proves the opposite. Here are four more examples that prove how innovation was made possible.

Let us begin with what made LJS possible. The Dominican Raymond Picard was ahead of his time in his realization that the increasingly secular French society needed an ecumenical and multicultural Sunday program rather than a national Catholic television network, which came into existence in 1999. In 1949, he convinced the state television that such a program was of great cultural value, and its eventual success proved him right. Knowing that a mass only takes about 30 min, a 90-min time slot would give him 60 min for unregulated innovation. After the initial success, Picard negotiated with the state a contract for a weekly program. To shelter it from criticisms from the church and the state, he created a civil organization: the CFRT, which was composed of lay and

religious members independent from the Catholic hierarchy. In short, the major factor in favor of multicultural worship at LJS was the collaboration between the state, the church, the universities, ecumenical organizations, digital technology, interviews, documentaries, quality music, Orthodox, and Western traditions, all of which conflated amid changing times, flexibility, and adaptation.

A second example is that of the bishop of Poitiers, France, who created a new parish structure, one in which a lay team, not a priest, has the main responsibility of the parish. This team consists of five volunteers responsible for worship, teaching children, charity work, church finances, and public relations; they work in cooperation with a non-resident priest. This team is installed by the bishop in a public ceremony. All volunteers are nominated for three years, renewable only once. This innovation seems extreme: lay volunteers without experience nor seminary training must lead prayer, preaching, and teaching. This experiment stated in 1995 has been adopted in over 300 local communities. In this case, the success of the proposal was due to collaboration and diplomacy. The proposal was the creation of a local synod (1988–1993), which the new bishop, who arrived in 1994, Mgr. Rouet, was asked to implement. This required exceptional diplomacy—the bishop had to visit villages to personally seek lay volunteers for responsibilities as different as prayer and finances, teaching, and charity work, in the midst of suspicions on the part of the clergy and the populace. Here again, cooperation was key (Rouet 2005, 2008).

Another example of multicultural worship is that of the St. Sabina parish in Chicago. The pastor, Fr. Pfleger, galvanized the parish in progressively longer Sunday services that extended from one to two, even three, hours. He hired a prominent director of gospel music and adopted the praise and worship style of prayer, which calls for loud and emotional responses. Several times during the year there is an altar call as in Evangelical churches. On many Sundays, especially at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost there is extensive choreography. In the process, many liturgical rules are ignored. Here, we have another principle that makes multicultural worship possible: the pastoral non-observance of rules judged outdated. It is not dissent; rather, it is tactical and pastoral non-compliance. It brought Fr. Pfleger into conflict with the archbishop, but ultimately he prevailed. (McClory 2010; Hegy 2017, chp. 11).

My next example takes us to the San Miguel church in Guatemala, where the success of multicultural worship was facilitated by the good relations between the pastor and the church authorities, a relationship aided by the pastor's knowledge of church rules. In 2015, this parish had about 150 small groups meeting weekly for reflections and prayer. One of their outstanding practices was a holy hour with the Blessed sacrament in the living rooms of the 150 groups. How canonical is this practice? According to church law, parish Eucharistic ministers can distribute communion at mass and bring communion to the sick. Most parishes have 10 to 15 such ministers. However, at San Miguel, the Eucharistic ministers must also visit the sick. This parish, therefore, has over 150 such ministers who can also bring the Eucharist to the 150 communities. This pastor always informs the chancery of his innovations and usually post factum. Good relations easily overcome obstacles (Hegy 2017, chp. 10).

My last example takes place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 1969, the Catholic bishops of the Congo petitioned Rome for a Zairean liturgy. The soul of the request was Joseph Malula, the archbishop of Kinshasa. He also had a multicultural vision of the church. He reorganized the parishes by giving the laity a key role, even more radical than in the diocese of Poitiers. As cardinal, Malula pursued negotiations with Rome from 1974 to 1988 when, finally, a special usage of the Roman rite was granted. This Zairean liturgy takes two-to-three hours. It is highly participatory; the entrance is a choreographed procession that may take 10 min and the offering of gifts 25 min. There is constant clapping and dancing in place. The rhythmic music and the constant beat of the African drum are enthralling. The assembly is enthusiastic. At the end of this long Sunday service, many people still stay for more prayer. In this case, the success of the multicultural Zairean rite

was due to the diplomacy and perseverance of Malula through his personal friendship with Pope John Paul II. (Hegy 2019, chp. 9).

As a general conclusion, it seems that in a pluralistic society with declining religious interest, religion requires diversity of offerings, as in *Le Jour du Seigneur*. Besides, multiculturalism and innovations have long been the norm in education and business and are an intrinsic part of a pluralistic society. The success of LJS shows that it is on the right track.

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Notes

1. The Constitution Quo Primum of Pius V (1570) recognized the right "to celebrate Mass differently" when this right had been granted by the Holy See and enjoyed for over 200 years (before 1370). This Constitution did not apply to the Oriental Catholic churches (e.g., Greek Catholics) which do not follow the Latin rite, nor to the rite of Zaïre created after Vatican II. Hence we may that before Vatican II the Latin Mass was the same all over the Catholic world, that is, in all Catholic churches of the Latin rite created between 1370 and 1965.
2. See the web page of the CFRT, https://www.cfrt.tv/qui-sommes-nous/ (accessed on 9 August 2022).
3. All interviews are available at https://www.lejourduseigneur.com/series/parole-inattendue-79 (accessed on 9 August 2022).
4. All interviews are available at https://vodeus.tv/series/les-piliers-de-notre-dame-104 (accessed on 9 August 2022).
5. Information given by an expert in church renovation during the discussion at *Le jour du Seigneur*, on 8 September 2019, but is not available online anymore.
6. Part of this video can be seen at https://vodeus.tv/video/lart-de-la-paque-extrait-297 (accessed on 9 August 2022).
7. The mass but not the interviews are available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bH2tH_6zZnA (accessed on 9 August 2022).
8. https://vodeus.tv/video/un-chemin-vers-la-lumiere-2379 (accessed on 9 August 2022).
9. Personal recording. No public records.
10. See note 9 above.

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Article

Public Lament and Intra-Faith Worship in an Appalachian Context

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Abstract: On 5 April 2010, the largest mining disaster in the US since 1970 occurred at the Upper Big Branch Mine in West Virginia. Twenty-five miners were known to have died in the explosion, with the fates of four miners unknown. Families of the twenty-nine miners gathered together at the mine site as they awaited word as to which of the miners died and who had survived. On 6 April, the Red Cross invited representatives from the West Virginia Council of Churches to the mine site to help organize pastoral support for the families. On the evening of 10 April, five days after the explosion, word came that all of the 29 miners had died in the initial explosion. Governor Joe Manchin declared, on 25 April, for a public memorial service for the miners—an event attended by several thousand worshipers and led by clergy, denominational leaders, and public officials, including President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Senator Robert C. Byrd, and Governor Manchin. This collaborative essay traces how the pastoral, political, and relational response to trauma shaped this liturgical form. Given the oral traditions of the region, narrative will be one of the primary structures for analysis, and testimony is central to this public worship. A public secular ritual with its goals of unity and inter-riting of distinct religious voices and identities will provide a grammar for reading the service.

Keywords: inter-riting; cross participation; etic and emic; trauma membrane; belongingness

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1. Introduction

Pastoral theology emerges from the particularities of pastoral care for a given community. When the given community understands itself as distinct from the dominant culture, it is essential to engage with the insights of ecology, sociology, and economics, in planning, leading, and analyzing public liturgy; for example, an Appalachian multicultural worship in the context discussed in this essay.

Heather Murray Elkins and Jeffrey S. Allen have explored the complexities of Appalachian intra-faith in West Virginia—a region that is demographically monoracial with 93.05% White population (World Population Review 2022). The West Virginia Council of Churches has been providing a sustainable intersection for ecumenical and multiracial worship experiences in diverse contexts and occasions in the regional community. Thus, the case study and the commentary in regards to the works of the West Virginia Council of Churches offer insights into liturgical pastoral care for communities, especially dealing with ecological and economic trauma.

The roles of narrative and orality in Appalachian culture are essential, since it is shaped by multiple histories of trauma, lament, and healings from them. This approach requires an analysis of speeches and addresses, as well as the performative aspects of the ritual. We are using this approach to ritual as it is outlined in *Ritual and Its Consequences*. The authors argue that:

> Ritual always operates in a world that is fragmented and fractured. Moreover, the subjunctive world created by ritual is always doomed ultimately to fail—the ordered world of flawless repetition can never fully replace the broken world of

> experience. This is why the tension between the two is inherent and, ultimately, unbridgeable. Indeed, this tension is the driving force behind the performance of ritual: the endless work of ritual is necessary precisely because the ordered world of ritual is inevitably only temporary. The world always returns to its broken state, constantly requiring the repairs of ritual (Seligman et al. 2008, p. 30).

This view of the *ritual and the tragic* of the world will undergird this essay, as it provides a lens for the particular relationship between coal and communal identity in the Appalachian community (ibid.). One question needs to be addressed early in this essay: why would a study of the memorial service for coal miners in Appalachia—a region whose population is often described as "Protestant" and "white"—belong to a collection of essays on multicultural worship? Our response to this question involves deconstructing some commonly held assumptions about Protestantism, secular/religious public disaster memorials, and Appalachia itself. Central to this analysis is the definition of culture that comes from the work of David E. Whisnant, in his *All That Is Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region*. He states:

> Culture is "the entire range of belief, attitude, value, characteristic behavior, posture, and so on, which makes up the individual and collective identity of an ethnic, regional, or socioeconomic group..." This understanding of "culture" is the cornerstone by which a community's ritual actions in response to a traumatic loss of life are measured. It encompasses "social organization, judgments about family and community structure, forms of worship, school curricula, entertainment, and cultural nuances that inhere in such things as bodily postures and rhythms, vocal cadence, and interactional style" (Whisnant 2009, p.12).

This definition of culture is interlinked with our understanding of ritual. (Seligman et al. 2008, p. 180) include non-Protestant traditions, as well as alternatives to social scientific understandings, as factors in considering the meaning of ritual. This view assumes "a world that is fragmented and broken" (ibid., p. 30). The language of lament shapes this region's worldview, from which songs and laments can be understood as the deep grammar or the accent of this community. In his address, then-Vice President Biden summarizes and critiques the sacrificial history of coal miners: "No one should have to sacrifice their life for their livelihood" (Biden 2010). The "should" is understood, however, as the reality of coal mining that is regrettable but required.

Who has the right to describe the life rites and rituals of Appalachia? This is a critical question for this region and its people. Julian Murchison discusses the *etic* aspect of ritual participation, and provides the framework for analyzing cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who does not participate in the culture being studied (Murchison 2010). Her critical perspective is significant for recognizing the distinctiveness of Appalachian identity, particularly, regarding the complex culture of coal communities. Failure to recognize that one's perspective is *etic*, that of non-belonging, has contributed to misreading of Appalachian culture, which contributes to an economic colonization of people, resources, and region. In contrast, an *emic* perspective comes from voluntarily locating oneself within a culture, religion, or regional identity, and being recognized as one belonging to the culture. We are using the term 'belongingness' to describe this emic perspective. The emic perspective is not a given, however. It is an interlacing relation; a patchwork quilt perspective. In other words, this belongingness does not presume a uniformity of perspective, or guarantee that the community will consistently recognize one's credentials of belonging.

Sensitivity to the complexity of cultural identities of Appalachia is required in order to prevent the re-inscribing of negative and romanticized stereotypes. West Virginia is the only state that is included in its entirety in the formal definition of Appalachia. Its religious identity has been "portrayed in stereotypical terms that focus on the archetype called the 'mountain preacher' who oscillates between two extremes with unfortunate and unrealistic characterizations: as either a strict, suffocating Calvinist or an emotionally unstable fanatic with a penchant for serpent handling" (McCauley 1999, p. 105). However, this reading erases its religious and cultural diversity and adds to the marginalization and simplification

of West Virginian identity. Even the term "Protestantism" obscures the reality of nondenominational mountain churches. In addition, West Virginia has a "considerably lower rate of religious affiliation than for the nation as a whole" (Pritchett 2006), Historically, religious and cultural mainline "missions" to the region have projected a homogeneous culture for their own ends. Cultural stereotyping has also served outside forces of exploitation, be they energy companies or pharmaceutical corporations.

It is essential to recognize the impact of industrialization in forming the religious diversity in the region and the state. The nation's critical need for natural resources is summarized in the phrase, "King Coal." This need for coal in heating homes, powering trains, and fueling battleships led to open-door European immigration policies supported by coal owners. Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Jews, and Muslims were recruited, and their numbers were added to those who came for work in the lumber mills, the glass factories, the steel mills, and the gas and oil reserves.

The industrialization of the region can be mirrored in the diversity of migrants drawn by the railroad and coal fields. East European Jews. Roman Catholic Italians, Poles, and Lutheran Germans joined the first-wave immigrants: the Scots and Irish. Nearly a tenth of the people in West Virginia were immigrants following WWI, but most of these were in the state's three major coal regions. Governor Manchin's family was among those Italian immigrants who settled in the Fairmont area, finding work in the coal fields. In the Fairmont region, "the entire range of Americanization impulses were evident.... The hub of malevolent, pragmatic, and benevolent Americanization impulses which were not present elsewhere in the state." (Lewis 2002, p. 262).

Industrialization following the Civil War transformed the state from a primarily subsistence economy to a dependent extraction economy, but the transition could only take place through the contributions of immigrant laborers. The concentration of corporate power of coal, railroads, and politics can be seen in the "Fairmont Ring", a small group of politicians and coal-owners with connections to companies such as Standard Oil, the Baltimore and Ohio Railway, Fairmont and Consolidated, and Monongah Coal Companies, which were powerful enough to purchase U.S. Senate seats in the early 1920s. (Drake 2001, p. 152).

The contribution of Black coal miners to the conversion of West Virginia's subsistence economy to an industrial base was substantial, but not often recognized. Between the 1890s and early 1930, Black miners made up over 20 percent of the state's total coal mining labor force. Southern Black families migrated to the state, drawn by the coal operators' offer of better jobs and the families' hope for fewer Jim Crow laws.

