

Reformation  
& Revival



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A Quarterly Journal for Church Leadership

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Volume 2, Number 1 • Winter 1993

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The Greek word for “worship” is *proskuneo*. Originally it meant “to kiss reverently,” which involved stooping down to kiss. Early Greek writers spoke of stooping to kiss the ground, as an expression of thanksgiving for a safe arrival.

Later on, *proskuneo* came to mean prostration, throwing oneself on the ground to show awe or respect before some deity. This was seen not only with regard to pagan gods or goddesses. It was also practiced when appearing before rulers, such as Alexander the Great. The idea was one of reverence, and this attitude of submission was signaled by falling prostrate on the ground.

In the Septuagint Greek Old Testament such worship was reserved for Jehovah God. In fact, it was considered sacrilege for a Jew to express worship toward any other pagan god or person. One recalls that Daniel’s friends refused to bow to their ruler’s idol (Dan. 3:1-12).

**Wayne Detzler**  
*New Testament Words  
in Today’s Language* (1986)

In the 1960s a book appeared on the continent of Europe written by the French Roman Catholic theologian Yves Congar titled *Ecclesiam Ab Abel*, i.e., *The Church from Abel*. Congar’s book traced the origins of the modern church, not just to the New Testament time, or to the Upper Room (which is the usual beginning point or watershed of Protestant thought regarding the historical origins of the church). Congar went back into the Old Testament, all the way to back Abel. You may wonder, “Why did he stop there? Why didn’t he go back one more generation and title his book, *Ecclesiam Ab Adam*?”

The reason he went to Abel is because he saw the essence of worship in the dynamic of sacrifice and in the critical disjunction between the offering of Cain and the offering of Abel. This, according to Congar, is what gives us the historic moment of true worship. This view is, and has been, controversial, and one largely rejected by historic Protestant theologians. In our tradition it must be understood that part of our protest has been against sacerdotalism. Sacerdotalism is a theology of salvation through the priestly ordinances of the church. This is why Roman Catholic dogma has taught *ex opere operata*, or salvation through the works of the various sacraments. Rome, for example, defines the instrumental cause of justification as being baptism. Protestant evangelicals believe the Scriptures reveal that the instrumental cause of salvation is faith. That was, and is, the first great issue. Rome says that baptism is the instrument by which the saving grace of justification is conveyed to the human soul. That grace can, of course, be lost through the commission of mortal sin. If a person destroys that salvific grace he must be restored to saving grace through the second plank of justification, which is the sacrament of penance. Again, what is being said is this: you must enter into salvation, first through baptism, and then when there is any lapse you are restored to salvation through penance.

The other five sacraments of the church augment and increase the operations of grace. These are the sacraments of extreme unction, communion, marriage, confirmation and holy orders. Sacerdotalism, in its essence, teaches that salvation is through these sacraments as administered through the priesthood.

### The Protestant Reaction

It is against this concept of justification and salvation that Luther waged his protest and argued that justification was by faith in Christ and in Christ alone. He said it was not conveyed through the rites and ceremonies of the church. What happened in the midst of this great controversy was that in the development of the Protestant movement there was a strong protest not only against sacerdotalism, but also against ritualism and liturgicalism. These are customarily negative concepts to our Protestant heritage. At the same time the Reformers of the sixteenth century understood that Christ did indeed institute sacraments. Thus they were careful, when they denounced sacerdotalism, not to denounce the sacraments of baptism and communion, which they saw revealed in the Scripture. The Reformers, as they combatted ritualism as an empty attachment to the forms of the church, saw that this often led to thinking ritual somehow pleases God, bringing redemption to the person participating in it. This caused them to rigorously attack ritualism as a distortion of true worship.

The worship patterns of leading Protestant theologians such as Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin reveal that though the ritual of sixteenth-century Protestantism changed dramatically at points from the ritual of Rome, these reformers retained *some* ritual. As a result, in most non-liturgical churches of our day where a strong negative view

of ritualism still prevails, you still have ritual. If you have a call to worship every Sunday morning, or a benediction, you have some ritual. These are very plainly rituals.

We can conclude then that these Reformers said no to liturgicalism, yet they understood corporate worship did need some liturgy, some pattern, some form. Public worship is not simply public chaos.

