

A NEW LITURGY FOR A POST MODERN ERA

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to offer the theme of “Creation –Fall- Redemption-Consummation” as a structure for a liturgical framework. I will demonstrate how redemptive history in scripture informs us of what worship really is and how the using the elements of Creation- Fall – Redemption – Consummation helps focus our corporate worship back on a biblical understanding of worship.

What is Worship?

We must begin with the question “What is Worship?” We all have a natural bent to worship someone or something. Worship can be defined as our natural tendency to seek out something greater than ourselves. This is the tendency we speak of when we say; Man is a religious being. We are aware that Man will reach out to whatever seems to be captivating and promising to him and we see that there is great diversity in that. Living in the Greater Toronto Area, one can find worship centers for every major world religion. A survey of human history shows how worship has been an integral part of every society since the beginning of this world. People have worshipped gods, spirits, ancestors, and natural forces as part of their daily existence. Looking at particular forms by which this worship was expressed we find there are common elements such as sacrifice, asceticism, prayer, singing, dancing, holy objects, and contemplation.

It might appear from such observations that all religions are the same, and if religion were simply about human worship practices then this would indeed be true. However, a probing inquiry into any religion soon reveals that these performances are imbued with meaning, purpose, and worldviews that are quite different from, and even contradictory to, other religions. Although there are common elements in worship

practices there is also great diversity to the meaning of these practices. Therefore, as Christians, when we speak of the subject of worship we must acknowledge that it is a phenomenon that is not exclusive to Christianity. This does not mean our worship is the same as the worship practices of other religions, but it helps us to understand better what makes Christian worship unique. Otherwise our understanding of Christian worship becomes preoccupied with rituals, actions and performances, and misses the meaning and worldview that these are imbued with.

To get at the heart of Christian worship, we must understand that Christian Worship is Trinitarian in nature. J.B. Torrance defines Trinitarian worship as “our participation through the Spirit in the Son’s communion with the Father.” It is our response to the redemptive actions of a triune God, the Father who sent the Son, and the Spirit who unites us to the Son, who stands on our behalf before the Father.¹ The Trinitarian nature of God is inseparable from the gospel and worship. In this description we see that Christian worship is the goal and the result of the redemptive plan of God.

This is the essence of Christian worship, the source from which all the elements of our worship, our rituals, actions and performance, derive their significance and meaning. Using Creation- Fall –Redemption- Consummation as a liturgy gives an explicitly Christian structure to worship. It reflects the person and the work of the Triune God and best frames our response back. Let us now turn to the scriptures to see how human worship, as the response to the work of God, develops and changes in the biblical narrative of Creation – Fall – Redemption – Consummation.

¹ James B. Torrance Worship, Community and the Triune God Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996 pg.15.

The Development of Worship in Redemptive History

We begin with examining Creation. This is the first part of God's plan. Some important principles and precedents are established in it. Most significantly for our discussion is the original definition of worship. This definition is what God intended the relationship between humans and himself to be like, and its restoration is therefore the goal of the redemptive action that God has been working in human history. Let us look at what this understanding of worship is.

The first instance of worship appears in the second account of creation in the book of Genesis. In chapter 2:8 we are told, "the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed." (NIV) The purpose of this placement is revealed in 2:15, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." (NIV) In verse 2:15 the words for "to work" '*abad*, and to "take care of" '*shamar*, are words that are used frequently in the Old Testament in relationship to worship. '*Abad* means to serve, either in the context of paying devotional homage, or performing cultic activities.² '*Shamar* means to keep, guard, observe and give heed.³ It is frequently found referring to people being obedient to directives from God (Gen 17:9, 18:19, 26:5). God's action of placing Man in the garden in 2:15 is a parallel description of the cultural mandate given to humanity in 1:28 in the previous creation account, "...be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Thus, Adam and Eve being obedient in exercising their rule over creation and filling the earth from the starting point of Eden is the initial concept of worship presented

² David Peterson Engaging with God. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1992. pg 61- 65

³ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for '*shamar* (Strong's 08104) ' ". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2002. 10 Apr 2004. <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/cgi-bin/words.pl?word=08104&page=1>>

in the bible. At this point there was no rupture in the relationship between humans and God and all human activity is considered as legitimate worship, including all the latent potential, cultural and technological, within the creation which humans were to cultivate and develop. The scope of worship is wide open and uninhibited. This was God's original definition of worship.