One memorable migrant to the Mountain State was Booker T. Washington, who recorded the cost of the American Dream of mining. "Work in the coal mines I always dreaded . . . There was always the danger of being blown to pieces by a premature explosion of powder, or of being crushed by falling slate. Accidents from one or the other of these causes were frequently occurring and this kept me in constant fear" (Washington 1901, pp. 137–38).

1.1. Belongingness and Appalachian Identity

Belongingness is a term we use to describe the identity of those whose cultural origin is West Virginia, either by birth or location, or those who leave their birth place for economic survival, but make pilgrimages back "home." Although Appalachia can be described as an immigrant-based region, there is a disconnection between that history and a kind of geo-piety of belonging to the place. An outsider can achieve "belongingness," but it requires years of being rooted in the community and being recognized for service by those "born and bred" in the Almost Heaven. We have combined the emic/etic perspectives to this service with the realization that neither birth nor service to the community removes these boundaries in our work, since we do not belong to a coal mining community. Belonging is atomistic for Appalachia. There is no centered source of community authority, although

social role does provide some initial access, such as those of a pastor, a governor, or a president.

1.2. Authenticity and Authority as Healer/Liturgical Leaders

This etic/outsider position is important to acknowledge, as pastoral and liturgical care is offered particularly when the community has suffered a traumatic loss. Connectedness to a community can be established by evidence of caring and empathetic knowledge. In this disaster-based liturgical event, it is critical that the "liturgists" are pastorally present with the families without being intrusive, are practiced in the skills of empathetic listening, have the authority to protect those who have suffered loss from public exposure, and are able to provide required assistance in the immediate crisis and sustained support in the months that follow the loss and its public service.

The term "trauma membrane" is a marker for the experience of the miners' families present for this service as well as a description for the history of coal extraction and West-Virginian communities. It is a concept central to the training of pastoral care workers in this area. "As part of the healing process in the aftermath of catastrophic stress, the trauma membrane forms as a temporary psychosocial structure to promote adaptation and healing. The trauma membrane acts as an intrapsychic and interpersonal mediator, interfacing between the person and the traumatic memories and everyday reminders of the traumatic event from the external world" (Martz and Lindy 2010, p. 27).

The narrative of this mining disaster and the collaborative analysis in this essay traces how the pastoral and relational response to trauma shapes the liturgical. Given the oral traditions of the region, story is one of the primary structures for analysis, and the role of testimony is central to this public service. Mining disasters have both industrial and ecological aspects of loss and trauma. A public Christian ritual held in response to an industrial-ecological tragedy assumes its stated goal to be healing and unity, as well as serving as a public platform for interpreting the identity of a people who see themselves as culturally distinct from a dominant urban culture.

2. Case Study

An overview of the printed order reveals this relationship of the religious and the political in a public memorial service following a disaster, either human-made, natural, or a combination of both. The descriptions of the service will be presented in present tense, and to encourage a wider reading of the essay, the recording of the service in its entirety can be found online (Memorial Service for West Virginia Coal Miners 2010).

People are still in shock at the site of the explosion. While most people know where their loved ones were working in the mine and could surmise whether they had died at the time of the explosion, the hope remained that one of the four, whose bodies were not officially found until April 10, could have been their loved one who would be still alive.

Four communities existed where the families gathered to await the word as to whether their loved one was alive or not: the miners' families and friends, volunteers and aid workers, UBB Mine staff, and government personnel, including Governor Manchin and his staff and House of Representative member Nick Joe Rahall.

During the week of the attempted rescue, many false starts for exploration of the mine came and went. It was very chaotic. The announcement that the miners had all perished came late at night. The families' hopes were crushed in a single blow.

The shadow of the Sago Mine Disaster also hung over the Upper Big Branch Mine disaster. This time, thanks to the authority of the Governor's office, families were kept secluded from the pressures of the news media, largely sparing the families from undocumented or invited persons claiming to be "sent by God" with messages about the survivors. The West Virginia Council of Churches organized pastoral support at the request of the Red Cross and had a daily presence. The rapport that the volunteer pastors developed with the families of the miners, as well as the gatekeepers in the local and state levels, provided access to the disaster site and the authority to negotiate the planning of the service at the

invitation of the Governor's office. Governor Manchin requested that the West Virginia Council of Churches put together the memorial service. The Council's work of gathering the clergy who were present on-site provided the initial authenticity and authority to offer pastoral care and liturgical leadership.

The initial intention for the service was to be a religious service of lament, affirmation, and healing for the families of the miners who had perished. Scriptures, songs, and testimonies were chosen with the purpose of personal and communal pastoral care. It was planned as a service for those who "belonged" at the disaster site due to the loss of loved ones and by the virtue of their pastoral presence during the crisis.

The original design and intention were altered when other state, and then national, political leaders requested to be included and to have their presence acknowledged in the service. This alteration required an interweaving of a memorial service for miners with a service of civil religion, by which the categories of Christian and "American" are blended. This exemplifies the inter-riting process that links regional, religious, and civil religion in a trauma-based service designed for the public square. It is not unique to Appalachia or coal mines; services following mass shootings invoke this form of lament, affirmation of meaning in traumatic loss for individuals and communities, and unspecified promises from civic leaders to solve the problem that created the crisis.

These services of loss, lament, testimony, and affirmation of endurance can be considered a life-cycle trauma rite for West Virginia, with its historic legacy as a supplier of the nation's coal-based energy. Families of these lost miners had funeral services in their own congregations, led by local clergy. This event, however, was to be a public service with the state and nation as the co-participants with the families and friends of the miners. The Governor's staff began to take a more active role in the design of the service, partly in response to the growing awareness of the regional response and then the national media. Changes in music, speakers, visuals for live broadcasting occurred once it was determined that President Obama and Vice President Biden were to take part.

The pastoral intentions of a religious service for local grieving families can be described as an emic dynamic. Once national political dynamics come into play, however, the etic function emerged in the planning and the performance of the ritual. The role of insiders and outsiders, the Appalachian mining culture, and the urban elite culture were interwoven around identity and energy politics, economics, theologies, and this trauma-shaped event.

2.1. The Bulletin

The bulletin's front cover is a black background, with the names of the miners above an image of an American flag. A miner's gloves and miner's helmet with light are at the bottom, The inside pages contain the order of the service and the participants, edged on the left with a picture of a sculpture of a coal miner. The service title is printed sideways on the right: "Hope and Healing," with the words, "We will remember" in white letters against a black border. The back cover provides opportunities for contributions for the miners' families: the ethical response indicative of a culture that wants to provide care in times of disaster.

The acknowledgements list includes disaster relief national groups, mining corporations, religious groups, local businesses, telecommunications. The vendors listed in the bulletin provided support for the families on the day of the memorial service, but one vendor is missing from the bulletin because they declined to be on a list with Massey Energy.

2.2. Ritual Space

The old Beckley Armory is the worship site, a gym-like setting with a raised dais. The Family Worship Center nearby serves as a staging area for the clergy. A member of that congregation helped to create the 29 white crosses that line the tables on the floor level and provided the helmets with lights that will be hung on the crosses. The battery pack/lights attached to each helmet were provided by a mining company. There is a podium on the stage, with photos of the miners attached to the black stage curtains and two screens where

the faces of the individual miners are posted as their names are read. Everyone is seated on the floor level, with the President, Vice President, and their aides in the front row on the right.

2.3. Elements of the Service

Please see following Table 1.

Table 1. A Memorial Service of Hope and Healing.

Entrance of Elected Officials	
Family Tribute	Gayle C. Manchin *First Landy of the State of West Virginia*
Posting of the Colors	*West Virginia National Guard*
National Anthem	Randall Reid-Smith *Commissioner of Culture and History*
Opening Prayer	Rev. Mike Pollard *West Virginia Baptist State Convention*
Welcome	Joe Manchin III *Governor of the State of West Virginia*
Greeting	Rev. Dennis D. Sparks *Executive Director, West Virginia Council of Churches*
Choral Special	*"Angels Watching Over Me"* *Trap Hill Middle School Choir* *Yvonne Seay, Director*
"Psalm 121"	Rev. Helen Oates *District Superintendent, UMC*
Remarks	Senator Robert C. Byrd Senator Jay Rockefeller *Members of Congress* Nick Joe Rahall, *Spokesman* Alan B. Mollohan Shelley Moore Capito
Hymn	*"Amazing Grace"* Michelle Hontz, Piano *Appalachian Bible College*
Gospel	Bishop Michael J. Bransfield *Roman Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston*
Meditation	Rev. James Mitchell *Chaplain, West Virginia State Police*
Remarks	Joseph R. Biden, Jr. *Vice-President of the United States*
Eulogy	Barack Obama *President of the United States of America*
Special Music	*"Go Rest High on That Mountain"* Matthew Jones
Benediction	"Coal Miner's Prayer" *Joe Manchin III* *Governor of the State of West Virginia*
Postlude	*"This Little Light of Mine"* *Martin Luther King Jr. Male Chorus* Bill Hairston, Director

The Family Tribute led by Gayle C. Manchin, wife of then Governor Joe Manchin, opens the service by asking all to stand. She has a very active role in the public representation of West Virginia, currently serving as Federal Co-Chair of the Appalachian Regional Commission, originally established by President John F. Kennedy, and signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson.

First Lady Manchin announces the first name, but there is a long uncertain silence. The CNN camera is directed toward the side view of President Obama on the front row, with VP Biden to his right. The camera then focuses on the projected miner's face image as the family walks down the aisle, carrying the miner's helmet. Manchin meets them, and leads them to the first cross on the far left. He helps a family member suspend the helmet on the cross. The head lamps are not on. Permission to publicly voice lament and faith is critical to emic process of multicultural worship. In this service, none of the miners' family members or surviving miners were given "voice," but carrying their lost loved one's helmet forward to be placed on a white cross as their names are called is a powerful silent testimony. The first family moves along the long display of crosses to greet the President. He hugs most; some shake his hand. They are the only family to greet him in this way.

Cross participation is one of the aspects of multicultural worship that this service demonstrates with its recorded relationships of President Obama and Vice President Biden with the community. In cross-participation, "one hopes to send a message of recognition and hospitality. Formal recognition of the rights and freedoms of a religious group is often guaranteed by law, but a more subjective form of recognition of people is never given in a direct way, but only indirectly by appreciating what they appreciate" (Herck 2015, p. 44).

The intention of cross-participation by the White House is seen in their presence. The subjective form of recognition by the community is muted or openly withheld for most of the service, noticeably changing only after the address by Biden followed by the eulogy offered by Obama.

Twenty-three of the remaining families would not greet him or make eye contact during this 37 min ritual. Even those whose crosses are positioned directly in front of the President and Vice President do not acknowledge their presence. Some turn their backs to avoid eye contact. Only one older man in a family group shakes his hand as he waits. Included in this non-greeting is the one Black miner's family. The camera angle heightens a sense of public reluctance or personal resistance to President Obama.

One explanation is that the miners' families were reacting to accusations that his administration was anti-coal. In his presidential campaign Obama had commented about limiting greenhouse gas emissions, but went on to affirm the nation's need for coal, but the political damage was done. As the Senate Republican Policy Committee framed it, "Americans should not be surprised that President Obama wages a war on coal. The linchpin of his energy strategy is to pursue policies that disadvantage time-tested, affordable, reliable energy products derived from our abundant, domestic resources of coal and other fossil fuels. The President wants 80 percent of U.S. electricity to come from renewable energy sources by 2035 and has already invested billions of taxpayer dollars, created more than 700 government programs, and populated his administration with environmental radicals and Wall Street bankers to ensure his success" (Senate Republican Policy Committee 2012).

The reality that natural gas obtained through fracking has sidelined coal as an energy source is not acknowledged in the public speeches of WV political leaders and fossil-based industrial owners. It is the "environmental radicals and Wall Street bankers," those who do not "belong," who are responsible for coal's decline.

Manchin crosses over to Obama for a quick word after eight families have walked past without greeting. The substance of the communication is unknown to observers. The President nods in agreement and only moves out of his place twice afterwards, once to hug a family member in the front row, and once to shake hands with one member of a large family waiting in the aisle. President Obama had met with the miners' families just prior to the service. Their refusal to even make eye contact in the public service that was being broadcast to the nation could be read as an act of unity and resistance to the "outsiders."

Choosing not to recognize the President could be read as an act of intentionality. It can also be seen as a non-verbal interpretation of Appalachian coal miner identity to outsiders.

> Those who are led by the fourth motivation for cross-ritual participation, namely the urge to communicate deep recognition to other faith groups using ritual as the ode of communication, testify to laudable intentions. They should be conscious of the fact however that their participation is nothing but a symbolic presence which does not really involve them in this ritual (Herck 2015, p. 52).

Manchin is the official chosen ritual leader and Comforter-in-Chief. He has the authenticity of "belonging," having patiently waited with the mining families for five days, arranging for their pastoral care and identifying himself with those in the trauma membrane because of his own family history of coal mining loss.

2.4. The Posting of the Colors

Please see Table 1.

The military sign/act of the presentation of the colors and national anthem reflects a regional history woven into the national protocol. West Virginia shows one of the highest rates of military service in the country, with veterans making up over 10 percent of its population. Maj. Gen. Hames A Hoyer, Adjutant General of West Virginia National Guard, summarizes the history and the motivation of a region of immigrants. "It is in the DNA of people who live in the Appalachian Basin to serve . . . . As they settled in communities and became successful, they felt a sense of responsibility to serve the nation that gave them these opportunities" (Grasham 2018).

This fusing of mining and the military evokes the shared sense of costly service to the nation that miners offer for the sake of national economic well-being. There is also the sense of camaraderie that miners share. The theme of sacrifice and social recognition derived from the industry is underscored in each of the WV officials' speeches. They frame coal mining and military service together, each requiring a willingness to be put in harm's way. The significance of this sacrifice, with its generational trauma and promise of economic prosperity, is enhanced by the presence of the President and the Vice President of the United States, as well as the national audience watching the live broadcasting.