### Asking the Right Questions

The question for the Reformers then, and especially for us today, is "What *kind* of order, what *kind* of ritual, what *kind* of liturgy?" Further, "How do the sacraments fit into the life of the church, and is there such a thing as *Reformed* worship?" To put it more plainly, "Is there such a thing as biblical worship?" Or, "Is it a situation where we have a virtual existential license from God?" Has He said to us, "You write the script and whatever you do, if you do it meaningfully and sincerely, I will give My blessing to it"?

What I would like to do in this article is some needed, and I trust healthy, speculating. I plead for charity from you, my reader, as I seek to discover something of what it means to please God in worship. That is what I desire to do when I worship Him, and I trust this is what you desire to do as well. What pleases God in worship? That is what I wish to bring to Him in my worship.

I am going to develop some of my thoughts in this area from Exodus 26, but this does not mean that I am trying to reconstruct the liturgy of Israel in the modern church. I understand that most of the patterns of worship instituted in the Old Testament were typological and have been nullified in the finished work of Christ. To reinstitute them would be nothing less than to recommission the judaizing heresies of old and to fall under the anathema of the apostle and thus of God.

Exodus 26, then, is our text. Let us read verses 1-6:

Make the tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them by a skilled craftsman. All the curtains are to be the same size—twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide. Join five of the curtains together, and do the same with the other five. Make loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in one set, and do the same with the end curtain in the other set. Make fifty loops on one curtain and fifty loops on the end curtain of the other set, with the loops opposite each other. Then make fifty gold clasps and use them to fasten the curtains together so that the tabernacle is a unit.

When you read a portion of the Book of Moses like this you see something of what provoked an exquisite sense of appreciation for living life based on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. But how do I, living as a Christian under the New Covenant, read this text? Is this a contractor's blueprint for the building of the tabernacle? Somehow this blueprint gets mixed up with the decalogue and the treaty of covenant and then becomes part of the Old Testament. Is that how it is? Do we have here, in other words, someone's building plan from thousands of years ago that has absolutely nothing to do with the kingdom of God, or are we dealing here with the inspired Word of God?

As one who believes that this is the very Word of God I can't help but notice the minutiae of detail in this text. The attention to detail extends right down to the thread, the yarns and the exact dimensions of measurements. The thing which jumps off the page here is that the God of heaven and earth is demanding a meticulous conformity to His will and His prescription concerning how these people

of Israel at this place and time are to worship Him acceptably.

We must be careful here, for, as I have already said, I am not at all suggesting that we reinstitute Jewish worship. But I am asking this question as a Christian theologian, "What in the world is going on here? Why is God concerned with these things? What are the elements, the generic principles that God is incorporating into His system of worship?" Keep in mind that it is only here that we encounter a pattern of worship that is designed not by some saint or Genevan Reformer, but we find here a pattern of worship designed by God Himself. This is why I ask, "What was this divinely given pattern of worship like, and why?" And furthermore, "How did it get distorted, and why?" Did this worship of God, established at Sinai, become sacramentalistic to these ancient people? Did the people of Israel devolve into a ritualistic dead formalism in their worship? Did Israel historically develop an empty liturgicalism necessitating Jeremiah to say, "You people come and you do your liturgy. You say this is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord. You say the words, but without the heart."

Jesus rebuked Israel for having the outward forms and trappings of religion. Instead, He taught that the worship required was that which was rendered in spirit and in truth. When we read the prophets, even with a cursory reading like this, we see that their agenda always included a critique leveled against Israelite worship. But nowhere are the prophets or the Reformers revolutionaries. They never called the people to turn away from ritual, liturgy or sacrament, but rather away from the distortions of these things. They called upon the people to return to the original sense of the forms. That's what reform meant. It wasn't a call to entirely replace the forms, but rather a call to recover the original meaning of the forms that God had instituted for His people.

**Non-Verbal Communication**

I have taught for some time in the seminary classroom. One of my assignments is to teach in the Doctor of Ministry program. One of the courses I teach is in communications. It's not primarily a course in preaching, but more than half the course is devoted to non-verbal communication so that pastors can understand the dynamic of non-verbal forms of communication, and how these forms can enhance or detract from the actual verbal dimensions of preaching. It seems that in the sixteenth century, because Rome had eclipsed the Word of God with the sacraments, the verbal was swallowed up by the non-verbal.

In an effort to recover the verbal we have this tendency in our Protestant heritage to almost totally neglect the non-verbal dimension of divine communication. Notice throughout the Old Testament that when God gives His Word He repeatedly seals that Word with some kind of visible sign. He makes a promise to Jacob, and Jacob takes a rock and pours oil on it and marks the spot. Abraham builds an altar when he comes to a significant time of dedication and thus he worships. These Old Testament patriarchs are continually doing something physical to memorialize their meeting with God and hearing His Word.