After the fall we see modifications to it. Adam and Eve must still respond to God's original command but now it will be difficult and painful and it would be done outside of the garden, and outside of God's presence. From this point the rupture in the relationship between God and humanity modifies the concept of worship. Worship is no longer easy access to God, instead God selectively reveals himself to certain people at certain times. What people do in response to God's revealing of himself, or as the text suggests, what some people do in seeking to find God is now considered worship. This we see in the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4.

The brothers are presented as taking the initiative to give offerings to God, who accepts Abel's but not Cain's. There is nothing in the text that delineates what the requirements are for an acceptable offering or how one should offer it to God. There is a great deal of freedom in this respect. What the story does focus on is the fact that Abel gave from the premium portions of his flock while Cain offered only regular harvest. After this episode Cain kills Abel out of jealousy, proving that sin was passing on from parent to child and showing the widening gap between humans and God.

Thus sin was bringing about a change in worship. The narrative hints at the fact that there were people who sought out the LORD God, as in 4:26, and the reference to Enoch walking with God in 5:24. But the general progression of the human race was

going from bad to worse and the consequences of sin are detailed for us in the narrative. People no longer seek God and cultural activity and development are pursued apart from and even in opposition to God, until it reaches a point where God decides to put an end to it by sending judgment in the form of a flood and sparing only Noah and his family.

After the flood Noah responds to God's deliverance by making sacrifices to the LORD. This is also the first example of a burnt offering found in scripture. There is no indication as to where this action originated, but Noah performed it and God responds to it with a promise to never destroy all creation in a flood again and designates the rainbow as the symbol of this promise. Again we see the relative freedom of what passes for an acceptable response to God, determined more by the spirit in which it was offered than by the form it took.

However, humanity quickly widens the gap in the relationship with God once again and the interaction between God and humans is silent for a while until God reveals himself to Abraham. Abraham responds to God in faith and obedience and reorients his life accordingly, leaving the land of his forefathers and following God to a new land with a promise of becoming a great nation. When he arrives at the place where God shows him the land promised to him, Abraham responds by building an altar to the LORD near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron in 13:18, presumably to offer sacrifices on.

In the following events in chapter 14, Abraham's nephew Lot finds himself in the path of a conquering army and Abraham has to take military action to rescue him. He is successful and recovers all that had been carried off as plunder. As he is returning from this foray, Melchizedek, the king of Salem, who was considered to be a priest of God Most High, comes out to meet him and blesses him. Abraham responds to the blessing

by giving him a tenth of everything he has. Again this action has no precedent in the text nor is it commanded by God, it is simply an action performed by Abraham as he responds to this blessing that he knows to be coming from the LORD God.

These examples are typical of the way in which the interaction between God and humans took place in the time of the patriarchs. The limits of this paper do not permit me to go into detail in every circumstance of God's initiation and human response during this period. However, it is appropriate to say that because of the fall the concept of worship changes from a wide-open response of human activity performed in co-operation with divine activity to occasional contact between God and humans, with the humans responding by obeying God's commands and offering sacrifice or erecting monuments. More than likely these were common worship practices in the ancient world of the patriarchs. When God revealed himself to them, they simply responded to the divine revelation as their surrounding culture had taught them to. However, God graciously accepts these responses, provided it is done in spirit of belief, trust, obedience, or gratefulness. All this is about to change as God decides to move a little closer to humans. The focus of God's plan now begins to shift to redemption, to bring about reconciliation between God and humanity. It also has profound effects on what is considered an acceptable way of responding to God.

In the story of the Exodus we learn that God wants to bring Israel out of Egypt not only to fulfill his promise to Abraham but also to teach them to worship Him (Ex 3:7-12) Specifically Moses is to go to the elders of Israel and together they are to propose to Pharaoh that the Hebrews should take a three day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD. (3:18) Further details reveal that young and old, sons and

daughters, flocks and herds are going to celebrate a festival to the LORD (10:9) The Israelites finally arrive at Mt. Sinai three months after they leave Egypt and God descends on to the mountain. When God is present in this way the people can not come close, they must consecrate themselves, abstain from sexual relations, and they must not touch the mountain or they will perish (Ex 19) This is the first encounter which seems to last a day. At this time Moses receives the first portion of the law from God. Of significance for our interest is that the first law given to Moses was regarding the forms of worship, specifically the prohibition against making gods of silver or gold, and instructions about how to make altars for sacrifices. But these, and many other directives are given because God wants to make a covenant with the nation of Israel. (19:3-8). These distinctions fulfill two purposes, one to make Israel holy, set apart and different from the nations around them, and two, these distinctions are given by God as the acceptable way to gain access to his presence and to facilitate his dwelling among the people so they would not be destroyed, to teach the people of the need for something to mediate God's presence because of their sin. The people agree to the covenant and are aware of its terms and commands. The whole deal is sealed by Moses offering sacrifices, sprinkling the people with blood, and the elders of Israel eating a meal with the LORD God himself. Thus God has begun the process of reconciling himself to humanity through the nation of Israel.

