

The Proposed *Kyrkohandbok*
for the Church of Sweden
Viewed From the Perspective of the Post-Vatican II
Ecumenical Liturgical Convergence

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The Church of Sweden has joined other Western Christian Churches in developing new liturgical resources for the twenty-first century. I have been asked to review the proposed *Kyrkohandbok för Svenska kyrkan* (HBF = “Handboks-förslag”) from the perspective of a Lutheran liturgist outside the Church of Sweden who nevertheless knows something about the Swedish liturgical tradition.

One can truly evaluate worship only from the “inside” – that is, as a participant. I have not experienced liturgy in a Swedish parish since Advent 2001. But over a period from 1973 to 2001, during which I visited Sweden five times and always attended liturgies, I did experience changes in the approach to liturgical performance from a situation in which worship was highly regulated in all its details to a situation in which more flexibility was granted to the priest (presiding minister) to design worship for the actual worshiping community. This flexibility was evident in the provision of six orders of worship in *Den svenska kyrkohandboken* (HB 1986) –three with communion and three without communion.¹ This complexity has been simplified in the proposed HBF.

My general observation is that the proposed HBF builds on the HB 1986 just as *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW 2006) built on

1 Several editions of HB 1986 exist, the latest, lightly revised, being from 2010. It is divided in two parts, of which the first contains the various orders for worship and for baptism, confession, confirmation, marriage and burial, while the second contains the orders for ordination, sending, reception and for the consecration of a church. The two parts are usually issued in two volumes and the musical settings are published separately.

Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW 1978). The HB 1986 and LBW 1978 represented significant departures from the previous liturgical traditions of the Church of Sweden and North American English language liturgy, respectively. They were the truly revolutionary worship books. Many of the texts of HB 1986 are carried into the proposed HBF, just as texts from LBW were carried into ELW, but in both cases with some tweaking of language and many additional texts as options. I will not make detailed comparisons between the HB 1986 and the proposed HBF. Instead, as a Lutheran liturgist from outside the Church of Sweden I will do the following:

First, I will establish that an ecumenical liturgical convergence has occurred in several of the Western liturgical traditions since the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). This synopsis may be helpful to the general reader.

Second, I will show the extent to which instances of this convergence are evident in the proposed *Kyrkohandbok för Svenska kyrkan*.

Third, convergence means a coming together, but not uniformity in every detail. Hence confessional and liturgical differences remain within and between the various church traditions. I will note those liturgical features of the proposed *Kyrkohandbok för Svenska kyrkan* that seem to me to be unique to Lutheranism in general and the Church of Sweden in particular.

Fourth, in summary, I will offer reflections on the overall impact of the ecumenical liturgical convergence on the Swedish Rite and the challenge of Baptism in the Swedish context in particular.

An Ecumenical Liturgical Convergence

It is not surprising that an ecumenical liturgical convergence has occurred among Western Churches since the end of the Second Vatican Council.² This is a remarkable historical occurrence since the divisions of the Reformation in the sixteenth century caused confessional Churches to move away from each other liturgically, to accentuate

² For a survey see Wainwright 2006 and Nilsson 2006.

their differences, and to find their identity in those differences. The liturgical movement(s) of the twentieth century transcended confessional differences and denominational boundaries. Building on the work of liturgical research and restoration in the nineteenth century the pastoral question posed already in the first decade of the twentieth century was: how can the people participate in the liturgy in such a way as to make it their own “public work” (*leitourgia*)? In 1903, in his *motu proprio* on Church Music, *Tra le sollecitudini*, Pope Pius X encouraged the use of plainchant to promote “the active participation of the faithful in the holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the church”. In later pronouncements the same pope urged more frequent communion on the part of the laity. Participation of the people in the liturgy became the major concern of the liturgical movement in the Roman Catholic Church.

Historical research, especially in early church liturgies, was shared among scholars in several traditions and pastoral leaders in all Churches had to address the same cultural challenges of industrialization, urbanization, population mobility, etc. Some historical and theological research concerned only one tradition, but other writings transcended the denominational tradition of the author.

The Church of Sweden, by virtue of its religious monopoly as a state church before 2000 and its geographical isolation from the rest of Europe, could have been immune to these developments. But helpful contacts between the Church of England and the Church of Sweden beginning in the early twentieth century provided liturgical cross-fertilization. So, for example, the Anglican scholar-priest, A. G. Hebert, who wrote a famous book on *Church and Society* (1935) that connected liturgical renewal with social renewal, also translated into English Swedish Bishop Yngve Brilioth’s masterpiece, *Nattvardens i evangeliskt gudstjänstliv* (1926), under the title *Eucharistic Faith and Practice* (1930). Brilioth demonstrated that various meanings of the Eucharist include thanksgiving, fellowship, commemoration, and sacrifice, and that the mystery of the real presence pervades all of them. He insisted that it is impossible to reduce the Eucharistic liturgy to one single element, or to a set of elements in logical combination. The

Catholic liturgical theologian Louis Bouyer (a former Lutheran pastor) appealed to Brilioth's magisterial work, along with the Anglican monk Gregory Dix's *The Shape of the Liturgy* (1945), in establishing the Catholic tradition concerning the shape of the Eucharistic liturgy.³ In the meantime, scholars in particular traditions were producing detailed studies of their own denominational liturgical traditions. Edvard Rodhe's *Svenskt gudstjänstliv* (1923) certainly takes its place among these important denominational historical liturgical studies.

In addition to the liturgical scholars there were also significant pastoral figures who promoted the goals of the liturgical movement by providing models of praxis. A. G. Hebert promoted restoration of the Parish Communion Service to its central place among the Sunday services in parishes of the Church of England. The pastoral theologian, Gunnar Rosendal, a pioneer in liturgical renewal in Sweden, pushed for a more frequent celebration of the Eucharist in the Church of Sweden in his book *Vår Herres Jesu Kristi lekamens och blods sakrament* (1938). The recovery of the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church and the active participation of the people were two of the main goals of liturgical renewal generally, including in the Church of Sweden.