2.5. Religious Leadership

The Opening Prayer led by the head of the West Virginia Baptist State Convention, the Greeting by the Executive Director of West Virginia Council of Churches, and the Gospel reading by the West Virginia Roman Catholic Bishop reflect leadership roles based on pastoral presence at the disaster site and/or social capital of the denomination in the state. The only other woman in the service, Rev. Helen Oates, is a United Methodist District Superintendent serving where the service is held. She reads Psalm 121, which, in the common wisdom of the region, "proves God is a West Virginian" (Oates 2010).

2.6. Role of Music

The Choral Special was performed by the Trap Hill Middle School Choir, a school closest to the site of the service. The song "Angels Watching Over Me" is a poignant reminder that angels cannot prevent the loss of human life, but the young voices provide both sight and sound of consolation to the families. The first verse of "Amazing Grace" is so well-known that it creates an emic moment of unity, providing a common voice in diverse cultural settings as well as intra-faith gatherings.

The Special Music "Go Rest High on That Mountain," performed by Matthew Jones, is well-known to the community of mourners. It, like Psalm 121, is an Appalachian song of place and faith. It marks the transition from lament to celebration. The struggle is over; the victory, won, for those miners. Their sacrifice has been recognized and honored in heaven as it has been now on earth, and they will be waiting for their loved ones to join them. "High on the mountain" provides a sense of transcendence and Appalachian identity. It generates a deep sense of "belongingness" and demonstrates the power of a culturally

sensitive sung affirmation of faith. It unifies the two distinct identities: the romanticism of coal mining and the reality of its human cost.

There is an energy, a turn from lament to a sense of celebration, at this point in the service. The mood and body movements seem filled with a sense of validation and release. A solo voice begins "This Little Light of Mine." This Black spiritual is widely used as a children's song of agency and faith. It was also used in civil rights demonstrations and acts of resistance. On this occasion, it gathers the community's voices in an affirmation of faith in God, the dignity of those they've lost, and their identity as coal providers for a nation. The song also provides ritual closure of the service, as described later in the essay.

2.7. The Remarks

The term "Remarks" deserves a comment as it is used in this setting. The plural indicates that this is not a casual form of speech; it is an address to a community, made in a specific situation, dealing with an event or issue relevant to that community. The religious term, meditation, is an interfaith term. It is not a Protestant sermon or a Roman Catholic homily. It can also apply to the verbal address by a liturgical leader in other faith traditions. Here, it is used for Rev. Mitchell's presentation. The term normally associated with a funeral address, eulogy, is reserved for President Obama.

A more accurate term to describe the "remarks" of the Vice President, the members of the Senate, Senator Robert C. Byrd, Senator Jay Rockefeller, and the members of Congress is "testimony," demonstration of belongingness and faith affirmation. Governor, now Senator, Joe Manchin's speech articulates this history of immigration, Americanization, and cultural and spiritual identification with coal mining. His own family's history of immigration and coal mining is central to his framing of the accident. Drill to the core of his politics, and the trinity of coal, gas, and oil, is also clear. He speaks to the "outsiders" using his narrative to demonstrate his "belongingness" to those who are grieving loss. The entire statement is provided here so that the various intentions of the service can be seen in his greeting.

> My main goal since I learned of the explosion has to make sure our miners were represented honorably and that their families would have the support and protection that they needed during this difficult time. I've personally been through this type of a tragedy. I lost my uncle and a lot of my classmates in 1968 at the Farmington West Virginia mine explosion. So, it was important to me to make sure that those who do not know West Virginia mining families would come to understand the character and substance of these wonderful people who play such an important part in this great state and this great nation of ours. As I listened to our first lady read each of our 29 miners names and watched as each family came forward to place a helmet in honor of their loved ones. I was saddened like all of you, but I was also inspired amid the pain. I see courage. It's the same courage I saw in the face of these wives, these mothers, the fathers, the brothers, the sisters, the sons, and these daughters, those long nights, as we all waited for more news at the Upper Big Branch mine, each of you, each of you exhibit a will and a spirit that we all admire. And this service today, it is our expression of love and hope for the comfort that we wish for all of you and your family. These were strong men. They were strong in stature. They were strong in character. They were strong in their love for you. They were strong in their courage. They were strong in their communities. They were strong in their commitment to every family member and they were so strong in their faith in God. Today is our strength as our chance to be strong in their honor, these were hardworking and brave men. And I know you all know it takes brave men to work beneath the surface. Today is our chance to be brave also in their honor. Mining was the job they chose and it was the job they loved. They were very skilled and they were very good at what they did. I believe. I believe that each of those 29 miners like every miner working today, as well as many of their fathers and grandfathers that worked before them had not only a strong commitment

> to provide a good living for their families, but a deep patriotic pride that the work they did and the energy that they produced made America strong and free (Manchin 2010).

Both Governor Joe Manchin and Corporal James Mitchell, a Freewill Baptist minister and the Chaplain for the West Virginia State Police, are individuals who share concern about the miners and their families and who took extraordinary efforts in providing comfort to the families. Governor Manchin had the families sequestered away from the press, likely as a result of the families who were involved at the Sago Mine disaster experience, and made sure, on the night when it was announced that there were no survivors, that each family had a clergyperson nearby. Corporal Mitchell developed close relationships with the families, praying with them and attending the funerals of many of those who died.

However, when comparing the presentations by Governor Joe Manchin and Corporal James Mitchell, two competing, overlapping, and intertwining narratives about the mine disaster and West Virginia begin to emerge. Both reflect the complex reality that is West Virginia, and both compete for dominance in the state's narrative to itself and the outside world. The one narrative is outward-focused, paternalistic, romanticized, transactional, and defensive; the other narrative is inward-focused, communal, relational, and vulnerable. These narratives are informed in part by the various roles that each play—one as governor, one as pastor, but they also reflect a deeper reality that is manifested both in the construction of the worship service and in their presentations to the families.

Governor Manchin's presentation is outwardly focused on the state and nation and has paternal overtones. He notes early on that, "My main goal since I learned of the explosion was to make sure our miners were represented honorably and that their families would have the support and protection that they needed during this difficult time." In contrast, Corporal Mitchell takes a more inwardly focused approach, one that is more communal in nature. He directly engages the families of the miners and his presentation becomes a re-union that is grounded in a recounting of the events that occurred during the week of the disaster.

Rev. Mitchell begins by re-establishing that sense of community and belongingness that first surfaced as the trauma membrane was forming. He reminds them that he has spent time with them during the disaster, attended viewings and funerals with them, and heard both the families' faith and their love ones' stories:

> About 29 miners who were tragically taken from us 20 days ago, you are without a doubt, some of the most wonderful people that I've been blessed to meet. And I'm thankful to call you my friends. I also stand here today in honor of the 29 miners themselves, whom I feel I know through each and every one of you through the hundred hours that we spent together at the family site and the precious moments at 24 of the 29 viewings and funerals, I was blessed to attend (Mitchell 2010).

Rev. Mitchell stands with the families: "It is in their memory. It is for your support. And it is in your honor that I stand here today." This is Rev. Mitchell's declaration of his understanding of the intention of the service. While both Rev. Mitchell and Governor Manchin share their concern for the families, Rev. Mitchell stands with the families, while Governor Manchin takes a more paternal approach.

Further, Governor Manchin's presentation takes a more romanticized and somewhat transactional view of the miners and mining. He states,

> And I know you all know it takes brave men to work beneath the surface. Today is our chance to be brave also in their honor. Mining was the job they chose and it was the job they loved. They were very skilled and they were very good at what they did. I believe. I believe that each of those 29 miners like every miner working today, as well as many of their fathers and grandfathers that worked before them had not only a strong commitment to provide a good living for their families, but a deep patriotic pride that the work they did and the energy that

> they produced made America strong and free. And my wish is this: that every American takes time to say a prayer for every coal miner working today that keeps our great nation vibrant and safe to not only thank them, but to honor them for their work and their patriotism (Manchin 2010).

On the other hand, Rev. Mitchell's homily is both communal and relational, demonstrating belongingness. Like many family reunions, it is a time of shared memory as he describes his initial engagement with the families, their hopes, and their pain. His first night with the families on the day of the explosion is a turning point, a time when he and the families became bonded. Faith takes center stage, and prayer become the nexus of hope and comfort:

> After the governor addressed us, something happened that changed the rest of that week. We all joined hands and prayed to our heavenly Father for what He alone could provide, things like peace in the midst of perplexity; things like calmness in the midst of calamity and strength in the midst of suffering. And when Amen was spoken, many of you repeated with a resounding amen and amen. Many of you shared with me that week, your personal faith in the Lord, Jesus, and that what you looked forward to as much as the briefings were our times that we would spend together in prayer (Mitchell 2010).

It is at this point in his homily that Rev. Mitchell begins to weave the families' experience of the disaster with the Christian narrative:

> I understand how we are comforted when we pray to the Lord for we know, and remember what the scripture teaches us about him in the Gospel of Matthew. The scripture says he was moved with compassion for them because they were weary and scattered like sheep, having no shepherd. And in the Gospel of Luke, he says, as he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out, the only son of a mother. And she was a widow. And when the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry." Let us not forget the compassion demonstrated in the book of Romans, but God commendeth or demonstrated his love toward us. And that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Yes. I agree with your family. He is a compassionate God (ibid.).

There were two narrative roads that Rev. Mitchell could have taken in his homily. He could have followed the narrative common among the speakers of patriotism and sacrifice for the nation. However, Rev. Mitchell never conflates mining with patriotism, which so often happened in the service. This is significant, because Rev. Mitchell is a Desert Storm veteran, and if anyone that day had the credibility to make that assertion, it would have been him.

Instead, Rev. Mitchell chose to connect with the deep spirituality found in Appalachia and with the values of community and belonging that are the hallmark of a counter-narrative to the romanticization of mining espoused by many of the speakers. He turns back to the Bible to revive the themes of grief, loss, and comfort (surely the experience of many of us who live here) by referring to the scene in the Gospel of John, where Jesus tells the disciples he is leaving (also an Appalachian theme), also harkening back to the theme of friendship with which he began the homily.

Governor Manchin and Rev. Mitchell share stories of loss in their remarks, demonstrating the persistent narrative of trauma in forming a self-identity. Governor Manchin states,

> I've personally been through this type of a tragedy. I lost my uncle and a lot of my classmates in 1968 at the Farmington West Virginia mine explosion. So, it was important to me to make sure that those who do not know West Virginia mining families would come to understand the character and substance of these wonderful people who play such an important part in this great state and this great nation of ours (Manchin 2010).

There is a sense of defensiveness, an intention to interpret the miners' lives as evidence of West Virginia's value and the substance of the miners' character in his statement. It is a

political/economic/national/transactional narrative that accepts sacrifice as essential to the nation. Rev. Mitchell, on the other hand, weaves his story of personal loss into a note of hope derived from the Gospel and the unchanging nature of God.

> Ten years ago, this fall, I lost my father to cancer. He was my father, my counselor, and my friend. About a month before his death. He asked me to take him for a ride in the truck. Upon our return, we sat in the truck as the sun burst through the windshield, onto his very serious demeanor. I looked over and I said, "Dad, what are you thinking about?" He replied, "Son, everything changes. Nothing ever stays the same forever." And you know, in a temporal sense, my father was correct in an eternal sense. I'm strengthened to know that Almighty God never changes. My almighty God. He never fails. And He is never defeated and has never succumbed to anything. Amen. . . . I drew strength from that very truth and draw it today. I still miss him. Miss him greatly as you will. But the Lord has given me grace and strength to survive (Mitchell 2010).

President Obama also sounds a theme of hope in his eulogy, but he anchors hope in the friendship, culture, and loyalty of the community of miners. The mood has shifted toward openness. Someone yells out "We love you, President Obama!" at the beginning of his eulogy. He signals his recognition of the community's identity by his opening recitation of the places that the miners called home, and then their names. Eulogy is the formal act of funeral rhetoric, usually shaped by personal and/or pastoral knowledge of the deceased and the meaning of their lives to the community. Obama demonstrates this knowledge after the naming by describing the miners' daily journey to the mines and then evokes applause by saying that their work is "the energy that powers the world" (Obama 2010).

> He strengthens the sense of cross participation and hospitality by citing "The Coal Miner's Daughter," and uses the song, "Lean on Me," written in Beckley, WV, as the lesson on loyalty and community that West Virginia and these mining families offer to the nation. The need for sacrifice is not unquestioned, however. "Miners keep America's lights on. Don't let this happen again" (ibid.). (It is important to note that no new legislative or regulatory actions by the state or federal level were taken in the aftermath of this loss.)

2.8. Benediction and Altar Call

"Coal Miner's Prayer" is read by Governor Manchin prior to the singing of the final song. He reminds the community he read the prayer on the last day that they waited together for news of the miners. The poem, author unknown, rehearses the reality and the romanticism of sacrifice. (Coal Miner's Prayer n.d.)

> And as they work beneath the clay,
> With heads bowed down these miners pray,
> That God will hear them up above
> And send them safely to the ones they love.
> Now if this cannot come to pass,
> And he must pay the price at last,
> The miner leaves his last demand
> "Keep my child safe above the land." (Manchin 2010)

As the soloist begins to sing "This Little Light of Mine," miners, dressed in black shirts, come forward and begin to turn on each of the lights on the helmets hung on the individual crosses. When the Martin Luther King Jr. Male Chorus joins in, many in the congregation join in. Governor Machin speaks over the joined voices, delivering what is an altar call for the community, an industry, and a national audience. "These are the lights of the world!"

The President and Vice President move down the aisle toward the exit. They are surrounded by family and friends of the miners. They are greeted by hugs, handshakes, a marked transformation from the beginning of the service. President Obama is walking

with his arm around one of the older women, a member of a miner's family, as he moves beyond the range of the camera.