In light of this new development worship becomes a test of obedience and at the same time a stumbling block. God has set out prescribed ways of approaching Him, and failure to do so can mean death. However, because of the sinful nature of Israel the very command of God that Israel was to worship the LORD God only, and in specific ways

brought forth their rebellion in expressions of false worship and faithlessness to the covenant stipulations. Only a few weeks after the Mosaic covenant is sealed with Israel, we find them worshipping a golden calf and celebrating a festival in ways outside of the prescribed laws of God. (Ex 32) Gods responds in anger and judgment on the people, and only because Moses intercedes for them does God decide to continue his covenant with them. This dynamic would continue through the rest of the history of Israel until the time of the exile. Thomas Torrance has an interesting perspective on this relationship between God and Israel. He says; “ the covenant between God and Israel was not a covenant between God and a holy people, but precisely the reverse. It was established out of pure grace between God and Israel in its sinful, rebellious and estranged existence.”⁴ Israel constantly struggles with remaining faithful to God and His prophets are continually exhorting the people to return to God, in practice of the law as well as in the spirit of law. The bulk of the Old Testament is devoted to describing the dynamics of this relationship. But this is not simply an up and down, or back and forth scenario. We also see God progressively revealing more of what He will do and this future action is set in bold contrast to Israel’s unfaithfulness to the LORD God. This was not simply an accidental side effect, but intentional on the part of God. “The movement of God’s reconciling love toward Israel not only revealed Israel’s sin, but intensified it...for it was the will and the way of God’s grace to effect reconciliation with man at his very worst, precisely in his state of rebellion against God.”⁵

It is very important that we understand how worship functioned in this phase of God’s redemptive plan, especially since the majority of worship references in the Old

⁴ Thomas F. Torrance The Mediation of Christ Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1992. pg 27.

⁵ Thomas F. Torrance Mediation pg.28

Testament are found in this context. Unless one understands how the Mosaic covenant fits into the larger movement of redemption, one will misunderstand the point of the rituals, sacrifices, and temple.⁶ Indeed the Israelite nation had to wrestle with this issue when God sent them into exile. What did it mean to be the chosen people of God, in a foreign land, with no visible symbol of His presence, and all signs of their status, e.g. land, and political independence, taken away? Even if they wanted to, they could not respond to God in the way he had prescribed, the option had been removed. It is in this setting of the exile that the concept of synagogue worship developed. It was an attempt by the exiled Jews to maintain a community of faith and a relationship with the LORD God in a hostile environment. It was a time to come to a realization of their failure to be faithful to the LORD God and to repent. For individuals like Daniel and Nehemiah, daily prayer and upstanding moral conduct were the key components to worship during this time. Fasting and offering prayers of repentance on behalf of their nation were also a part of their practice. (Dan 9 and Neh 1:4-11) In this environment we see worship becoming something more private and individual practiced by the nation of Israel in a foreign environment. Worship becomes the means by which the Israelites remember who they are and plead to God for forgiveness, as in the book of Lamentations. In response God fulfills his promise to preserve a remnant as prophesied in Isaiah 11, and brings some of the nation of Israel back to their land and they are given the freedom to worship the LORD God as he commanded. (Ezra 6:13) But the rebuilt temple cannot compare in splendor to the one built by Solomon and there are those who weep for the glories of that

⁶ *A good example of this is the usage of the Isaiah 6 passage to gain understanding about worship. This passage is concerning Isaiah's commission and does not describe a regular experience of a worshiping Israelite. Without an understanding of the development of worship in God's redemptive plan it is tempting to see this as an experience to be sought after rather than something that was initiated by God for the purposes of commissioning Isaiah as a prophet to further His plan.*

former time. The point is here that a rebuilt temple and reinstatement of the liturgical practices are not the complete fulfillment of God's promise of deliverance from exile; there is more to come. Therefore, it is important that we continue to move along with Redemptive History and not become too concerned with chronological history at this point. The initiative that God is to begin is more important to our discussion than the political events taking place in Israel and their impact on worship in the time between the Testaments.