This brief sketch will have to suffice to indicate that liturgical renewal was being promoted in many countries and across the boards ecumenically by the time Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council in 1962. Liturgical work was so far advanced that the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium* (SC),⁴ was adopted as the first official document of the Council by an overwhelming final vote of 2,146 in favor, 4 opposed. It was promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963 – sixty years to the date after Pius X's *motu proprio*.

The general principles enunciated in the Constitution would be shared in many of the Protestant Churches. For example, the Constitution promoted reforms that would contribute to “that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded

³ Bouyer 1954, pp. 70–85.

⁴ *The Sacred Liturgy. Sacrosanctum Concilium.*

by the very nature of the liturgy” (SC 14). Among the reforms called for were “the participation of the people by means of acclamations, responses, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, bodily attitudes, and reverent silence” (SC 30); rites characterized by a “noble simplicity”, avoiding “useless repetition” (SC 34); “richer fare . . . at the table of the Word”(SC 51) in terms of Scripture readings; sermons based on the readings (SC 35.2); restoration of the intercessions of the people; and use of the mother tongue (SC 36.2).

The work of realizing the goals of the Constitution was carried out by the Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.⁵ Observers from the World Council of Churches were invited to participate in the deliberations of the Consilium, just as there had been Orthodox and Protestant observers at the Council. Among these observer/participants attending Consilium meetings were the Anglicans Ronald Jasper from the Church of England and Massey Shepherd from the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., the British Methodist Raymond George, and the American Lutheran Eugene Brand (representing the Lutheran World Federation). These notable liturgists undoubtedly contributed their scholarly advice to the work of the Consilium and were able to carry ideas from the Consilium to their own church bodies. Eugene Brand, for example, became the project director of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship that led to the authorization and publication of *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978). I note that Bishop Sven Silén of Västerås attended the Second Vatican Council as an observer, although not the Consilium. Nevertheless, he was familiar with the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and undertook a pilot project in liturgical renewal in the Diocese of Västerås called “We Celebrate the Mass.”

The outstanding achievements of the Roman Missal of Pope Paul VI (1969) and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA 1972) paralleled work that was already underway in other Churches. As we look across the board at new services of Holy Communion/Eucharistic liturgies in Anglican/Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyte-

⁵ For a detailed inside view of the work of the Consilium see Bugnini 1990.

rian, and United/Uniting Churches, we see a common *ordo* of word and meal with optional elements in the gathering rite, the adoption of a three year lectionary for Sundays and festivals with its implications for the church year calendar, intercessions that call for the preparation of petitions locally, and multiple Eucharistic prayers. The decision of the Roman Consilium to prepare new Eucharistic prayers in addition to amending the historic Roman Canon was made by Pope Paul VI himself. A Church that had one “canon” for over a thousand years suddenly had four, and eventually nine, Eucharistic prayers. This seemed to “give permission” for other Churches to also develop multiple official Eucharistic prayers. And as a result of the Roman Catholic RCIA many churches now have rites of Christian initiation that display a ritual process leading from evangelization to the catechumenate (usually during Lent) to baptism, the sealing of the Holy Spirit, and first communion (all celebrated at the Easter Vigil). As biblical homilies have become common in the Roman Catholic Church, so Protestant Churches have moved toward more frequent celebration of the Lord’s Supper.

In some language groups translations have been developed for texts that are shared in common by Roman Catholics and Protestants. This was especially the case in the English-speaking world in which the translations of the Roman Catholic International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) were adopted by the Protestant International Consultation on English Texts (ICET).⁶ Also, the ecumenical Consultation on Common Texts (CCT) worked to bring together the separate three-year lectionaries of the various Churches into greater conformity with the Roman Lectionary, producing first the Common Lectionary (1983) and then the Revised Common Lectionary (1992).⁷ The result

6 These common texts include the Kyrie, Gloria in excelsis, Nicene Creed, Apostles’ Creed, Preface dialogue, Sanctus, Lord’s Prayer, Agnus Dei, Benedictus, Magnificat, and Nunc dimittis. ICET was in 1985 succeeded by the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC).

7 Many Anglican, Methodist, Reformed/Presbyterian, and United/Uniting Churches around the world use the Revised Common Lectionary. Lutheran Churches that use the RCL include the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Lutheran Church of Estonia. It was being considered by the Lutheran Church of Finland. The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

of all this has been the emergence of orders of worship that converge in both structure and in actual wording.⁸

The ability of Christians to be comfortable worshipping with one another within and across denominational bodies does much to promote Christian unity. The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches has worked toward the visible unity of the Church. Its Lima statement *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry* (1982) included references to liturgical as well as doctrinal convergences. Liturgical commonality has promoted the unity of Christians, if not of Churches.

Ecumenical Convergence in the Proposed *Kyrkohandbok för Svenska kyrkan*

The orders in the proposed HBF include Mässa (Mass), Dop (Baptism), Bikt (Individual Confession), Konfirmation (Confirmation), Vigsel (Marriage), and Begravning (Burial). The Handbook also includes musical settings for the Mass. This analysis will focus primarily on the orders of worship rather than on the texts or the tunes.

Mässa (Mass)

Right away in the outline of the order for the Högmässa (p. 17) and the Mässa/Gudstjänst (p. 19) we see the appeal to a four-fold pattern of Gathering (Samling), Word (Ordet), Meal (Måltiden), and Sending (Sändning) that has characterized other revised liturgies. (This is not the same as the four-fold shape of the Eucharistic rite based on the institution narratives proposed by Gregory Dix: taking bread and wine = offering; giving thanks = Eucharistic prayer; breaking the bread = fraction; communion = administration.) This four-fold ordo of Gathering, Word, Meal, Sending was presented in the Presbyterian

has its own version of the RCL in its *Lutheran Service Book* (2006).