**For Glory and for Beauty**

When God institutes worship in the Old Testament He makes a definite provision for the reading of the law. However, the overwhelming concentration in these chapters in Exodus is best described in terms of God's commandments to enhance the non-verbal act of worship. This is why He goes into such incredible detail about the kind of thread that was to be used in the garment of the priest. "I want purple thread! I want white thread! I want scarlet thread!" In Exodus 28 we read:

Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve Me as priests. Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron, to give him dignity and honor (vv.1-2).

Time after time in these chapters of Exodus God couples the designing work of artisans with the bestowing of His Spirit. In fact, the first people the Bible ever mentions as being filled with the Holy Spirit are Bezalel and Oholiab, artisans selected by God to mold, shape and design the furniture and vessels for the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant and the garments for the priests. Can you believe that? The first time God fills a human being with His Spirit, at least as recorded in the text of Scripture, is for the aesthetic purpose of design and form. God says that He is doing this for His own glory and for beauty.

I conclude, then, that God goes to painstaking extremes to be sure that the place where the people gather to worship Him exhibits a visual impact that is conducive for worship. In a word, the tabernacle was beautiful. If the tabernacle was this beautiful, then the temple of the Lord must have been even more beautiful.

I am not saying, by this observation and by my conclusion, that it is our obligation to build a new tabernacle. Here is what I am saying: If you have come to believe, as a result of supposed Protestant tradition, that to construct a church building with any concern for beauty is to act against the character of God, you are in serious trouble. Why do I say this? Because here we see God Himself expressing His concern for both beauty and design.

We read in Exodus 28:

Make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it as on a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD. Fasten a blue cord to it to attach it to the

turban; it is to be on the front of the turban. It will be on Aaron's forehead, and he will bear the guilt involved in the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be. It will be on Aaron's forehead continually so that they will be acceptable to the Lord (vv.36-38).

This beauty is not a monument to the arrogance of the preacher. This visual display of beauty is to communicate the holiness of God. It must not become an ostentatious display of human pride. We saw this at the base of Mt. Sinai with the golden calf episode. The golden calf was beautiful. It was also blasphemous. Beauty, you see, can be used against the glory of God. We know that people can become so hung up on the external trappings that they begin to worship the graven images as they did at the base of Sinai. Such was the case with the golden calf. God says, "I want gold and I want beauty, but I will not permit a bull to glorify Me."

#### Crossing the Threshold

In the summer of 1992 I spent two months traveling in Eastern Europe, a place I had never visited previously. During this teaching trip the first place we went was Czechoslovakia, to the old city of Prague. The overwhelming impact of the city is an external testimony to the history of Christianity. When you go to the central square there is a massive statue of a man, boldly standing against an unseen enemy, leading a people who are downcast and oppressed. This monument stands as a testimony to the life and labors of the Reformer John Hus. Within 50 yards of the Hus statue, commemorating the life of a man burned at the stake by the Roman Catholic Church, are several Roman Catholic churches. Further on, as you walk across the Charles Bridge, you are overwhelmed to see larger-than-life statues about every 30 feet. You see likenesses of great theologians such

as Aquinas, Augustine, and Athanasius. It is like a textbook on church history. After you cross the bridge you next come to this great church where Mozart was the organist. At the top of the hill, overlooking the entire city, is St. Vitus Cathedral with its magnificent flying buttresses and spectacular vaulted ceilings. I have never been in a city where there is such visual display of Christian heritage as in Prague. As I looked at one of these churches I thought to myself, "Wow, these places communicate a spiritual sensation within you when you simply walk into them."

I sometimes ask my seminary students, "Have ever been in a Roman Catholic cathedral?" When their answer is positive, I then ask, "What is the feeling you get when you go in?" Now, I know that they have an antipathy built into their emotions because of their Protestant theology. Invariably, when my students are candid, they say, "I'm overwhelmed with a sense of the transcendent and with a sense of awe." There is, you see, this immediate sensation of stepping across the threshold from the secular to the sacred. We usually get into a discussion and then somebody says, "But Jesus says that God is to be worshiped everywhere." They argue that He cannot be contained in buildings. This is surely true. But the concept of the holy, the concept of the sacred, the concept of the consecrated, is as much a New Testament conception as it is an Old Testament conception. I wish to argue that for the Christian there is still *sacred space* and there is still *sacred time*.

