



DOING GOD'S STORY IN WORSHIP: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM ON THE CHURCH'S SANCTUARY

Session 1a: Theological Touchstones for Worship:
Worship Does the Story of God, including the End

OUR GOALS

- Review several common, standard theologies of Christian worship to provide theological touchstones for all Christian worship.
- Practice using these theological touchstones to assess the strengths and weaknesses of any particular expression of Christian worship.

LITURGICAL THEOLOGIES

1. Dynamic worship narrative
2. Trinitarian
3. Christological/Incarnational
4. Eschatological

DYNAMIC WORSHIP NARRATIVE

As articulated by Robert Webber

2 BASIC PREMISES

- ✓ God has a story.
- ✓ Worship does God's story.

2 BASIC PREMISES

- ✓ God has a story (and it's a cosmic one).
- ✓ Worship **does** God's story.

Webber on worship doing God's story: "Worship proclaims, enacts, and sings God's story. Worship is not a program. Nor is worship about me. Worship is a narrative—God's narrative of the world from its beginning to its end."

OPEN DISCUSSION

What is God's Story?

DYNAMIC COMMEMORATION IS CRITICAL

“In summary, here is what biblical worship does: it remembers God’s work in the past, anticipates God’s rule over all creation, and actualizes both past and future in the present to transform persons, communities, and the world...biblical and ancient worship is always about remembering all of God’s savings acts in history.”

Divine Activity
Prior to
Annunciation

Divine act.
in Christ's 1st
Advent

Divine act.
now (heaven
& earth esp.
in church)

Divine act.
at Christ's
2nd Advent

An easy first presumption: we are here



Divine Activity
Prior to
Annunciation

Divine act.
in Christ's 1st
Advent

Divine act.
now (heaven
& earth esp.
in church)

Divine act.
at Christ's
2nd Advent

Dynamic commemoration: we are here



MALOS MOVEMENT

*MALOS=*Make A Lick Of Sense?

HOW WORSHIP DOES/REMEMBERS

THE PAST

- Historical recitation
- Dramatic reenactment

THE FUTURE

- Priority of praise
- Rhythms of time tied to resurrection
- Overwhelming spaces and environments
- The ethic of the future lived out now

GOD'S FUTURE FOR HUMANITY

Not just a recovery of the past or a reversal of the present but an elevation, a modulation

WEBBER'S DYNAMIC NARRATIVE APPROACH

THE STRENGTH

- Emphasizing *The Story* as a cosmic, broad salvation narrative and ties this theology into the apostolic proclamation of the Gospel.

THE WEAKNESS

- Less clear answers on this question: what is God's active role in and through the church's worship?

QUESTIONS THAT COME TO MIND

1. What story is told (and not told) in what is spoken about in the content of a worship service?
2. Is it explicit or implicit that there is a narrative quality to God's activity with humanity and creation?
3. Through what physical actions, symbols, and verbal acts do we participate in that cosmic story?

QUESTIONS THAT COME TO MIND

4. What's the primary narrative being told and re-enacted in a worship service? Is it the apostolic one attested to in the Scriptures and in the classic narrative statements of the Church's Tradition, e.g., the Creed?
5. Is the work of Christ, when it is remembered, portrayed in excessively individualistic terms, whether of people or of nations? Is the vision sufficiently cosmic?
6. Do the symbols used in the worship connect us to the dynamic apostolic narrative or to another one?

THE KEY IDEA/BASIC DEFINITION
OF EACH THEOLOGY

1. Dynamic worship narrative:
Worship is _____.
2. Eschatological
3. Trinitarian
4. Christological/Incarnational

THE KEY IDEA/BASIC DEFINITION
OF EACH THEOLOGY

1. Dynamic worship narrative:
Worship is the *doing* of God's story.
2. Eschatological
3. Trinitarian
4. Christological/Incarnational