The next phase of redemptive history is the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Christ. The themes of the political landscape surrounding the Christ event had not changed much in 400 years. With the exception of a 100-year period of autonomy under the Hasmoneans, it was the Persians, the Greeks, and now the Romans who have controlled Israel politically. For the most part Israel was free to practice worship as God had commanded as long as it did not interfere with civil order. In the postexilic period we also come to see the importance of the synagogue as a place of prayer and the study of the scriptures.⁷ In this climate we also see the development of the many different religious sects within Judaism familiar to us from the New Testament. Jewish worship at this point has become a complex system of rituals and requirements developed from the original Mosaic Law, the exile experience and the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. It was into this context of worship, still understood as the Israelite response to God within the covenant, albeit embellished with additions to the covenant, that Jesus was born. Of particular interest to us are the ways in which Jesus participated in worship and the ways in which he redefined patterns of response that had become standard for the Jews. As a boy Jesus was given the sign of the covenant at the Temple in accordance with the laws

⁷ David Peterson Engaging with God Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1992. pg 81.

of Moses, (Luke 2:21-24) and when he was twelve he began to participate in his parents yearly custom to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem at the Temple. Not much else is known about Jesus participation in worship as a boy, the majority of the gospel accounts are given to the teachings, and miracles, and passion narratives and it is from these that we must come to understand how Jesus' work as the Messiah would change the required response of worship from God's people. John Witvliet describes this as "a simultaneous full participation in and critique of culture"⁸

It is important to note that once Jesus begins his ministry we do not see him participating in the usual forms of worship. Jesus offers no sacrifices, and when he prays; he is usually alone in the wilderness. The majority of his teaching takes place in the countryside and away from religious institutions and what he teaches causes friction between him and religious authorities.

The only instance of traditional Jewish worship we see Jesus participate in is in the synagogue, (Luke 4:14 and Mark 3:1) and it is only as a platform for his teaching and healing ministry. Likewise when Jesus goes to Jerusalem, at a time when the Passover Feast was to be celebrated, it would appear he is following a worship custom, however this action is only taken, and recorded for our benefit, as it is seen to be part of the fulfillment of his ministry, for he goes to give his life in Jerusalem. Jesus participation in the Passover Meal, more commonly known as the last supper, is for the purpose of redefining his disciples understanding of the mosaic covenant, and linking himself and his future death with the Passover lamb, who was sacrificed so that its blood would protect from God's judgment. Thus the gospel accounts of Jesus ministry are characterized by this avoidance of the specific worship responses that are characteristic of

⁸ John D. Witvliet Worship Seeking Understanding Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003. pg 116.

the Mosaic covenant. Thomas Torrance aptly describes how we are to understand Jesus interaction with the worship forms of the Mosaic covenant in light of the work that Jesus understood was his to accomplish.

Jesus “had come, Son of God incarnate as Son of man, in order to get to grips with the powers of darkness and defeat them, but he had been sent to do that not through manipulation of social, political or economic power structures, but by striking beneath them all into the ontological depths of Israel’s existence where man, and Israel representing all mankind, had become estranged from God, and there within those ontological depths of human being to forge a bond of union and communion between man and God in himself which can never be undone.... He came to penetrate into the innermost existence of Israel in such a way as to gather up its religious and historical dialogue with God into himself, to make its partnership and its conflict with God his own...and then to deal with it decisively in atoning sacrifice.”⁹

Jesus Christ was the proper human response to God. What had been impossible for Israel to do in all the years under the Mosaic covenant was now fulfilled in Jesus Christ. “Similarly the writer of Hebrews speaks about ‘the ordinances of worship’ (Heb 9:1) having been fulfilled for us only by Jesus Christ our high priest, so that we can draw near to God only through him.”¹⁰ A large portion of the New Testament writings are devoted to fleshing out what it means that the old covenant is fulfilled in Christ and what that means for those who believe it. It is significant that there are no prescribed responses of worship found in the New Testament, only references to worship gatherings and some instructions for that specific context.¹¹ (1 Cor 10-14) Paul writes in Colossians 2:16 that believers should “not let anyone judge them by what they eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.”

⁹ Thomas F. Torrance Mediation pg. 30-31.

¹⁰ James B. Torrance Worship, Community & the Triune God pg. 58.

¹¹ David Peterson Engaging with God pg. 166.

What we do see, is that in the New Testament, the scope of worship as a response to God is widened once again. This starts with Jesus words in John 4:21-24, where Jesus opens up the scope of worship by declaring the parameters to be “in spirit and in truth.”

