Introduction

Many of the world's religions describe the human desire to offer gifts to one's deity or deities. The Judeo-Christian tradition is no exception. From the story of Cain and Abel to the present day, people have given gifts to God. Yet, the Judeo-Christian tradition also recognizes God to be beyond the need for gifts. As the psalmist states, "You have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise" (Ps 51 NRSV). Nonetheless, while challenged, reformed, and even radically restructured, this desire to give gifts to God has persisted over the centuries.

What does it mean to offer God a gift if God has offered humanity the greatest gift in Jesus Christ? Does offering a gift to God reflect the desire to curry God's favor, or does it symbolize one's gratitude to God? These questions and more evoked strong responses within Anglicanism and produced significant changes in the liturgy, particularly in the offertory. Oblation is the liturgical term for the giving of gifts to God. It has been one of the most controversial issues within Anglicanism from the sixteenth century to the present.[1] For example, by the 1552 English Book of Common Prayer, all references to oblation in the offertory rite had been removed. However, by the twentieth century, oblationary language and actions, such as the offertory procession, had returned in full force. The movement from the near elimination of oblation in the offertory rite to its widespread usage in the churches of the Anglican Communion is a remarkable liturgical and theological development.

1. Throughout this book, I will use the term *Anglicanism* as defined by *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3rd ed.), s.v. "Anglicanism," as "the system of doctrine and practice of those Christians who are in communion with the see of Canterbury." While it may appear anachronistic to apply the term before its coinage in the nineteenth century, I will do so sparingly and when I mean for it to apply more generally.

Was the development of oblation in the offertory periodic reactions to extreme theological positions? Or was it just a contemporary response to the liturgical renewal movement in the twentieth century? No, the development of oblation in the offertory was neither arbitrary nor episodic but rather the result of sustained theological tension between the reformed/evangelical wing and the high church / Anglo-Catholic wing of Anglicanism. In addition, four theological themes—almsgiving, propitiation, preparation, and participation—reformed the theology of oblation in the offertory within Anglicanism.

IMPORTANT TERMS

Five terms central to this book hold either ambiguous or disputed definitions: offertory, oblation, sacrifice, propitiation, and liturgical theology. The following working definitions will apply for this book, while not attempting to resolve all the ambiguities or disputes.

Offertory

In his widely received essay, liturgical scholar Robert Taft describes "soft points" in the liturgy. These "soft points" occur "[1] before the readings, [2] between the word service and the eucharistic prayer, and [3] at the communion and dismissal that follow this prayer."[2] Over time, these "soft points" expand and contract in response to accretions and reforms to the liturgy. Thus, they can provide important historical information on the development of a liturgical rite. Because liturgical authorities make choices to include or exclude material and often do so with theological motivations, these liturgical units do not expand and contract without theological consequences. Thus, these "soft points" can also provide important theological information on the development of a liturgical rite.

The offertory is an example of a "soft point" in the liturgy. In the Western liturgical tradition, the offertory occurs at Taft's second "soft point . . . between the service of the word and the eucharistic prayer."[3] The history of the offertory in the West illustrates Taft's thesis of expansion and contraction within a liturgical unit.[4] Also, it has been the container for increasing

2. Taft, "Structural Analysis," 325.

3. Taft, "Structural Analysis," 325.

4. See Clark, *Origin and Development*; Jungman, "The Offertory," 1–100; and Tirot, "Histoire des prières," for excellent histories of the offertory in the Western tradition.

and decreasing ceremonial within the liturgy. Thus, it lends itself to theological elucidation.

