

Abstract

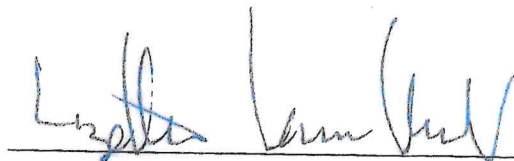
“A WAY OF CONVERSION:
RECLAIMING EUCHARISTIC FORMATION AND SACRAMENTAL
IMAGINATION IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND”

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Thesis under the direction of The Rev'd Canon Lizette Larson-Miller, PhD

This thesis argues that the formation of priests in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia must be reoriented around a renewed sacramental imagination because liturgical participation—especially in the Eucharist—is a primary means of Christian formation. Focusing on the Pākehā context within this three-tikanga province, the study identifies a significant misalignment between the formative work of liturgy and the emphases that tend to shape contemporary ministerial training. Methodologically, it brings ritual studies, sacramental theology, historical analysis and pastoral reflection into conversation. Engaging the work of Catherine Bell, Louis-Marie Chauvet, Mark Searle, James K. A. Smith, Bruce Morrill, Rowan Williams, Patrick Prétot, and others, it contends that Christian formation occurs not only through the transmission of ideas but through repeated embodied participation in the church’s ritual life. The thesis traces the historical displacement of liturgical formation from the worshipping assembly into clerical specialisation, rubrical regulation and control, and explanatory instruction, and examines the particular outworking of this pattern of displacement in Aotearoa New Zealand. In response, drawing on the work of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, it proposes a framework for renewing priestly formation and sacramental imagination in this context, grounded in common prayer, sacramental theology, competence in liturgical presiding, and the extension of eucharistic ethics into diakonia. Such renewal, it argues, is essential to sustaining a more coherent Anglican identity and a more faithful ecclesial life in this context.

Approved

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Imagination in Aotearoa New Zealand

By

Clare Elizabeth Barrie

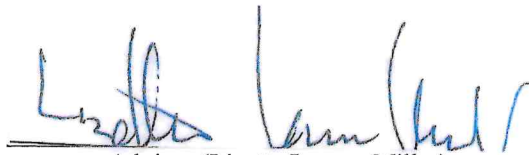
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Glossary

Commonly used Māori terms and names

Pākehā—a New Zealander of non-Māori descent, probably originally applied to English-speaking Europeans living in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In contemporary New Zealand it also encompasses all other immigrant groups.

Tikanga—cultural stream or set of protocols or way of being/doing. Our Province has a unique three-part or three-tikanga structure in its life and governance, with each tikanga having its own jurisdiction in parishes, clergy, and bishops, and equal and shared governance at the highest level—our General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui and General Synod Standing Committee.

Hui amorangi—the five tikanga Māori dioceses which overlap geographically with the seven tikanga Pākehā dioceses; together with the Diocese of Polynesia, our province is made up of thirteen dioceses and hui amorangi.

Te Haahi Mihinare—a Māori church for the Māori people; a literal translation of this name is ‘The Church of the Missionaries,’ ‘mihinare’ being a transliteration of the word ‘missionary,’ (since it was the CMS who first brought the gospel to the Māori people). Māori Anglicans will often speak of themselves as ‘Mihinare’.

Marae—the sacred, central gathering place of a Māori community; it is the hub for extended family, social, cultural and spiritual life. It comprises a fenced complex including a carved meeting house (wharenuī), in front of which there is an open space (marae ātea) for ceremonies, and a dining hall (wharekai). The land/surroundings on which the marae stands are the tūrangawaewae (a place to stand) giving identity and belonging to the people of that marae. Many Mihinare communities are based at marae which don’t include a Western-style church building—the wharenuī will be used for services. Some marae are very large and elaborate, and some are very small and simple.

te reo Māori—(The) Māori language; often also spoken of as both ‘te reo’ and ‘the reo’.

Iwi—tribe; a large extended kinship group, often descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct geographic area.

Moana—a Polynesian word used in Māori, Hawaiian and other languages to mean ocean; it encompasses the whole marine environment and implies a deep connectedness and sense of stewardship; for Pacific peoples it is linked to identity.

Whenua—the Māori word for the land; it also means placenta (it is customary for Māori to return to their iwi’s land to bury the placenta after the birth of a child). It implies the whole ecosystem connected to the land, and it implies a strong sense of belonging and identity linked to a particular place.

Tangata Whenua—the people of the land; the Māori people.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi—Te Tiriti o Waitangi (translated as The Treaty of Waitangi), also referred to as ‘Te Tiriti’, is New Zealand’s founding document, a written agreement made on 6 February 1840 between the British Crown and over 500 Māori chiefs (though not all iwi participated). It is a covenant establishing a government to manage British settlement while promising to protect Māori rights (including customary rights, for example, to the use of lands and sea resources), authorities and treasures. Anglican missionaries were instrumental in the process, and there were two distinct texts (one in English and one in te reo Māori) which have turned out to be not exact translations of each other, leading to enduring debate. The majority of the Māori chiefs signed the Māori text, which gave the Crown *kāwanatanga* (governance) but guaranteed the chiefs *ino rangatiratanga* (full and exclusive sovereignty) over their lands and people, while the English text states that Māori ceded all rights and powers of sovereignty to the Queen. Given this difference, our government and legal practice over time has established a set of ‘treaty principles’ to be applied in law, which include partnership, active protection in Māori interests and participation in government.

Tangata Tiriti—people of the Treaty; those Pākehā who understand themselves as being in treaty partnership with tangata whenua, the people of the land (Māori). Not all Pākehā New Zealanders would claim this identity or see value in the Treaty.

Mātauranga—knowledge; a Māori word meaning a comprehensive knowledge system encompassing understanding, wisdom and skills related to tangible and intangible aspects of existence. It is something holistic and evolving—developed over generations through observation, experience and cultural practice.

Introduction

“When you went down into the water it was like the night and you could see nothing but when you came up again it was like finding yourself in the day. That one moment was your death and your birth—that saving water was both your grave and your mother.”
– Cyril of Jerusalem, 313–386

The practice of liturgy has extraordinary formative power when it is understood as the beating heart of our life in Christ—the life we are called to share with the world around us. I contend that my province has largely lost touch with this formative power and with the deep roots of our distinctive liturgical identity and traditions as Anglicans; a renewal of our sacramental understanding and imagination is needed to renew and sustain our mission and ministry. This is true for both lay and ordained members of our church, since all ministry begins with and flows from our baptism and all the baptised are called into the sacramental life.

In this thesis, I explore the formative power of liturgical participation—especially in eucharistic worship—in the Anglican tradition, and I argue that the formation of priests in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia should be reoriented around a renewed sacramental imagination. While acknowledging the cultural, linguistic and theological diversity of our province, my study focuses primarily on the *Pākehā*¹ context, drawing on local parish experience, theological reflection, and observations from within our provincial seminary, Hoani Tapu / St John’s Theological College.² Methodologically, my research engages sources in

¹ I am ‘*Pākehā*’, the Māori word for a New Zealander of non-Māori descent, probably originally applied to English-speaking Europeans living in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In contemporary New Zealand it also encompasses all other immigrant groups.

² The provincial seminary of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, founded by Bishop George Augustus Selwyn, the first Bishop of the Diocese of New Zealand, in the 1840s; it is the oldest tertiary institution in New Zealand and remains the main provider of full time residential training for Anglican clergy in our province. ‘Hoani’ is a transliteration of the name John, and ‘Tapu’ means sacred, set apart.

sacramental theology, historical analysis, and critical reflection on contemporary formation practice, and it incorporates my own experience as a parish priest. The significance of my project lies in its contribution to ongoing conversations about sustaining Anglican identity and mission in our context: by recovering liturgy as a primary means of lifelong formation in parish and seminary contexts—rather than a structural or aesthetic option in planning worship³—this study offers a pathway towards a deeper integration of theology, worship and priestly formation. In so doing, it addresses a gap in both practice and reflection within our current church and educational structures.

Like many Anglican provinces worldwide, the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia is facing multiple challenges, some of which have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In many parts of our church, although there are signs of positive growth, membership is declining, and our communities are aging. These factors are creating a heightened sense of anxiety about our identity, our finances, and other measures of sustainability. I believe this anxiety is driving diocesan, provincial and seminary leadership to grasp at a managerial approach to training and ministry, with emphases such as growth and leadership and programmes promising quick fixes taking priority over the slower, deeper and less easily quantifiable practices of formation. In this anxious and pressured environment, priestly training can be framed in pragmatic terms: producing leaders, managers or innovators, rather than stewards of sacramental life. While some managerial skills are useful in ministry, it is easy for us to lose

³ See the incredibly flexible template available in our prayerbook. Church of the Province of New Zealand (Te Hāhi o te Porowini o Niu Tirenī), *A New Zealand Prayer Book—He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa* (Auckland, N.Z.: Collins, 1989), 511.

sight of our Anglican identity and the fundamental theological commitments this implies, and the riches these have to offer for the life of faith and the life of the world.

As Anglicans, we have inherited an ecclesiology which depends on locally gathered parish communities of Word and Sacrament within diocesan structures, each a part of the universal church. We are baptised into the life of the universal church in local parish communities (whether as children or adults) and grow into a lived faith through regular participation in the liturgical, service and social life of our communities, weaving relationships of shared service and witness in the local geographic settings of which we are a part, whether urban, suburban or rural. The sustaining heartbeat of our parish communities is our weekly celebration of the Eucharist.

Through my years in parish ministry,⁴ I have become convinced that our weekly eucharistic worship is the most important practice we share, shaping and sustaining us as a community and as a missional people. Preparing for and leading this well is therefore the most vital part of my priestly ministry—it is the keystone. And yet, our seminary formation⁵ for those training for ordained ministry has placed a low priority on liturgical theology and practice for many years, and in some of our dioceses, our liturgical tradition is even neglected and undermined.⁶ But as Lizette Larson-Miller warns,

⁴ I was ordained to the diaconate in November 2006 and priested in November 2007, moving into a full-time curacy in the parish of St Andrew's Epsom (Diocese of Auckland). In December 2009 I was inducted as Vicar of St Luke's Mt Albert, where I continue to serve.

⁵ We have one provincial seminary (St John's Theological College in Meadowbank, Auckland) serving our three tikanga or cultural streams, with students from tikanga Pākehā, tikanga Māori and tikanga Polynesia; some also train for ordained ministry through Bishopdale College in Nelson (mostly students from the Pākehā dioceses of Nelson and Wellington), and through part-time local diocesan programmes which may or may not link students with a tertiary provider for a theological qualification.

⁶ In their book *In-tensional*, Archbishop Justin Duckworth and Alan Jamieson tell the parable of a young woman with evident leadership gifts who comes to faith and brings a passionate and prophetic desire to connect societal culture to Jesus. She is encouraged by 'centre-church' into youth ministry and eventually she is supported to train

If we have many clergy who do not know what they are doing (not the mechanics of liturgical structure or manual acts but that what they are doing participates in the meeting of heaven and earth), who will help worshipping communities move beyond the shallowest interpretations of participation, hospitality, and pilgrimage?⁷

This neglect has real consequences. So much of our liturgy is desiccated, conducted casually with all the fluorescent lights on, with little attentiveness to presence, visuality, mystery, embodiment, or materiality. Liturgy in many communities has been reduced to optional stylistic elements in worship, along with many others (such as a teaching sermon, a ‘worship section’ comprising a set of contemporary choruses, or exploratory stations). Elsewhere, it is treated as a coat hanger—a skeletal structure for all the elements of a service. To further complicate our situation, some are now being discerned for ordained ministry in our province who have only a year or two of participation in a local Anglican parish, as either relatively new converts to Christian faith or with a Baptist or other denominational or nondenominational background. They lack deep formation in Anglican liturgical life and so have only a fragile grasp of our identity and its formative practices.⁸

for ordained ministry with three years of theological college, and then undertakes a two year curacy. However, by the time she is ready to move into ministry as a vicar, she is deemed ‘to have grown old’. Still only in her thirties, “at a deeper level she has become part of the old ways. Part of the establishment... every organisation, including the church, is basically a hierarchy where the further you go in the leadership, the more you are shaped by the organisation... Each step [for Mia] required an element of indoctrination and domestication to the dominant centre-church culture and paradigm. To a prophetic or apostolic leader, each step meant compromise in their missional passion, vision of hope and prophetic voice. Each step meant becoming more fluent in the language of the church and thereby often forgetting the language and concerns of contemporary culture. Finally, Mia, the passionate young prophet and radical entrepreneur, reaches a place of influence in the church, but she no longer has anything unique to offer.” Justin Duckworth and Alan Jamieson, *In-tensional: A Way Forward for the Church* (Wellington, New Zealand: Philip Garside, 2024), 57–58.