⁸ It was a disappointment that the new English translation of the *Roman Missal* (2011) diverges from the common texts many of us who worship in English had become used to.

Book of Common Worship (BCW 1993),⁹ the supplement to LBW, *With One Voice* (1995),¹⁰ and in the ELW used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

I note that the order for Mässa/Gudstjänst allows some parts of the Mass to be omitted, perhaps for a weekday celebration. If everything were omitted that could be omitted, the order would include: Psalm (I understand “Psalm” to refer to what we in English would call a Hymn); Inledningsord (Introduction); Psalm, Evangelium (Gospel); Predikan (Sermon); (Herrens bön [Lord’s Prayer] at a service without the Holy Communion); Offertory Psalm; Nattvardsbönen (Eucharistic Prayer); Herrens bön; Kommunion; Psalm or Lovprisning (Benedicamus); Välsignelsen (Blessing). This corresponds with the most pared-down order in LBW and ELW. The daily Mass in the Roman Rite historically omitted the Gloria in excelsis and Credo. So the principle that a weekday Mass is less full than the Sunday or festival Mass is well established historically. One would expect the presiding minister to include more elements, such as (at least) the Dagens bön (prayer of the day), another reading, and intercessions, if circumstances permit. These parts would certainly be of greater liturgical weight than hymns (psalms).

Samling (Gathering)

The gathering rite is one of the most elastic parts of any liturgy. How do we come together and begin? What should we do before we come to the essential parts of the liturgy – hearing the Word of God and celebrating the Lord’s Supper? Over the course of centuries it has seemed good to confess one’s sins or acknowledge human sinfulness when one comes into the presence of the Holy God, and be assured of God’s grace and forgiveness. Then one may enter God’s courts with praise.

There seems to be general agreement in the various worship books

⁹ *Book of Common Worship*, 1993, p. 33.

¹⁰ *With One Voice*, 1995, pp. 8–9.

that these are appropriate things to do, but the books also show diversity in the “gathering” section. There is a long list of elements in the gathering rite of the proposed Handbook, many of which have had a previous use in the Swedish Mass. They are: Klokringning (Bell ringing); Psalm (Hymn); Inledningsord (word of introduction); Bön om förlåtelse (prayer for forgiveness), Förlåtelseord (word of forgiveness/absolution) or Löftesord (word of assurance of forgiveness), and Tackbön (prayer of thanks), all of which may, instead of in the “gathering” section, be placed before or within the Kyrkans förbön (general intercessions); Överlåtelsebön (prayer for commitment) in Mässa/Gudstjänst, but not in Högmässa; Kristusrop (Kyrie); Lovsången (Gloria and Laudamus); Dagens bön (prayer of the day). By way of comparison, the items in the gathering rite in ELW include: Confession and Forgiveness or Thanksgiving for Baptism (blessing water and sprinkling the congregation); Hymn or Psalm; Kyrie; Cantic of Praise; Apostolic Greeting; Prayer of the Day.

In the Högmässa it does not seem that any of these parts are optional, in the sense of selecting items that are appropriate for the day or season (although some items may be omitted in Mässa/Gudstjänst). The Roman Mass of Pope Paul VI established the principle of providing options in the gathering rite. The penitential rite took several forms, one of which was a troped Kyrie. A rite of sprinkling in remembrance of baptism might be used instead of the confession of sins. The Kyrie might be used on a weekday, the Gloria in excelsis on a Sunday (except during Advent and Lent). The options in the entrance rite were augmented in LBW and in *The Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church (BCP 1979).¹¹ LBW provided “Worthy is Christ” (based on Rev. 4–5) as the song of praise during Eastertide in place of “Glory to God”. The BCP provided the Trisagion in addition to the Kyrie and Gloria, but only one of them would be used. I note that in HBF the Trisagion is sung by the priest in Kristusrop 3 with the congregation responding with the three-fold Kyrie.

LBW and ELW allow the Brief Order for Confession and Forgive-

¹¹ *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1977.

ness to be omitted on some occasions, although then a prayer for forgiveness might be included in the intercessions. Anglican/Episcopal use usually places the Order for Confession and Absolution after the Intercessions and before the Peace. The historic precedent for this option is the prayer for forgiveness at the end of the late medieval pulpit Office of Prone. Other Lutherans seldom use that option, but perhaps the historical use of a Prone-like pulpit office in the Swedish Mass might prompt this placement of the penitential rite. In any event, there is liturgical precedent for both positions of the Confession of Sins in late medieval and Reformation uses.

So the prayer for forgiveness and related prayers may in the HBF be said following the sermon and before the intercessions. Some would argue that the confession is more sincere if the sermon moves one to confess sins. But preaching ought to convey the comfort of the gospel as well as the demands of the law. Historically, the confession of sins at the beginning of the Mass (actually before the Introit and therefore before the beginning of the Mass) was simply a way to prepare for worship. LBW and ELW demonstrated this by using the Collect for Purity from the English Sarum Use (included in the Anglican Prayer Books) as a prelude to the confession of sins: “Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name.”

In some denominational liturgies (e.g. BCP, BCW), the confession of sins may be placed, as I indicated, *after* the intercessions. Confession and forgiveness then leads to the greeting of peace as a sign of reconciliation. If the Swedish HBF were to allow for the greeting of peace before the offering, and if the prayer for forgiveness were to take place *after* the intercessions, the greeting of peace would be the conclusion of the penitential rite and could be understood as an act of reconciliation with God and neighbor. Sin is social, never only individual. When we sin it has an impact on others.