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church defines the offertory succinctly as "the worshippers' offering of the bread and wine (and water) to be consecrated."[5] While efficient, such a definition is incomplete. The liturgical data from the Anglican prayer book tradition suggests a much broader definition. Therefore, in this work, the offertory is defined as *that portion of the Eucharistic liturgy in which occurs an invitation for monies and/or in-kind gifts to be collected, the depositing of said monies, in-kind gifts, and/or bread and wine for the eucharistic celebration in their designated places, as well as all sentences, exhortations, prayers, confessions, and ritual actions occurring between the service of the Word and the Eucharistic Prayer*. This definition fits neatly with Taft's second "soft point" of the liturgy and will provide for the expansion and contraction evident of a "soft point" of the liturgy. Furthermore, this definition centers on the public meaning of the offertory rather than the official meaning. The official meaning of the offertory would be described only in the rubrics and headers printed in the prayer books. However, neither the rubrics nor the headers fully describe the ritual action involved in the offertory.

Therefore, this working definition recognizes that the offertory expands and contracts over the course of history and from region to region within the churches of the Anglican Communion. At times, it will involve very terse rubrics and a few simple prayers or scriptural quotations.[6] At other times, it will involve exhortations, intercessions, and even confessions that are associated with the liturgical action of preparing for communion.[7] An argument could be made that these are separate liturgical units. However, a close reading of these sections will show that they are so intertwined in their references to each other as to be one liturgical unit.

Oblation, Sacrifice, and Propitiation

In this book, oblation, sacrifice, and propitiation will be used frequently and with significant distinctions. The distinctions among them are important especially for understanding their development within the Anglican context. Therefore, the tendency to conflate them will be resisted for important theological reasons as will be explained throughout this work.

W. Jardine Grisbrooke defines oblation specifically.

5. *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. "offertory."
6. See AmBCP1979, 333, for example.
7. EngBCP1662, 1056–88.

> A synonym for "offering," derived from the Latin *oblatio*, and like the latter may refer either to an act of offering, or to the thing offered. Four different Christian uses of the term may be distinguished: (1) the self-offering of Christ in the Last Supper and on the cross for the redemption of the world; (2) the celebration of the eucharist as an anamnesis (q.v.) of this self-offering; (3) its application to the material elements of bread and wine with which this anamnesis is made, according to Christ's command; (4) its application to the dispositions of the worshippers which are externalized by (2) and (3).[8]

The use of oblation in this work will adhere to this definition but with conditions. For example, Grisbrooke continues by saying, "Other uses, such as the application of the term to monetary offerings in general, would seem to fall outside the legitimate Christian usage." However, evidence will be presented that liturgical texts and practices in the Anglican Communion recognized the monetary gifts as oblations as well. Thus, oblation would be *any offering of the elements of bread and wine and/or monetary or in-kind gifts given not simply for the relief of the poor but also for divine use either for the upkeep of the church or symbolically as an expression of gratitude to God*.

Sacrifice and propitiation will be distinguished from oblation by virtue of degree. Oblation will have the most general reference as defined above. However, sacrifice, in terms of its use in the offertory, will refer to language that specifically references Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Thus, a prayer, for example, could have oblationary language if it references a gift to God but would only have sacrificial language if it also references Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Furthermore, propitiation will be distinguished even more narrowly in terms of the offertory. Propitiation will refer to the gift being given with the desire to elicit an exchange between God and humanity. For example, a prayer over the gifts would include propitiatory language if it asked God to accept the gift to cleanse the givers of their sins.

Thus, a prayer would only contain oblationary language if it only referenced a gift given to God with no reference to Christ's sacrifice or a desire for God to do something in return. A prayer would contain sacrificial language if it referenced Christ's sacrifice and would contain propitiatory language if it goes further by asking God for an exchange based on the gift. For example, the *secreta* for Quinquagesima Sunday in the Sarum Missal includes propitiatory language, "We beseech thee, O Lord, that this offering *may cleanse away our sins*; and sanctify the bodies and souls of thy

8. Grisbrooke, "Oblation," 392.

servants for the celebration of this sacrifice [emphasis added]."[9] It also includes oblationary and sacrificial language by necessity. On the other hand, 1 Chr 29:14b, one of Lancelot Andrewes's "Peculiar Sentences," uses only oblationary language, "For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you."[10] The context speaks of a freewill offering in support of the temple. It is not referencing Christ's sacrifice, and it does not suggest an exchange between humanity and God.