Jesus words in John 14: 12-17 explain what this means,

“ I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. If you love me you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of Truth.” (NIV)

We are given more examples of this widening movement in the variety of nations touched by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, (Acts 2) Peter’s vision of the unclean animals made clean, (Acts 10:9-23) the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas to be missionaries to the gentiles. (Acts 13) and Paul’s exhortation in Romans to believers that they should offer their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, as a spiritual act of worship. In Galatians 5 we find Paul using abstract terms to describe the Fruit of the Spirit, abstract terms that can be worked out in a variety of different responses. Paul does not give specific instructions as to what form joy, or patience is to take, but leaves it up to the Holy Spirit to help each believer determine how to express this. This is the holy responsibility of each believer as indicated in Phil 2:12 where believers are encouraged to work out their salvation in fear and trembling.

God redemptive plan also includes the creation. Jesus command over nature, healing of sickness and disease are indications that God’s salvation plan is about more than just the individual’s inner life. Paul indicates that God is working to reverse the curse that He placed on creation after the fall. (Rom 8:19-21) We are told that the future

involves a new heavens and a new earth. (2 Peter 3:13) And John specifically states that because God loved the “cosmos” which he made, he sent his son Jesus Christ. (John 3:16) in order to reconcile all things to himself.¹² (Col 1:20) This is possible because Jesus Christ was the Word of God, by which all things were made. (John 1:1-3) All of this works together to inform us that worship is now a wide-open response to God once again, the only requirement being that it must be offered in faith to God through Christ because we have not yet been made perfect. (1 Cor 13:12) This is the phase of God’s redemptive plan that we now live in. But our worship response to God in this phase of redemptive history also anticipates a fulfillment, the consummation. We look forward to a time when our faith will be made sight. When God will let down the New Jerusalem out of Heaven onto the earth (Rev 21:1-3) and He will dwell uninhibited with humanity once more. (Rev 22:1-5) When it will be as it was in the beginning.

Thus, to summarize our overview of worship as a response to God’s redemptive revelation, we begin with worship as a wide-open response to God, the fall ruptures this relationship, and God begins to work to restore it. As He reveals His plans to sinful humanity it is necessary to give them a prescribed response in order to help them understand that humanity cannot properly respond to God on their own. This sets the stage for Jesus Christ to be the proper response to God on behalf of humans. In light of Christ’s work we now can offer our whole lives to God through Christ, anticipating our perfection, when we will be made like Christ. All of the different spheres of our life can be offered to God as worship because all things have been reconciled to God. Thus our Christian worship is now an act of faith and an evangelical proclamation all at once. Corporate worship becomes a gathering where this understanding is communally

¹² Albert M. Wolters Creation Regained Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. pg 59.

confessed and owned and acted out in proclamation. Therefore the structure of our liturgy needs to work towards promoting this kind of biblical understanding of Christian worship. Using the theme of Creation – Fall – Redemption – Consummation gives a narrative thrust to our corporate worship which accomplishes that.

Additional Benefits for using Creation- Fall- Redemption- Consummation

There are additional benefits to using Creation –Fall – Redemption – Consummation as a liturgical framework. First, It helps to establish a biblical understanding of what the church is and should be doing. Secondly, It provides a flexible framework for creative, artistic expression of the biblical elements of worship. Finally, it provides us with a theological basis by which we can approach questions of style and cultural relevance.

This liturgical framework helps to establish a biblical ecclesiology because its purpose is to re-tell, and re-enact God’s plan of salvation with the intention of the worshipper and the worshipping community finding themselves within that plan, in a new relationship not only with God, but also with others, and the creation, all through Christ via the Spirit. It provides the big picture, the context in which we can properly understand who God is, who we are and what our purpose in life is as members of Christ’s body in relationship to the creation and humanity. This is directly related to what the essence of being the church is about. Craig Van Gelder describes the essential nature of the body of Christ in this manner.

“The church is a people shaped by the redemptive reign of God. The church is not an end in itself. It has a distinct calling – to demonstrate the reality of God’s redemptive power in the world. It has a distinct nature – to live as a fellowship that demonstrates kingdom values and expresses

kingdom power. It has a distinct purpose of carrying out a ministry of participating fully in the redemptive work of God in the world. The fuller implications become clearer when the kingdom of God and the church are placed in the context of creation, re-creation, and consummation...¹³

What better way to pursue the formation of the church's self-understanding along these lines than by using Creation –Fall- Redemption- Consummation?