The practice of other liturgies of conducting the confession of sins around the baptismal font shows that confession and absolution is a return to baptism, as Luther taught in his Catechism. This practice commends itself. A possible practice on some days (e.g. Epiphany,

Easter) might be a blessing of the water and a sprinkling of the congregation as a thanksgiving for and remembrance of baptism. Lacking in the Swedish Mass, but present in Roman Catholic, Anglican/Episcopal, and some other Lutheran books (e.g. ELW) is a rite of blessing water and sprinkling the congregation as a thanksgiving and remembrance of baptism, the primary forgiveness of sins.

There is a rich variety of gathering texts in the proposed HBF: 5 invocations, 17 introductory texts, 8 prayers for forgiveness, 4 words of forgiveness (absolution), 3 words of praise, 4 prayers of thanks, 3 prayers for commitment, 6 musical settings of the Kyrie in litany-form; 9 musical settings of the Gloria and Laudamus in various arrangements of the text. The prayers of the day are in *Den svenska evangelieboken* (Gospel book), along with the readings.

Ordet (The Word)

The liturgy of the word in the various worship books shows the greatest ecumenical liturgical convergence. This is due to the use of the three-year lectionary with its Old Testament reading, responsorial psalm, Epistle reading, and Gospel. While the Church of Sweden is listed on the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) website as a user of the lectionary, I have not been able to compare its readings with the official RCL to determine how closely the Church of Sweden lectionary follows the RCL. There is no doubt that a common lectionary has been one of the most important aspects of the ecumenical liturgical convergence since millions of Christians in many denominations and nations are hearing the same readings on Sundays.

I have read that the practice of singing a responsorial Gradual Psalm, often in the style of the Taizé psalms set by Joseph Gelineau, gained in popularity through the efforts of Anders Ekenberg, and that “now the use of a gradual psalm is common everywhere in the Church of Sweden.”¹² It is certainly a commendable ecumenical liturgical convergence that the psalms are once again being sung with the

¹² *The Meaning of Christian Liturgy*, pp. 21–22.

participation of the people. LBW provided simple chant tunes so that the psalms could be sung by the congregation. The Roman Catholic Church has pioneered the practice of cantors singing the verses and the assembly singing an antiphon. The Churches have moved toward replacing the biblical psalms with hymns. Retaining the responsorial psalm as a response to the first reading (usually from the Old Testament) is a practice that must be protected and promoted.

The only variation in the structure of the liturgy of the Word is what comes between the Epistle and Gospel. Traditionally it was the Gradual with Alleluia. In the Roman Mass and in LBW and ELW a proper verse is provided for the Alleluia for each Sunday of the three-year lectionary; or a general verse in place is sung. In the HBF a simple Alleluia is sung *after* the Gospel reading. The traditional place for the Alleluia was *before* the Gospel. The Alleluia heralds the coming of Christ in the gospel reading. In practice, however, when a gospel procession is used the Alleluia is sung both before and after the gospel reading to accompany the gospel book on its journey into the congregation and then on its return to the altar or pulpit.

As a small matter, I note that HBF provides the acclamation after the Gospel reading (Lovad vare du, Kristus = *Laus tibi, Christe*) but not the acclamation greeting the announcement of the Gospel reading (*Gloria tibi, Domine*). Lutheran liturgies have usually retained both.

The Swedish Mass has provided both the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds. It is surprising to me that in the HB 1986 and proposed HBF the Apostles' Creed – the baptismal creed – is in the plural (“Vi tror”) whereas the Nicene Creed – the conciliar creed – is in the singular (“Jag tror”). This is the reverse of the use in several Protestant liturgies, including the LBW, ELW, BCP, and BCW. In the translations produced by ICEL, ICET and the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC 1988) the Nicene Creed is plural (“We believe. . .”), following the Greek conciliar text, although the Nicene Creed is singular in the Latin and now in the revised English language Roman Mass. The Apostles' Creed is singular (“I believe. . .”) because it is the baptismal creed and therefore confessed by each individual.

As in other traditions since the reform of the Mass after Vatican

II, the general intercessions in HBF are left blank with petitions to be supplied locally for each celebration, paying attention to the suggested categories for prayer. However, nine written forms for the intercessions are provided. Intercessions 8 and 9 are litanies intended to be sung.

Måltiden (The Meal)

An offertory hymn is sung while the communion elements are arranged on the altar. Monetary gifts may be collected here or at the Sending. A brief prayer is provided to be said if the gifts are presented at the altar. An offertory hymn is typical of Roman and Anglican liturgies. In many Lutheran Churches this is a place for choir music.

The Eucharist continues with the *Sursum corda* dialogue (see my comment below). Sixteen proper prefaces are provided. The Trinity season is divided into three parts. In addition there is a preface for the end of the church year and four general prefaces. I was happy to see a preface for Marian days. But there is no preface for saints' days.

The Great Thanksgiving continues after the Sanctus. Following the precedent set by Pope Paul VI when he ordered additional Eucharistic prayers for the Roman Mass, many Protestant worship books also provided multiple Eucharistic prayers. HB 1986 provided nine Eucharistic prayers; HBF provides thirteen. Some of the prayers in HBF are inherited from the HB 1986: HBF Nattvardsbön 2 = HB 1986 B; 5 = D; 6 = C; 10 = H; 12 = F. Aspects of the brief Eucharistic prayer in the 1942 Handbook attributed to Yngve Brilioth remain in the proposed HBF, especially in prayers 2 and 5. Generally these Eucharistic prayers follow a classical pattern in which the opening lines of the post-Sanctus pick up the cosmological character of the Sanctus, referring to God as the "Lord of heaven and earth." This leads to a thanksgiving for the salvation made known in Jesus Christ and a petition for the Holy Spirit to bring about the fruits of communion in the lives of the faithful, which serves as an introduction to the institution narrative. The concluding words of the institution narrative, "Do this for my remembrance," lead to a brief anamnesis – in these Swedish

prayers it is expressed in the congregational interjection recalling the Lord's death, resurrection, and coming again. The Spirit is involved in a second epiclesis on the bread and cup. Thus, like the Roman prayers there is a double epiclesis in these Swedish prayers, but in reverse of the Roman pattern which invokes the Holy Spirit on the bread and cup before the words of institution and on the communicants after the institution narrative. Prayer 9 provides the possibility of inserted intercessions. Only prayer 5 ends with a full Trinitarian doxology. Prayers 2, 7, and 13 lead into the Lord's Prayer.

