

## WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION: AN EXAMINATION OF LEX ORANDI-LEX CREDENDI

Marcus Waldren Brown\*

“When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, we’ll sing and shout the victory!”<sup>1</sup> The words of this gospel song chorus, written by Eliza E. Hewitt in the nineteenth century<sup>2</sup> give voice to a historic longing by God’s children to see his face. Theologian Hans Boersma elaborates on the transformational impact of a believer’s gaze into the glory of God’s self-revelation, referred to by many as the beatific vision. Boersma writes, “On such an understanding, the body will no longer be . . . unaffected by the loving gaze of God in Christ. The resulting transformation is suprasensible.”<sup>3</sup> While Boersma’s conclusions presume the eschatological *telos* of the Christian faith, Christian worship seeks to bring believers into the presence of God in this life—where transformation may also occur. Christian worship roots itself in biblical events where God reveals himself to a person or group of people of his choosing and they respond on the terms that he proposes and in the way that he alone makes possible.<sup>4</sup>

Within corporate worship, God reveals himself to his people, his people respond, and their faithful, Holy Spirit-empowered response to his revelation helps move them toward spiritual transformation. Firstly, I will explore biblical passages in the New Testament that demonstrate this pattern. Secondly, I will examine theological evidence that demonstrates how the

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\*Marcus Waldren Brown serves as assistant professor of church music and worship at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

<sup>1</sup>Eliza E. Hewitt, “When We All Get to Heaven,” *Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Worship, 2008), 603.

<sup>2</sup>Wesley L. Forbis, ed., *Handbook to the Baptist Hymnal 1991* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay, 1991), 230.

<sup>3</sup>Hans Boersma, *Seeing God: The Beatific Vision in Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 429.

<sup>4</sup>David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1992), 20.

holy dialogue of revelation and response has been expressed by examining a common paradigm found in liturgical theology, *lex orandi – lex credendi*. My analysis will expose how individual and collective responses in worship, empowered by the Holy Spirit, inevitably lead worshipers to undergo spiritual transformation.

## I. TRANSFORMATION AND WORSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Examining Scripture for evidence of the transformation that comes through revelation and response occurring in corporate worship proves challenging because the New Testament never documents a complete corporate worship service. Even without the archive of a complete liturgy, reviewing the apostles' encouragements to worshipping believers demonstrates congruence between worship in the New Testament church and the goals of the *Shema* and the Great Commandment.<sup>5</sup> Apostolic admonitions of worship involving God's revelation and his people's faithful response through the lens of heart, soul, mind, and strength open the door to corporate and individual transformation within the church.

The first event in the New Testament connecting apostolic encouragements aimed toward worship may be found in Acts 2 when Peter addresses the crowds gathered in Jerusalem during the festival of Pentecost. After Peter preached his sermon, many who heard were "cut to the heart" and asked Peter and the other disciples, "Brothers what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."<sup>6</sup> God's revelation to the crowd through Peter's preaching clearly motivated the assembly's response to God's revelation—and for many, their response was a faithful acceptance of the gospel. This New Testament narrative clearly demonstrates the link between the coming of the Holy Spirit, worship through hearing God's preached Word, and obedient responses of the people's hearts, all demonstrating that "outward acts of devotion are worthless without a submitted spirit."<sup>7</sup>

Another example of apostolic teaching on acts of worship involving God's revelation, the church's Spirit-enabled response, and the church's subsequent transformation can be found in 1 Corinthians. Paul's letter to the Corinthian church gives readers a glimpse into how the New Testament

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<sup>5</sup>Mark 12:30.

<sup>6</sup>Acts 2:37-38.

<sup>7</sup>Noel Due, *Created for Worship: From Genesis to Revelation to You* (Fern, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, Ltd., 2005), 95.

church corporately observed the Lord's Table.<sup>8</sup> Paul tells the church in Corinth, "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you."<sup>9</sup> Paul shares his personal dialogue of revelation, response, and transformation with the Corinthian church. Paul wants to teach them the sober, reflective, and sacred way Christians should approach the Lord's Table. In turn, Paul knows that when the church responds in the Spirit, faithfully to Christ's revelation in the Table, they will experience a spiritual transformation that will help grow them toward being more like Jesus.