Liturgical Theology

Liturgical scholars disagree as to the definition of liturgical theology. Alexander Schmemann's now classic work *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* first introduced the term into the literature. In this book, Schmemann defines liturgical theology as "the elucidation of the meaning of worship."[11] Schmemann explains that the task of liturgical theology is to provide a theological explanation for worship in the context of the entire liturgical tradition of the church.[12] Schmemann provides an important clarification that impacts this study: "If liturgical theology stems from an understanding of worship as the public act of the Church, then its final goal will be to clarify and explain the connection between this act and the Church, i.e. to explain how the Church expresses and fulfils herself in this act."[13] This emphasis upon liturgy as the "public act of the Church" will be the methodological focus of this book.

Three influential liturgical scholars published books building on Schmemann's classic work: David Fagerberg's *Theologia Prima: What Is Liturgical Theology*,[14] Gordon Lathrop's *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology*,[15] and Kevin Irwin's *Context and Text: Method in Liturgical Theology*.[16] Each of them expands on Schmemann's central ideas in important ways.

In *Theologia Prima*, Fagerberg defines liturgical theology as "theology that is liturgically embodied."[17] While Schmemann's approach to liturgical theology centered primarily on textual analysis, Fagerberg expands on

9. Appendix A, no. 16.
10. Andrewes et al., *Two Answers*, 153.
11. Schmemann, *Introduction*, 16.
12. Schmemann, *Introduction*, 17.
13. Schmemann, *Introduction*, 17.
14. Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima*.
15. Lathrop, *Holy Things*.
16. Irwin, *Context and Text*.
17. Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima*, 7.

Schmemann's view of the relationship between the *ordo* and liturgical theology. Schmemann defines the *ordo* as:

> To find the Ordo behind the "rubrics," regulations and rules—to find the unchanging principle, the living norm or "logos" of worship as a whole, within what is accidental and temporary: this is the primary task which faces those who regard liturgical theology not as the collecting of accidental and arbitrary explanations of services but as the systematic study of the *lex orandi* of the Church. This is nothing but the search for or identification of that element of the *Typicon* which is presupposed by its whole content, rather than contained by it.[18]

Fagerberg expands on this definition by seeing this "living norm" as an embodied experience, not a conceptual categorization as Schmemann initially describes it. Conceptual categorization will come later for Fagerberg:

> Liturgical theology is derivative from the liturgists' encounter with God. Liturgical theology materializes upon the encounter with the Holy One, not upon the secondary analysis at the desk. God shapes the community in liturgical encounter, and the community makes theological adjustment to this encounter, which settles into ritual form. Only then can the analyst begin dusting the ritual for God's fingerprints.[19]

Thus, Schmemann and Fagerberg make an important distinction between the experience of the liturgy as *theologia prima* and the analysis of that experience as *theologia secunda*.[20]

Gordon Lathrop contributes to this distinction. Building from Schmemann's basic definition of liturgical theology, Lathrop offers his definition, "[Liturgical theology] inquires into the meaning of the liturgy. . . . As theology . . , it does so especially by asking how the Christian meeting, in all its signs and words, says something authentic and reliable about God, and so says something true about ourselves and about our world as they are understood before God."[21] Like Fagerberg, Lathrop continues by offering two types of liturgical theology: primary liturgical theology and secondary liturgical theology. He argues that one finds the meaning of liturgy in the liturgy itself. Thus, "*primary liturgical theology* is the communal meaning of

18. Schmemann, *Introduction*, 39, and quoted in Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima*, 10.
19. Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima*, 9.
20. Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima*, 41–42.
21. Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 3.

the liturgy exercised by the gathering itself."[22] He makes a clear distinction between primary and secondary liturgical theology: *"Secondary liturgical theology*, then, is written and spoken discourse that attempts to find words for the experience of the liturgy and to illuminate its structures, intending to enable a more profound participation in those structures by the members of the assembly."[23]

