

A Firm Footing, A New Song

*Giving God Thanks and Praise “Across the
Borders”*

Introduction

- Getting to know one another
- Eagerness for conference

Overview

- The Weight of God's Glory, the Echo of Human Gratitude
- “Because God Loves Stories”
- “And Forget Not All His Benefits”
- Pilgrims Enroute Together
- Staying Faithful in Worship Planning & Leading
- “And now, sisters and brothers...”: Parting Words

I. The Weight of Divine Glory, the Echo of Human Gratitude

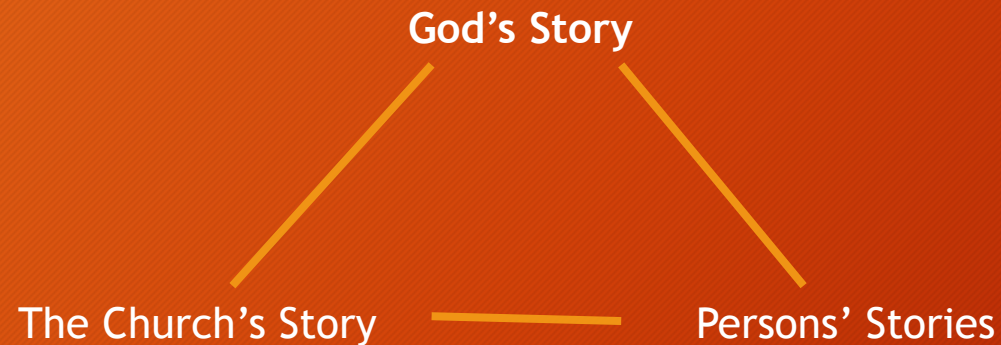
- The *Kabod* of the Triune God
- The Church's Calling: To Echo Thanks and Praise

On Liturgy

“That is why we must insist that liturgy, far from being an escape from the real world, is the real world. God is at work, of course, in all reality, not merely in our fleeting hours of public worship. But humanity is a blinded race, and in worship we have a chance to look on the world as it truly is—the beloved and redeemed creation of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For a brief definition of worship, I have seen few better than Abraham Heschel’s: ‘Worship is a way of seeing the world in the light of God.’”

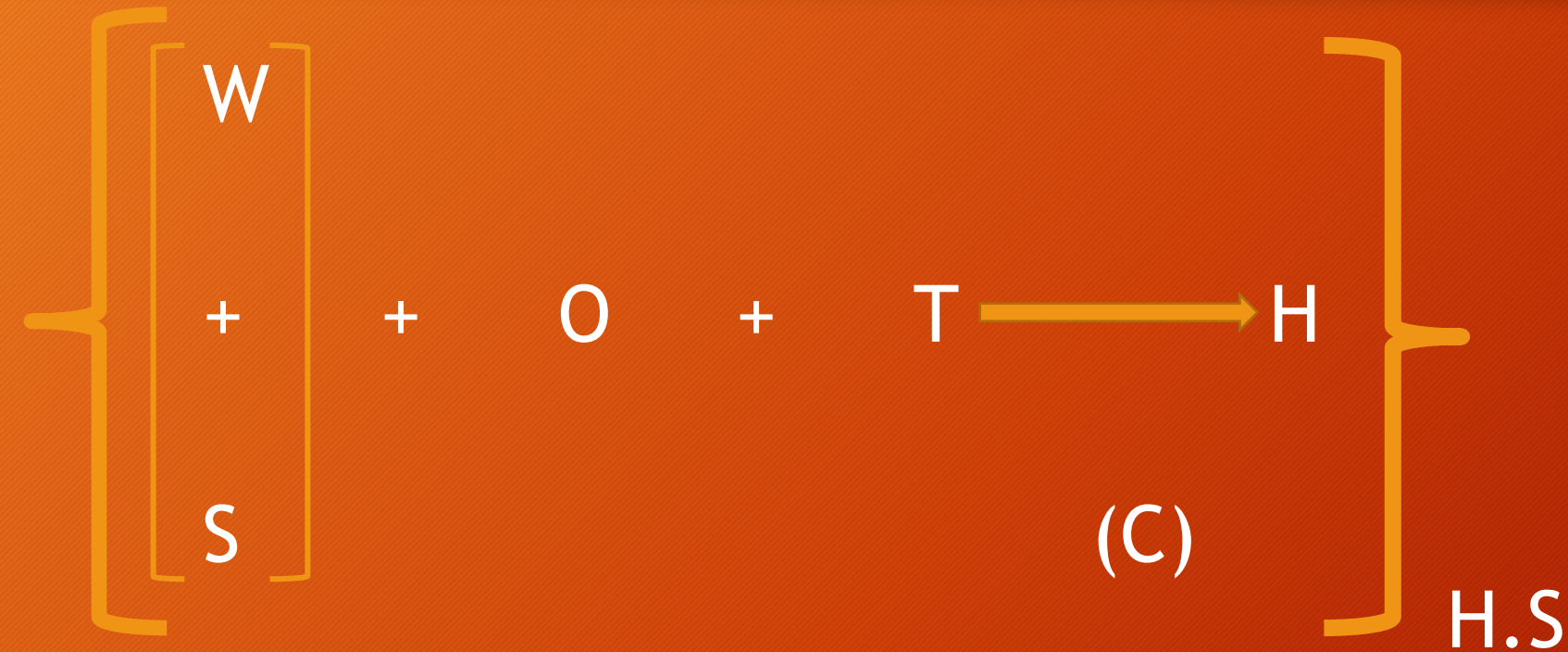
II. “Because God Loves Stories”: On Remembering Together God’s ‘Mighty Deeds’