⁷ Lizette Larson-Miller, *Sacramentality Renewed: Contemporary Conversations in Sacramental Theology* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2016), 159.

⁸ It is not uncommon for such individuals to have years of valuable ministry experience in other traditions, and to be theologically educated, and so their dioceses send them to St John’s College for a year or two for ‘Anglican formation’ to prepare them for ministry in our context.

I serve as a parish priest in The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, Te Hāhi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Nui Tirenī, ki Ngā Moutere o Te Moana Nui a Kiwa.⁹ As well as serving as a parish priest in the Diocese of Auckland, I'm a member of Te Kaunihera, the Board of Governors of St John's Theological College, our provincial seminary, and have recently concluded three two-year terms on our General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui and as a member of our General Synod Standing Committee. Constitutionally, our province is made up of three *tikanga*¹⁰ or cultural streams, each with its own dioceses or *hui amorangi*, bishops and clergy. Our prayerbook, *A New Zealand Prayer Book—He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa* (ANZPB/HKMA), also reflects our bicultural identity and our multicultural and multilingual ways of being as a church. This unique arrangement, born of historical struggle and covenant, honours Māori, Pākehā and Pasefika identities.¹¹ My personal observation and experience of liturgy in *Te Haahi Mihinare*¹² and in the Pacific is that culturally, they are far more aware of the power and necessity of ritual, especially in the formation of identity and community, than most Pākehā congregations. However, as a Pākehā with limited *te reo Māori*¹³ and ministering in an English-speaking parish setting, my training and experience has focused primarily on liturgical

⁹ The full bicultural name of our Province in the Anglican Communion.

¹⁰ *Tikanga* is cultural stream or set of protocols or way of being/doing. Our Province has a unique three-part or three-tikanga structure in its life and governance, with each tikanga having its own jurisdiction in parishes, clergy, and bishops, and equal and shared governance at the highest level—our General Synod/Te Hīnota Whānui and General Synod Standing Committee.

¹¹ However, our constitutional structure is being challenged and reviewed and questions of resource sharing are arising, given that the present day Pākehā dioceses own most Anglican land and have benefitted significantly from the processes of colonisation.

¹² 'Te Haahi Mihinare' means a Māori church for the Māori people; a literal translation of this name is 'The Church of the Missionaries,' 'mihinare' being a transliteration of the word 'missionary,' (since it was the CMS who first brought the gospel to the Māori people). This bi-cultural identity is also expressed in the Māori title of our prayer book ('karakia' being 'prayer'). Māori Anglicans will often speak of themselves as 'Mihinare'.

¹³ (The) Māori language; often also spoken of as both 'te reo' and 'the reo'.

expression in English. Therefore, the full liturgical life of our province, as expressed in the multiple Pacific languages and te reo Māori as well as English, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

My assumptions about liturgy, embodiment, materiality and visuality have been shaped by my prior training in fine arts, where I first learnt the power of materials to shape perception, evoke memory and meaning, and call forth response in ways that words alone do not. In liturgy, material elements—bread, wine, water, oil, gesture, sound—draw us into encounter with Christ, not simply ideas about Christ. As Juan Oliver insists,¹⁴ liturgy is not the passive transmission of information but a “doing,” a lived experience of divine mystery. Henri Nouwen’s powerful extended reflection *Can You Drink the Cup?*¹⁵ on the sharing of the Eucharist in the life of the L’Arche Daybreak community with whom he lived, shows us that participation in the sacramental life is deeply transformative—it is our primary means of grace. To neglect these dimensions is to risk reducing worship to words alone, instead of attending to the multiple means by which God forms us, including both Word and Sacrament.

Formation in Christ through our sacramental tradition must be renewed if we are to meet our common challenges as a province. This renewed awareness is critical for our whole church, so that the life of our parish and *marae*-based¹⁶ communities is consciously shaped and sustained by their eucharistic life. Experience in this formation is essential for those discerning a call to

¹⁴ Personal lecture notes, 20 June 2022; Professor Juan Oliver: *The Incarnation of Liturgy: The Church, its Worship, and Culture 2021* (Sewanee Advanced Degrees Programme, The University of the South).

¹⁵ Henri Nouwen, *Can You Drink the Cup?* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1996).

¹⁶ A marae is the sacred, central gathering place of a Māori community; it is the hub for extended family, social, cultural and spiritual life. It comprises a fenced complex including a carved meeting house (wharenuī), in front of which there is an open space (marae ātea) for ceremonies, and a dining hall (wharekai). The land/surroundings on which the marae stands are the tūrangawaewae (a place to stand) giving identity and belonging to the people of that marae. Many Mihinare communities are based at marae which don’t include a Western-style church building—the wharenuī will be used for services. Some marae are very large and elaborate, and some are very small and simple.

ordained ministry and should be intentionally extended and deepened during ordination training. In this way, our priests will be grounded in a common liturgical tradition that in its breadth and depth can adapt responsively to the diversity of our local contexts. Such clergy will be aware of the formative power of the Eucharist, will know how to prepare and lead meaningful liturgical worship in their communities, and will understand why this is critical to sustaining the mission and ministry of their communities in Christ.

This thesis, therefore, argues that priestly formation in The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia must be re-rooted in a renewed sacramental and liturgical imagination. Drawing on sacramental theology, historical reflection and local parish experience and seminary observation, I contend that liturgy—especially eucharistic worship—must be recovered as the primary site for Christian formation, not simply an optional expression. Such a re-orientation is critical if our church is to sustain and embody its mission amid the present and future challenges of our context.

Literature Review

The ‘treasure’ of the sacrament [which is the grace of God] is found in the ‘work’ of plowing, of turning, of ‘converting’ to the gospel the symbolic field that Christians are. This work is effected by the rite, or more exactly, the word of God taking on a ritual form and reaching them in its aliveness through the Spirit. ...Grace is less a value-object to be received than a symbolic receiving oneself: receiving oneself from God in Christ... as daughters and sons, as sisters and brothers. It is easy to see why sacraments like the Eucharist and reconciliation are to be celebrated again and again and again: such a work of conversion has to be always begun again.¹⁷

And out of what one sees and hears and out
Of what one feels, who could have thought to make
So many selves, so many sensuous worlds –
As if the air, the mid-day air, was swarming
With the metaphysical changes that occur,
Merely in living as and where we live.¹⁸

Introduction

For Christians for whom the Eucharist holds a central place, it can be understood as a bodily practice that we participate in with great regularity over many years, and through that participation, our practice forms us—our identity, desires, and participation in the life of God. This is the ‘work’ of liturgy—to adopt the language of Louis-Marie Chauvet, it effects ongoing conversion within us, renewing and deepening our identity as sons and daughters of God and as members of the body of Christ. Participation in the Eucharist is deeply formative of our individual and social sense of self, our image of God, and our relationship with God. Because of its corporeality, this formation through practice is effected at a level deeper than our conscious

¹⁷ Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 94–95.

¹⁸ Wallace Stevens, *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Vintage, 1990) 326 (“Esthétique du Mal,” canto XV).

awareness or reason. “To be initiated is not to have learned ‘truths to believe’ but to have received a tradition, in a way through all the pores of one’s skin.”¹⁹

To undergird my contention that priestly formation in my province should be reoriented around a renewed sacramental imagination—and so recover liturgy as a primary means of lifelong formation for identity and mission—this section draws on both ritual studies and Christian liturgical theology to clarify *how* formative practices work upon persons and communities. I begin with a renewed account of the person as holistic and embodied, attending to the kinesthetic, affective, and pre-reflective dimensions through which human beings learn and are shaped. I then explore practice theory, in particular through the work of Catherine Bell, to understand how ritual forms dispositions and patterns of perception through repeated bodily participation within symbolic worlds. With Bell’s work in mind, I consider theological accounts of liturgy and sacramentality that demonstrate why eucharistic participation is experienced as ongoing conversion and re-formation in Christ. Finally, I situate these questions within the history of “liturgical formation” and the contemporary challenge of forming clergy for liturgical leadership in local parish communities.

This work requires a vocabulary that speaks of formation as more than the acquisition of ideas and information. Catherine Bell’s analysis of *ritualisation* and the *socially informed body* offers a framework for understanding how repeated, spatially organised, kinesthetic practices cultivate embodied dispositions and tacit forms of knowing that come to feel “natural.” Read alongside accounts of embodied cognition, this helps to explain how formative change often occurs beneath explicit awareness—through bodily rehearsal, habituation, and social

¹⁹ Louis-Marie Chauvet, “The Liturgy in its Symbolic Space,” *Concilium* 3 (1995): 31.

participation. With these observations from ritual studies in view, theological accounts of Christian liturgy can be approached not simply as interpretations of meaning but as claims about formation: the Eucharist functions as a recurrent bodily practice within a symbolic world that shapes Christian identity.

I begin, then, with the body: how persons make meaning and are shaped through repeated practice.

If ritualisation works through the body's learned dispositions, then human formation is irreducibly embodied. As material, incarnate, created beings, we find deep meaning in (and are deeply affected by) material, created things, in images and symbols, and in sensual and spatial experience. As is well known to artists, musicians, athletes, the parents of small children, and anyone in a religious order, we learn by doing. As Mark Searle states, "Liturgy's meaning is only realised in the doing."²⁰ In liturgy, that 'doing' most often takes place in a familiar but formal space, such as our own parish church, and we 'do' or experience the liturgy as bodies. In our personal engagement in the liturgy, Bruce Morrill notes that we must consider the body, for each of us exists only as a "person-body."²¹ He draws on Louis-Marie Chauvet, noting that Chauvet "conceptualizes each of us as an "I-body," a human subject whose corporeality is, nonetheless, a "triple-body" comprised of culture, tradition and nature. The key to this notion is recognising that each of us does not have a body but, rather, is a body."²² Morrill goes on to elaborate that we relate to the cosmos through our natural physicality and find meaning in our experience of it by

²⁰ Mark Searle, *Called to Participate: Theological, Ritual, and Social Perspectives*, ed. Barbara Searle and Anne Y. Koester (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 22.

²¹ Bruce Morrill, "Initial Consideration: Theory and Practice of the Body in Liturgy Today," in *Bodies of Worship: Explorations in Theory and Practice*, ed. Bruce T. Morrill (Collegeville: Order of St. Benedict, 1999), 12.