Finally, Kevin Irwin furthers this notion of liturgy as *theologia prima*, or as he describes it, *orthodoxia prima*: "Liturgy is fundamentally *orthodoxia prima*, a theological event. In essence, liturgy is an *act of theology*, an act whereby the believing Church addresses God, enters into a dialogue with God, makes statements about its belief in God and symbolizes this belief through a variety of means."[24] He recognizes the analysis of this experience as secondary theology but goes further to identify a third category: "We will continually refer to an additional component, *theologia tertia*, which underscores the essential relatedness of liturgy to living the Christian life."[25]

Thus, for Irwin, the liturgy is not simply a set of texts to be analyzed, but a lived event to be experienced. Therefore, liturgical theology must extend beyond just the analysis of texts to include the analysis of context as well: "In general, to state that liturgical *context is text* is to adjust the focus in liturgical theology from a philological-theological study of liturgical texts (e.g., sacramentaries, pontificals, ordos) to discussing these sources in light of their celebration, both past (to the extent possible) and present."[26] By focusing on the celebration of the liturgical event in addition to its publication in a liturgical text, Irwin offers the opportunity for an exploration of public meaning in liturgical theology. However, by no means does Irwin disregard text. Instead, he recognizes

> an *ongoing dialectical relationship* between *text* and *context* where the ecclesial and cultural settings in which the liturgy takes place—*context*—influence the way we experience and interpret the liturgy—*text*. But just as *context* influences how the *text* of liturgy is interpreted, the other side of the equation concerns how that data we call *text* necessarily influences the Church's theology, spirituality and life—*context*.[27]

22. Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 5.
23. Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 6.
24. Irwin, *Context and Text*, 44.
25. Irwin, *Context and Text*, 46.
26. Irwin, *Context and Text*, 55.
27. Irwin, *Context and Text*, 56.

Thus, Irwin also draws together the dialectical relationship between *theologia prima* and *theologia secunda* through his methodology.

Not all liturgical scholars will agree with these definitions of liturgical theology. Over a decade before the publication of these books, Geoffrey Wainwright discussed a dialectical relationship between *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* rather than a more causal relationship which other liturgical theologians purported.[28] Looking at the historical material, he provided examples of how the liturgy influenced the development of doctrine and vice versa. He concluded, "The two-way relation between worship and doctrine which these passages expound is grounded in the assumption, and requirement, that 'the whole liturgy contains the catholic faith, in as much as it is a public profession of the faith of the Church.'"[29]

Paul V. Marshall argues against the entire notion of *theologia prima* leading to *theologia secunda*. First, he recognizes that leading proponents of this view take a structuralist approach to the liturgy, which he finds problematic especially for Protestants.[30] Marshall does not like what he sees as a unidirectional methodology among proponents of *theologia prima*. Instead, he calls for "the liturgical circle, a constant feeding each other of theology, liturgy, the arts, pastoral and missionary work, and their ancillary activities under the umbrella of the Christian life, not liturgy."[31] Whether Marshall's reading of proponents of *theologia prima* is accurate or not remains an open question. Nonetheless, he articulates an important concept in liturgical theology regarding its dialectical nature.

Another important liturgical scholar, Paul Bradshaw also voices concerns regarding liturgical theology. His concerns center mostly on methodology. First, he cautions liturgical theologians from referring to "*the* liturgy" as a constitutive whole.[32] As a historian of the liturgy, he advocates for the careful use of liturgical data resisting the temptation to become prescriptive and highly selective, akin to biblical proof-texting.[33] In addition to these cautions regarding the use of historical data, Bradshaw poses an important question that lies at the heart of liturgical theology, "Whose Meaning?" He then draws upon the work of Lawrence Hoffman's taxonomy of meaning:

28. Wainwright, *Doxology*, 218.

29. Wainwright, *Doxology*, 224, quoting Pope Pius X, "Mediator Dei": "Liturgia igitur omnis catholicam fidem continet, quatenus Ecclesiae fidem publice testatur."

30. Marshall, "Reconsidering," 134–35.

31. Marshall, "Reconsidering," 142.

32. Bradshaw, "Difficulties," 182.

33. Bradshaw, "Difficulties," 186–87.