## II. LEX ORANDI – LEX CREDENDI

The nature of transformation coming from congregational worship can be best summarized in the Latin phrase, *lex orandi – lex credendi*. Written sometime between 435 and 442, Prosper of Aquitaine's original phrase states, "*ut legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*."<sup>10</sup> The Latin phrase translates to "that the law of praying establishes the law of believing." A commonly used but loose translation of this phrase could be, "The way you worship shapes your faith." Prosper, a student of Augustine, originally wrote this phrase in support of Augustine's fight against Pelagianism. Pelagius's particular brand of heresy came from his belief that humans were born innocent, without the curse of original sin via Adam and Eve.<sup>11</sup>

In 431, meeting in the great city of Ephesus, the third ecumenical council confronted the heresy of Pelagianism by condemning one of its major proponents, Celestius. The Council of Bishops knew how crucial belief in original sin would be in helping Christians understand Jesus's role in redemption. Through his efforts to champion orthodoxy, Prosper promoted awareness of the primary role prayer and worship holds in a believer's expression of faith. In other words, the church's prayer and worship (*orandi*) make its teaching (*credendi*) tangible.<sup>12</sup> Simply stated, the way a church worships not only reflects its beliefs, its worship actually shapes the church's faith and doctrine. In relation to Nicene theology, Alexander Schmemmann affirms that faith gives birth to and "shapes" worship, but worship, by fulfilling and expressing faith, also "bears testimony" to faith

<sup>8</sup>Robert Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. Volume I, The Biblical Foundations of Christian Worship* (Nashville: StarSong Publishing Group, 1993), 32.; 1 Cor 11:17-34.

<sup>9</sup>1 Cor 11:23.

<sup>10</sup>Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, 174.

<sup>11</sup>Wainwright, *Doxology*, 225.

<sup>12</sup>Rick Hilgartner, "Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi: The Word of God in the Celebration of the Sacraments," *Catechetical Sunday Newsletter of the United State Conference of Catholic Bishops* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, September 20, 2009).

and becomes its true and adequate expression and norm: *lex orandi est lex credendi*.<sup>13</sup>

1. *Which Came First?* The process of *lex orandi – lex credendi* creates the primary theology of worshipping communities, because, as opposed to the academic study and discourse of theology, worship actually *does* theology.<sup>14</sup> Sometimes evangelical Christians do not agree with *lex orandi – lex credendi*, because they understand worship as something that naturally flows from a believer's faith and doctrine rather than faith and doctrine becoming shaped by practice. Because biblical and historical evidence can be observed for both, Christians should realize that both processes regularly occur in every church. This reality places a high responsibility on those who plan, structure, and lead worship services to fulfill their callings with the greatest intentionality. A reasonable extension of this idea could be expressed as *lex orandi – lex credendi et agendi*: Worship transforms believers because it shapes beliefs and actions.<sup>15</sup>

2. *Historical Evidence and Modern Recognition.* Further demonstrations of ways corporate worship transforms faith can be found in church history. One of these examples may be observed in how certain churches have dealt with what could be considered the most defining action in Christian life: baptism. Baptism has always served as a tangible picture of God's transforming grace provided through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ. In the Patristic age of the early church, evidence for the life transformation of baptismal candidates was formally vouched for by the candidate's God-father or God-mother. These individuals were church representatives who served as the candidate's one-to-one faith mentor through the duration of their pre-baptismal discipleship process; a process that could last up to three years.<sup>16</sup>

Even though baptism was never meant to achieve the "work" of salvation, its status was so revered that it was considered necessary to demonstrate salvation. Evidence for this idea can be observed in the early church writings of Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem in the late fourth century:

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<sup>13</sup>Alexander Schmemmann, *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990), 39.

<sup>14</sup>Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, 48.

<sup>15</sup>Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 88-95.

<sup>16</sup>Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality through the Christian Year* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 137-8.