²² Morrill, "Initial Consideration," 12.

mediating it through our culture and tradition. “Each human subject as body constructs meaning for one’s life, uniquely according to one’s own desires, through a myriad of symbols. Thus, the body is the fundamental functioning symbol of all human experience, shaped through each one’s participation with others in the symbol systems of culture.”²³

Extending this complex view of the body into how we participate bodily in worship, Juan Oliver notes, “...worship forms the whole person, attitudinally and not only intellectually, by rehearsing our selves, our souls, our bodies through verbal and nonverbal means, engaging us in a semblance of the reign of God.”²⁴ The liturgical space and our bodily experience of it through practice also constitute a symbolic world that forms us in profound ways. This is expressed by the US Catholic Bishops’ guidelines on art, architecture and worship, *Built of Living Stones*, as follows “...the liturgy and its signs and symbols do not exercise merely a teaching function. They also touch and move a person to conversion of heart and not simply to enlightenment of mind.”²⁵

In the Eucharist, the body is our means of worship, and also our means of understanding and receiving grace. We understand God through our bodies—they are a site of revelation. In his book *The Meaning of the Body*, the philosopher Mark Johnson argues that, since babies learn the meaning of things and events despite not yet being at the stage of forming propositions, meaning

²³ Ibid., 13. Morrill notes that Chauvet calls the body the ‘arch-symbol’ of human experience.

²⁴ Juan C. Oliver, “Worship, Forming and Deforming,” in *Worship-Shaped Life: Liturgical Formation and the People of God*, eds. Ruth Meyers and Paul Gibson (London: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2010), 8.

²⁵ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship: Guidelines of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000), no. 26.

must involve more than creating propositions and their related linguistic expressions.²⁶ He draws on cognitive science research to support his proposal that we first learn to make meaning as infants in relation to our world in pre-propositional and pre-conceptual ways, and that this embodied meaning-making eventually enables propositional thought, though it always remains prior to other disembodied ways of making meaning.²⁷ Thus, “meaning is shaped by the nature of our bodies, especially our sensorimotor capacities and our ability to experience feelings and emotions.”²⁸ Johnson’s research supports Rowan Williams’ contention that the body is intelligent: “[The body] knows... by finding its way around the world, by learning a path through obstacles, by charting a set of possible spaces to inhabit. In short, the body is necessarily intelligent.”²⁹

These writers bring us to a renewed understanding of persons as holistic and embodied. If this is so, then Christian liturgy cannot be understood primarily as the transmission of theological content but as a repeated bodily practice that shapes—or forms—our dispositions, perception, and belonging.

Catherine Bell: Ritualisation and the socially informed body

In this section I explore the work of Catherine Bell, whose two key works, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (1992) and *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (1997), have been hugely

²⁶ Mark Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 8.

²⁷ Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body*, 34.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁹ Rowan Williams, “On Being a Human Body,” *Sewanee Theological Review* 42, no. 4 (1999): 405.

influential in the fields of ritual and religious studies and a resource for the study of liturgical practice and theology.

In her earlier book, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Bell challenged theories that treat ritual as performance or as a vessel for meaning and belief, insisting instead that ritual is practice and cannot be reduced to a bearer of separable content. Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Michael Foucault, Bell developed a practice theory approach for what she termed ‘ritualisation’.

I will use the term ‘ritualization’ to draw attention to the way in which certain social actions strategically distinguish themselves in relation to other actions... [it] is a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities.³⁰

In her later book *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, while she resists simple definitions because ritualisation is always culturally specific,³¹ Bell consistently uses ‘ritualisation’ to describe how ritual forms persons beyond the communication of ideas. She surveys theoretical approaches to ritual that treat ritual as symbolic systems (or texts) to be decoded³² and as performance; the latter has opened up a focus on “what ritual actually does, rather than what it is supposed to mean.”³³ A performance approach to ritual carries the assumption—helpful to Bell’s position—that ritual is “an event, a set of activities that doesn’t simply express cultural values or enact symbolic scripts but actually effects changes in people’s perceptions and interpretations.”³⁴ This prepares the ground for her preferred framework:

³⁰ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), 74.

³¹ Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 93.

³² Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1997), 61–72.

³³ Bell, *Perspectives and Dimensions*, 73, with reference to Richard Bauman.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

practice theory, which is better able to account for ritual's physical and sensual power in embodied action.

Fundamentally, practice theory is interested in 'how cultural activity in general works.'³⁵ Bell draws on a range of practice theorists,³⁶ who agree that the efficacy of ritual practice is bound up with the body; ritual practice is irreducibly embodied.³⁷ Among these, Bourdieu uses the term *habitus* to designate human activity as "the set of dispositions by which people give shape to social traditions or, in another formulation, as the structured and determined attitudes that produce structuring and determining practices."³⁸ These dispositions are located not in people's minds but in and through our bodies; the 'principle underlying all practices [is] "the socially informed body"'.³⁹ This insight from Bourdieu becomes a key idea in Bell's work.

Bell adopts a practice approach to analysing ritual. "Viewed as practice, ritualisation involves the very drawing... of a privileged distinction between ways of acting... intrinsic to ritualisation are strategies for differentiating itself... from other ways of acting... At a basic level, ritualisation is the production of this differentiation."⁴⁰ In this discussion, she goes on to consider how a Christian Eucharist—as a ritual activity—is differentiated from a conventional

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 79, including Maurice Bloch, Sherry B. Ortner and Jean Comaroff, who illuminate the connections between ritual practices and power, authority and ideology.

³⁷ "The strategies of ritualisation are particularly rooted in the body, specifically, the interaction of the social body within a symbolically constituted spatial and temporal environment. Essential to ritualisation is the circular production of a ritualised body which in turn produces ritualised practices. Ritualisation is embedded within the dynamics of the body defined within a symbolically structured environment. An important corollary to this is the fact that ritualisation is a particularly 'mute' form of activity. It is designed to do what it does without bringing what it is doing across the threshold of discourse or systematic thinking." Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 93.

³⁸ Bell, *Perspectives and Dimensions*, 78.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁴⁰ Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 90.

meal and thus is strategically more important and powerful. An important insight here is that ritual does much more than communicate values: participation in ritual instead forms dispositions, perception, and a sense of one's place in the world. "The fundamental efficacy of ritual activity lies in its ability to have people embody assumptions about their place in a larger order of things."⁴¹ In other words, this formation occurs through embodied participation—through doing—as people are immersed in the world of the ritual; "For all intents and purposes, kneeling produces a subordinated kneeler in and through the act itself."⁴²

Bell's approach also considers participants not simply as 'performers' of a ritual script but as agents formed through ritualised practice. A ritualised agent is someone whose bodily dispositions and practical 'sense' have been cultivated such that the ritual's patterns of action become available as competent, even instinctive, ways of perceiving and acting. In this way, ritualisation does not bypass agency and render people as passive; instead, it produces a particular kind of agency—shaping agents who acquire a practical competence for what feels fitting, possible, authoritative, or 'natural' within a given symbolic world and within the relationships and hierarchies of that world. Bell names this cultivated competence "ritual mastery"⁴³ —a practical, embodied know-how acquired through ritualised participation.

"...[T]he most subtle and central quality of those actions we tend to call ritual is the primacy of the body moving about within a specially constructed space... The result is a

⁴¹ Bell, *Perspectives and Dimensions*, xi.

⁴² Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 100.

⁴³ "Bourdieu speaks of 'practical mastery' to indicate the systems of classifying schemes that act as instruments for ordering the world that 'every successfully socialised agent' possesses. These schemes of practical mastery are acquired through the interaction of the body with a structured environment. They come to be embodied in the very perceptions and dispositions of the body and hence are known only in practice as the way things are done. I use the term 'ritual mastery' to designate a practical mastery of the schemes of ritualisation as an embodied knowing, as the sense of ritual seen in its exercise." Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 107.

ritualised agent who has acquired an instinctive knowledge of schemes that can be used to order his or her experience....”⁴⁴ This will become important later in this study for questions of liturgical leadership, since clergy are not formed only to understand liturgy cognitively or to execute it technically, but to inhabit and mediate ritual competence in ways that can sustain communal participation and formation.

Bell’s account of ritualisation as embodied differentiation provides a framework for analysing liturgy as formative practice. It also prepares the ground for theological accounts of sacramentality, particularly Chauvet’s claim that this formation is ordered toward grace: a symbolic world of recognition in which identity is received, and conversion is enacted.

Louis-Marie Chauvet and the symbolic world

If Bell helps explain how ritual practice forms embodied dispositions through participation in a differentiated symbolic world, Louis-Marie Chauvet helps clarify what that symbolic world—specifically the world of the Eucharist—is doing theologically: it is the medium through which Christians are recognised and converted in relation to God and to one another. In other words, Bell clarifies the formative mechanics of ritual practice, while Chauvet clarifies the *telos* of that practice as participation in the life of God that re-forms the church for the world.

Chauvet’s exploration of symbol and symbolic world offers further insight into the powerful function of liturgical space as a constructed symbolic world and the way we inhabit it bodily and are formed by it in our liturgical practice, as both individuals and communities of

⁴⁴ Bell, *Perspectives and Dimensions*, 82.

faith. Chauvet's key contention is that symbols do not simply convey information; they locate persons within a shared order of recognition, so that identity is received and enacted within a symbolic world before it is explained.

Three related claims emerge here. First, symbols shape subjects through participation in a shared order; second, physical liturgical space functions as a formative matrix of Christian identity; and third, repeated liturgical practice habituates desire and perceptions in ways that can be understood psychologically (via the work of James K. Smith) and theologically (conversion understood as an itinerary).

As Chauvet explains, our daily life constantly involves us in a world of symbolic markers in which we

situate ourselves as subjects within a culturally organized world, that is to say, a world in which we can find our bearings. These symbols function the better the less we explicitly think of them. They are less objects of speech than space within which speech takes its meaning.... Symbols 'speak' to us before we even begin to talk.⁴⁵

He goes on to remind us of what the symbol was in the ancient world—a kind of token, “a piece of an object given to contracting parties in order to allow them or their descendants to recognize themselves as parties in this contract.”⁴⁶ Thus, crucially, “what characterizes the symbol is not its material value in quantity or quality but its relation with the whole to which it belongs.”⁴⁷

Symbols therefore work through relational power; for a subject they create identity or effect recognition in relation to another subject, according to a shared context (which Chauvet expresses as the communal Other or ‘the authority of the written or oral law guaranteeing the

⁴⁵ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 70.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

legitimacy of the operation’).⁴⁸ Chauvet carefully differentiates between sign and symbol, with sign functioning on the order of knowledge, while symbol functions on the order of recognition, and “therefore to the order of the relation between subjects as such. The sign designates significations; the symbol assigns a place to the subject.”⁴⁹ For Chauvet, then, symbol is not primarily a vehicle for information but a relational structure of recognition—it positions subjects within a shared world, shaping identity through participation. Our liturgical spaces function much more on the order of symbol than sign, and thus exercise greater relational and affective power over us.

The liturgical space of a church, the symbolic and practical uses of items of furniture and the relationships among them, evoke body memories of the past for contemporary participants in liturgy, and also structure our present understanding of ourselves and God, and our hopes for the future. In an earlier essay on liturgical space as symbolic space, Chauvet writes, “...liturgical space constitutes... a quasi-sacramental crystallisation of the whole value system specific to Christianity.”⁵⁰ Such space “serves as a ‘matrix’ in which the subject is engendered as a Christian. It shows the vocabulary and grammar of Christian identity as these have been transmitted by tradition.”⁵¹ Thus, liturgical space, for Chauvet, functions as a formative ‘matrix’; it embodies a grammar of Christian identity that is learned by inhabiting it. Liturgical practice is therefore formative of our Christian identity, and this transformation is effected in us through bodily experience, often within a traditionally ‘coded’ church space.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 74.

⁵⁰ Chauvet, “The Liturgy in its Symbolic Space,” 31.

⁵¹ Chauvet, “The Liturgy in its Symbolic Space,” 30–31.