HBF provides a place for the breaking of bread after the Lord's Prayer with appropriate words. Gregory Dix had insisted that the fraction should occur after the Eucharistic prayer rather than within the institution narrative. This has been a controversial issue in American Lutheranism because of the Reformed appeal to the breaking of bread to emphasize the Lord's Supper as the fellowship meal of the Church. If a whole loaf of bread is used, of course it must be broken for distribution, and St. Paul noted the symbolism of the many participating in one body through the broken loaf (1 Corinthians 10:16).

The Swedish tradition follows the Roman tradition of placing the greeting of peace before the communion. Some other Lutheran worship orders also retain this place for the peace, but not LBW or ELW. All other traditions East and West place the peace before the offering, appealing to St. Matthew 5:23-24: be reconciled with your brother or sister before offering your gift (see my comments below).

Fourteen post-communion prayers are provided: ten for use during specific seasons of the church year and four for general use.

Sändning (Dismissal)

The sending rite is brief: the *Benedicamus*, *Benediction*, and words of dismissal or sending into the world. We may tend to miss it, but the dismissal has become an ecumenical element in many Western liturgies since Vatican II. Based on the old Roman "Ite missa est. R/ Deo gratias," it ends the liturgy on a note of mission: being sent into the world. Not surprisingly, there has been a troping of this simple

formula with added words, such as “Go in peace R/ and serve the Lord with gladness” (HBF p. 90). ELW adds during Lent, “Go in peace. Remember the poor.”

Dop (Baptism)

The order for Baptism can stand alone or be included as a special order in the Mass following the sermon. It would be preferable to celebrate Baptism in the midst of the congregation’s gathering for worship in word and sacrament since Baptism is the Church’s rite of initiation. It is also a way for the whole congregation to remember their baptism. While HB 1986 provided separate orders of Baptism for children and adults, HBF provides one order for all ages, as LBW and ELW also did.

It is disappointing that the Order for Baptism provides no blessing of the water as HB 1986 provided. Such a blessing has historically made references to the biblical types of baptism. Martin Luther provided such a prayer in his 1526 *Taufbüchlein* – his famous “flood prayer” (*Sintflutgebet*) based on the old Gelasian Sacramentary blessing of the font – which Olavus Petri included in his Order for Baptism¹³ and which Archbishop Thomas Cranmer translated into English and included in *The Book of Common Prayer*. LBW reintroduced a prayer of blessing over the water in its Order for Holy Baptism. ELW also provides a blessing of water and remembrance of Baptism in the gathering rite of the Service of Holy Communion as an option in place of the confession of sins. It may be that a blessing of water also introduces some possibilities for environmental reflections into the liturgy.

There is no explicit exorcism in the HBF Order for Baptism, although there is a prayer for liberation from evil. Exorcisms are not typically included in contemporary Protestant worship books, but this may be a matter that the Western Churches need to revisit in the light of global experiences of exorcism, especially in Africa and Latin America. The signing with the cross with laying on of hands is optional. The custom of presenting a lighted baptismal candle is preserved.

¹³ Yelverton 1953, p. 66.

Some elements of rite that are not in HB 1986 are also not introduced in HBF, although they have found their way into other books such as LBW and ELW, including the triple renunciation of evil, the triple confession of faith (following the three articles of the Apostles' Creed), anointing with oil and laying on of hands with a petition for the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit. The study of the ancient church orders, such as the so-called *Apostolic Tradition* attributed to Hippolytus of Rome,¹⁴ had a profound influence on the shape of baptismal liturgies in some other Churches.¹⁵ From the standpoint of cultural anthropology, rites of initiation should make an impact on the body.¹⁶ In fact, an appreciation of the embodied character of liturgy has developed in recent years.¹⁷

The Roman Catholic Church has enjoyed worldwide success with its Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Protestants have been slower to implement something like this and to develop a catechumenate. The Episcopal Church in the U.S.A has *The Catechumenal Process* and the ELCA and ELCiC have *Welcome to Christ*. I have been told that a few parishes in Sweden have developed an adult catechumenate.

Bikt (Individual Confession)

Luther regarded the office of the keys – confession and absolution – as a return to Baptism. It is appropriate that the order for individual confession follows the order for Baptism. The Church of Sweden continues to provide an order for individual confession to a priest. As one who has practiced individual confession I miss the important question Luther asked in his Catechism before bestowing the absolution: “Do you believe that the forgiveness I declare is from God himself?” If the penitent cannot trust God’s word of forgiveness on the lips of the Church’s minister, there is no point in declaring the absolution.

14 For a new assessment of the Apostolic Tradition see Bradshaw, Johnson & Phillips 2002.

15 See especially Kavanagh 1978.

16 See Eliade 1958.

17 See *The Body in Liturgy*.

It would be good to impress the word of forgiveness on the sinner by accompanying the absolution with a laying on of hands.