We often wonder why our country has been so secularized. I am sure there are numerous reasons, but within our own tradition, we Protestants have so reacted against Rome that we have done everything we can to disguise the purpose of our churches as we assemble to worship God. As a result we lose all concept of *sacred place*. In addition to this, our approach to the Lord's Day and to Christian tradition leads to losing the concept of *sacred time*.

In classic architecture there was a conscious attempt to use art forms that would suggest transcendency—the decorative walls, the arched ceilings, the stained glass, the resonating physical structure—all of this was done by design. Their distinctive architecture communicates the threshold—the moving of the human being into a posture of worshipping a highly exalted and supremely holy God. This all communicates that when we come into His presence it is not like going into a town meeting hall; it is simply not to be business as usual.

In recent years we have had megachurches begun by men who have asked the unchurched, often thousands of them, “Why do you not attend church?” They ask those who once went, “Why did you quit attending?” They tabulate the responses and seek to develop a church based on what will draw such people to their worship. They discovered in their questioning that the number one reason people stay away from church is that they feel it is boring. The second reason is that they find church irrelevant. When they ask why people do come to church they find that the first reason given is that they want fellowship. Meaningful human relationships are their top priority.

Whether we have understood this cognitively or simply by intuition we have done everything in our power to attract people to our fellowship, to make them comfortable in this fellowship, and to design the church buildings primarily for fellowship. We know that the chief reason we are supposed to come to corporate worship on the Lord’s Day is to worship God. Yet, we have reasoned, people are not going to be attracted to worship unless we cater to their desire for fellowship.

Please don’t misunderstand me. I think fellowship is a legitimate need for people in the church, and I think we should be aware of the fact that people desperately want it. We do need to meet people’s need for human relationship,

but I think that if we design our Sunday service exclusively for this principle we are not going to have any reason for fellowship.

What is the real crisis in American worship today? I suggest the real crisis is that people need a genuine sense of the overwhelming presence of God in the corporate gathering of the church. I see this all through the Word of God as well. People encounter God in various ways in the Scriptures, and their reactions are often quite varied. Some are excited, some are gritty, some laugh, some cry, some run, some cower, but nobody is ever bored: ever. And no one ever meets the living God and walks away and says, “That was surely irrelevant.” So I don’t know what we are doing on Sunday mornings in many of our churches, but if people are bored it is because they are not having a real sense of the presence of God in their worship. I am quite sure about that.

#### Worship and Our Five Senses

Now I would like to turn your attention to the pattern we observe in the Old Testament. In the worship by Israel there was a visual display of majesty the eyes beheld in the experience of worship. It seems quite apparent that when God designed a pattern of worship in the Bible the entire human being was engaged in the experience itself. The word was proclaimed to the mind, but in addition to this cognitive aspect, there was also the experiential where all five senses were deeply engaged in and involved with the worship experience.

Before we leave our thoughts about the visual part and move to the other four senses let me suggest a principle. This is what I will call “Sproul’s Law of Aesthetics”: *Every form is an art form, and every art form communicates something.* There is a reason why something is shaped the way it is shaped. We do not design things for utility only, or

simply for functionality. This can be seen in the pen with which I write. It may be bright red so as to get your attention and to cause you to buy it instead of the dull and black pen of the competition. You see red and it jumps out at you. Even the reason why designers choose a particular print style on the pen has to do with graphic design. People are highly trained and well paid in making these apparently simple decisions. Every form, you see, is an art form and every art form communicates something.

A church building communicates something to every one who enters it. If I were a pastor I would be asking this question: "What does our building communicate?" And, further, "What exactly do we want to communicate so that we might display the glory of God?" Does your church building visually promote God's glory? Does it display God's beauty? I sometimes fear that we Protestants do everything in our power to make our churches as ugly as we possibly can so that no one will ever accuse us of liturgicalism. Many of our churches are aesthetically unattractive. Your office, church, and sanctuary all communicate a message. It is, for sure, a visual message. Is this message conducive to putting people in a posture of worship, or does it conceal the transcendence of God?

If God gives attention to the color of thread and to every little detail, He must think that the visual stimulation of our sanctuaries is critical for true worship to occur.