James K.A. Smith's account of habituation provides a contemporary psychological mechanism that complements Bell's practice theory and Chauvet's theological account and helps explain why repeated liturgical participation becomes 'second nature.' We don't have to consciously choose to participate in or even be aware of this process for it to be effective within us, as Smith explains in his extensive study of Christian education, *Desiring the Kingdom*. Smith argues for a shift in understanding of education, so that we come to see it as a formative process; to this end, he explores the interrelated areas of liturgy, formation and desire. He explains how "habits (precognitive dispositions) are formed by practices: routines and rituals that inscribe particular ongoing habits into our character, so that they become second nature to us."⁵²

Smith draws on psychological research into how practice forms habit, that process by which we train and develop our brains and our bodily ways of knowing. When someone chooses to learn the piano, for instance, their initial experience is that it involves great conscious effort and focus. But in time, as one continues to practice and the 'motions' become more familiar, "gradually more and more becomes 'sublimated' or taken care of by the subconscious."⁵³ This is a natural part of the way we learn and grow as humans, and as Smith explains, any repeated experience or practice (he offers a disturbing reflection of the 'liturgical practice' of going to a shopping mall to illustrate this point)⁵⁴ will affect us and shape us through this process of 'automation.'⁵⁵

⁵² James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 80.

⁵³ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 81.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 19–22.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

So many automatic dispositions become part of our adaptive unconsciousness because we consciously, intentionally choose to participate in practices and routines that will train the unconscious in this way... [but] ‘the process of automation is itself automatic... [so there can be formation going on] that we do not choose and of which we are not conscious but that nevertheless happens because we are regularly immersed in environments... The dispositions [so acquired] become inscribed into our unconscious so that we ‘automatically’ respond the way we’ve been conditioned.⁵⁶

This explains how liturgical practice—regular participation in the sacrament of the Eucharist, for example—works within us in the context of liturgical space in such a powerful way, whether we are aware of it or not. The mechanism of habituation at work accesses the deepest parts of our being, for better or worse. Liturgical practice is an ancient human activity that utilises this aspect of our created nature to open us up to the work of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God.

Smith considers the dynamics of habituation—in other words, how liturgical practice works within us; Chauvet and Bruce Morrill help interpret the theological significance of habituated bodily practice. The meaning available to us through embodied and material elements is far richer and more immediate than that which would be available were we only able to speak of grace using words. The sacraments open up bodily awareness in us, so that we gain the capacity to live more holistically; creation and the incarnation can thus become more meaningful for us and within us. In this way, liturgical practice is endlessly transformative.

To change our lives, to be more involved in sacramental living, means changing our physical activity. This enlarged experience of physicality means that liturgy is not just a place I visit from time to time. And growth in sacramental life requires practice. Thus the need to be physical. True conversion is a bodily experience. Because liturgical prayer is physical, it is also communal.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ James L. Empereur, S.J., “The Physicality of Worship,” in *Bodies of Worship: Explorations in Theory and Practice*, ed. Bruce T. Morrill (Collegeville: Order of St. Benedict, 1999), 142.

Morrill suggests Rebecca Chopp’s definition of practice as “a pattern of meaning and action that is culturally constructed and individually instantiated.”⁵⁸ When we enter into the liturgy and into liturgical space, we practice—we step into this ‘pattern of meaning’, this ‘symbolic world’, and there we are led through the enactment—again and again—of that which we hope for, that which we allow ourselves to be shaped for, and which is God’s gift to us: participation in the reign of God, and the life of grace. And this practice transforms us—in other words, it converts us.

Chauvet takes up this notion of conversion, and similarly, he frames it metaphorically as bodily practice—a journey, an itinerary that we travel or walk along. “The realization by human beings of the performance of thanksgiving demands that God give them the competence. The itinerary that the Eucharistic Prayer makes us travel is thus exemplary of the way of conversion which Christians are called to walk throughout their lives.”⁵⁹ Chauvet suggests here that it is by God’s invitation and grace that we are enabled to participate in or ‘perform’ the act of thanksgiving. The Eucharistic Prayer is thought of as a journey, and we could equally consider the whole of a eucharistic liturgy as a journey, a ‘way of conversion’.⁶⁰ The effect of entering into the symbolic world of the liturgy (as bodily practice within liturgical space) again and again is to change us, or to change our direction.

⁵⁸ Rebecca Chopp, quoted in Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., “Conclusion: Nonsystematic Reflections on the Practical Character of Liturgy and Theology,” in *Bodies of Worship: Explorations in Theory and Practice*, ed. Bruce T. Morrill (Collegeville: Order of St. Benedict, 1999), 175.

⁵⁹ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 133.

⁶⁰ The word ‘conversion’ derives from Latin and Old French words carrying the meanings of ‘altogether,’ and ‘turn about; turn around; send in another direction’.

These accounts converge on the claim that liturgy forms persons through repeated embodied participation, often beneath explicit cognition. Yet the possibility of being formed by worship depends on how the church has organised the relationship between celebration, instruction, and ministerial competence: where it has located formation, and what it has imagined as the goal of ‘learning liturgy.’ The historical question, therefore, becomes crucial: when has formation been trusted as something that occurs *in and through* the common practices of worship, and when has it been relocated into specialised explanation, technique, or clerical training? It is this shifting relationship that Patrick Prétot traces in his genealogy of “liturgical formation.”

Patrick Prétot: A genealogy of liturgical formation

Prétot’s genealogy in his 2016 article “Benchmarks for a History of Liturgical Formation” is particularly useful because it tracks not only *what* was taught about liturgy, but *where* formation was located: within the worshipping assembly itself, or increasingly in specialised instruction and clerical training. Liturgical formation is a complex and multivalent notion; Prétot offers a provisional definition of it as “the transmission of an intellectual knowledge concerning liturgy,” noting that this is a relatively recent understanding emerging with the twentieth-century Liturgical Movement.⁶¹ He immediately demonstrates the complex layers of meaning that sit behind the term ‘formation;’ “What is at issue here is not only a “knowledge about” (*savoir sur*) liturgy, but also “knowing how to be” (*savoir être*), a “knowing how to do” (*savoir-faire*), and even an important element of “knowing how to live” (*savoir-*

⁶¹ Patrick Prétot, “Benchmarks for a History of Liturgical Formation,” *Studia Liturgica* 46 (2016): 18.

vivre).”⁶² He also notes that concern for the transmission of liturgical practice has existed throughout history under various names, including instruction, explanation, and mystagogy.⁶³

Prétot’s expression of the different types of ‘knowing’ assumed in relation to liturgical formation surfaces the complexity. He goes on to survey five broad periods across the history of the church, while acknowledging that tidy historical divisions do not reflect the slow evolution of practice.⁶⁴ To focus his account, he attends to the “principal actors, the context of the act of formation, and the contents that were transmitted.”⁶⁵ He begins with the primitive church (to the emergence of the earliest liturgical institutions late in the fourth century); then treats the ‘high’ patristic era, the Middle Ages, the Early Modern/Modern period, and finally, the Liturgical Movement and its aftermath.

Across these periods, Prétot suggests that formation progressively migrated from a shared liturgical practice of faith that shaped Christian character and ethical life among all the baptised, toward a more narrowly focused rule-bound concern with correct ritual performance, most sharply concentrated in clerical formation.⁶⁶ In the primitive church, faith was transmitted largely orally, and we have only limited evidence of its content and practice.⁶⁷ But it seems clear from the sources we do have that liturgical and ethical formation are interwoven at this point in

⁶² Prétot, “Benchmarks,” 18.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 21–22.

⁶⁷ Along with the gospels and Paul’s letters, Prétot notes the importance of the *Didache*, the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, Tertullian’s work on baptism, and the Apostolic Tradition. *Ibid.*, 22.

history,⁶⁸ and that the Sunday assembly is the primary context for formation, involving the whole people of God.⁶⁹

During the patristic period (fourth to sixth centuries), formation remains inseparable from liturgical practice, with central institutions of Christian liturgy being established, particularly the catechumenate and the liturgical year.⁷⁰ There was an emphasis on mystagogy as a mode of formation, especially in relation to baptism; this focus is evidenced in the catechetical work of Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan and Augustine of Hippo.⁷¹ However, interest in the lives of saints (reflecting a concern with how to live as Christians) began to emerge, along with the development of preaching; during this period, as with the primitive church, the Sunday assembly remained the primary site for formation.⁷²

Prétot considers the Middle Ages (seventh to thirteenth centuries) to be “the veritable birth of formation ‘for’ liturgy.”⁷³ During this period, formation began to split off from the worship practice of the Sunday assembly, and so no longer belonged to the whole people of God; Prétot contends that this was part of a broader splitting up of Scripture, theology and spirituality.⁷⁴ He notes that “the gradual appearance of a specialised body of theologians would little by little lead theological reflection to leave its initial community setting, and to become the prerogative first of the masters of the monastic cloisters, then of the masters of the university

⁶⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 25.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 26.

⁷² Ibid., 28.

⁷³ Ibid., 29.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

quadrangles.”⁷⁵ Formation for liturgy found expression in vast works of allegorical commentary on every element and action in liturgical practice—“a rarefied knowledge of the rites and their meanings”⁷⁶—that were solely the preserve of clergy.

Allegory came to dominate the interpretation of both Scripture and liturgical practice, and with this hermeneutic approach, meaning making came to be increasingly abstracted and separated from any literal sense.⁷⁷ Formation and spirituality were unmoored from Sunday worship, liturgical practice, and the daily lives of lay people. However, Prétot notes two important formational practices during this period: the reading of the Psalter and its influence on learning how to read and memorise, as well as on the theological and liturgical formation of clergy, and the transmission of the very popular medieval text *The Golden Legend*, which preserved liturgical knowledge in narrative form.⁷⁸ The result of all of this is that ‘formation’ became increasingly detached from the Sunday assembly and re-sited in specialist knowledge and clerical competence.

Prétot’s account thus suggests a long drift from formation embedded in the worshipping assembly toward formation for liturgy as specialised clerical competence and explanatory knowledge. The twentieth-century Liturgical Movement marks a decisive reconfiguration of this relationship, both by recovering active participation as a theological and pastoral goal and by reframing “liturgical formation” as a distinct and deliberate task—one that continues to shape contemporary expectations of clergy as liturgical leaders.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 30.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 32.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 34.

The Liturgical Movement

In Prétot's analysis of this modern turn, the twentieth-century Liturgical Movement is considered the laboratory for our present-day understanding of liturgical formation, but it has deep roots in previous centuries; he locates it within a longer set of shifts in the transmission of liturgical knowledge and in the relationship between liturgical celebration and instruction.⁷⁹

The invention of the printing press led to significant shifts in the way information was transmitted; “liturgical formation passed for the most part from an oral to a written form and took place more and more through an individual study of books”⁸⁰ instead of through participation in learning communities taught by masters. Instruction in liturgy was separated from liturgical action; there was a shift toward historical understanding, the ‘explanation of ceremonies’, and the study of liturgy as text rather than as practice. It was “no longer a matter of interpreting liturgy by means of allegory... but rather of explaining in order to know and understand.”⁸¹ In other words, formation increasingly assumed that the rite should be made intelligible through explanation, rather than entered as a mystery to be ‘read’ through allegorical or mystagogical interpretation—an assumption that can relocate formation from participation in worship to knowledge about worship.

With the centralisation of liturgical authority through the Council of Trent (1563), facilitated through the printing of common liturgical resources, emphasis on correct performance intensified, producing “an era of rubrics,”⁸² something that Prétot notes still has resonance

⁷⁹ Ibid., 35.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 36.

⁸² Ibid.

today.⁸³ Along with this, there was also a new interest in the aesthetics of liturgy and the beauty of art, music and preaching, all of which spoke to the human heart and fostered a deep personal interiority in spirituality. However, this interior formation could still lead to detachment from the collective formative power of the liturgical assembly.