Konfirmation (Confirmation)

Confirmation has been a practice in search of a theory. Luther dismissed the rite as so much “monkey business” (*Apfenspiel*), while emphasizing the need for catechetical instruction. But the rite made a return in Lutheranism in the Age of Rationalism, acquiring so much cultural weight that it was set almost in competition with Baptism. The introduction to the proposed HBF Order of Confirmation says that “Confirmation is included in the Church’s mission to baptize and to teach” (p. 120). The text of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) is read toward the beginning of the order.

Several Churches have interpreted the rite of confirmation as an affirmation of baptism. LBW has the candidates answering for themselves the questions put to their sponsors when they were baptized as young children: the renunciation of evil and the interrogatory form of the Apostles’ Creed. This is followed in LBW by the prayer for the Holy Spirit to strengthen the sevenfold gifts of grace given in Baptism. The effort in American Lutheranism in the 1970s to downplay the rite of confirmation by construing it as an affirmation of Baptism and giving it multiple uses (e.g. reception of members from other Churches, restoration to church membership) was met with great resistance, and the same would undoubtedly be true in the Church of Sweden.¹⁸

As with the order for Baptism, the order for Confirmation may stand alone or be included in the Mass after the sermon.

Vigsel (Marriage)

With regard to weddings Martin Luther wrote, “Many lands, many customs.”¹⁹ He recognized that marriage is intertwined with cultural expectations and practices and that the Church in its rites is simply

¹⁸ See Truscott 2003.

¹⁹ Luther 1965, p. 111.

placing marriage under the word of God. Traditional marriage rites include a statement of intent, an exchange of promises and rings, and prayers of blessing and intercession. Roman Catholic and Protestant weddings in North America usually include intercessions for all couples and families and for other needs.

Social changes have occurred so that it is no longer customary in the West for the father to “give away” the bride. The order for marriage in the HBF may be used for both heterosexual and homosexual couples. Since it may also be used for the blessing of registered partnerships (which was the legally recognized form of same-sex relationship in Sweden 1995–2009) the direction is provided that “Blessing of registered partnerships has the same structure, except for the introduction and prayer over the ring / rings where the word ‘marriage’ is exchanged for ‘partnership’” (HBF p. 147).

This Order for Marriage may be placed within the Mass and include Holy Communion. For a long time Lutherans were reluctant to celebrate a Nuptial Mass because it was a votive mass – a mass for special intentions. But Martin Bucer in Strassburg encouraged the celebration of weddings at the Sunday Communion Service of the congregation and *The Book of Common Prayer* admonished the bride and groom to receive Communion as soon after the day of their wedding as feasible (since Communion was not celebrated every Sunday). In any event, if the Order for Marriage is celebrated in a Communion Service (Mass) the sacrament must be offered to all who are eligible to receive it since the sacrament belongs to the Church.

Begravning (Funeral)

The reform of Christian burial in the ecumenical liturgical consensus is to place the Christian’s death within the paschal mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection. This theme will be emphasized in the choice of hymns, readings, prayers, and in the thrust of the sermon, as well as in the use of the paschal candle (lighted outside of the paschal season at baptisms and funerals) and white funeral pall to cover the coffin. As with the other occasional services in the HBF, the funeral may take

place within the Mass. Options are provided for burial or urn planting following cremation. With immediate cremation it is becoming more common for the funeral service to be a memorial service arranged at some convenient time after death.

Lutheran and Swedish Particularities

Much of the specifically Swedish and Lutheran liturgical tradition remains in the proposed HBF. The term “Högmässa” seems to be used in the Church of Sweden to designate the full rite in terms of text and music. “High Mass” or *Missa solemnis* in the Roman Rite has to do with style more than content. It means that the ancient differentiation of liturgical roles – i.e. of celebrant, deacon, sub-deacon – is observed. The nature of such a celebration is that the fullness of the rite, in terms of text and music, would also most likely be employed. Perhaps at one time “high mass” had this sense also in the Swedish Church.

A unique introductory text in the Swedish Mass from the 1811 *Kyrkohandbok* is the Tersanctus, “Helig, helig, helig är Herren Sebaot.” Coming out of the Age of Rationalism, this text established the character of worship as an encounter with the transcendent (and Trinitarian) Deity. The original 1811 text was long and turgid, but the opening lines came to characterize the Swedish worship in the use of the Augustana Synod in the U.S. The Tersanctus remains a part of the accumulated inheritance of the Swedish Rite and is included in the proposed HBF, along with some musical settings based on medieval chant and early twentieth century tunes.

The congregational confession of sins (at least said by the priest on behalf of the people) and word of forgiveness “over the people” (“*of-fuer folket*”) was a contribution of the Swedish Mass of Olavus Petri (1531).²⁰ There was no such *Confiteor* in Luther’s Latin or German masses or in early German church orders, although a congregational confession of sins and declaration of grace is found in early Reformed liturgies. Later it became a part of Lutheran mass-orders as well.

²⁰ See Yelverton 1920, pp. 33–34.

Direct words of absolution (“Du är förlåten”) were characteristic of the Swedish Rite and usually given before receiving Communion. The provision for an assurance of forgiveness as an alternative to the unconditional word of forgiveness in Högmässa may mean the end of that tradition.

The Swedish Handbook used to provide for Skriftersmålgudstjänst (service of confession) which was held on Saturday evening or Sunday morning before the Högmässa med nattvard (High Mass with Communion). In the 1942 Handbook a brief form of this order could be inserted into the Högmässa. In the same way, a Service of Public Confession was also included in the Common Service in American Lutheran Churches, but in the *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958) a brief form of this service could be used in place of the usual penitential order before the Introit. This was where we heard the unconditional absolution; otherwise we heard an assurance of forgiveness. However, this unconditional word of forgiveness was never heard without an accompanying “binding word” for those who do not truly repent. In LBW and in ELW the Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness includes an unconditional word of forgiveness or a word of assurance but no binding word.²¹

The Överlåtelsebön (prayer for commitment) in Mässa/Gudstjänst is not something I am aware of in the Lutheran or ecumenical traditions. It may be used in place of the penitential order either in the Gathering or in connection with the intercessions.