What then about the auditory nerve and the experience we have related to that? I'll never forget the first time the Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology used the Westminster Brass. It was an opening Friday night service in Philadelphia at Tenth Presbyterian Church. The first, and subsequently standard, opening hymn was "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." The Westminster Brass began to play. The people at Tenth were ecstatic. They had never heard such brass instrumentation at Tenth Church. I wondered

what would happen. The experience of worship was so exhilarating that evening that I will never forget it. The service lasted for over two hours, and it was time for the postlude. You must understand that at most churches, including Tenth Presbyterian, you say a benediction and then after about a five second silence there is the sound of the organ. At that point everyone heads for the exits. Well, on this particular evening the postlude was from the Westminster Brass. When they began to play nobody moved. Not a soul. The whole congregation, about 1,300 people, sat through the entire postlude and didn't know exactly what to do. When the brass concluded the postlude the people stood up and gave a standing ovation and pleaded for more. I'll tell you why this occurred; people are aesthetically starved for beautiful music. They wanted to hear the music of majesty.

Our churches use instruments like the organ and piano. Why? Does the symphony orchestra have an organ? A piano? Not generally. Why not? Because the organ and piano are designed to be imitation symphony orchestras. They imitate the sounds of the various instruments such as the strings, the brass, and the reeds. The only time you see a piano at the symphony is when there's a piano concerto that is a special part of the program. And yet many people seem to think that the only instruments that are divinely ordained for worship are the piano and organ.

The worship of Israel used all the elements of music including strings, brass, and reeds. It included rhythm, melody and harmony. All aspects of music were integral to their worship. It was an orchestral feast for the people of God when they assembled. It was an experience of majesty for the ears.

As you look carefully at the Word you will see that one of the really weird aspects of Israelite worship is associated with the olfactory dimension. The olfactory dimension has



to do with the altar of incense which God prescribed. Some of you might be thinking, "Is Sproul telling us that we need to swing incense lamps in the church?" Relax, please. We're just looking at the Old Testament worship pattern. When God commands the use of incense in worship He sets down as an absolute law a patented formula for the incense that is to be made and to be burned on the altar. He says to the people of Israel that a particular mixture of very aromatic blends was to be used at the altar of the Lord. Why? Because the altar of incense, which symbolizes the prayers of God's people, will have a particular and peculiar identity and aroma all its own. This exclusive aroma was to be associated in the memory banks of the people of Israel and with the house of the living God.

Recently I read that the human nose can distinguish between several hundred distinct odors. Have you ever been walking down the street on a spring day and somehow the fragrance of a particular bouquet of flowers snaps your mind back to when hearts were young and you were 16 years old and you were going to call on that very special young lady? Haven't you had an experience like that? You have aromas associated with Christmas, with certain places, with certain times. In the same manner God built that experience into the worship of Israel. When the people moved into idolatry this became part of the prophetic criticism. God said, "I despise your sacrifices. Your offerings have become a stench in my nostrils." The original intent of the fragrance was to create a memorable aroma that was beautiful and pleasant, and to suggest the sweetness of the presence of God.

A pastor friend of mine some years ago said to me, "You know R.C., there's something I don't understand." I said, "What is that?" He answered, "I've been in this church for three years and it seems like we have the most spiritually alive church in this town, but our reputation in the

community is that our church is dead. I don't understand it." I suggested to him, "I do. If you come in the front door of the church and sniff you'll see what I mean." He replied, "What are you talking about?" I said to him, "It smells like death in that building. The place is 200 years old and the wood is rotting. There's mould and mildew everywhere. It smells like a funeral parlor. Before the people ever sing the first hymn or hear the Word of God they feel like they are experiencing death because it smells dead. It's that simple." I went on to tell him, "If I were the pastor of this church I would crawl through the rafters on Saturday night and put some kind of pine fragrance in the air. I would do anything to get rid of that smell. Repaint, change something, but alter that smell." I am asking you, honestly, how does your church smell?

The other two senses are taste and touch. How many times is the imagery of God throughout the sacred Scripture linked to certain tastes? He institutes feasts in the Old Testament, such as the Passover. The items He includes in the Passover are carefully selected to remind the people through their taste buds of their rescue from the wrath of God when the angel of death passed over them in Egypt. Calvin once wrote about how appropriate it is that the fruit of the vine is used to symbolize for us the person of our Lord. On the one hand the crucifixion is the most bitter moment in human history, and the bitter aftertaste of wine communicates this truth. Yet the very moment of Christ's pouring Himself out in death is the most singular moment of redemption. It is the most joyous time in history. We call this Good Friday, not Bad Friday. Why? On this day our redemption was secured. Calvin thus concludes that wine serves well as a symbol of that which makes the heart glad. It also looks like blood, and Calvin comments that this is fitting, too, since the Lord would take something so common and set it apart and give it uncommon association just as He

does with the bread. We are then to taste this and know that the Lord our God is good. Search through your concordance and see how many times the imagery of taste is used for God and for Christ throughout the Bible.