Great indeed is the Baptism offered you. It is a ransom to captives; the remission of offenses; the death of sin; the regeneration of the soul; the garment of light; the holy seal indissoluble; the chariot to heaven; the luxury of paradise; a procuring of the kingdom; the gift of adoption.<sup>17</sup>

The bath of Baptism we may not receive twice or thrice; else, it might be said, Though I fail once, I shall go right next time: whereas if thou failest once, there is no setting things right, for there is One Lord, and One Faith, and One Baptism: none but heretics are re-baptized, since their former baptism was not baptism.<sup>18</sup>

In the fifth century, infant mortality was much higher than what modern Westerners now experience. If early Christian worshipers understood that the only path to heaven goes through the waters of baptism, one can understand why the practice of infant baptism gained popularity as an act of worship and initiation into the church. Even though the church father Tertullian strongly cautioned against infant baptism at the turn of the third century,<sup>19</sup> 40-50 years later Hippolytus, another church father, accommodated the practice in his *Apostolic Traditions*:

You are to baptize the little ones first. All those who are able to speak for themselves should speak. With regard to those who cannot speak for themselves, their parents, or somebody who belongs to their family should speak.<sup>20</sup>

Two hundred years later, the practice of infant baptism had become so widely practiced in the church that Augustine wrote, “This doctrine is held by the whole church, not instituted by councils, but always retained.”<sup>21</sup> At some point in the early history of the church, congregations began the widespread worship practice of baptizing infants without articulating a

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<sup>17</sup>Cyril, St. *Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Christian Sacraments: The Procatechesis of the Five Mystical Catecheses* (London: SPCK, 1960), 16.

<sup>18</sup>Cyril, St. *Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Christian Sacraments*, 7.

<sup>19</sup>James F. White, *Documents of Christian Worship: Descriptive and Interpretive Sources* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1992), 149-50.

<sup>20</sup>Hippolytus, *On the Apostolic Tradition* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Press, 2001), 21.

<sup>21</sup>Ralph E. Bass, *What About Baptism: A Discussion on the Mode, Candidate and Purpose of Christian Baptism Revised Edition* (Greenville: Living Hope Press, 2010), 45-50.

theological justification for the ritual.

Through worship practice alone, infant baptism had become so accepted, that even Augustine tried to make a theological argument by simply pointing to the pervasiveness of the practice. Based on this historical example, could today's churches have possibly adopted some doctrinally dangerous practices in worship on the basis of felt needs more than on solid theological grounding? Christian worship needs the positive renewal that could be generated by pastors and lay leaders understanding worship's power to transform. As James K. A. Smith writes, "Human beings are 'liturgical animals,' creatures who can't *not* worship and who are fundamentally formed by worship practices. The reason such liturgies are so formative is precisely because it is these liturgies, whether Christian or 'secular,' that shape what we *love*. And we are what we love."<sup>22</sup>

In *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*,<sup>23</sup> Henry Blackaby encourages Christians to pray, asking God to reveal where he is at work. From that point on, as the praying believer becomes aware of God's work, Blackaby instructs that their awareness becomes God's invitation for the believer to join him in his work. Blackaby writes that whenever the praying Christian becomes aware of God's invitation, a crisis usually manifests itself. This crisis must be overcome in order for the person to fruitfully comply with God's invitation. As individual Christians (and by extension, worshipping congregations) successfully navigate cycles of revelation and response, they become transformed by the Holy Spirit—achieving greater depth of discipleship, producing more fruit for the Kingdom.<sup>24</sup>

Dru Johnson edifies Blackaby's concept through his own understanding of the human process of knowing (epistemology). Johnson proposes that "people know only as they listen to trusted authorities, then do what they say in order to see what they are showing."<sup>25</sup> Extending Johnson's understanding of Blackaby's concept, believing and doing become necessarily intertwined with one another.<sup>26</sup> This pairing of ideas produces significant implications for the holy dialogue of revelation and response

<sup>22</sup>James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 3-4.

<sup>23</sup>Henry Blackaby, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1990), 4.

<sup>24</sup>Blackaby, *Experiencing God*, 21.

<sup>25</sup>Dru Johnson, *Scripture's Knowing: A Companion to Biblical Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 16.

<sup>26</sup>Dru Johnson, *Knowledge by Ritual: A Biblical Prolegomenon to Sacramental Theology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 46.

within corporate worship.

Simon Chan also elucidates the transformative benefits of revelation and response within corporate worship. Chan relates that when God reveals himself to the church, the believer's best response always comes through worship because in worship a Christian can actually participate with God.<sup>27</sup> Pastors, philosophers, and theologians across many Christian traditions have recognized the importance of a worshiper's responses given to God in worship as these responses greatly impact the way worshipers learn, know, and become transformed into disciples ... or something less.