The twentieth-century Liturgical Movement sought to rebalance this by renewing the communal experience of participation in liturgy. The movement's ideal was to recover the place of Christian formation through participation in the liturgy: "participation came to have a reciprocal relationship with formation; it became the means and setting of liturgical formation, while formation became the prior condition for the progress and the authenticity of participation."⁸⁴ Prétot considers this more an ideal than a reality for various reasons, but the Liturgical Movement holds that the liturgical celebration should be the essential or primary site for liturgical formation. This resonates closely with the model suggested in the accounts of Bell's practice theory and Chauvet's theology above: formation occurs not only through explanation but through repeated embodied participation in the symbolic world of worship.

Yet Prétot helpfully identifies the significant difficulty of living into this ideal today, and the need for creative new approaches if the life of our church is to bring it to the fullness of its potential. While we now have access to an immense richness of scholarship around the liturgical life of our ancestors in faith, we must contend with the degree of "cultural distancing"⁸⁵ that has occurred. In other words, the same rites may no longer carry the same formative intelligibility without renewed apprenticeship into their symbolic grammar. In addition, just as the printing

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 36–37.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 37.

press profoundly changed how knowledge and formation were transmitted and experienced, the advent of the digital world has transformed our present-day ways of accessing knowledge and formation, due to the profound effects of technology on our processes of cognition and the human psyche.

Critically, Prétot suggests that celebration cannot, on its own, bear the whole weight of formation today, even if it remains the keystone element.⁸⁶ He proposes that any fruitful pathway forward in formation must find ways to restore the interweaving of scripture, theology and spirituality, so that formation in Christ can become “the summit and source of Christian life.”⁸⁷ His analysis clarifies why clergy formation often defaults to explanation and rubrics, and why a sacramental imagination must be re-learned through worship.

One of the great gifts of the Liturgical Movement was the renewal of liturgical studies in university and seminary settings, and these centres of liturgical understanding and practice should be resources for the life of the church. It is within this post-Liturgical Movement landscape that contemporary frameworks for forming ordinands and clergy for liturgical leadership have emerged.

Mark Searle and participation in liturgy

Drawing on his own experience in forming ordinands and clergy for ministry in our contemporary context, Mark Searle proposed a model for understanding participation in liturgy. He was deeply concerned by the flowering of modernism in contemporary Western societies, seeing rising individualism as a response to these cultural forces, and identifying it at work in

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 38.

shaping the liturgical life of the church.⁸⁸ Against this backdrop, Searle understood liturgy to be inherently social,⁸⁹ and the Liturgical Movement and the work of Vatican 2 as an “ascetical movement, calling us to return to the sources of the common spiritual life and to take up the discipline inherent in the Christian vocation.”⁹⁰ In Searle’s thought, the liturgy is a complex event with multiple layers of participation⁹¹ that shapes the people of God for God’s work in human history, “with all the social and political consequences that entail.”⁹²

Searle’s work explores the layers of theological meaning inherent in ‘participation.’⁹³ He develops a scheme in which there are “three successively deeper levels of participation...moving from the visible to the invisible, from the human to the divine... together ...[these are the] inward or contemplative dimension of liturgy.”⁹⁴ Searle contends that “the Church is sacramental in nature”⁹⁵ and that full participation occurs when ritual is not an end in itself but draws the assembly into the divine/invisible life that the rite signifies. The three levels in Searle’s scheme form a deepening progression: (i) participation at the level of the ritual (actions of singing, speaking, attentiveness), (ii) at the level of the Christian economy (a new social or ecclesial

⁸⁸ Searle, *Called to Participate*, xi.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ “...liturgy as ritual activity, liturgy as the work of Christ, and liturgy as sharing in the life of God.” Ibid., x.

⁹² Searle, *Called to Participate*, xi.

⁹³ Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (December 4, 1963), sec. 14.

⁹⁴ Searle, Ibid., x.

⁹⁵ “...full, conscious and active participation occurs when we so engage in the ritual celebration as to become engaged in the divine, invisible life of the world-to-come.” Ibid., 17.

reality is signified), and (iii) at the level of the life of God—the reality of God’s sanctifying grace at work in the world.

Searle’s first level of participation in liturgy is in liturgy as ritual practice. Searle emphasises four characteristics: that ritual is collective, formal, performance, and formative. He contends that people engage in the first level of participation socially—that liturgy involves an event with two or more persons, each enacting their particular role. Ritual’s formality is seen in its repetition and predictability⁹⁶; in the words and actions assigned to all those involved, there are both common rubrics and unspoken rules governing what is expected of them. Because religion addresses matters of ultimate concern, its rituals are characterised by weight and certainty; there is no place for triviality and casualness.⁹⁷ Considering ritual as performance, Searle notes that liturgy does not exist in books—it is something that is done.⁹⁸ There is resonance here with Bell’s practice theory, in which liturgy is enacted practice whose meaning is experienced bodily and in community before it is conceptualised. Likewise, “ritual words and actions do not just express feelings: they make things happen.”⁹⁹ This efficacy is seen in new situations, especially in new or changed relationships; through participation in a rite, people are given new roles and identities in something larger than themselves and even larger than the immediate gathering: the universal church.¹⁰⁰ This leads to Searle’s final characteristic, that ritual

⁹⁶ “Liturgy will not leave us on an emotional high because that is not its purpose. But regular, persevering participation and growing familiarity with liturgy’s images and gestures will eventually shape our attitudes, our thoughts, and even our feelings.” Ibid., 62.

⁹⁷ “Liturgy is ritual: in order to function it requires the seriousness and reverence of which formality is the sign.” Ibid., 22.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Searle, *Called to Participate*, 23.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

is formative; it is clear that if liturgy sustains and shapes relationships, it inevitably re-shapes identity and belonging over time. Searle comments that “[t]o engage in ritual is to submit to its constraints, to assume the role allocated to us,”¹⁰¹ and notes that this is embodied in standing and kneeling and other ritual actions. He explains further, “we are not free to make liturgy up as we go along but are required to carry it out, enact it, and perform it, so that it may form us.”¹⁰² Over time, this disciplined participation shapes the person: “...regular, persevering participation...will eventually shape our attitudes, our thoughts, and even our feelings.”¹⁰³

In Searle’s scheme of participation, his second level involves participation in a new reality: the Christian economy. This is a relational participation effected by baptism, the rite of belonging, and sustained by the Eucharist. For Searle, Baptism generates a new network of relationships, to Christ, to the church, and to the world; and with relationship comes responsibility.¹⁰⁴ The role we are inducted into is inherently relational; it is “the double task of representing Christ to the world and the world to God,”¹⁰⁵ and this task or work is “the work of Christ that has passed over into the liturgy of the Church.”¹⁰⁶

Searle’s third level of participation is engagement that reaches beyond the human and visible rite and into the divine and invisible reality it signifies; this is an eschatological horizon (the “world-to-come”¹⁰⁷) that is encountered in and through ritual participation. Searle suggests

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰² Ibid., 25.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 62.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 31.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 17.

this is accessed through the contemplative dimension of our faith and is the fruition of the fundamentally sacramental nature of the church—that we are, in essence, a “sign-sacrament”.

This leads us to the summation of Searle’s vision for liturgy: that the church’s worship is not only an inward and formative experience for participants but also a visible and public sign of God’s reconciling work in the world.¹⁰⁸ In the context of our society’s destructive drives, the church should stand for the common good and a renewed commitment to public values.¹⁰⁹ Searle goes on to explore how this social mission might be expressed in liturgy such that it is the work of ‘a priestly people’ and is truly “a liturgy of the world.”¹¹⁰ In summary, Searle provides a rich yet coherent framework in which embodied ritual discipline, our baptismal agency in Christ, and the divine and eschatological horizon of the eucharistic rite interweave. This account of Christian identity in the church clarifies why the notion of liturgical formation cannot be reduced to explanation or technique. Searle’s work explains why clergy need to be formed not simply for ‘level one’ competence but to mediate and sustain deeper levels of participation in parish communities.

Conclusion

Eucharistic practice is a repeated, embodied, communal action that forms Christian identity, desire, and mission over time, often at a level beneath explicit cognition. Precisely for this reason, my province must recover a sacramental imagination for priestly formation rather

¹⁰⁸ “The liturgy is therefore the primary locus in which the Church becomes visible as a sign: the liturgy signifies what it effects and effects what it signifies.” *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹¹⁰ This is a phrase Searle adopts from Karl Rahner. “The world and its history is the terrible and sublime liturgy, breathing death and sacrifice, that God celebrates for himself...” Karl Rahner, quoted in Searle, *Called to Participate*, 78.

than treating liturgy as one more ministry technique or body of information. To echo Chauvet's language, the 'work' of liturgy effects ongoing, iterative formation within us, renewing and deepening our identity in Christ.

To undergird my contention, I have explored a range of theological and sociological perspectives. The work of Juan Oliver, Bruce Morrill, Mark Johnson and Rowan Williams supports an approach to formation in which persons are shaped through sensorimotor, affective, socially patterned bodily life, not only through intellectual propositions; thus, worship forms 'the whole person.' Catherine Bell's practice theory and understanding of ritualisation explain how practices form a socially informed body, shaping perception and 'what feels natural,' and why 'ritual mastery' matters for leadership in a formational community. Louis-Marie Chauvet, supported by James K. A. Smith's account of habituation, offers a theological vision of formation in which symbols do not simply 'mean things'; instead, they position subjects in relationships of recognition, while liturgical space offers a matrix of identity; Smith's mechanism explains how repeated experience carries formative power beyond cognition.

A historical survey of liturgical formation by Patrick Prétot surfaces an important tension: even if liturgy is formational, the church has repeatedly re-sited formation away from the assembly into specialised clerical competence, explanatory regimes and rubrical discipline. This has produced a misalignment between what liturgy does and what clerical formation programmes train for. His work explores this long drift and the hope of the twentieth-century Liturgical Movement to reverse this separation. He also signals a contemporary difficulty: despite the accessibility of sources on early liturgical theology and practice, we are now at a significant cultural distance from the early church and cannot expect formative practice to work in the same way within our contemporary church. Our digital, global, and multicultural context has great

power over our cognition and sense of self, and this means that celebration alone cannot bear the full weight of formation, though it should remain our keystone. Priestly formation should be reconfigured such that liturgy is once again trusted as the primary site of lifelong conversion and formation, while also addressing the contemporary conditions that impede that formation.

At stake is the *telos* of worship: a lifelong journey into communion with God that forms the church to be Christ for the world. To this end, Mark Searle's scheme offering interwoven levels of deepening participation is a rich and nuanced approach to formation in liturgy. He envisages a church in which liturgy forms a people for God's reconciling work with social and political consequences; this means that 'formation' cannot be reduced to explanation or technique.

I now turn from these conceptual and theological foundations to consider the history of my provincial context and how our liturgical life has been shaped. I then address questions of clerical formation and how this might be reoriented towards a renewed sacramental imagination and participatory competence.

Historical Development of Pākehā Anglican Liturgical Identity

And, though we have to leave these glorious temples of our native Church, to find in the wild woods our school of architecture, and to worship God under the open canopy of heaven or under the shade of overarching trees... yet [here] the gospel was planted, so that now it has grown into a great tree... Why, then, should our hearts faint within us, when we go forth to sow the seed, and to lay the corner-stone of the Church of Christ in the most distant islands of the sea?¹¹¹

Introduction

In this section, I trace the liturgical history of our province to show how Pākehā Anglican identity and liturgical practice have been historically conditioned. By attending to patterns of worship, architecture, and theological commitments, I argue that the present loss of confidence in liturgy's formative power—and the gaps in formation that follow—are not accidental but inherited.