3. Conclusions

This essay's primary contribution to the study of multicultural worship is its interpretation of inter-riting in relationship to the regional, religious, political, economic, and environmental aspects of ritual and trauma in Appalachia. In addition, using these concepts of culture and ritual may provide greater sensitivity to observing and participating in services that involve conflicting or competing cultural values. Finally, a model of cross-participation offers the possibility of healing and pastoral care in a trauma-shaped community, with hospitality being offered and received, for however brief a time, among diverse groups and individuals who have gathered to lament, testify, and pray together.

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Article

A Liturgical Model for Worship in the Multireligious Context: A Case Study Based on the Interfaith Service Held on September 25, 2015, at 9/11 Museum in New York City

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Abstract: This article proposes a liturgical model for multireligious worship, namely the Pilgrim's Service for the Ultimate Goodness of Humanity. Three key humanitarian liturgical principles buttress the proposed model; story-sharing, agreed symbols (metaphors), and de-centering. The model also proposes an overarching onto-narrative image—the pilgrim weaving and holding various liturgical threads as a whole. The end goals of this multireligious worship include, among others; (1) renewed awareness of the all-encompassing Transcendent and Its Peace, (2) interreligious dialogue and collaboration, (3) raised consciousness and the practice of radical hospitality for "strangers", and (4) appreciation of the (religiously) marginalized. The interfaith service held on September 25, 2015, at the 9/11 Museum in New York City is analyzed and annotated, along with further suggestions, as a demonstration of the proposed model.

Keywords: dialogue; religion; peace; interfaith worship; prayer

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1. Introduction

> *I was recently on a plane with a fellow, and he is a Muslim. And when he said he was a Muslim, the first thing he said to me is, he said, "But I'm really kind of a spiritual but not religious Muslim." He wanted me to sort of know that it wasn't all about Dogma to him but that it was about an experience of God and he explained that to me and then he went on and he said, "Oh but I'm married to a Buddhist." And it just so happened that the fellow who was the spiritual but not religious Muslim was married not only to a Buddhist but a Buddhist whose parents came from Vietnam, and they came here and the parents converted; one became a Catholic and one was a Baptist minister.*
>
> Diana Butler Bass[1]

The above story told by the religion scholar, Diana Butler Bass, in her interview by PBS is not uncommon in today's world, at least in the North American context. People from different faith traditions mingle quickly, work together, play sports as teams, go to schools as peers, and get married. They find all these practical aspects of interfaith relations inevitable (that is, without really thinking hard or seriously about it; it is simply very natural), and religious scholars like Bass anticipate the velocity of this interfaith dimension of society will speed up exponentially in years to come.

However, as the same religious scholars would also agree with no varying degrees, there is one aspect of the interfaith life that, unlike other above aspects, does not really come along easily, even though there have been many attempts to achieve it; namely interfaith or multireligious worship service.[2] Simply put, it is very hard to imagine and practice interfaith worship. There are understandably many critical reasons for it, including, but not limited to, theological differences (e.g., monotheism vs. polytheism), ritual differences (e.g., high liturgy vs. minimalist ritual), different cultural contexts (e.g., Euro-American Platonism vs. Eastern Asian Confucianism), historical mistrust (e.g., Christianity vs. Islam), differences in gender roles (e.g., egalitarianism vs. complementarianism), and others.

Probably, a more fundamental reason could be that people have and express natural fear vis à vis, if not against, the "otherness" of different beliefs and practices. Even worse, human beings tend to feel threats from "otherness." (Boyce and Chunnu 2020).

With all these difficulties present in creating interfaith worship considered, there have been exemplary cases of it. There have been some, including the interfaith service held on September 25, 2015, at the 9/11 Museum in New York City, which demonstrate much desirable liturgical principles of interfaith worship.[3] The example also presents fundamental and strategic philosophical goals of interfaith worship, along with a universally sharable central spiritual (or anthropological) metaphor; that is, *the pilgrim on the shared journey*. In sum, the given 9/11 service showcases the high possibility of interfaith worship and its actual practice in the public arena.

This article is an analysis of the 9/11 interfaith service in both a descriptive and prescriptive sense (Fox10 2015).[4] Thus, the article will provide an in-depth description of and annotation on the service, in an attempt to abstract fundamental liturgical principles and philosophical goals that could apply to similar liturgical trials in other interfaith settings. Certainly, we cannot and must not expect these liturgical principles or philosophical goals to be universal in the absolute sense and applicable to all different interfaith settings. But at least we can hope that those goals and principles will provide a guide for many other occasions. Difficulties in creating interfaith worship will still remain, but it should be good and fortunate to have fine exemplars like the 9/11 interfaith service.

2. The Interfaith Service Analyzed and Annotated

For the efficiency of the analysis of the 9/11 interfaith service, I will utilize the basic report toolkit of the 5Ws and 1H; Why, When, Where, Who, What, and How. This toolkit should provide a clear and succinct picture of the service. Each analytic unit, with When and Why combined, has two parts: a brief analysis and a brief annotation.

2.1. When and Why

The service happened on September 25, 2015, when Pope Francis visited the 9/11 Memorial and Museum in New York City to pay his respects to the victims of 9/11 during its 14th anniversary. This was his first visit to the memorial, and the occasion was used for an interfaith service, inviting faith leaders from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, and Hindu traditions. The Christian tradition included the Protestant, the Catholic, and the Orthodox church.

The grand purpose of the service was straightforward and threefold: (1) to commemorate the fallen ones, both civilians and first responders, during the 9/11 attack in 2001, (2) to promote tolerance and solidarity among different faith traditions around the world while abating each other's misunderstandings, and (3) to pray for the peace of the world. A very significant twofold message throughout the service was that (1) the innocent lives are sacrificed (2) due to the misuse of religion or even God's name. Various prayers offered hoped that the people of the world be united in solidarity in recognizing differences of each other and seeking each other's well-being.

The service showed that different faith traditions can come together (relatively easily) in a faith-oriented event that seeks the common good of the people beyond faith boundaries. The service was more about relationship, community, openness and service, rather than dogma, judgement, authority, and power. Also, the service was designed, through various prayers, to recognize that at the core of each faith tradition, notwithstanding that historically they have been in conflict with each other at times, there is the pursuit of and *actual prayer* for the common well-being of all people. Thus, during the service, participants would recognize that vicious terrorist activities against other human beings under the name of a religion or a god is simply a non-sense and meaningless.

2.2. Where

The service happened near one of the reflection pools in the memorial building, on a make-shift yet solid marvel stage. On the stage where faith leaders and their English translators sat together (thirteen people in total, including the Pope), chairs were arranged in a half-oval, audience-facing shape, thus creating a sense of welcoming and embracing toward other participants. Surrounding three sides of the stage, except for the backside, were seats for the audience coming from different faith traditions and no traditions (i.e., simply non-religious people). Family members and friends of the victims, city officials, clergy members, and the city's politicians were present.

The reason for the choice of the service space seems obvious. The memorial stands right above the ground where the 9/11 victims were sacrificed. Thus, the symbolic meaning of the place is beyond any description. The raw and vivid nature of the backwall, the original material of which came from the remanent of the fallen World Trade Center, could easily draw the audience in their imagination into the trade building itself where once their beloved victims worked and lived before the fall. In a sense then (especially in an ancient Asian shamanistic sense),[5] the audience was having the service *with* the spirits of the sacrificed victims right in the moment.

2.3. Who

On the service stage, clergy members and lay representatives/translators from six faith traditions were present with their unique ritual clothes or robes put on. There was a good gender balance, as five women and seven men were seen, although clergy members were all male but one. As the Pope was the main speaker in the middle of the service and the presider a Catholic priest, along with their assistants, the Catholic church's presence felt strong, yet not overwhelming. The pope began his stage appearance by warmly greeting each faith's representative, thus showing his egalitarian approach to the service.

It was highly plausible that several of the world religions were present on the same stage by almost equal numbers of representatives, again, even though the Catholic church's presence felt stronger. The presiding cardinal mentioned Native American people's presence in the service, but they were not represented on the stage. It would have been great for him to briefly make a specific note on their absence on the stage or at least recognize their presence in the audience. As aforementioned, the apparent absence of women clergy members, except for one, was somehow strange given that several lay women representatives were present as translators on the stage; the enhanced presence of women clergy is highly recommended. Also, it would have been great and more welcoming if clergy members with disabilities could have been present on the stage.

2.4. What (Contents of Prayers)

Throughout the service, several prayers were offered, at least one from each different faith tradition. They prayed according to or utilizing the best of their unique faith tradition, which also included citing their own scriptural sources (e.g., the Quran or the Bible) and invoking their own indications of the divine (e.g., Allah or God). This reliance on their unique traditions seemed to be acceptable—that is, not really exclusive to each other—as the actual content of their prayer was highly invitational toward the common good of humanity. For instance, the Muslim clergy member prayed, "The Quran declares that Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good. Let us embody their unconditional love, their continued strength, their unwavering hope, and their pursuit of good as we seek to build a much-needed peace ... ", and the Rabbi prayed, "The Book of Psalms teaches us that we should have Shalom. We should love peace and we should pursue peace. Let us honor those killed in this place by becoming in the words of St. Francis instruments of peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. And where there is sadness, joy." In these instances, each faith tradition showed that their faith is and can be very welcoming and inclusive in practice. In many places of the prayers, the petition for

solidarity among religions appeared as an urgent issue of the day. For instance, the Jewish clergy member made a note of *Nostra Aetate*, which is *the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions of the Second Vatican Council* (1965), which reveres the work of the Christian God in all the major faith traditions. Similarly, the Imam prayed, "Let us move beyond a mere toleration of our differences and work towards the much-needed celebration of them. Let us be bold enough to build partnerships with new friends and allies and together be the reason that people have hope in this world and not the reason that people dread it.".

The pope's address or homily seemed to be a reiteration of previous prayers. Nothing appeared really new. Thus, it does not merit a separate analysis here. But one thing that is notable about his address is his unapologetic condemnation on religious violence over the innocent and compassionate remarks on the vulnerable and marginalized. He seemed to acknowledge that in a world of violence and chasm, the vulnerable and marginalized are the one who suffer the most.

2.5. How

Here is the order of the service. An asterisk means when people stand together, with reasons for standing not clearly specified.

- *Procession (of the Pope);
- *Greetings and Beginning Remarks by the cardinal;
- Invocational Prayer Co-led by the Rabbi and the Imam;
- *Prayer by the Pope;
- Chanted Prayer by the Hindu priest, with contemplative instrumental music in the background; both native language and English translation;
- Bell Ringing;
- Chanted Prayer by the Buddhist monk, with contemplative instrumental music in the background; both native language and English translation;
- Bell Ringing;
- Prayer by the Sikh priest, with contemplative instrumental music in the background; both native language and English translation;
- Bell Ringing;
- Prayer by the Orthodox priest, with contemplative instrumental music in the background; both native language and English translation by a Protestant pastor;
- Bell Ringing;
- Chanted Prayer by the Imam, with contemplative instrumental music in the background; both native language and English translation;
- Bell Ringing;
- *Chanted Prayer by a second Rabbi (who came up to the stage from the audience); in Hebrew with no English translation;
- The Pope's Homily, followed by a brief moment of prayerful silence (approx. 1 min);
- The Youth Choir Singing; coming forward to and standing around the stage;
- Final Remarks by the cardinal;
- *Sharing of Peace.

The whole service ran for roughly forty-eight minutes. The Pope, the main speaker of the service, greeted every faith tradition's representative as he made his procession to the stage. Even though a Catholic cardinal presided over the service, he seemed to well recognizes the interfaith nature of the service and constantly used "we" language. Not once did he use the "I" language in his greetings and introduction of the service. Each faith tradition representative took turns in conducting a different segment of the service. Invocational prayer was done together by the Rabbi and the Imam. All chanted prayers, including the Orthodox priest's prayer, were offered in their mother tongues, with English translations following. Yet, the Jewish chanting was not translated. American Sign Language was offered throughout the service from the left side of the floor. At the very

end of the service, there was time for the physical exchange of the sign of peace among all participants, which concluded the service with people moving around.

At the beginning, the invocational prayer co-led by the Rabbi and the Imam was striking, which hardly, if not never, happens in any typical ritual setting in their own religious communities. It presented a remarkable sign of religious solidarity toward the common good of humanity. The most frequently used single word in almost all prayers was "peace", including the Youth Choir's singing, "Let there be peace on earth." Faith representatives prayed for the peace of the world over and over again, which literally demonstrated that the world is not in peace but in chaos and in face of violence. Bell ringing was wisely used to signal the beginning and ending of each chanted prayer. As most faith traditions have their own historical use of bell ringing, belling ringing seemed to create a natural (or well-intended) feeling of universal solidarity of all humanity and all religions.

3. Four End Goals of the Service Interwoven

Inductively abstracted (that is, abstracted from the critical observation of the prayerful words and kinetic performances), the service seemed to endeavor to achieve at least four interreligious humanitarian goals.

3.1. Renewed Awareness of the All-Encompassing Transcendent and Its Peace

One of the most noticeable lessons that various prayers reminded the audience of is that the all-encompassing Transcendent is around, in, and for all humanity for their ultimate goodness. However, they call It—God, Allah, the Almighty, the Spirit, the One, etc., all we need is to recognize It, rely on It, and live up to Its moral, spiritual, and ethical expectations. The ultimate expectation of the One for humanity, the prayers recognized, is peace of all creatures, especially that of various human tribes that easily tend to be in conflicts with one another. The prayers also urged that the One is a highly reliable and trustable source of this peace, through and with which humanity can move a step toward the ultimate peace of the world gradually, however slow or painful it could be. Prayers encouraged the audience to enthusiastically and humbly participate in this common ethical journey of all humanity in their own *renewed awareness of the all-encompassing Transcendent and Its peace.*

3.2. Interreligious Dialogue and Collaboration

It was taken for granted in the service that each different faith tradition is a fine pathway to the renewed awareness of the all-encompassing Transcendent and Its peace. Further, each tradition is unique in so doing on its own full rights. The service certainly recognized each tradition's uniqueness (e.g., having them use their own original languages), and it seems that that is the reason why different traditions came together to create the service. Each unique tradition will help people of other traditions to see more clearly the various (hidden) dimensions of the One that will greatly enrich human life and eventually lead to human flourishing. Thus, compassionate collaboration among different faith traditions is not a burden nor an additional assignment, but a necessity for the thriving of each tradition. There should be, the whole service seemed to indicate, only merits in *interreligious dialogue and collaboration*, in particular toward the greater peace of the world.