### III. BY WHAT PROCESS?

How can worship shape the faith of the congregation even as believers think and express their worship?<sup>28</sup> In many evangelical churches, the primary way for worshipers to understand their identity as the church comes through the lens of evangelism and the Great Commission. Other churches attempt to simply define the "essence" of the Christian faith through regular teaching and oration, proclaiming their doctrinal beliefs.<sup>29</sup> However, in churches whose worship also employs biblically-structured liturgical action in submission to the Holy Spirit's power and guidance, greater and lasting discipleship formation can be found.

A positive example of utilizing worship and liturgy to help transform the minds and hearts of worshipers may be observed in the corporate confession of creeds. When a congregation speaks either the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed as a regular part of worship, believers remind themselves of every fundamental element of their faith. This practice can solidify the stability of a congregation's faithful response, both individually and in community, to God's revelation. This in turn can assist the church's convictions and intent to fulfill the Great Commission.<sup>30</sup>

Many evangelical churches go to significant lengths to use their worship services as a tool for fulfilling the Great Commission. To this end, a consensus exists among many modern churches, holding that congregational worship, as the large group gathering, must be able to attract those

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<sup>27</sup>Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, 48.

<sup>28</sup>Byron Anderson, *Worship and Christian Identity: Practicing Ourselves* (Collegeville: A Pueblo Book, 2003), 28.

<sup>29</sup>James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 134.

<sup>30</sup>Dennis Okholm, *Learning Theology through the Church's Worship: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 111.

with little or no understanding of church culture. Many churches and pastors seek to cut out unrelatable worship practices that might inhibit the lost from hearing, understanding, and responding to the gospel. Worship services are crafted so that seeking visitors will not feel pressure to commit to anything and are free to evaluate the faith without being pressured.<sup>31</sup> Sometimes, in the name of evangelism, rather than using the Great Commission as an ontological expression of worship, churches use their corporate worship as a tool to fulfill the Great Commission. These shortcuts can become negative examples of *lex orandi – lex credendi*, having unintended side effects.

E. Byron Anderson believes that as churches seek to capture the attention of the unchurched, there will be a growing tendency to dispose of or hide some of the church's most important worship traditions (Anderson uses the words "liturgical" and "sacramental"). Continuing, Anderson states, "Replacing these traditions are patterns and practices that more readily express the unfaith of the seeker than an invitation to the particular ethical way of God in Jesus Christ."<sup>32</sup> In other words, churches will lead their people to resemble whatever qualities their worship values most. Will corporate worship steer a congregation's transformation toward becoming more like Christ or the surrounding worldly culture?

*The Significance of Orandi.* What does it mean when a congregation worships God in the holy dialogue of revelation and response? From the descriptions of Christian worship found in the Apologies of Justin Martyr, to the Divine Liturgy of John Chrysostom, to the Reformed liturgies of Calvin, Cranmer, and English Puritans of Middelburg, the *orandi* and content of corporate worship has been recognized as ultimately critical for fostering and shaping a congregations' faith. Significant observations have been made concerning this paradigm of Christian worship.

Gordon Lathrop writes, "Is the Sunday meeting—the liturgy, the worship service—simply the survival of a collection of quaint customs from a more secure and simple time? Or do its symbolic interactions propose to us a realistic pattern for interpreting our world, for containing our actual experiences, and for enabling action and hope?"<sup>33</sup> How does our

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<sup>31</sup>Thom Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology, and Principles* (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 226.

<sup>32</sup>Anderson, *Worship and Christian Identity*, 28.

<sup>33</sup>Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 2-3.



worship, “in all its signs and words, say something authentic and reliable about God?”<sup>34</sup> In other words, Lathrop asks if worship services help to clearly present God’s revelation. Lathrop’s curiosity as to whether worship services provide adequate vehicles for the congregation’s response to God’s revelation should not fall on deaf ears. Pastors and worship leaders should be concerned that worship services provide opportunities for congregations to respond to God through conscious decisions, deep emotions, new ways of thinking, and specific action.