Someone once did a study of Jonathan Edwards' works, searching for all the adjectival qualifiers that he used to write his highly graphic and imaginative material. The word Edwards uses most often might surprise you. It is the word "sweetness." People would think the answer is wrath or judgment, but the word he uses more than any other one to describe the character of God is sweetness. Edwards is always talking about the sweetness of Christ.

The prophet Ezekiel ate the scroll of God that was filled with woe, mourning, and suffering, only to discover it was as sweet as honey in his mouth. How often does the Bible draw metaphorical descriptions from taste to communicate something about the character of God?

The last sense is touch. I remember when the charismatic movement broke out in the 1960s. It spread through religious schools like Duquesne University and Notre Dame University. It appeared in several major Lutheran bodies, the old Presbyterian church, and other denominations like these. One of the things that I saw as an observer very early on was the feely-touchy dimension of it all. People were laying hands on each other for everything. They didn't do this just to speak in tongues. If you had a stomachache you got the laying on of hands; if you worried that the car was going to run out of gas you laid hands on the car. I saw everybody was touching this, touching that.

What is it that makes the human touch so attractive to people? When the minister gives a benediction at the end of our Sunday service he stands and puts his hands up and prays. Why does he do this? In the house church of the New Testament era the pastor at the end of the service of worship went around the room and individually put his

hand on the head of every worshiper and pronounced the blessing of God upon him or her. He touched each worshiper. When the churches grew too large to accommodate this individual and personal tactile expression of God's benediction the pastor extending his arms and hands over the people became the symbolic gesture. Symbolically the pastor was saying, "I am touching you now in the name of God."

Several years ago the Christian Reformed Church had its annual convention at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, CA. I was invited, not by Dr. Schuller, but by the Christian Reformed denomination, to speak. I addressed the evening meeting, and they had a most interesting and fascinating way of concluding. They asked those who wanted prayer to come forward to a kneeling rail, extending across the front of the church. Seventy-five people came that night and knelt at the rail during the closing prayer. Instead of a normal benediction, brief and predictable, the minister prayed for about ten minutes. The pastor who led this prayer began at one end of that rail and went down the entire length laying his hands on each person, simply touching them for a moment. It was very meaningful.

Do you know how desperately people want to receive the touch of Christ? Why do we pastors stand at the door after the service and shake the hands of our people? For some of our older friends this may be the only touch they receive all week. I sometimes take their hand and hold it an extra second or two because I know that this is true.

I am not talking here about sensuality. Not at all. I am talking about what Luther meant when he said that it was our responsibility, as much as possible, to be Christ for our neighbor. Now that can be a blasphemous thought in certain ways; it could be understood as an exercise in unspeakable arrogance. But that is not what Luther meant, of course. He meant that we have to mirror and reflect the concern, the

compassion and the kindness of Jesus to our people. This will sometimes mean touching them, in an appropriately sacred way.

Have you been to an ordination service? Have you observed the laying on of hands? For ministers who are ordained that is a powerful experience. It was not simply the words of the charge that I heard that day that I recall. It was also the touch of the elders—the fathers and brothers who laid their hands on my head. That brought an overwhelming experience because they were doing this in the name of God. This action is symbolic, but very powerful. We live only a very small percentage of our lives at the cognitive level.

I hope some of you know the reputation I have, a bad reputation with some, of being an unreconstructed, Aristotelian logician. I get that criticism all the time. I am told, “Sproul reduces the faith to logic.” Actually, I hope people keep saying that about me. I hope it gets worse. I think we are living in the most anti-intellectual period in the history of the church, and I think the most important thing that has to happen on Sunday mornings is a spiritual awakening of the mind. Having said this I wish to go on record by saying that God simply does not address the mind alone, but also the vision, the hearing, the tasting, the touching and the smelling. The one place where God historically ordained worship for the people of Israel He was very careful to bring to our attention the dynamic of what was going on. In order that He would be glorified and that His holiness would be at the very center of the worship experience, God regulated that the whole of our being is to become involved in worship. Shouldn't we recognize this as we seek to glorify God in the spirit of holiness? Recovery of a biblical experience of worship must recover this balance if it is to engage the whole person in the activity of worship.

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