3.3. Raised Consciousness and Practice of Radical Hospitality for "Strangers"

One of critical reasons why interreligious dialogue and collaboration is hard is that humans tend to see people of differences as "strangers" or even worse, potential enemies. This easily happens, especially when people come to confront those of different faith traditions. People are prone to label those of different faiths as strangers, apostates, heretics, and, worse, representations of hostile spiritual forces. As prayers during the 9/11 service realized, in that degraded consciousness of "intolerance and ignorance", religious conflicts, if not religious terrorism, are inevitable and actually have happened. Various prayers

in the service encouraged the audience of different faiths to accept and love each other as beloved brothers and sisters, not as strangers. As not a single brother or sister in the family is the same with another brother or sister genetically or psychologically (they are all different apparently), people of different faiths, the service taught, should be able to see the differences and diversities as natural and as the One-given gifts for a colorful human life.

3.4. Appreciation of the (Religiously) Marginalized

The appreciation of the (religiously) marginalized was achieved in two ways in the service. First, it was done by the sheer representational presence of minor world religions, the racially marginalized, and women on the stage with equal weight. This achievement cannot be truer in the North American context, where the Euro-centric white male clergy-dominant Christianity still prevails across the continent; recall that this interfaith service was held in New York City. Throughout the service, Christianity was only present as a part of the diverse religious groups represented by racial minorities and women. Second, various prayers, especially that of the Pope, lifted up the lingering pains and suffering of those who have been heavily inflicted by the significant loss of their loved ones. Their pains are psychological, financial, relational, and even spiritual, which could make their lives highly vulnerable and potentially marginalized in their communities. The prayers remembered their ongoing suffering and motivated the audience to do the same and further take care of the needs of the suffering ones.

These four goals functioned collectively as the driving force of the interfaith service or as the fourfold teleological foundation. It was not, however, that all four appeared in each and every liturgical segment of the service. Only one or two of them were likely to appear in each. But still, the service as a whole embodied all these four integrated goals, further enhancing one another. In the next section, we see how these four goals were implemented throughout the service in a more liturgical–technical sense.

4. Three Humanitarian Liturgical Principles

Liturgical principles mean design or structural principles of interfaith service utilized to achieve the aforementioned four religious humanitarian goals. This is a technical side of services, but it functions much beyond simple mechanical techniques. The principles, with significant weight, contribute to the meaning making of a service. In a metaphorical sense, these principles are the solid foundation, internal columns, or external frames of a house that firmly sustain the whole entity, while the four goals are the internal furnishings of the house. These internal and external dimensions should not be exclusive to each other and are indeed essential in the generation of a meaningful interfaith service. The 9/11 service seemed to demonstrate the application of the two dimensions very well, and it adopted the following three liturgical principles: story-sharing, agreed symbols, and de-centering.

4.1. Story-Sharing

Stephen Crites proposes the fundamental narrative structure of human experience. For him, story or narrative is of vital importance in both individual and communal lives. In particular, when a story is truly meaningful to life's situation, we humans experience it as the ontological or fundamental ground of existence. Thus, it would be safe to say that every individual or community needs a truthful and meaningful narrative that establishes that individual's or community's ontological ground, moral foundation, communal virtues, social relations, and, in particular, for religious folks, their spiritual journey in faith.

The 9/11 memorial service made a good case of Crites' proposal. *There was* one central narrative shared by all participants for their relationship building and moral imagination, namely the sacrifices and courageous services of the 9/11 victims. For this service, it was relatively painless to "find" one story sharable by people of different faiths, as the service gathering's main purpose was the commemoration of the 9/11 attack, which impacted (killed) people of many different faiths. Yet, still, the service showed its effortful consideration in telling the story in the way that the story led to robust relationship building

and communal moral imagination among the people of different faiths gathered in one place. The service interpreted the 9/11 story not only as one of ultimate tragedies and human failures, but also, more importantly, as *the sacrifice of the innocent and the triumph of courageous human spirt* exemplified, among others, by the first responders and many kind volunteers who on the tragic day offered their own lives to save those of other people—even when the served were "strangers" or people of other faiths. The 9/11 story, the service recognized, beyond its utter darkness, sheds a hopeful light on humanity's continued endeavor to live peacefully and in harmony. This one story was unmistakably shared by all the participants of the service.

4.2. Agreed Symbol (Metaphor)

In their study of metaphor *par excellence*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson showed how metaphors or symbols function in people's ordinary lives, as well as in language and text.[6] Basically, they realized that without metaphors, human communication would be very limited in its meaning making and conveyance. More importantly, metaphors in communication create large space for different interpretations of the same situation, still with a certain agreed ethos underneath. This may sound quite devastating, as if "genuine" communication is impossible. At the same time, however, metaphoric or symbolic language provides a wide-open room for creative and radical perceptions and interpretations of the same situation.

The 9/11 service effectively utilized at least two symbolic metaphors in maximizing the implementation of the above four goals; the two are water and bell ringing. Water in almost every religion symbolizes (the sacredness of) life, new beginnings, and healing. With this water symbolism, the service participants gathered around one of the reflection pools in the Memorial Museum. Further, here and there during the service, prayers made references to the water image for the purpose of proclaiming healing, new beginnings, and renewed life. Bell ringing, which is also a symbolic action practiced by many religions for meditation, the invocation of a divine presence, and the making of communal spirit, had heightened presence in the service. Bell ringing happened five times interspersed among prayers of different faiths. This five-fold activity seemed to symbolize the gathered community's meditation on human suffering and hopes for better future, yearning for the divine presence that may heal brokenness, and the community's pursuit for peaceful world.

As Lakoff and Mark Johnson articulated, these symbolic actions seem to create large (spiritual or mental) space and time where and when people think of the confronted (violent) situation deeply and generate new hopes for the better future in their own wide-open imagination. What is highly plausible is the good use of these *ordinary* metaphoric symbols. Through the symbols that people can find easily and in a friendly manner in their own lives, people could realize painlessly that the renewed future—the future with no violence yet peace and harmony—is and must be really possible in this world we live in every day.

4.3. De-Centering

Along with story-sharing and agreed symbols (metaphors), de-centering should be a real key to the design of any proper interfaith service. This last, but by no means the least, principle is so important since in many cases of interfaith service, a particular faith tradition still tends to take on a superior status in terms of liturgical leadership and dictates the rest of the service. As a matter of fact, without this third principle integrated adroitly, the good intentions of the previous two could easily collapse; story-sharing and agreed symbol might be dominated by a certain tradition's ideology or bias.

Multicenteredness, specifically a liturgical space of multicenteredness, should be the phenomenological result of the practice of de-centering. In other words, each different participant faith tradition should create its own liturgical center that is paralleled in harmony with those of others. This is easily observable in the 9/11 service in terms of its basic liturgical constructive elements of when, why, where, who, what, and how, as described earlier.

In particular, the use of indigenous languages for prayers by various faith traditions (along with English translations) achieved the de-centering very wisely and in a very natural way. By this simple yet significant practice, the potential western religious hegemony, which has happened historically, culturally, and linguistically at least in the North American context, lost its grip—thus became de-centered—while the multicenteredness of different faiths was generated. The antiphonal invocation co-led by the Rabbi and the Imam at the beginning was also remarkable in this de-centering regard.

It should be noted that de-centering must be executed beyond mere right proportionality among different faith traditions; that is, beyond each tradition taking a turn to do something in order to simply fill up the service space in the sense of representational tokenism. The service space should function as that of "liminality" (Victor Turner) or that of "the Third Space" in Homi Bhabha's terminology. The liminal space, Turner contends, is created by those who have arrived at a place where they find themselves *being recognized as others*, if not as strangers, yet still where they can begin to see a new possibility for life for all—themselves and all others around them (Turner 1969). The postcolonial Third Space functions almost in an identical way. In the Third Space, the dominant colonial entity loses its power yet becomes humble while the marginalized–colonized restore its indigenous identity and voice toward potential reconciliation between two previous opposing parties.[7] The 9/11 interfaith service seemed to provide exactly this space of liminality or the liturgical Third Space, where the new reality of the reconciled peace among (historically) contending religions was being born and also where the dominant western religious power lost its hegemony while uplifting the marginalized voices of other faiths. This phenomenological de-centering of the interfaith service is certainly beyond representational religious tokenism.

It should be noted that there can be no set of liturgical principles that are applicable and adoptable for every interfaith service universally. By principles, we can only mean liturgical design fundamentals of *significant consideration*. Each different interfaith service for a different context and occasion would have to come up with its principles for liturgical design or structure that may serve its pursued goals well. That being said, the above three principles should be applicable with ease to any interfaith service with different specifics; that is, with different stories shared and different agreed symbols along with a variety of other de-centering strategies.

5. Conclusions: Toward the Interfaith Pilgrim's Activism of Peace and Reconciliation

Lead us to your abode of peace[8]

The ultimate purpose of the 9/11 service was certainly beyond the commemoration of the sacrificed. Proactive activism toward the world's peace and reconciliation was the very reason why the 9/11 service was planned and offered. The prayers encouraged *proactive* activism, which means that they wanted the participants to be swift and vigilant in preventing any similar (religiously oriented) tragic violence upon human lives. All the four end goals and three liturgical principles articulated above are activism-oriented reflections of that ultimate purpose in varying degrees.

As the above prayer quote from the 9/11 service indicates, the ethos of the pilgrim or pilgrimage existed throughout the service, though not explicitly. Put briefly, by the pilgrim ethos, the service reminded the audience that we are all temporary residents of this earthly place where we continue to walk on the shared journey of life toward the One Source who is the foundation of all life and all creation.[9] Under this shared One Source, all, in spite of many differences and biases—not least in religious faiths—are expected to love and serve each other as beloved brothers and sisters. In my humble opinion, it would be great to adopt this pilgrim ethos as a central topical thread, in a more robust way, that may weave the whole liturgy and that each faith tradition may apply to the construction of their prayers. This central topical thread may have helped achieve better coherency of the service, which was somewhat lacking due to the presence of multiple faith traditions at once.

Finally, as Bass also points out in her interview, people of the 21st century across all religious terrains are yearning for religious activities that are more about genuine experience, authenticity, service of others, relationship, community, religious harmony, and openness in beliefs instead of religious dogma, power, hypocrisy, unchecked authority, judgement, religious conflicts, and individualistic piety. The 9/11 interfaith service, though limited, sincerely adopted these felt needs of the people into its design and practice. Furthermore, the service encouraged the participants to do the same—meeting the same needs of the people—in their own contexts for the same ultimate purpose. In that aspect, the 9/11 interfaith service seems to be an ongoing, never-ending invitation and encouragement to all.

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Notes

[1] "Diana Butler Bass Extended Interview", https://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2013/03/15/october-26-2012-diana-butler-bass-extended-interview/13585/ (accessed 1 on May 2022). In particular, watch 8:31–9:36 (WNET 2013).

[2] In this article, the two terms, interfaith and multireligious, are used interchangeably. In various places, it seems that interfaith is used in a more action-oriented or prescriptive sense, while multireligious in a more phenomenological or descriptive sense. As we see later in this article, interfaith or multireligious worship service needs to consider both senses carefully in its actual practice.

[3] Before further moving on, we need working definitions of certain key terms, especially liturgy, worship, ritual, and service. Liturgy is specifically a Christian term for ritualized worship. Its Greek origin, *leitourgia*, means *the work of or for the people*. Thus, liturgy connotates ritualized worship designed and performed by the community for the community's sake. In this article, the term liturgy is used to represent all ritualized or worship activities of various religious traditions, adopting its most original sense of "the people's work." Ritual or worship is truly a communal task. The terms ritual, worship, or service are interchangeable in this article too. Some faith traditions prefer ritual (e.g., Buddhism and Hinduism), while others prefer worship or service (e.g., Christianity and Sikhism). Finally, along with liturgy, the term service is used as a universal term to point to various religious rituals or worship practices. Service seems to sound more neutral; that is, not specific to a particular faith tradition.

[4] The entire service can be watched at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_qgyCDH_ks&t=1184s (accessed on 1 March 2022).

[5] In traditional Confucianism and Shamanism, the spirits of the deceased can still have connections with the living. See (Ching 1993, pp. 84–89; Ryu 1965, p. 68; Jacobsen 1999, p. 1).

[6] It is not easy to differentiate symbols from metaphors because in a linguistic or semiotic sense, meanings or literary functions generated by those two literary tropes often overlap even in one literary work. Yet, to speak very briefly in terms of their differences, symbols always have distinctly relatable objects that are symbolized (e.g., The Stars and Stripes is a symbol of nothing but the U.S. nation), while metaphors produce various meanings of objects that are metaphorized depending on the literary situation (e.g., when we say "Time is Money" or "Time is Revelation", these two time metaphors create different literary meanings. Nonetheless, as said, symbols and metaphors are often interchangeable; that is, at times, certain symbols become metaphors and vice versa (e.g., When King says, "Many years ago, the Negro was thrown into the Egypt of segregation . . . ", here the term "Egypt" is used as metaphor rather than as symbol). In this article, I use symbol and metaphor in this interchangeable sense. For a detailed definition and discussion on symbol and metaphor, see Chandler (2002, pp. 38–39) and Lakoff and Johnson (2003, pp. 3–6).

[7] For more discussion of the Third Space, see (Bhabha 1994). Homi Bhabha is considered as the original coiner of the term *third space* based on his postcolonial notion of *hybridity*. He notices that people oscillating between the colonizer's hegemonic cultural authority and the p De-centering erson's initial cultural orientation comes to formulate a hybrid identity that is very new to the former two though emerging and taking certain characteristics from the two. This new hybrid identity appears as a disruption and displacement of the existing colonial powers, which cannot fully grasp the new cultural thrust and creativity of the hybrid people and thus dismiss it by their typical universal cultural claims. Translated politically or sociologically, this hybrid people become a key source of protest, subversion, reconstruction, and of colonial hegemonic society. Where the existing exclusive colonial status quo is subverted, the people of hybrid identity create the more inclusive third space that "initiates new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation." (Bhabha 1994, p. 1).