It is my contention that my province is losing touch with the formative power of liturgy, and consequently, with a key strand of our identity and tradition as Anglicans, and that a renewal of liturgical understanding and imagination is needed to renew and sustain our mission and ministry. While liturgical revision is a necessary part of how we make our way in our contemporary world and respond to Christ's call in this place and time, I argue it should emerge out of the view of reality and the way of life that has been both engendered and expressed by the historic liturgy of the church, and out of a deep, experiential awareness of the richness of our sacramental tradition. Most parishes of the seven Pākehā dioceses of our province have a more

¹¹¹ George Augustus Selwyn, "A Sermon, Preached in the Cathedral Church of St Peter, Exeter, on Sunday, Dec. 12, 1841, Previous to His Departure from England," *Anglican History*, accessed August 23, 2024, <http://anglicanhistory.org/nz/selwyn1841.html>.

casual style of worship and emphasise proclamation rather than sacrament, and the reasons for this can be traced back to the early years of our history in this land. In this section, I survey our origins and the development of our liturgy.

Māori had made a home here for many centuries before colonial settlers began to arrive in the early 1800s. The first Christian liturgical service (in English, with te reo Māori translation) was held by the Anglican priest and Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionary Samuel Marsden on a beach at Rangihoua¹¹², north of Auckland, on Christmas Day 1814. CMS mission stations were established in the years that followed, working amongst the Māori *iwi* (tribes) and small, precarious settler communities of Northland. It would be almost 30 years before New Zealand was established as a Diocese ('The Diocese of New Zealand') with the appointment of our first Bishop, George Selwyn.

George Augustus Selwyn and the Diocese of New Zealand

The Diocese of New Zealand was established by the Church of England in the early 1840s, with the appointment and consecration of its first bishop, George Augustus Selwyn, in late 1841. Selwyn was a powerful figure whose episcopate shaped our province in profound ways; his work encompassed worship, the planning and establishment of a College for the formation of Māori and Pākehā clergy, the acquisition of extensive land holdings and the building of churches and other ecclesial property, the development of a new provincial governance structure and constitution, and the financing of all of these endeavours. While the popular narrative is that Selwyn simply brought the Church of England with him and, in effect,

¹¹² Rangihoua is now a heritage site managed by an independent trust; see <https://rangihouaheritage.co.nz> for further detail.

transplanted it wholesale—prayerbook, buildings, liturgy—his reality was much more complex and innovative. While deeply committed to the theological and liturgical principles that had formed his ministry, Selwyn was willing to experiment with and adapt his church architecture and liturgical practice to the challenging context and conditions he encountered and to the needs of the newly established Anglican communities in nineteenth-century New Zealand. Both liturgical practice and church architecture had an important place in informing these priorities, which became intertwined in Selwyn’s strategy.

Selwyn was deeply influenced by the work of The Ecclesiological Society, of which he was a patron. It was an architectural society founded in 1839 by undergraduate students at Cambridge University (Selwyn’s alma mater) to promote the study of Gothic Architecture and ecclesiastical objects, and the application of the principles derived thereof. However, Selwyn soon realised that their plans could not be applied directly in his new and foreign context and, armed with his personal collection of ecclesiological publications and carpentry textbooks, began drawing up plans himself.

The ecclesiologists drove a return to the centrality and visuality of the sacraments as the proper expression of prayerbook liturgy. James White helpfully describes the shift from the post-Reformation ‘auditory’ churches that reflected the Puritan emphases on sermons and Morning and Evening Prayer (in which it was important that the congregation be able to hear the spoken word) to the ecclesiologists’ desire for visibility, especially of the sacramental action.¹¹³

In contrast to the auditory churches, in the ideal ‘ecclesiological’ church, the liturgical space was to be clearly divided; “There are two parts, and only two parts, which are absolutely

¹¹³ James F. White, “Prayer Book Architecture,” in *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*. eds. Charles Hefling and Cynthia Shattuck (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 112.

essential to a church—chancel and nave.”¹¹⁴ The chancel was to be at least two steps up from the floor level of the nave.¹¹⁵ Attention was given to the symbolism expressed in the plan of the building; for example, the cross-shape of the footprint, and the location of liturgical symbols such as the font, which should be placed in the nave and near a door, to typify “the Admission of a child into the Church by Holy Baptism.”¹¹⁶ Here and at other points, they strengthen their case by reference to ancient practice: “[the Font] shall stand in the ancient usual place.”¹¹⁷

Along with *A Few Words to Church Builders*, as he sat in the Waimate Mission House after arriving in New Zealand, Selwyn would also have studied Pugin’s *True Principles*. Published in 1841, before Selwyn left England, these books would have formed the basis of Selwyn’s thinking about the planning, form, design and ornamentation of his churches.¹¹⁸ In *True Principles*, Pugin set out his design principles, with detailed illustrations. “The two great rules for design are these: 1st that there should be no features about a building which are not necessary for convenience, construction, or propriety; 2nd, that all ornament should consist of enrichment of the essential construction of the building.”¹¹⁹ For Pugin, the honesty of construction carried theological weight: “Nothing can be more execrable than making a church appear rich and

¹¹⁴ Cambridge Camden Society, *A Few Words to Church Builders* (Cambridge: Cambridge Camden Society at the University Press, 1841), 5.

¹¹⁵ This was for visual effect, but also for the practical reason that raised chancels were easier to keep dry. Cambridge Camden Society, *A Few Words*, 11.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹⁸ Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, “Selwyn the Ecclesiologist—in Theory and Practice,” in *A Controversial Churchman: Essays on George Selwyn, Bishop of New Zealand and Lichfield, and Sarah Selwyn*, ed. Allan K. Davidson (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Ltd., 2011), 137.

¹¹⁹ Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (London: J. Weale, 1841), 1.

beautiful in the eyes of men, but full of trick and falsehood ... to whom churches should be built, and not to man.”¹²⁰

Establishment of St John’s College

Selwyn quickly began to contextualise the ecclesiological and high church principles. At Waimate, Selwyn established an experimental College community with a shared life of study and industry. This project in community formation for European and Māori ordinands together was central to his vision for his episcopate, and the chapel was central to the life of the community. Within a few months, Selwyn had adapted the interior of the CMS chapel to reflect his ecclesiological and liturgical ideals. He placed the font which he’d brought from England at the centre of the nave, and the pulpit and reader’s desk “were not placed in a central position—as was still customary in Anglican churches—but to one side so that the sightlines to the altar would be unimpeded.”¹²¹ The altar clearly features a richly embroidered cloth and stands on a platform two steps higher than the nave. Despite its plainness, the space was liturgically satisfactory to Selwyn and his fellow ecclesiologists; “This was the first church interior in the colony to conform to ecclesiological ideals of liturgical ‘correctness’.”¹²²

However, as Mane-Wheoki explains, “These arrangements would have baffled the CMS personnel. This was not the ‘sermon-house’ in which they were accustomed to hold their service.”¹²³ Selwyn and his chaplains were suspected of being ‘Puseyites’ and introducing

¹²⁰ Ibid., 45.

¹²¹ Mane-Wheoki, “Selwyn the Ecclesiologist,” 131.

¹²² Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, “Selwyn Gothic: The Formative Years,” *Art New Zealand* 54 (Autumn 1990): 76.

¹²³ Mane-Wheoki, “Selwyn the Ecclesiologist,” 132.

‘popery’. Selwyn’s relationship with the independent-minded CMS missionary community, established for several decades prior to Selwyn’s arrival, who did not appreciate a bishop suddenly being given authority over them at their expense, was difficult, and these suspicions added to the strain.

In mid 1844, Selwyn moved toward establishing the new College at ‘Bishop’s Auckland.’ In the summer of 1844–45, the College community transferred by boat to a temporary encampment at Purewa while they awaited the construction of permanent buildings. Some eighty people lived in tents, and then raupo huts, and the Bishop’s large tent was used for daily worship—his ‘canvas cathedral’.¹²⁴ The contrast with the ‘glorious temples’ of Selwyn’s English home could hardly be sharper, and it signals how far the church’s liturgical life was already being adapted in practice to colonial conditions.

Selwyn began learning te reo Māori on the voyage from England and actively built relationships with Māori iwi; he also expected his Pākehā ordinands to learn te reo. By the summer of 1844/45, Selwyn would have been welcomed onto many marae (see Figure 1) as an honoured guest. There is no evidence that Selwyn consciously adapted any Māori elements into his church designs or liturgical spaces—his colonial superiority would have been too strong and his sense of what a church should *look like* too deeply English—but nearly three years of experiencing such profoundly different sacred/liturgical and communal space must have impacted him on some level.

¹²⁴ Davidson, *Selwyn’s Legacy*, 49.



*Figure 1: Waipapa Marae, The University of Auckland (Waipapa Taumata Rau)*¹²⁵

The College Chapel and Selwyn's architecture

By the time he and Frederick Thatcher, a young architect who entered training for ordination as a member of the College community, were at work on the plans for the chapel and other buildings of St John's College Auckland (1844-45), Selwyn was making decisions about design, materials and construction method that were still in accord with his ecclesiological ideals, but that would have been almost unimaginable when he left England.

Selwyn's initial hope for St John's College was to build in stone, in a collegiate layout, in accordance with Pugin's ideals.¹²⁶ However, he observed the failure of three early stone-

¹²⁵ "The opening gate and lawn of Waipapa Marae," Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland, <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/life-on-campus/maori-life-on-campus/waipapa-marae.html> (accessed 12 April 2026).

¹²⁶ Pugin, *True Principles*, 51–54.

construction churches in Auckland and soon resolved that building in wood was the only way forward, something he'd considered even before leaving England.¹²⁷ This possibility was realised in the St John's College Chapel, completed in 1847, and recognised today as a *taonga* or treasure of both New Zealand architectural history and our province.¹²⁸



*Figure 2: St John's College Chapel, present day.*¹²⁹

¹²⁷ In October 1841 Selwyn showed friends drawings "of a new style of building suitable to N.Z. A log house but of a different description. The ribs of the roof and walls being the same & resting on the ground." 'Account of the last days at Eton of George Augustus and Sarah Selwyn, 1841', Alexander Turnbull Library. Margaret H. Alington, *An Excellent Recruit: Frederick Thatcher, Architect, Priest and Private Secretary in Early New Zealand* (Auckland: Polygraphia Ltd, 2007), 19.

¹²⁸ The Chapel remains iconic of the contemporary College both physically and spiritually and is still in daily use by the College community and carries the highest heritage designation with our national heritage authority.

¹²⁹ Exterior of St John's College; the roof beams can be seen extending down through the exterior walls of the sacristy and transept. Photo by Clare Barrie.

The Chapel, with a unique design involving an apse at both ends (east for the sanctuary and west for the baptistry), employs exposed timber framing and bracing set over vertical board-and-batten cladding. There is nothing ‘unnecessary’ or concealed in the construction of the Chapel: “The Ecclesiological virtues of honesty and truth [are] expressed on the exterior as well as the interior of the building.”¹³⁰ In the interior, the altar is raised above the level of the nave and sits in a clearly identifiable chancel. All the seating is arranged lengthwise in collegiate fashion so that the community is gathered daily in an intimate monastic pattern. As a liturgical space, it supports the daily office just as well as eucharistic liturgy. The Chapel interior entirely meets the Ecclesiological Society’s highest aim: “The most important requisite in erecting a church is that it be built in such a way that the Rubricks and Canons of the Church of England may be consistently observed and the sacraments rubrically and decently administered.”¹³¹

However, the Chapel does not represent a simple next step in the long tradition of English Gothic architecture and prayerbook liturgical practice. It is an innovative and contextual response that employs ecclesiological principles faithfully through the use of unconventional materials and new construction methods. Selwyn’s buildings and liturgical spaces of the 1840s, born of intense struggle in a new context, reflect the ecclesiological and missional hopes of his time in a unique amalgam of traditional and original.