Geoffrey Wainwright suggests that in order to evaluate a church’s ability to facilitate God’s revelation and the congregation’s response, an assessment of the church’s pattern of worship may become necessary. Reflection of a church’s worship becomes crucial because worship provides congregations with a “realistic pattern for interpreting the world.”<sup>35</sup> In other words, worship not only expresses faith, but it also helps to shape it. Wainwright suggests the “nearest traditional equivalent to the notion of pattern is the notion of sacrament.”<sup>36</sup> Amid the vast variance of activities and practices across the globe, the Lord’s Supper and baptism are exercised in nearly every Christian tradition. Wainwright postulates that because of their direct connection to Jesus’s instruction, these ordinances function with greater importance than all other activities of the church.

Don Saliers agrees with Wainwright: “The continuing worship of God in the assembly *is* a form of theology. In fact, it is ‘primary theology.’”<sup>37</sup> Saliers speaks of how God’s revelation and our response in worship, over time, transforms our perception, our knowledge, and our feeling. “The true ethos of Christian liturgy is that web of grace through word, sacrament, and song, through eating and drinking together, and being remembered by God, whereby God’s saving power in the flesh transforms and transmutes all human pathos. . . . God sees in our life patterns what we cannot yet see.”<sup>38</sup> Authentic worship, when bound with the fuel of the Holy Spirit and cast in the cycle of revelation and response, transforms Christians so that their desires become the desires God has for them. This type of transformational worship dialogue with God allowed David to write in

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<sup>34</sup>Lathrop, *Holy Things*, 2-3.

<sup>35</sup>Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 70.

<sup>36</sup>Wainwright, *Doxology*, 70.

<sup>37</sup>Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 15.

<sup>38</sup>Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 15.

Psalm 37:4: “Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

Theologian David Peterson also articulates his understanding of the transformative power revelation and response has in worship by developing Paul’s “Let the word of Christ dwell among you richly.”<sup>39</sup> As Peterson describes worship in the ancient world, he points out one way that Hebrew worship was always different than other pagan religions. A common worship pattern for pagan religions “was to know where the presence of a god could be found and to know the names of the gods so that they could be approached, and communion established with them.”<sup>40</sup> This example presents a good comparison between pagan expectations of worship and the faith of ancient Israel. For Israel, the “one and only Creator Lord of the universe had made himself known to the forefathers of Israel at particular times and places. In so doing, he initiated a relationship.”<sup>41</sup>

Peterson connotes that another significant difference between the way pagan gods were believed to reveal themselves and the way Yahweh reveals himself can be demonstrated in the nature of the revelation itself. Peterson writes, “In the case of most pagan gods, the extent of the revelation normally manifested itself in some display of power. Yahweh, on the other hand, most often reveals himself by communicating his word.”<sup>42</sup> Occurrences of God revealing himself in this way to his people can be found throughout scripture with individuals like Abraham, Hagar, Jacob, Gideon, and the list continues.<sup>43</sup> The fact that Yahweh still reveals himself most often through his word provides a rich connection between the transformation resulting from corporate worship and biblical examples of supernatural transformation.

#### IV. BY WHAT POWER?

Planners and leaders of Christian worship understandably tend to focus on the aspects of corporate gatherings that we can control, such as selecting songs, prayers, and Scripture readings. However crucial the *orandi* of worship, the true transformation established through holy dialogues between God and his people must be facilitated by the power of the Holy Spirit.

John 16 records how Jesus told his disciples of the Helper, the Holy

<sup>39</sup>Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 197; Col 3:16; cf. Eph 5:19-20.

<sup>40</sup>Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 24.

<sup>41</sup>Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 25.

<sup>42</sup>Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 25.

<sup>43</sup>Gen 12:1; Gen 21:14-20; Gen 28:12-15; Judg 7:1-7.

Spirit, who would come and what his role would be: “He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”<sup>44</sup> This explanation appears to be a straightforward indication of the Spirit’s role in calling people to salvation in Christ. However, Jesus’s words likely hold more application than may be comprehended on first reading. Jesus continued in verse 13: “He will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”<sup>45</sup>

Concerning the breadth of the Spirit’s work, nineteenth-century theologian J. C. Ryle wrote, “The common, superficial explanation, that our Lord only meant that the work of the Spirit in saving individual believers is to convince them of their own sins, of Christ’s righteousness, and of the certainty of judgment at last, will hardly satisfy thinking minds.”<sup>46</sup>