The use of a hymn (psalm) between the Epistle and Gospel reflects the Lutheran Gradual Hymn, which became the chief hymn (*Hauptlied*) already in Luther’s German Mass. This drew upon the custom of the sequence hymn that was appended to the Gradual on many festivals. Many early Lutheran hymns were actually based on sequences (e.g. Luther’s *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, *Komm heilige Geist*, *Got sei gelobet*).

It was a typical Lutheran practice to use the Ante-Communion (Liturgy of the Word) when Communion was not served. In this

²¹ The issue of a conditional versus an unconditional absolution has been raised by Sundberg 2012.

case the service ended after the intercessions (prayer of the Church) with the Lord's Prayer and Benediction. HBF continues to provide that option. Originally Ante-Communion was the Sunday or festival liturgy when no communicants announced their intention to receive the sacrament. Otherwise the Lutheran Confessions (see *Apology to the Augsburg Confession* 24) and Church Orders preferred the full Mass with Holy Communion every Sunday and festival. Most Lutheran Churches in the world have made some headway in the practice of weekly Communion after the losses of the Age of Rationalism.

The *Sursum corda* dialogue in the Swedish tradition does not begin with the salutation (*Dominus vobiscum. R/ Et cum spiritu tuo*). This is a peculiarity because presidential prayers (prayers said by the celebrant on behalf of the assembly) almost always begin with a salutation.

The Swedish Mass, from its very beginning, followed the pattern of Luther's *Formula Missae* rather than his *Deutsche Messe*, in which the Preface (Olavus Petri composed a single preface with a paschal theme) leads directly into the Institution Narrative and is followed by the Sanctus.²² The Swedish Mass was the only Lutheran mass-order to follow exactly the Eucharistic structure of Luther's *Formula Missae*. This was changed in 1942 when a brief Eucharistic prayer composed by Yngve Brilioth was added after the Sanctus and the Words of Institution were removed from the preface and placed after this brief prayer. In the HB 1986 and now in the proposed HBF brief but full Eucharistic prayers are provided that include the Words of Institution and all have epicleses or invocations of the Holy Spirit on the bread and cup and on the communicants. This is a witness to other Lutheran Churches in the world that still have theological difficulties with the Eucharistic prayer.

The "Benedicamus" (*Låt oss tacka och lova Herren*) ends with a triple Alleluia and has long been established in this form in the Swedish Mass.

The Benediction follows the Lutheran tradition begun by Martin

22 See Senn 1997, pp. 407–413. On the theological value of recovering a full Eucharistic prayer see pp. 476–479.

Luther in his *Deutsche Messe* of using the Aaronic Benediction in place of the Roman Trinitarian benediction. But the Swedish Mass includes the Trinitarian invocation as part of the Aaronic Benediction.

The Swedish liturgical tradition has been known for its retention of plainsong chant at the time of the Reformation. Gregorian chant was reintroduced in the 1942 *Kyrkohandbok*. Some of these medieval chants were imported into the *Service Book and Hymnal* of the Lutheran Church in America (1958) by Professor Regina Fryxell of Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois as Setting 2 of The Service. These chant settings were amended to fit the revised texts in LBW Holy Communion Setting 3 and may still be found in ELW. It is good to see some of these chants (e.g. Kyrie, Agnus Dei) retained and the *tonus solemnus* used for the Preface. Indeed, a case can be made that these chants, rather than a convergence, constitute an ecumenical liturgical inheritance that is still used in Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Anglican traditions. In the extended use of liturgical music from around the world Gregorian chant may still serve a unifying function.

In terms of the occasional services, the Church of Sweden has by and large preserved and updated its own orders of Baptism, Confession, Confirmation, Marriage, and Burial in such a way as to respect its self-identity as a “folk Church” in which Swedish culture is embedded. But it has joined the ecumenical convergence of drawing these services into the chief service of Word and Sacrament.

The Impact on the Swedish Rite of the Ecumenical Liturgical Convergence

The above analysis suggests that the unique features of the Swedish Lutheran tradition have not been lost as the Church of Sweden has shared in an ecumenical liturgical convergence. The Swedish Church Order (1571) was one of the most conservative of all the Lutheran church orders. It was characterized by retention of pre-Reformation uses, not least in liturgy. The geographic isolation of Sweden from the rest of Europe enabled the nation and its national Church to escape the worst ravages of the religious wars on the continent and in

England and the rationalism of the Age of Enlightenment, which had a deleterious effect on liturgy. Factors that did great damage to Lutheran liturgy in other places (e.g. Germany, America) had less impact on the Swedish liturgy. Therefore there was less to restore when the liturgical movement came to Sweden in the early twentieth century. Sweden already participated in an ecumenical liturgical convergence before Vatican II in terms of the order of Mass, the church year calendar and lectionary, the use of vestments and altar appointments. A “high church” movement helped to promote historical uses in parishes throughout the country. Perhaps the greatest impact of this movement was felt in the retrofitting of church buildings to be less preaching halls and more banquet halls (with a focus on the altar-table).

Liturgical renewal is not the same as liturgical restoration. Restoration seeks to retrieve what has been lost. Renewal aims to make the liturgy truly “the people’s work.” As a Lutheran Reformation Church, the Church of Sweden was never lacking the participation of the people, especially in the singing of hymns. Pietistic movements in Scandinavia also contributed an abundance of hymns and songs to the liturgical corpus. Many critics have commented on the individualism or sense of privacy of Swedes when it comes to their religious beliefs and practices. But on the other hand, as an American used to an individualistic spirit in the body politic, I have perceived a corporate aspect to Swedish society. There is still the sense that the Church and its worship belongs to the people. There is also a global outlook in the Swedish Church and society which is reflected in worship music imported from the worldwide Church. I was charmed in 2001 to hear a choir of blond-haired, blue-eyed Swedish teens in the Döderhult Parish near Oskarshamn singing an African-American gospel song that probably originated on the south side of Chicago.