[8] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_qgyCDH_ks&t=1184s (accessed 1 on March 2022), 21:37.

[9] It is interesting to realize that all six faith traditions present in the 9/11 service have their own historical concepts and experiences of pilgrimage in their own religious contexts. Thus, it would not really be a foreign task for them to further develop their own pilgrim/pilgrimage concept for the purpose of the interfaith service.

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Article

Interfaith/Interreligious? Worship/Prayer? Services/Occasions? Interfaith Prayer Gatherings

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Abstract: Today there are many occasions when persons from various religious traditions gather together for some type of observance. These gatherings are referred to by various names: Interfaith "Worship", Multireligious "Prayer," Interreligious "Services," and "Integrative Religious Prayer." People come together to learn more about one another, to protest injustices, to mourn disasters, and to join together to work for the common good. In some gatherings, there are also people in attendance who claim no religious affiliation at all. In other gatherings, like a community ritual event designed by the religious leaders of the town the eve before Thanksgiving, there is often an assumption that all who attend "pray" to a "God" even if the content and forms of "prayer" and the names and understandings of "God" differ. However, while Buddhists use the term "prayer," they do not have a "god" to whom they pray. This article addresses the models of host/guest, serial interfaith occasions (when people are participant observers at a gathering where each religious tradition maintains its own integrity and contributes something to the whole in a serial fashion), and "inter-riting" (when the event is designed so the people can pray together in a unified fashion, often blurring the boundaries that commonly separate each religion). The Shinnyo Lantern Floating Hawaii, a large Buddhist-designed interfaith ritual gathering that combines the personal and the global, and offers insights into guest/host, serial interfaith, and inter-riting models, will be used as a basis for understanding these issues to assist religious leaders in their interfaith work.

Keywords: interfaith worship; interreligious prayer; multireligious services; serial interfaith prayer; inter-riting; Lantern Floating Hawaii

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1. Introduction

The title of this article gives readers some idea of the complexities today in naming what some call "interfaith worship services" or "interreligious prayer". We know "it" when we see it or hear about it and many of us have participated in some sort of interreligious "event" where the people gathered for more than an educational activity. Ritual practices took place. A Jew may attend the baptism of a friend's child and in the process learn something and come to appreciate the role religion plays in his friend's life. You may attend the wedding of a Christian who is marrying a Hindu. A Muslim colleague invites you to break the fast during a day of Ramadan at an Iftar dinner. The various religious groups in your town/city join in solidarity to protest the killing of a young black man. The nation gathers people from every religion and no religious affiliation to lament and mourn the deaths of those killed in the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

There are occasions where there is an intentional gathering of people from various religions who come together to read sacred texts, to "pray," to be in silence together, to sing/chant songs. The purpose of these gatherings and one's decision to attend and observe, or more actively participate varies greatly. These events, however, are not primarily about religious histories and beliefs. They embody the ways religion is lived out in spiritual practices—in the gestures and postures and movements, the sounds and sights and smells and symbols that are deeply rooted in the psyche and spiritual being of religions' practitioners.

Joining with others from different religions, especially for ritual, prayer, or worship, is welcomed and embraced by some and viewed as a total violation of their own religious beliefs by others. Yet as oppression and even persecution of religious minorities continues at home and around the globe, and as local communities become increasingly multireligious, getting to know our religiously diverse neighbors and finding ways to foster peace can be a great contribution to human flourishing and the common good.

This article highlights the Lantern Floating Hawaii event as an example of a religious community that uses important elements and symbols from their tradition to create an interreligious occasion for the purpose of fostering healing and peace among those who attend. Organized by a Buddhist denomination that began in Japan in the 1930s, the event intentionally takes place near Pearl Harbor, the site that Japan bombed in 1941.

There are various occasions today that call upon religious leaders and laypersons to design and/or participate in collaborative multireligious events. The purpose(s), content, and leadership of these occasions all vary, but there are some models that can help those who participate in the design of these events. What these events are called varies greatly.

In the field of Christian liturgical studies, there is no common agreed upon term that refers to the variety of interfaith/interreligious worship/prayer/ritual services/occasions described above. In some ways it is tied to the area of study known as "multicultural worship" because the gathering of those from other religious traditions is, by definition, also multicultural. However, there are additional layers of complexity that accompany the worship/prayer/ritual gatherings where two or more religious traditions jointly design and facilitate an occasion that is for their respective communities but also for the confluence of these communities combined.

Different disciplines, different religions, and different regions within the English-speaking world define terms associated with these occasions in varied ways, not to mention the plethora of terms possible in other languages. I am a North American, Caucasian woman who is a Christian minister and native English speaker. This article is somewhat slanted toward an English-speaking Christian audience because these interfaith/multireligious ritual gatherings are often more problematic for Christians than for Hindus, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, or Baha'is. Christianity is considered an "exclusive" religion which, for some, poses issues for interfaith engagement.

It is clear that the English terms we choose can be interpreted in a variety of positive (welcoming, inclusive) and negative (boundary erecting, exclusive) ways. Therefore, clarity of what is meant by the words used in this article is essential. Coming to an understanding of these terms is an important part of engagement with persons from other religions.

1.1. Interfaith? Interreligious? Multireligious?

In reality, "interfaith" and "interreligious" are often used interchangeably. However, scholars and theologians have argued for highlighting the difference between these terms. The World Council of Churches (WCC)

> distinguishes between 'interfaith' and 'interreligious.' For the WCC, the term 'interfaith' is not limited to established religions. The term 'interfaith' is also 'considered to encompass ideologies and systems of belief which transcend specific religious identification, including, for example, humanists and secularists. It is also a term regularly used in political and social circles, to speak about social cohesion, the importance of members of different faiths and religions working together for the common good, and the elusive search for peace between religions'. (Tveit 2016)

In 1965, as a result of Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church published "Nostra Aetate" (Our Age) which used the term "interreligious" to refer to its engagement with those from other religions and faith traditions (Nostra Aetate 1965). Following "Nostra Aetate," the WCC "has increasingly opted to use the word interreligious rather than interfaith" because the work they do is primarily dialogue with those who represent a specific religious tradition (Tveit 2016).

Whether the term is all one word or two words or a hyphenated word can also signal differences in meaning. Sometimes, "interfaith" is used to emphasize the similarities between religions while "inter-faith" or "inter faith" is used to highlight the need to keep differences as well as similarities part of the encounter (Tveit 2016).

In "(Inter)Religious Studies: Making a Home in the Secular Academy," Kate McCarthy argues that "interfaith" activities are done with the goal of creating a space where people who belong to different faith traditions work together for the purpose of greater understanding and fostering peace. She views the field of "interreligious studies" as an academic discipline that is committed to critical study but is religiously neutral (McCarthy 2018).

"Multireligious" and "multifaith" are also terms that are used in both the academy and the church though not as often as interreligious and interfaith. As you can see, the choice of the term used means different things to different populations of people. Since ritual gatherings are often designed to bring adherents of different religions together for deeper understanding and fostering peace, and since civic ritual gatherings and those designed to protest, lament, or grieve tragedies in our communities, nations, and world also include those who are humanists, secularists, agnostics, spiritual but not religious, and atheists, for the purpose of this article, I will use the term "interfaith," though "multifaith" would similarly reflect the intent of these gatherings. While I have not chosen to include the hyphenated term "inter-faith" since it less frequently appears in discussions on this topic, attention to differences as well as similarities should nonetheless be a part of these interfaith gatherings. In helping to organize interfaith gatherings, it is important to discern what term will be used to best convey the purpose of the event and how the meaning of terms used will be conveyed to those who will attend.

1.2. Worship? Ritual? Prayer?

In addition to the question of the adjective (interfaith, interreligious, etc.) that identifies the multifaith composition of these gatherings, *what* it is that we are doing is also riven with controversy. "Worship" as a collective ritual event is viewed by many as more of a Christian term. This is not to say that those who are not Christian do not worship. "Worship," can be found in many of the world's religions but it is defined and expressed in different ways. Christians use it in reference to worshiping a triune God (Father/God, Son/Jesus, Holy Spirit). If an interfaith event has *worship* in the title, for non-Christians, the term can imply that the ritual event will have an underlying assumption of a divine being who is worshipped. For some outside Christianity, using the term interfaith *worship* might also imply that the ritual occasion was primarily designed/organized by Christians, which conveys an assumption about the power dynamics present in the planning and outcome of the interfaith event.

The word "ritual" is likewise controversial. For some, it is a comfortable term that refers to spiritual practices (personal and collective) that are life-giving and form the rhythms of our lives—daily, weekly, and yearly. It might be daily prayers and devotions, the weekly times we gather as communities of faith (though not all religions gather weekly), the yearly feasts, festivals, seasons, and holy days that are celebrated. It might be the rituals that we call rites of passage that take place throughout one's lifetime. "Ritual studies" is a term used in anthropology denoting cultural rituals that may or may not have religious foundations, so the term also has secular meanings as well. For some people, the term "ritual" is defined as repetitious—saying the same words in the same order week after week (which has positive connotations for some and negative ones for others). However, the very nature of ritual can also be problematic for events specifically created for a diverse group of people at a particular time and place because ritual "is a set pattern of behavior which people receive rather than create. More than any other structured cultural behavior, rituality is traditional and resists change" (Moyaert 2015).

The term "prayer" is used in a wide variety of religious contexts. The weekly gathering of Jews and Muslims would more likely be called "prayer", rather than "worship". Prayer is a corporate occasion as well as a personal, individual practice. "Prayer" also denotes

physical movements and postures for many of the world's religions. "Prayer vigil" may be the term used when persons come together to protest an injustice committed against an individual or group of people, to lament or grieve unnecessary death. Despite this, in the Western world, "prayer" often implies an entity that we are praying to who is usually greater than/beyond ourselves, a deity. Yet not all religions are theist.

"Prayer" is a practice within Buddhism and Jainism but it is not addressed to a divine being since there is no external creator "god" within these religious traditions. Enlightened beings are not considered divine. Prayer is also not about petition or supplication—asking God or enlightened ones for something for ourselves or for others. Instead prayer is about the transformation of our inward self and outward acts that bring us closer to enlightenment as we learn from and model our lives on those who have already attained enlightenment. Meditation is a form of prayer, a process of mental purification, of cleansing the mind from attachments and desires to focus on compassion and loving-kindness. While in the Western world there is often this underlying assumption of theism in connection with the word "prayer," there is also a wide diversity of purposes for these prayers. "There is a difference between praying to a God who sees and hears, recognizes and stands over against you, and intentionally 'oneing' yourself with an infinite being with which you are already identified at your deepest level and into which you wish to be absorbed" (Ryan 2008). Therefore, any generic use of the word "prayer" (as in interfaith *prayer*) for these ritual occasions can be problematic, especially if the planners believe that "we all pray to the same God" as a way to highlight our similarities and create unity. It excludes those from non-theist religious traditions. Still, interreligious and interfaith scholar, Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook, argues for the use of the term "prayer" rather than "worship" because "'prayer' translates more readily across traditions than the term 'worship' (Kujawa-Holbrook 2019)".

While the term "prayer" is certainly problematic, it is a term more widely used among the world's religions. The commonality of its usage and the multiplicity of its meanings and practices across traditions may make it more acceptable to people from drastically different religions (i.e., theist, monotheist, polytheist, pantheist, non-theist). Many religions have different postures for prayer (i.e., sitting, kneeling, standing, dancing, spinning/twirling, lying prostrate), movements that accompany prayer (i.e., the movements in the Salat prayers of Islam, crossing oneself in some forms of Christianity, bowing one's head, rocking movements in some forms of Judaism as well as in the Tong Sung Kido prayers of Korean Protestant Christians, twirling/spinning in the Sufi whirling dervishes or in some Traditional African religions), objects that focus the mind when praying (i.e., statues of the Hindu gods and goddesses, the prayer beads and prayer wheels in Buddhism, the rosary beads in Catholicism, the materials used for the Kolam prayer designs in Hinduism, the cross found in most Christian churches), ways prayers are expressed (i.e., singing, chanted, spoken, offered in silence), and purposes of prayer (i.e., adoration, thanksgiving, petition, blessing, to seek help/guidance, to transform the self, to meditate on those who are the human holy ones past and present, to offer honor to the divine or enlightened ones, to repent or turn toward the path of holiness or enlightenment). For the purpose of this article, I will use the term "prayer" because of its common usage and multivalent nature. People can bring to and take from the interfaith prayer event something that connects to their understanding(s) of "prayer" rooted in their tradition IF the gathering is designed in a way that is open to this diversity of prayer practices, postures, purposes, movements, expressions, and meanings in order for the people gathered to be able to participate.

Whatever term is chosen ("worship," or "ritual," or "prayer," or some other term to convey the purpose of an interfaith event), it is important to consider how the term chosen is reflective of those religious traditions represented in the organizers, invited participants/guests, and the intent of the gathering/event. The term may be different from one occasion to another as the planners, participants, and purposes change.

1.3. Service? Event? Celebration? Vigil? Ceremony? Occasion? Gathering?

Some who organize these interfaith observances also use an additional term to denote what will take place. The word "service" has many different uses in the English language and while it is used by most Protestant Christians (i.e., "worship service," or even simply "the service"), it is confusing to non-native-English-speaking Christians as well as those from other religious traditions. These are often events, celebrations, sometimes vigils (as in "keeping watch"—to keep in the forefront so injustices do not happen again). "Ceremony" implies something more formal which may be very appropriate. The term "occasion" implies that the event is not repeated on a regular basis but happens occasionally. The term "gathering" denotes that people are coming from diverse places, even perspectives, to join together as a community. I believe that gathering is at the heart of interfaith prayer.