The St John’s College Chapel became a model for other church buildings by Selwyn and Thatcher, though their style, which became known as ‘Selwyn Gothic,’ quickly evolved to better suit to the Auckland climate. Other churches were soon being built by different architects,

¹³⁰ Bill McKay and Jane Ussher, *Worship: A History of New Zealand Church Design* (Auckland, New Zealand: Godwit/Penguin Random House, 2015), 284.

¹³¹ Cambridge Camden Society, *The Ecclesiologist*, no. 1 (November 1841) 10.

patterned on Selwyn's buildings and closely imitating his expression of the ecclesiological ideals. Anglican church construction in New Zealand began with the Selwyn Gothic style. Unlike the ecclesiologists at work in Britain and Europe over the course of the nineteenth century, who often worked with existing buildings, Selwyn and those who followed him worked in a context with no prior church buildings. Selwyn's vision, as expressed in his early projects, remained the powerful norm for Anglican liturgical space in Aotearoa New Zealand well into the twentieth century, even as construction methods evolved.

However, despite this very firmly established model of liturgical space, which would have naturally lent itself to a more ceremonial and sacramentally explicit style of worship, our liturgy remained largely proclamation-centred and casual, with a few exceptions. In some places, this reflected an explicit anti-ritualism; more often, it reflected "quasi-pioneering communities whose energies and resources were focused elsewhere."¹³² There was also resistance to anything that smacked of the English establishment, including the Anglican church; one cannot understand the history of nineteenth-century New Zealand in isolation—it must be related to the history of nineteenth-century Britain.

The colonial church in historical context

Significant social and cultural undercurrents developed in the mid-nineteenth century that worked against the perceived privilege that Anglicans occupied in New Zealand, including tension over the landholdings that had been gifted to the church by Māori. "British imperialism

¹³² Hugh Morrison, "Maintaining the Church in Unsettled Times: 1899–1919" in *Living Legacy: A History of the Anglican Diocese of Auckland*, ed. Allan K. Davidson (Parnell, Auckland: The Anglican Diocese of Auckland, 2011), 127.

in New Zealand constituted, in part, a ‘class act’ in which English Anglican elites and baptised Anglican Māori chiefs forged alliances across racial boundaries.”¹³³

As the colonial population increased, the demand for land intensified, and the methods used to obtain it from Māori became less and less honourable. Many settlers had expected that in New Zealand they would be free from the ‘Old World’ establishment in which the Church of England was enmeshed; they had not imagined contending with Māori communities who identified with that establishment.¹³⁴ Simmering resentment at discovering a de facto Anglican establishment, one that stood between them and the promise of land, contributed to the outbreak of the New Zealand Wars from 1860.

Against this broad backdrop of conflict and division, while the Oxford Movement, with its emphasis on the renewal of the sacramental life of the church, was in its ascendancy in England, the concerns of Selwyn’s early successors reflected those of the wider colonial society. They focused on unity, stability and growth, and they resisted and discouraged anything that might hinder those priorities, including the influences of ‘ritualism’ which had proven so divisive in the Church of England. Lineham notes, “The forms of the [Eucharistic] ritual were tightly regulated by early Anglican bishops in order to prevent the divisions that had happened to the church in England.”¹³⁵

¹³³ John Stenhouse, “Religion and Society,” in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. Giselle Byrnes (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), 325.

¹³⁴ “British/Irish migrants believed they had come to what they had been promised wrongly—an empty land. They desired to create a new Britain in this southern antipodean paradise and for many of the settlers Maori did not figure in any significant way in the imagined future.” Christopher Honoré, “Foundations: from Mission to Te Hāhi Mihinare 1814–45,” in *Living Legacy: A History of the Anglican Diocese of Auckland*, ed. Allan K. Davidson (Parnell, Auckland: The Anglican Diocese of Auckland, 2011), 49.

¹³⁵ Peter Lineham, *Sunday Best: How the Church Shaped New Zealand and New Zealand Shaped the Church* (Auckland: Massey University Press, 2017), 108.

Liturgical development in the Diocese of Auckland

Considering the Diocese of Auckland, with a prevailing suspicion of ceremonial and the physical challenges of the pioneering setting,¹³⁶ Anglo-Catholic expression was not much in evidence beyond the diocese's urban centre during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, as early as the late 1880s, complaints about alleged 'ritualism' at Anglican parishes began to appear in the Letters to the Editor pages of the *New Zealand Herald*. The parishes where 'ritualistic practices' were allegedly occurring were city parishes, and often the trouble was blamed on young vicars appointed from England. City parishes often sought university-educated English clergy who brought Anglo-Catholic influences to New Zealand, while "New Zealand-educated clergy were often thought more suitable for country areas where they needed to mend fences, row a boat, endure hardship and be extraordinarily adaptable."¹³⁷

The first Auckland parish to attract complaint, in 1886 and 1887, was St Thomas Freeman's Bay, where a procession with a cross caused offence. Unlike any other parish in the diocese, St Thomas' worship was Anglo-Catholic throughout its history. For all of its life (it closed in 1970 when the church was demolished to make way for the Northern Motorway extension) it stood in a part of Auckland then marked by poverty and poor housing. In these aspects, whether by chance or design, it stood in the tradition of the Anglo-Catholic slum

¹³⁶ "Services were held in living rooms, stores, hotels and schoolhouses, in the loft of a flaxmill, and in the Mining Institute building at Kawakawa, the courthouse in Hamilton, and a railway shed in Stratford. Congregations sometimes gathered with only a day's warning... The schoolmaster at Awhitu on the Manukau made brackets out of fencing wire to hold candles around the schoolroom that were lit before a service." Margaret McClure, "New Beginnings: The Colonial Church 1870–1902," in *Living Legacy: A History of the Anglican Diocese of Auckland*, ed. Allan K. Davidson (Parnell, Auckland: The Anglican Diocese of Auckland, 2011), 92.

¹³⁷ McClure, "New Beginnings," 89.

churches of London. The parish had a surpliced choir, the first in the diocese, and took pride in its fame; it also had a weekly communion service by 1884.

The third Bishop of Auckland, Moore Richard Neligan, was a young Irish priest with experience in English parish ministry. Consecrated in 1903, Neligan “provoked low church comment”¹³⁸ for officiating at the consecration of St Matthew in the City in March 1905 wearing a cope (though no mitre), the first Anglican Bishop in New Zealand to do so. The children of the first generations of British and Irish migrants were now adults, and there was a growing determination to assert their New Zealand identity, in relation to both church and society, over against their English heritage—in whatever form that might appear.¹³⁹

However, Neligan himself refused to be identified as ‘ritualistic,’ instead arguing for a broad and nonpartisan church; he often quoted Charles Gore in his articles. When he spoke on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of St Aidan’s Remuera in 1905, he said, “There is room within our Church for men of divergent views on questions of ritual and belonging to different schools of theological thought, provided they are loyal to the principles of the Prayer Book.”¹⁴⁰

But the broadness that characterised Neligan’s episcopate attracted much debate and criticism, particularly apparent in Synod debates in 1904 and 1909, which focused on the bishop’s support for the Anglican women’s community that became known as the Order of the Good Shepherd. One of the speakers against the Order was W. J. Speight, a high-profile lay

¹³⁸ Mr D. P. Miller, quoted in J. S. G. Cameron, *The Episcopate of Moore Richard Neligan, Bishop of Auckland, 1903–1910* (Diploma S.Th. thesis, Board of Theological Studies, Auckland, 1973), 141.

¹³⁹ Noel W. Derbyshire, “*The English Church*” Revisited—*Issues of Expansion and Identity in a Settler Church: The Anglican Church in New Zealand 1891–1945* (M.Arts(History) Thesis, Massey University, 2006), 26.

¹⁴⁰ *Church Gazette*, 35 (May 1905): 83.

leader in the diocese, ‘a vociferous opponent of ritualism and an entrenched traditionalist over women’s roles in church.’¹⁴¹ The New Zealand Herald, in reporting on Speight’s synod speech, noted that “As sure as this sort of thing got a footing, it would sweep away all the great and glorious principles of the Church of England.”¹⁴²

Neligan’s exercise of episcopal power to establish and support this small but suspiciously Catholic women’s order clearly rankled a significant number of Aucklanders.¹⁴³ As McClure puts it,

The exterior symbols of their spiritual life remained provocative: the habit they wore, their vows, and their attendance at St Thomas Freeman’s Bay where a new vicar from England was introducing vestments and choral Eucharist. These were all powerful symbols of Anglo-Catholicism in Auckland... Opponents of ...ritualism felt that the Order of the Good Shepherd was the clearest example of episcopal autocracy, and a symbol of Rome’s tentacles. It is remarkable how threatening a small household of three good women could appear.¹⁴⁴

In 1909, partly in response to the failure to halt the development of the Order of the Good Shepherd, a Laymen’s League was formed to oppose ‘ritualism’ in the life of the diocese—an indication of how quickly debates about liturgical expression could become public markers of identity and authority.

¹⁴¹ Morrison, “Maintaining the Church in Unsettled Times,” 133.

¹⁴² “An Anglican Religious Order,” New Zealand Herald, 20 October 1904. The report went on, “If they set up a celibate order of women it meant injury not only to them but to all our mothers and our children. What was there, [Speight] asked, in celibacy that gave to these women a power of doing good beyond what they would have in association in the same work under other conditions?”

¹⁴³ When Canon MacMurray spoke in defense of the Chapter’s actions, Mr Wm Beatty called the Order a ‘schismatical institution’ and commented, “I am exceedingly sorry that he has come forward, or allowed himself to be put forward, as a screen for the Chapter, or for the power, episcopal or feminine, which lies behind the Chapter.” “The Order of the Good Shepherd,” New Zealand Herald, 6 November 1906.

¹⁴⁴ McClure, *Saving the City*, 60.

In the years following WW2, the city and the diocese were both changing. St Thomas Freeman's Bay, never a wealthy parish, struggled to support a vicar's stipend and the property was purchased by the Ministry of Works in 1969. St Thomas' Lady Chapel was dismantled and packed into the crypt at St Matthew's in the City, and sacred items were gifted to many parishes across the diocese.

By 1960, there was a shift towards weekly communion across most of the diocese, though with the priest in the eastward position; by the early 1960s, many Auckland parishes had priests who wore eucharistic vestments and reserved the sacrament.¹⁴⁵ The liturgical renewal movement began to attract interest in Auckland, with All Saints Ponsonby pioneering the westward orientation in 1957 by installing a newly built free-standing altar. St Paul's Symonds Street retained its distinctive combination of charismatic spirituality and Anglo-Catholic liturgy until the late 1990s, and—just as St Thomas Freeman's Bay had done in previous generations—was influential in forming the liturgical and spiritual sensibilities of many Auckland clergy and lay people over that period.

As a revival movement emerging within the Anglican Church of the nineteenth century, the Oxford Movement had a delayed impact on the life of the Diocese of Auckland due to the timing and dynamics of settlement and the challenges of the colonial context, both physical and cultural. However, over time, though in the face of considerable resistance, it still bore fruit in new liturgical life in parishes (particularly in central Auckland), a deepened sacramental piety amongst individuals, and courageous and pioneering social service activities, as well as the establishment of a religious community for women. It also reoriented Anglicans in the Diocese

¹⁴⁵ Peter Lineham, "The Church Facing Challenges: 1960–85," in *Living Legacy: A History of the Anglican Diocese of Auckland*, ed. Allan K. Davidson (Parnell, Auckland: The Anglican Diocese of Auckland, 2011), 247.

of Auckland towards mission, a vital shift in a society determined to leave behind the cultural Christianity of its heritage.

However, now in these early decades of the twenty-first century, the traces of this influence of the sacramental tradition are becoming harder to discern in our parishes—there is a strong turn to casual, proclamation- or teaching-centred worship and a minimisation of liturgy as the heart of our life together.