The Church of Sweden has shared in the ecumenical liturgical convergence. The order of Mass reflects the convergence on the *ordo* or shape of the liturgy. A version of the three-year lectionary is in place. Responsorial psalmody of various types is becoming more common in parish worship. Preaching tends to be homilies based on the lectionary readings rather than topical sermons. Multiple Eucharistic

prayers with stylistic differences are provided. The Swedish liturgy has been enriched by this ecumenical convergence without losing its distinctive features.

In this connection, I understand that the special liturgies for Holy Week – the Palm Sunday procession, the Holy Thursday footwashing (*mandatum*), the historic Good Friday Liturgy with the St. John’s Passion, Bidding Prayer, Reproaches, and Veneration of the Cross, and the Paschal Vigil (Påskvigilian) – have been available in a separate publication. There are some parishes in Sweden, and not only of the “High Church” variety, that do celebrate these ancient liturgies that have been renewed with edifying effect in Roman Catholic and some other Lutheran and Protestant Churches.

I have registered my disappointment with the order for Baptism in the proposed HBF. There has been a significant ecumenical liturgical convergence in Baptism as well as in the Mass or Eucharistic liturgy, expressed for example in the Faith and Order Statement *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry*, V. “The Celebration of Baptism”. How Baptism is celebrated is a touchstone for how any Church perceives its life and mission. Is the Church based on baptism or its status as a cultural institution? Baptismal remembrance (Doppåminnelse) is a possibility in the Gathering (see Inledningsord 6 and 9), people may gather around the font, and a candle may be lighted (HBF pp. 21, 51). This is a start in the direction of recovering the idea of the Church as the baptized people of God.

The Church of Sweden is only a little more than a dozen years into disestablishment. It is no longer a part of the state from a political perspective, although it may still be very much a folk church from a cultural perspective. I admit that it is difficult for an American Christian, used to the voluntary character of American church life, to appreciate what it means for a Church to be either “established” or “folk.” But statistics indicate, and some in the Church of Sweden have recognized, that the current situation in Swedish society calls for the re-evangelization of Sweden. If such a massive project is intentionally pursued, the rites of Christian initiation of adults will surely prove useful.

It may be that the significance of this change in status of the Church of Sweden has not sunk in for many people. The Church is no longer just a community service provider; it must be a worshipping community. The service rendered is by the people to God, and from God to his people. The disestablished Church of Sweden needs to develop a liturgical ecclesiology that regards the Church as the assembly of believers for word and sacrament (*Augsburg Confession* 7). It may be that enlarging the people's expression of praise of God and experience of the sacraments of Christ will reinforce this ecclesiology. The proposed *Kyrkohandbok* makes a contribution toward this emerging ecclesiology.

Sammanfattning
*Förslaget till Kyrkohandbok för
Svenska kyrkan betraktat ur den postkonciliära
liturgiska konvergensens perspektiv*

Författaren, som är en amerikansk luthersk liturgivetare, betraktar kyrkohandboksförslaget utifrån den ekumeniska liturgiska konvergens som har vuxit fram i flertalet västerländska kyrkotraditioner sedan slutet av Andra Vatikankonciliet (1962–1965). Denna konvergens är resultatet av den liturgiska rörelsens arbete under förra hälften av 1900-talet, vilket återspeglas i konciliets Konstitution om den heliga liturgin (*Sacrosanctum concilium*). Liturgikonstitutionen vägledde arbetet med liturgisk reform och förnyelse i den romersk-katolska kyrkan och i många protestantiska kyrkor tack vare ekumenisk kontakt och delande. Den svenska högmässan i kyrkohandboksförslaget speglar denna konvergens i sin ordo, sina tre textläsningar och sin responsoriella psalmodi samt i tillgången på alternativa böner, inklusive ett flertal nattvardsböner. Författaren finner färre tecken på ekumenisk konvergens i de kyrkliga handlingarna: dop, konfirmation, bikt, vigsel och begravning.

Den ekumeniska konvergens hindrar inte att kyrkohandboks-förslaget står i kontinuitet med det svenska ritualet i dess tidigare historia och i följderna av handböcker, särskilt kyrkohandboken från

1986. I denna kontinuitet ingår också vissa lutherska egenheter såsom en utförlig beredelse (syndabekännelse och avlösning) före den egentliga högmässans början, att psalmer och sånger får företräde framför psaltarpsalmer samt bruket av gregorianska melodier i gudstjänsten. De kyrkliga handlingarna står huvudsakligen i kontinuitet med det historiska svenska ritualet, samtidigt som de erbjuder nya böner som är tänkta att spegla diverse mänskliga och sociala situationer och även presenteras i varianter som kan firas i samband med högmässa.

Författaren framför en särskild kritik av de föreslagna ordningarna för dop och konfirmation. Dopet kunde spegla mer av den ekumeniska liturgiska samsynen och konfirmationen kunde utformas som en bekräftelse av dopet som skulle kunna tjäna flera olika syften. Han rekommenderar den katolska Ordningen för kristen initiation av vuxna (*Ordo initiationis christianae adultorum*) samt en utveckling av katekumentatet såsom relevanta för projektet att återevangelisera det svenska samhället.

I så måtto som HBF speglar den ekumeniska liturgiska konvergen- sen har den berikat det svenska gudstjänstlivet, samtidigt som den har bevarat en substantiell kontinuitet med den svenska liturgiska traditionen.

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