2. Interfaith Prayer Gatherings

2.1. Introduction: Interreligious Comfort Zones

There are a variety of expressions of interfaith prayer gatherings. Some preserve the boundaries of religious beliefs, sacred texts, and practices while others intentionally blur those boundaries. Some adherents to various religions are deeply attracted to interfaith prayer gatherings and others are absolutely appalled by the fact that they exist. Where one places oneself on the interfaith prayer comfort zone spectrum often depends on one's beliefs about other religions. While Christianity and Islam are considered to be more exclusive in nature (their religion is the *only* way) compared to the dharmic traditions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism) which are more inclusive of other religions, there exists within most of the world's religions those who are more open and those who are more orthodox in their beliefs. Today, there are also persons who have multiple religious belongings. Additionally, among the grassroots population in parts of Asia, some people participate in religious rituals of different religious traditions depending on whether the ritual brings about the desired result, not based on the religion's belief system (Farwell 2015), so one's choice to participate includes many factors.

Paul Knitter, in his book *Introducing Theologies of Religions* poses four models of ways people view religions other than their own: "replacement," "fulfillment," "mutuality," and "acceptance" (Kittner 2002). Though written from a Christian (Roman Catholic) perspective, these models are helpful for understanding people's comfort zones in participating in interfaith prayer gatherings. For those adherents of a more exclusive religious tradition, the "replacement" model affirms that their religion is the only true religion, which will eventually supplant the "lesser" religions of the world. The "fulfillment" model recognizes the possibility of grace, even truth, in other religions though not on par with one's own religion. These first two models "so stress the particularity of one religion that the validity of all the others is jeopardized" (Kittner 2002, p. 173). The "mutuality" model values the worth and truth that lies within all religious traditions and does not try to rank them as more or less inferior to one's own. This model can so "stress the universal validity of all in a way that fogs over the real particular differences" (ibid.). The "acceptance" model accepts "the real diversity of all faiths. The religious traditions of the world are really different, and we have to *accept* those differences . . . " (ibid.).

What one believes along this spectrum impacts one's willingness to participate in interfaith prayer. While more attention needs to be given to familial interfaith prayer occasions given the increase in interfaith marriages, for the purpose of this article, I will focus on the models for corporate/communal events (which are often adapted for familial occasions). There are three basic models of corporate interfaith prayer gatherings that are most common today: (1) guest/host; (2) serial interfaith occasions, multireligious/multi-religious prayer; and (3) inter-riting, united interreligious prayer, interreligious prayer, integrative religious prayer. While these will be discussed in their "pure" form, there is always the possibility that more than one form may be present in any gathering. The Lantern Floating Hawaii event is used as an example because it contains all three of these models.

2.2. Models of Interreligious Prayer

Guest/Host

In the guest/host model, a person from one religious tradition is the guest at a gathering that is organized and led by persons from a different religious tradition. I attended the daily puja (prayer) at a Hindu monastery on the island of Kauai in Hawaii. I could choose to be an observer or I could participate to whatever degree I felt comfortable. While the host welcomed non-Hindus and the website gave some background on what was appropriate to wear, etc., in order for me to participate in the puja (since I did not understand the language), I needed to be attentive to what others were doing (postures, emotions, symbolic actions) and model what I observed. I chose to participate to the degree I could because simply observing the sounds and sights alone did not convey for me a fuller sense of the spirituality. Participating in the movements and symbolic actions helped the experience to be embodied. While things were not explained in English (verbally or in written form), there was still a warmth of hospitality in that I felt welcomed and accepted regardless of anything I did "wrong" during the times I was trying to participate. In some guest/host situations, there are more accommodations for the guests (information, guidance, etc.) which may allow for fuller participation but participation is not necessarily expected.

In other gatherings, being an observer may be all that is intended by the host. It is often hospitable to not require anything of the guest. The host is simply appreciative of their presence. In "Receiving the Stranger: A Muslim Theology," Tim Winter states that "hospitality is only authentic if it respects rather than compromises the rights of the guest" (Winter 2015). However, there are also "rights" of the host. Ruth Langer, in "Parameters of Hospitality for Interreligious Participation: A Jewish Perspective," reminds us that "guests who do not respect the 'rules of the house' violate the proffered hospitality." It is helpful if the "rules of the house" and the expectations of both guests and hosts are clarified in advance.

2.3. Serial Interfaith Occasions, Multireligious/Multi-Religious Prayer

This second model is often referred to as serial interfaith occasions (Braybrooke 1997), multireligious prayer (Ryan 2008), or multi-religious prayer (Moyaert 2015; Braybrooke 1997). Since "multireligious prayer" today is a more generic term that can be used to refer to any one of these models, I will use "serial" to refer to this model.

In 1986, Pope John Paul II gathered with representatives from different religions in Assisi, Italy, for A Day of Prayer for Peace. He said "We come together to pray rather than come to pray together" (Ryan 2008). In this gathering, a diversity of Christian denominations and eleven other world religions/traditions came together for fasting and prayer throughout the day with each praying/meditating in their own way. On this occasion and subsequent commemorations of this day, there was no "joint" or interfaith time of prayer. Nonetheless, in many ways this concept of "coming together to pray" is foundational for serial prayer. In serial interfaith prayer, people gather to offer texts, songs/chants, prayers, symbolic artifacts, and actions from their own religion in the presence of persons from other religions.

These "offerings" are done in a serial fashion; the rites of one tradition cross paths with the rites of another religious tradition. It honors the differences among the religions while at the same time showing respect, even appreciation for the offerings of those different from one's own. It is a given that what is said from those in leadership will not ring true for everyone present but it also recognizes that what is said are truth claims for *some* of those who have gathered. Sometimes serial gatherings are organized around a topic so that sacred texts, prayers, songs/chants, symbolic artifacts, and actions are chosen to reflect a common theme. A sacred text will be read by an adherent of one religion, a song will be chanted by another, a prayer will be offered by another, etc. Each religion maintains their own integrity within the presence of others—coming together to pray, not praying together. If an imam is offering the Shahadah ("I testify that there is no god but God and I testify that

Muhammad [peace be upon Him] is His servant and Messenger."), Muslims attending the gathering may recite the Shahadah as well so there is the possibility of active participation by some, but it is participation in what is familiar from one's own religion while being an observer of those offerings from other religious traditions.

2.4. Inter-Riting, United Interreligious Prayer, Interreligious Prayer, Integrative Religious Prayer

Inter-riting (Moyaert 2015), united interreligious prayer (Braybrooke 1997), interreligious prayer (Ryan 2008; Moyaert 2015), and integrative religious prayer (Ryan 2008) are terms that are used to refer to interfaith gatherings intentionally designed for people to come to pray together rather than coming together to pray. There are times when people from various religions (and those with no religious affiliation) gather in order to celebrate diversity or to "create a 'we' in the face of shared challenges (Moyaert 2015)." The occasion may be an interfaith walk for peace that ends with an interfaith prayer gathering or there might be a prayer vigil protesting an injustice in the community or in the world. The focus is on our common humanity, the unity of community while at the same time recognizing, respecting, and valuing cultural and religious differences. In these gatherings, there is intentionally no clear host or guest. Great care is taken to include representatives from as many religious traditions as possible to help plan and organize the interfaith prayer event. One major goal is participation by all who attend. Michael Jagessar believes that for this to happen, however, "in order to pray each other's prayers, we must assume that there is indeed some sense of disruption, or to use a better word, an expansion of our commitments (Jagessar 2016)".

In this model, attempts are made to be as inclusive as possible, which often means being mindful of language, gestures, symbols, etc., that erect barriers to participation. Jewish scholar, Lawrence A. Hoffman, in his article "Worship in Common," refers to this as a service of "Mutual Affirmation" or one of the "Highest Common Denominator" (Hoffman 1990) because critics of this model often refer to it in negative terms as interfaith prayer of the *least* common denominator (Braybrooke 1997). Or it is said to be syncretistic and reduces the substance of religious traditions to whatever it is that we can claim is common among us. However, one of the key purposes of this model of interfaith prayer gatherings is to gather as one community those long divided, to stand in solidarity with the "other," to celebrate diversity within the human community, and to seek the common good for humanity, its creatures, and our home, Earth.

The designers and leaders of these services represent not only their respective religious tradition but they are present to help guide all who have gathered in a time of unity and community and, hopefully, a transformative experience. It may be a college campus' baccalaureate before graduation or a nation's "prayer" during an inauguration. Everyone is invited to join/participate regardless of their religious affiliation. These gatherings are often topically oriented, specific to the occasion, and highly contextual.

One of the great dangers of the inter-riting model of interfaith prayer is misappropriation—borrowing the sacred texts, practices, and symbols of a religious tradition and using them in inauthentic ways. The end result can appear to be disrespectful of particular beliefs and abuse of spiritual practices. Given the fluid boundaries, the risk of misappropriation, and the goal of inclusion of theists, non-theists, and atheists, this is perhaps the most difficult type of an interfaith prayer gathering to plan.

Each of these models have value in their "pure" form but ritual/prayer/worship within various religious traditions are not always in their "pure" form, if a "pure" form can even be identified. Borrowings and blendings take place as religions interact with culture and other religions in different times and places.

What follows is an example of a unique interfaith prayer gathering. It is unique because it contains elements from all three of the models discussed, practitioners from many different religions and those with no religious affiliation at all attend, and the number of participants is extremely large. It is a yearly event (except during the COVID-19 pandemic) known as Lantern Floating Hawaii (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Lantern Floating Hawaii[1].

On the island of Oahu, Lantern Floating Hawaii is an unique, very large (40,000+ participants) interfaith prayer gathering with over 40,000 participants. Note, however, that "prayer" or "worship" or even "interfaith" is not in the title. Though clearly an interfaith prayer gathering, the title depicts the participatory symbolic action that is the culmination of the event. Lantern Floating Hawaii is organized by the Shinnyo-En Buddhist community. Shinnyo-En roughly translates as "a garden open to all, where everyone can discover and bring out their true nature". While Shinnyo Buddhism was not founded in Japan until the 1930s by Shinjo Ito, it is rooted in the 1100-year-old Shingon Buddhism, one of the main forms of esoteric Buddhism in Japan. Shinnyo Buddhism's current leader is Her Holiness, Shinso Ito (Shinnyo-en 2021). Lantern Floating Hawaii has roots in the Japanese Buddhist Festival of the Dead (Obon) in late summer which is a very popular, solemn occasion when the dead, especially the spirits of those who died within the year, return home for a visit.[2] The Shinnyo Buddhists of Honolulu have adapted the day, purpose, and meanings associated with it to reflect the interreligious prayer gathering and American (U.S.) context in which it takes place, Hawaii, where east meets west on the sacred lands of the native Hawaiians.[3]

Lantern Floating Hawaii occurs at dusk on the Memorial Day holiday (the last Monday in May) about 10 miles from Pearl Harbor. The date, time, and place are intentional as remnants of war are mitigated by religious and cultural offerings of healing and peace. "The releasing of the lanterns is a symbolic, collective vow to work toward a peaceful, harmonious future, where each person commits to strive for their best through expressing their 'shinnyo', a term used to describe 'our best selves'" (Shinnyo 2021). The invitation in 2019 was to "Come to honor, love and embrace those who have passed and to share the innate lovingkindness that lives in each of us, that light that we call 'shinnyo' (Lantern Floating Hawaii 2019)".

The interfaith prayer gathering is led in multiple languages (primarily Japanese, Hawaiian, and English) and is about 45 min long. The symbolic action part of the event (floating the lanterns), however, continues well into the evening as 7000 lanterns are floated in the Ala Moana Bay by persons from every religious tradition and those with no religious affiliation at all. Family groups or groups of friends receive a lantern that includes a candle and a rice paper "memory wall" around the candle. People write prayers and poems, names of loved ones who have died, draw pictures, or tape photos on the rice paper. Some add flowers to the base of the lantern. After the ceremony, all the lanterns are retrieved from the bay, the rice paper "memory walls" are collected and, over time, all are respectfully handled and blessed/prayed over/meditated upon by leaders of the Shinnyo-en Temple before they are burned.

The planning process, the leadership in the interfaith ceremony itself, and the diversity of the 40,000+ participant observers represent aspects of each of the interreligious prayer models identified above. In general, the first part of the 45-min ceremony resembles the serial interfaith occasions, multireligious/multi-religious prayer model. The second part of the ceremony mostly includes aspects from the guest/host model. The third part, the floating of the lanterns that is the culmination of the ceremony, reflects the values and purposes of the inter-riting, interreligious prayer, joint interreligious prayer, integrative religious prayer model.

The interfaith prayer gathering is primarily planned and led by adherents of Shinnyo Buddhism though the event could not take place without hundreds of volunteers that are not affiliated with the Shinnyo-en temple. Specific invitations were sent to Shinnyo-en

communities in other parts of the world as well as to persons from other religious traditions. I was an invited Christian guest in 2016 as part of the interfaith outreach of the Los Angeles Shinnyo-en temple.[4] Amazing hospitality was extended to us as they provided us with lanterns, instructions, art supplies for the "memory wall," food, and seats near the stage for the ceremony which took place outside on the edge of the Ala Moana bay. While seats were only available in front of the stage for a few hundred invited guests, an enormous screen on the stage and loud speakers positioned around the bay area made the activities on the stage visible to many people and heard by most gathered. Periodically throughout the interfaith prayer gathering, the screen would show drone shots of the thousands of participants gathered on the shoreline.

2.5. Serial Interfaith Occasions, Multireligious/Multi-Religious Prayer—Shinnyo-en Lantern Floating Ceremony

The opening of the 2019 interfaith prayer gathering, Lantern Floating Hawaii, began with the blowing of the conch shell, a native Hawaiian ritual. In a more "serial" fashion, there were "offerings" by various community participants who were not Shinnyo Buddhists. Native Hawaiians offered song/chants and dance. Japanese Taiko drummers and a flutist contributed their beat and music. Members of the Honolulu community shared stories of justice and compassion work. Local military (from the navy base at Pearl Harbor), civic, and other religious representatives were physically present on the stage as words were offered that contributed to the overall theme of unity amidst diversity and sharing one's light, one's best self for the transformation of others.