This liturgical framework also helps to give a flexible structure for worship planners to creatively utilize the talents, gifts, resources and abilities available to them in their local congregations. Worship planners can take the necessary biblical elements of corporate worship such as prayer, singing praise, celebrating the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and baptism, reading scripture, preaching and the blessing, and be prompted to find creative ways of expressing the liturgical structure through these elements. Thus the elements themselves do not become the focal point of worship (or the objects of dispute) but they speak of a greater reality that they are symbolizing.

Finally this liturgy can help us to decide what additional elements to utilize in worship and the styles in which they ought to perform them from a theological basis. Since this theme in the bible helps us understand that there is a wide scope as to what can be considered a worship response to God, and since Christ has reconciled all things to God through his work, our decisions about what to include in our corporate worship response ought to reflect this. In more theological terms it prompts us to consider where we need to manifest God's kingdom. The development of our society in terms of its culture needs to be

¹³ Craig Van Gelder The Essence of the Church pg 89.

engaged in this manner and Christ's lordship proclaimed over all areas. This liturgical framework gives us the theological basis to do this.

Thus as we conclude, we see that the biblical theme of Creation –Fall-Redemption –Consummation offers us a holistic understanding of what worship is, gives a framework for liturgy that helps us to focus on that understanding and additionally provide the church with a missiological self-understanding, and helps to creatively express the elements of worship by giving us a theological basis for doing so.

Sample Liturgy

In order to help demonstrate how the last two benefits might look I have provided a sample liturgy based on the suggested framework. This service is designed with the assumption of having certain resources and people in a church.

Creation – This section of the liturgy is about beginnings, it can be long or short so long as it sets up the understanding that in the beginning all things were good and there was an uninterrupted relationship with God and provides a backdrop against which the fall seems terrible and abnormal.

God's Initiative

Scripture Reading of Genesis 1:1-31

The worship leader evocatively reads this passage of scripture. As the reading progresses there may be supplementary elements brought in to add layers of expression to the text. Power Point images, interpretive dance, sculpture, or other artwork displayed for all to see. The congregation responds with “*And God saw that it was good.*”

When the leader reaches verse 26 – he walks through the congregation to emphasize this part of scripture to the worshipers.

The pastor then speaks on behalf of God giving the congregation the blessing in verses 28 – 30

The worship leader concludes with verse 31 and invites the congregation to sing and dance in praise to God our creator.

Human Response

Praise Session – 2-3 Songs (I would use either rock, dance, or urban music to set these songs to)

Suggested Songs

Holy Holy Holy, Lord God Almighty

Let Everything That has Breath (Worship Together Vol 2)

Earth and All Stars (Psalter Hymnal #433)

How Great thou Art

This is the Day

Congregational Prayer –

Start by thanking God for his creation and its goodness and transitions into the Fall section by acknowledging our sinfulness and confessing how like Adam and Eve, we have turned away from God – Performed by minister, or layperson.

The Fall – This section of the liturgy is meant to facilitate our confession of sin, acknowledge brokenness, and realize our shortcomings, as stemming from original sin. It can be used to highlight a particular issue – like aids, war, and environmental abuse on a broader level. In this section using secular songs about brokenness can be a very effective way of engaging culture and helping people enter into its brokenness, and their own and own it for themselves. It also helps to facilitate lament.

God's Initiative

Scripture Reading – Gen 3:22-24

emphasizing the fact that God has placed a barrier to prevent humanity from coming back into his presence.

Human Response

Modern Dance

Tourniquet by Evanescence – A passionate cry searching for salvation from the existential desperation of life away from God.

Redemption – In this section we highlight the redemptive focus of God's initiative in Jesus Christ through preaching of the word and the celebration of the sacraments. Our response is understood to be done in thankfulness to God's redemptive actions.

God's Initiative

Assurance of Pardon

Sermon - Text Acts 17:16-34 (Using the 4 page sermon method by Paul Wilson)

Our Response

Singing Session – 3-4 appropriate songs

Better is one day

I could sing of your Love Forever

Shout to the Lord

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

*Offering our gifts of money and service.
Prayer of Consecration*

Consummation – In this section the focus is on waiting for Christ’s return and looking forward to fulfillment of the kingdom of God and working faithfully to manifest his kingdom until he returns.

God’s Initiative

Blessing

Scripture Reading: Rev 22:7

Our Response

Congregation recites section 1 & 2 of *Our World Belongs To God*

Song – Jude Doxology

Minister concludes the service by saying “Go in Peace”

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