Michael A. G. Haykin expands on Ryle’s ideas *The God Who Draws Near: An Introduction to Biblical Spirituality*: “In a sense, it is he (Holy Spirit) who stands at the threshold of the Christian life, for only he can enable us to embrace Christ as Saviour and Lord— ‘no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit’ (1 Cor. 12:3).”<sup>47</sup> Haykin broadens our understanding of the Spirit’s work beyond the salvation event to transformation occurring in corporate worship when he writes, “It is the Spirit who enables believers, from various racial, social and religious backgrounds, to find true unity in Christ and together worship God (Eph. 2:18) In fact, without the Spirit, worship and the glorification of Jesus Christ cannot take place (Phil. 3:3). And it is the Spirit who is the true Guarantor of orthodoxy (2 Tim. 1:14).”<sup>48</sup> Haykin clearly demonstrates through Scripture how corporate worship provides a primary venue for displaying the church’s Spirit-enabled unity and response to Christ.

British Baptist William Brock completes the connection between the Holy Spirit’s enabling power and congregational worship’s efficacy towards transformation when he writes:

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<sup>44</sup>John 16:8.

<sup>45</sup>John 16:13-14

<sup>46</sup>J. C. Ryle, *John Volume 3: Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (East Peoria, IL: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2020), 105-6.

<sup>47</sup>Michael A. G. Haykin, *The God Who Draws Near: An Introduction to Biblical Spirituality* (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2007), xix.

<sup>48</sup>Haykin, *The God Who Draws Near*, xix.

Unaided by the Spirit of truth, you cannot comprehend the things which are of God because they are spiritually discerned. The prayer, the psalmody, the argument, the appeal, the Scriptures, the ordinances, are not grace – they are only the means of grace, the mere vehicles through which the God of all grace sends down the communications of his love. Rely then, implicitly and consciously ... upon God.<sup>49</sup>

Brock was concerned that Baptist worshipers were becoming too reliant upon their praxis while failing to recognize and cultivate their attachment to God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Brock's admonition clearly points his fellow Baptists to the efficacy of *lex orandi – lex credendi* when it is pursued in the power of the Holy Spirit. Brock's words remain relevant.

## V. CONCLUSION

I have supported my thesis that within corporate worship, God reveals himself to his people, his people respond, and their faithful, Holy Spirit-empowered response to his revelation helps move them toward spiritual transformation. I have explored biblical passages demonstrating ways God revealed himself to his people and how that revelation and the people's faithful responses transformed worshipers' lives through their hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Through my examination of *lex orandi – lex credendi*, I have exposed how individual and collective responses to God in worship inevitably lead to human transformation. By exploring *lex orandi – lex credendi*, I have also demonstrated the ways humans respond to God in worship can both display what they believe about God and simultaneously shape (or transform) that very faith. Most importantly, I have established how responses to God's revelation in worship should never occur simply for the sake of habit or social norms.

As Daniel I. Block writes, “[H]aving experienced the grace of Christ in salvation does not mean that we may be casual about worship or that our cultic [worship] expressions are automatically acceptable to God.”<sup>50</sup> When a church's worship practices orient themselves towards hearing and responding to God's revelation, congregations place themselves more fully in the river of God's grace, opening a congregation to the Holy Spirit

<sup>49</sup>William Brock, *The Behaviour Becoming the House of God* (Norwich: Norfolk and Norwich Association of Baptist Churches, 1845), 23.

<sup>50</sup>Daniel I. Block, *For the Glory of God: Recovering a Biblical Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 78.

and his power to transform them — more completely resembling their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Theologian Geoffrey Wainwright saliently expresses this sentiment:

For the Christian community, meaning is in the making: life is oriented toward God's ultimate purpose, and history-making is the way to the attainment of that purpose for both individuals and humanity as a whole; the most characteristic Christian rituals are therefore predominantly transformative in character, actions that signify divine grace coming to begin and continue the shaping of active recipients into the people God is calling them to become.<sup>51</sup>

Believers in Christ should expect transformation to occur in congregational worship. As “all of our activities in worship are to be done in anticipation of the fulfillment of the promises in the ages to come,”<sup>52</sup> so everything undertaken in corporate worship should be pursued in mind of our ultimate transformation in the eschaton.

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<sup>51</sup>Wainwright. *Doxology*, 121.

<sup>52</sup>Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2006), 510.