There were people in the large throng that understood the Hawaiian language, the meaning of various gestures during the Hawaiian dances, the origins and purpose of the blowing of the conch shell. Others present would have understood the deeper meanings of the rhythms of the Taiko drums and the words offered in Japanese. Later in the event, when there were specifically Shinnyo Buddhist elements, those from other Buddhist denominations would have related to the ringing of the bell, the water and rice offerings that are similarly present in non-Shinnyo Buddhist practices. They might have connected the flower petals strewn on the floor with the lotus flowers that bloomed with each of seven steps taken by the Buddha after his birth. They would have resonated with some of the items, symbols, gestures, and actions involved in the blessings bestowed upon the gathering by Her Holiness, Shinso Ito. People were participants when aspects of their religious tradition were offered and observers during the other contributions.

While a small lamplight was placed on a table on the stage early in the ceremony, in an act of solidarity embodying unity-in-diversity (which would be uncommon in a strict serial model), the community representatives on the stage (religious, military, civic) gathered in a semi-circle to collectively light a very large cauldron—the "light of harmony" (Lantern Floating Hawaii 2019). The small lamplight and large flame introduced the theme of light that was carried out later as the thousands of lanterns danced across the water spreading light in the darkness.

2.6. Guest/Host—Shinnyo-en Lantern Floating Ceremony

Though there were often brief introductions in English that cued us in on what was happening, much of the interfaith prayer gathering, especially in the second part, included ritual practices of Shinnyo-en that were not explained or translated into English which made non-Shinnyo Buddhists primarily observers/guests until the symbolic action at the end when the lanterns were launched. The presiders and other participants on the stage wore different colored robes but what the colors signified was unclear[5]. While holding prayer beads in their hands, women strew flower petals on the floor of the stage.[6] There were water offerings using a nautilus shell and rice offerings.[7] Wreaths were ceremoniously placed on two very large lanterns.[8] Her Holiness offered a "ritual blessing" for all gathered that involved two small vessels (one with water), dipping her finger in one of the bowls and rubbing the side of her prayer beads multiple times, using a long, thin brass stick

to strike one of the bowls three times. The stick was then dipped in the bowl of water and "waved" repeatedly toward various sections where people were gathered—including those farther away on the shoreline. She then blessed the larger lanterns. The bowls were covered. She rubbed her palms together, placed her hands, palms together, in front of her forehead, and bowed. After Her Holiness offered a prayer (that was translated on the screen, though not verbally for those who could not see the screen)[9] (Lantern Floating Hawaii 2019), she sang a song/chant that contained more confessional language about Buddhist beliefs but because it was chanted in a language unfamiliar to most, those of us who did not understand ancient or modern Japanese did not know what the lyrics were and therefore were not uncomfortable (even as an observer/guest) with the beliefs that were being proclaimed.[10]

At the end, just before the invitation was extended to launch their lanterns, Her Holiness held the tip of the handle of a bell to her forehead, then moved it down and out to ring it. She repeated this several times and then she rang the bell at a faster pace without returning the handle to her forehead. When she ceases the ringing, she returns the tip of the handle to her forehead and pauses in a slight bow before putting the bell down.[11] She then sat in a posture of "prayer"/meditation (palms pressed together near her face) as the large lanterns (two with wreaths on them) were removed from the stage and placed in longboats and/or outrigger canoes. She maintained that position as the thousands gathered launched their lanterns as well.

All of these ritual acts were accompanied by movements, gestures, and postures that clearly added additional meaning to those adherents of Shinnyo Buddhism and, most likely, for other Buddhists as well. However, for those of other religious traditions, there was minimal, if any, information about the meaning of these symbols or actions. For the large percentage of the 40,000+ gathered, we were observers of these ritual practices of another religious tradition, many of which were done in silence or with chanting/singing in the background in languages mostly unfamiliar to those present.[12] During these moments, most of us were guests of our Shinnyo Buddhist hosts, observers of the beauty and serenity of the sights and sounds of the ritual acts.

2.7. Inter-Riting, Interreligious Prayer, Joint Interreligious Prayer, Integrative Religious Prayer—Shinnyo-en Lantern Floating Ceremony

"We are strengthened as a community as we reach out to support others and build understanding of our common values and experiences (Lantern Floating Hawaii 2019)." This statement from the 2019 Lantern Floating ceremony conveys one of the core purposes of the event—to create "harmony amid diversity". The extremely diverse community on Oahu along with the worldwide invited guests come together for this event that requires hundreds of volunteers (only some from the Shinnyo-en Temple) to provide the foundation for, and to undergird the purpose of, this interfaith prayer gathering. There are people on the shoreline helping those gathered to launch their lanterns. Others push the lanterns further out into the bay so more could be launched. Some are doing crowd control, helping with the sound or video, or serving as ushers for the invited guests. There are people in canoes that create a boundary between the bay and the ocean to make sure the lanterns stay in the bay. Later in the evening, they collect all 7000 lanterns and return them to shore. The larger community who represent a diversity of religions and no religion is required for this interfaith prayer gathering to take place so that "common values and experiences" can be fostered.

Groups of family and friends design their lantern in ways that are most meaningful for each. Words written on the rice paper "wall," the light represented by the candle, the lantern base that stays afloat despite rough seas, the water itself that can be lifegiving and healing but also destructive, are all symbols that have different associations and meanings within different religions and within different communities and families. Nonetheless, the experience of death is something we all have in common. Rather than teachings on what Shinnyo Buddhism does and does not believe about death, "samsara," the transmigration of

a soul, whether there are souls, reincarnation, or rebirth, etc., the planners of this gathering intentionally chose a symbolic action that had deep roots in their broader Buddhist tradition but was also open to multivalent interpretations. However, many of those gathered did connect the loss of loved ones with this symbolic act of launching the lantern into the bay: for some it was a "letting go" of those who had departed, for others a "re-connection/reception" of those long dead, for others it was a "sending forth" of the deceased into the next journey "beyond." For non-religious persons, it may have been a step in the process of grief, maybe even a sense of closure. For those not grieving, the beauty and serenity of the environment and the lantern evoked prayers/hopes for peace. For many, it was a combination of all of these things. The interpretations of the meanings of this symbolic act were as numerous as the thousands gathered. The year I participated, in the midst of thousands, there was a tremendous sense of shared community as we joined together in this meaningful act collectively. While the mood was more solemn with many tears shed, there was also awe and wonder on the multitude of faces as the lanterns filled the bay with light and the memories of loved ones. The transformation of individuals and the larger community gathered was palpable.

One could argue that the inclusion of all three models allows for the participation of more people from diverse religious traditions and no religious tradition at all. At some point in the event, people could participate in what they considered to be their comfort zone. The opposite is also true. Some elements were in languages that were unfamiliar and the practices and symbols were primarily for the "insiders" who were formed in Buddhism, especially Shinnyo Buddhism. As religious leaders and laypersons choose to collaborate in the design and/or participation in interfaith prayer gatherings, it will be important to discern which model is most appropriate or whether the blending of more than one model will best accomplish the purpose of the event.

3. Conclusions

While interfaith prayer gatherings are still problematic for more orthodox adherents of most religious traditions, it is clear that interfaith awareness and education in the civic sphere, interfaith marriages and friendships in the personal realm, and formal interfaith dialogue between religious institutions are increasing the desire for interfaith prayer gatherings. The context in which these gatherings take place, the religious backgrounds (and/or no religious affiliation) of the participants, and the purposes of these gatherings call for a unique structure, content, and model(s) to give form and shape to the occasion. These events enable us to focus on something beyond ourselves (though not necessarily on a divine entity). They encourage us to cross boundaries, develop community, even friendships, with those often deemed "the other." We join in solidarity in protest, collective grieving, and joint efforts that are for the common good of all of the world's peoples and creatures, even the earth itself. These interfaith prayer gatherings build bridges that help us navigate difficult terrain so that those long separated may be able to come together to pray and come to pray together.

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Notes

1 Lantern Floating Hawaii photos. Taken by Kathleen Black, Honolulu, Hawaii, 2016.

2 Yagi, Dickson Kazuo (Seinan Gakuin University, Fukuoka, Japan), email message to author, 13 November 2021. Yagi states that in the traditional Japanese Buddhist Festival of the Dead, "the Lanterns are placed on small models of boats usually with the Chinese letters 'Westward Ho!' displayed (西方). The west is where The Pure Land (Heaven for Amida Buddhists) is located."

3 "US Census, Hawaii". According to the 2020 U.S. Census data, Hawaii is the most diverse state: 36.5% are Asian, 21.6% are non-Latinx white, 20.1% are two or more races (non-Latinx), and 21.8% are native Hawaiians, Latinx, African American, etc. Accessed 10 November 2021, https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/hawaii-population-change-between-census-decade.html.

[4] While I was a participant observer at the 2016 Lantern Floating Ceremony, there is not a complete video from that year. Therefore, I am using the content and order of the gathering from 2019 so readers can access the full event. The overall content in 2019 was very similar to what I experienced in 2016 though there were minor differences. The entire 2019 Lantern Floating ceremony can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwm0lZH9KKo. Accessed 17 November 2021.

[5] Mohr, Christopher, email message to author, 11 February 2021. Mohr, a Shinnyo-en chaplain, has graciously offered guidance on the meanings of many of these symbols and symbolic actions. He states: "The different colors of robes are typically those of differing priestly/clerical status. Usually in East Asian Buddhism, this culminates in red, purple, or yellow robes, depending on Japanese or Chinese influence (purple and red being higher ranking in Japan, gold/yellow in China/Vietnam, and so on). The more earth-tone robes, like green and brown and blue/gray are typically the lower "level" in that same way".

[6] Mohr, 11 February 2021. "When the Buddha was born, he was said to have taken seven steps and a lotus flower bloomed in front of him with each step. Since he is the ultimate head of the Buddhist order, we are emulating that event whenever the head of the order (currently Keishu Shinso) walks toward the altar." . . . "The other times you'll see those in Shinnyo-en is during major services where they are trying to emulate the rain of flowers that, likewise, hail from the birth of the Buddha, and denote the spiritual power of that moment to connect that power to the moment we find ourselves in . . . "

[7] Mohr, 11 February 2021. "Water and grain offerings are for purity and gratitude, and in a strictly Buddhist ceremony, there would be fruit and/or sweets offered as well".

[8] Mohr, 11 February 2021. "The wreaths on the "parent" or "community" lanterns are something more special. Since the whole purpose of the Lantern Floating is to remember the dead, heal/grieve more recent losses. For some it allows them to send their loved one's spirits away (into whatever version of the afterlife they subscribe to). That vagueness is at least partially intentional. It allows for those of different beliefs to graft their own meaning onto the lantern that they are floating. In theological terms, this comes from the very highly apocryphal Ullambana scripture, in which Maha-Mogallana (one of the Buddha's chief disciples, known for his spiritual acuity and psychic abilities) sought out his mother after her death and found her in one of the hells. Asking the Buddha how to help her, he was told to make merit on her behalf and to conduct specific rites. Over the years, this has been conducted many ways, but the Lantern Floating is a common one, and this is typically seen in the end of summer "Ghost Festival". The parent lanterns in the Lantern Floating are the remembrance for anyone not covered by a specific, individual lantern . . . the nameless dead, since we 'make no distinction between friend and foe.' . . . The wreaths of flowers are similar to a bouquet on a casket, but they serve to honor ALL the lost loved ones who died. . . . some of the parent lanterns have some sort of 'cause of death' such as war, illness, etc.

[9] The English translation provided on the screen was: "The light of the lanterns, the inner light of shinnyo, a shared light with the countless before us. Remember the countless who came before us. Celebrate how their lives have led to ours today. Take action to make a difference in the world. May the past be healed. May the present be with joy and fulfillment. May we act to realize peace for the future. Share the light of our loved ones. Make our inner light brighter, stronger. Join me in a prayer to kindle our inner light." Accessed 17 November 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwm0lZH9KKo.

[10] Yagi, Dickson Kazuo, email message to author, 13 November 2021. Many thanks to Dickson Kazuo Yagi for providing understanding of this chant that expressed "devotion to Shinnyo." The first half of the chant is in the "ancient Japanese language sung in a professional poetic style" and is more difficult to understand. "But the second half is simple and universally understood as the Buddhist confession of faith. The Japanese Buddhist confession of faith has a set form:

> NAMU AMIDA BUTSU. I believe (take refuge) in Amida Buddha (Pure Land).
> NAMU MYOHO RENGE KYO. I take refuge in the Lotus Sutra.
> NAMU DAISHI HENJO KONGO. I take refuge in the Great teacher Kukai, the
> Lightning Bolt who lights up the entire universe. (Shingon Buddhism)
> NAMU SHINNYO. I believe, honor, taken refuge in the SHINNYO (Divine Buddha Nature).

The latter part . . . simply repeats again and again the same confession of faith in the set Buddhist pattern inherited from China—NAMU SHINNYO, NAMU SHINNYO, NAMU SHINNYO.

[11] Mohr, Christopher, email message to author, 1 December 2021. " . . . the bell is a sacred ritual implement and there is a certain respect being shown to the bell for ringing. The repeated ringing and increased pace of ringing matches long-standing Asian cultural patterns that I have observed in Thailand, Cambodia, Japan, and amongst my Vietnamese peers here in the US. I am certain the rest of the Buddhist world from time to time does this as well. . . . Usually it is to announce presence, but it also marks the beginning of coordinated movement by persons from one place to another. . . . In the case of the Lantern Floating, perhaps to symbolically announce the attendees' presence to those who are being remembered and definitely signals the movement of the lanterns to the water. . . . the downward, then outward motion is mostly just done to make the ringing louder and more focused, so it's more audible and clear. [It is used] as a way to focus my attention and the attendees' attentions".

[12] Mohr, 11 February 2021. " . . . the chanting is a mix of Japanese, Chinese, Sanskrit, and Pali (the canonical language of Theravada Buddhism)".

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