- History: The Arena of God’s Revelation
- Sacramental Remembering
- Three Interconnected ‘Stories’



- The Storytelling Continues

Responding to the Story: Toward Cultivating Holy Obedience



III. “And forget not all God’s benefits”

- Gratitude: Charis, Chara, Eucharistia
- Gratitude for What?
 1. Creation and Providence
 2. Salvation
 3. The Word
 4. Fellow pilgrims
 5. What life’s (difficult) experiences may yield
 6. Life to Come

IV. Pilgrims Enroute Together: “Traditioned Innovation”

- Change in the Church: A vital necessity
 - 1. The pilgrim God precedes his people
 - 2. Growth in Christian life demands it
 - 3. Proclaiming the Gospel continually afresh requires it
- Church Militant-Church Belligerent
- Toward Singing a New Song Together: Four Helps
 - 1. Together ponder and proclaim God’s great deeds
 - 2. Together cultivate a “spirit of knowledge”
 - 3. Together conduct a “Liturgical Breadth Assessment”
 - 4. Together practice makrothumia

V. Staying Faithful in Planning and Leading Worship

- Central Task(s) of Worship Planners & Leaders
 1. To prompt worshippers
 2. To bear witness
 3. To bring Triune God delight and praise

The Kairos to Which We are Called

- Atmosphere of secularism
- Crisis within the Christian Church

“And now, sisters and brothers...”: Parting Words

Work

Pray

Sing

In a Deep, Unbounded Darkness

In a deep, unbounded darkness long before the first light shone,
You, O God, beyond all merit, worked a wonder faith makes known:
In your mercy, in your mercy, you embraced us as your own,
evermore and evermore.

Though our world is ever-changing, you are constant, firm, and sure,
Faithful to your covenant promise. Trusting you, we live, secure:
singing praises, singing praises, long as heart and breath endure,
evermore and evermore

Joy transforms our lips to boasting only in your matchless grace,
Sending Christ to dwell among us, Word made flesh, in time and
space:

Friend and Savior, Friend and Savior, in whose life we glimpse your
face
evermore and evermore.

God of Hagar, God of Sarah, God of nomad Abraham;
God of Miriam, God of Moses, Fiery Pillar, great I AM:
Lead us homeward, lead us homeward, to the lovefeast of the Lamb
evermore and evermore.

(Based on Chinese poem, Mary Louise Bringle, 2012)

Millennium Hymn

Through the darkness of the ages,
Through the sorrows of the days,
Strength of weary generations,
Lifting hearts in hope and praise.
Light in darkness, joy in sorrow,
Presence to allay our fears,
Jesus, you have kept your promise
Faithful through two thousand years.

Bounty of two thousand harvests,
Beauty of two thousand springs,
He who formed the times and seasons
Has vouchsafed us greater things.
Word of God who spoke creation,
Speaks forgiveness, speaks to save,
Gathers still his ransomed people
In the life he freely gave.

Countless flowers have bloomed and withered,
Countless noons are sealed in night,
Shattered thrones and fallen empires,
Realms and riches lost from sight.
Christ, your kingdom still increases
As the centuries unfold,
Grain that fell to earth and perished
Has brought forth ten thousandfold.

Master, we shall sing your praises,
Man of sorrows, God of power,
For the measured march of seasons
Shall at last bring in the hour
When, as lightning leaps the heavens,
You return to lead us home.
You have promised, “I am coming,”
Swiftly, our Lord Jesus, come. (Hilary Jolly)