Surveying the history of New Zealand prayer book development

Our twenty-five-year-long process of prayerbook revision meant that in practice, most parishes and clergy (across multiple incumbencies) became well used to employing a range of experimental liturgies with a high degree of autonomy; thus, a mechanism intended to create opportunity for consultation and transition to a new prayer book also embedded a new norm in liturgical practice. In many parishes, our prayer book is treated as a reference text rather than as something used regularly in worship.¹⁴⁶ Our liturgical formularies are perhaps the most permissive in the Anglican Communion, allowing us to use, for example, any Great Thanksgiving prayer approved by any province in the Communion. We have combined great liturgical flexibility with decreasing liturgical formation and scholarship.

However, now thirty-five years on from the publication of ANZPB/HKMA, it is timely to reflect on what might be missing from our liturgical life, as well as what has been gained. The

¹⁴⁶ It is not unusual today for students arriving at St John's College from across the Pakeha dioceses to have never held or used a prayer book in worship. One recently ordained graduate commented on her Instagram after a power cut late last year—necessitating the use of her church's set of prayerbooks instead of their projector for their Sunday service—that it was her first experience of presiding at the eucharist using our physical prayerbook.

Rev'd E. B. Algar's¹⁴⁷ challenging comments to the St John's College theological colloquium held at the launch of our Provincial Commission on Prayer Book Revision (PCPBR), in 1964, in which he suggested that liturgical revision could not stand alone but must work hand in hand with liturgical renewal, seem prescient. Robert McCullough, the last Chair of the PCPBR, commented similarly with regard to its publication, "The language in the Book we now have is as far as the Church is willing to go at the moment ... the Book itself will not renew worship ... Only people will do that."¹⁴⁸

New Zealand was one of the last provinces in the Anglican Communion to embark on prayer book revision in the mid twentieth century, with the PCPBR being established by General Synod in April 1964 and ANZPB/HKMOA being published in 1989. Over the course of its twenty-five-year journey, the PCPBR drew on the liturgical and social zeitgeist and responded to movements towards inclusive language and inculturation, as well as developments in liturgical theology. The resulting book has been widely admired for its multicultural and progressive liturgical language. It is a significant achievement given the prevailing conservatism and legislative hurdles that characterised the New Zealand Anglican context when the PCPBR was established.

The challenges facing the PCPBR in the mid 1960s are evident in papers and minutes from that period. The 1964 colloquium held at St John's College in 1964 was attended by forty clergy, demonstrating wide interest in the project.

¹⁴⁷ Algar was a member of the Saint John's College faculty and would become the PCPBR's first Secretary.

¹⁴⁸ Rob McCullough, quoted in Geoffrey M.R. Haworth, *He Taonga Tongarewa: A Highly Prized and Precious Gift: A History of A New Zealand Prayer Book He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa* (Auckland: Tuia—The Office of the General Synod, 2018), 205.

Algar opened the colloquium by stating that “almost to a man we, clergy and laity—are little better than interested amateurs in liturgical matters, if not ignorant or obscurantist,”¹⁴⁹ and asked if the New Zealand Church was really ready for prayer book revision. He contended that the “revision of forms of service will be meaningless, in some respects disastrous, unless it is seen as part of a whole new way of looking at Church life—a new view of our place and purpose in contemporary New Zealand society.” He surveyed aspects of the Liturgical Movement in other parts of the world, in both Anglican and Roman Catholic settings, and insisted that liturgical reformation (i.e., prayer book revision) must precede or accompany liturgical renewal: “presumably... by infusing such ideas of the Liturgical Movement as: the common offering to God of our corporate life in Christ’s Body, active participation of the whole people in the life, worship, and witness of the Church—in other words to instil in us... that ‘Liturgy is Mission.’”

Algar’s comments suggest that our church, while excited about the possibilities of prayer book revision, was not necessarily aware of the complexity of the liturgical renewal movement or of the liturgical theology driving revision projects in other parts of the church around the world.

The first meeting of the PCPBR was convened the following week, on 12 August 1964. Concerns about inadequate representation in the membership were addressed immediately (there being no Māori, no women, no laity, and only one member of a professional teaching faculty), and within its first year, the Commission proposed a list of additional members to the Archbishop.¹⁵⁰ The Commission also soon realised the need for greater expertise in liturgical

¹⁴⁹ E. B. Algar, “Liturgical Developments,” *The New Zealand Theological Review*, 1 (1966): 33.

¹⁵⁰ J. Bosco M. Peters, *The Anglican Eucharist in New Zealand: 1814–1989* (BTheol(Hons) thesis, Auckland Consortium for Theological Education, 1990), 158.

theology, but was frustrated; in June 1966, Monteith (the Chair) wrote to the Archbishop suggesting that the St John's College lecturer in liturgics be invited to join the Commission. The Archbishop's response required a current member to give up their seat to allow this, which did not happen. However, the new appointments in 1965 doubled the size of the Commission and increased the theological and cultural diversity; the membership now included clergy and laity, men and women, Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals, as well as Māori clergy. They adopted a regional committee structure, which allowed different groups to progress various aspects between meetings, before convening and presenting their work to the whole Commission.

Alongside its textual work, the Commission also made attempts to broaden eucharistic understanding in the wider church, for example, through initiatives such as Paul Reeves' 'Life is Liturgy' project, which framed the bread and wine as the world brought into the church and laid on the altar.¹⁵¹

Following on from the significant time and resources that had been given to prayerbook development over the twenty-five years of the life of the PCPBR, and the impact of our new provincial Constitution established in 1992 (formalising the three-tikanga structure and expression of our province), time was also given to reshaping our provincial structures and bodies. However, in 1994, General Synod established the Common Life Liturgical Commission (CLLC, a three-tikanga body with an equal number of appointees from each tikanga) to succeed the PCPBR; this involved a significant (and not entirely happy) change in personnel, shaped primarily by the new canonical requirement for representation from across the three tikanga. Training and expertise in liturgical theology appeared to become a lower priority (not many of

¹⁵¹ Paul Reeves, *Life is Liturgy: A Guide to the Proposed Liturgy of the Anglican Church in New Zealand* (Auckland: Scott Printing, 1966), 23.

those who had gained liturgical expertise through their work on the PCPBR were appointed to the CLLC).

Conclusion

This background has left hurdles in the path of any possibility of present-day liturgical renewal or further prayer book revision. An unintended consequence of our positive emphasis on cultural identity and autonomy (crystallised in our three-tikanga constitution and canons) is that we are required to ensure cultural and gender representation in provincial bodies such as CLLC, while expertise is less of a focus. Our seminary faculty has not included anyone with qualifications in liturgical theology for many years, and student formation has tended to emphasise creativity and contextualisation in liturgy while giving minimal attention to the depth of the liturgical tradition. In addition, Pākehā culture in general prizes informality and is suspicious of anything perceived as fussy ceremony, which has influenced parish liturgy.

Thirty-five years on from the publication of our prayerbook, we are a changing church in an even more rapidly changing context. The three-tikanga partners of our church have grown in self-awareness and independence, yet have an even greater need for true interdependence.¹⁵²

It is clear from this historical survey that many clergy and parishes in our context have never been exposed to or formed in liturgical theology and the meaningful or intentional practice

¹⁵² “...it is important to remember that the book was published before the three-Tikanga constitution was approved. The prayerbook was that of the Church of the Province of New Zealand, but soon became that of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia... If [our Church] had indeed become a three-Tikanga Church, then was that new reality reflected in the book’s liturgies? For Tikanga Polynesia is only marginally represented, by liturgies that have never been regarded as adequate. And if Tikanga Māori was adequately represented in the book, why are there no ordination liturgies in Māori? Or baptismal liturgies? Or marriage or funeral liturgies? At least part of the answer... lies in how Māori Anglicans regarded the book—not as the final product for a satisfied Church, but as a step on the way towards mana motuhake (Māori self-determination).” Haworth, *He Taonga Tongarewa*, 227–8.

of liturgy. It is vital, then, to consider an account of liturgical theology for our context and what a sacramental imagination has to offer us.

This survey suggests that renewal will require more than permissive formularies or local creativity. It will require sustained liturgical formation, a retrieval of sacramental theology, and shared practices capable of forming communities over time. The next sections develop the theological resources needed to interpret and respond to this inherited situation.

Sacramental Theology Under These Southern Skies

Sacramentality is not a general principle that the world is full of sacredness: it is the very specific conviction that the world is full of a life of a God whose nature is known in Christ and the Spirit.¹⁵³

E! Ka nukunuku: E! ka neke neke ¹⁵⁴	It is moving; it is shifting
E! Ka nukunuku: E! ka neke neke	It is moving; it is shifting
Kia kite i te Au o Waitangi	Look to the open sea of Waitangi
E hora nei	Spread before us
me he Pīpīwharauoa	Like the shining cuckoo
Takoto te pai! Takoto te Pai!	It is good, all is well
Whiti! Ta tata! Whiti! Ta tata!	Change is coming soon
E rua ne inga ra kei tua	Is on the horizon
Takoto te pai! Takoto te Pai!	It is good, all is well, let peace be established...

Introduction

In this section, I offer a constructive exploration of sacramental theology for Aotearoa New Zealand today, considering what a renewed sacramental imagination should encompass if our liturgical practice is to be restored as the beating heart of life in Christ, shared with the world. I relate this exploration to the realities shaping contemporary formation and worship in this province.

¹⁵³ Rowan Williams, “Foreword,” in *The Gestures of God: Explorations in Sacramentality*, eds. Geoffrey Rowell and Christine Hall (London: Continuum, 2004), xiii.

¹⁵⁴ A Māori chant of the words uttered immediately following The Rev’d Samuel Marsden’s sermon, according to oral tradition, on the occasion of the first documented Anglican service on New Zealand soil, on Christmas Day 1814; this chant has been shared across the generations particularly among the Ngā Puhi iwi, the tribe who first welcomed and interacted with Marsden, and is still widely used today in both liturgical and secular settings. Te Pīhopa Te Kitohi Pikaahu, “Te Hari a Ngāpuhi—The Dance (of Joy) of Ngāpuhi,” in Davidson, Allan; Lange, Stuart; Lineham, Peter; Puckey, Adrienne, eds., *Te Rongopai 1814 'Takoto te pai!': Bicentenary reflections on Christian beginnings and developments in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Auckland, New Zealand: The General Synod Office, "Tuia", of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia, 2014), 23.

A renewed sacramental imagination must speak both to where worship is taking us (its *telos*) and to the conditions that shape how worship forms us now. It must be accountable to place—our *whenua*¹⁵⁵ and *moana*,¹⁵⁶ seasons and built environments—and to the communal realities of our three-tikanga life. It must also be open about the struggles of our society that impact formation today: both abuse and trauma, the contested nature of bodies and identities (including racial and cultural identities), widening inequality, the ecological crisis, and digital technologies that reshape our attention and selfhood. I suggest that eucharistic worship, habitually received, forms a people for communion with God and for public, reconciling life in the world.

Accordingly, I begin by clarifying the *telos* of worship (communion with God for the public, reconciling life), then turn to place and our three-tikanga realities, before tracing sacramentality's public and ethical implications and finally grounding this account scripturally through Tillard's eucharistic ecclesiology.

3.1 Telos—what worship is for

By *telos* I mean the end or purpose of eucharistic worship: communion with the triune God that forms the church as a sacramental people for the life of the world. If worship is for communion with God that sends the church into the world, then it cannot be an imported or escapist symbolic world. The sacramental tradition and theology of the church must be grounded

¹⁵⁵ 'Whenua' is the Māori word for the land; it also means placenta (it is customary for Māori to return to their iwi's land to bury the placenta after the birth of a child). It implies the whole ecosystem connected to the land, and it implies a strong sense of belonging and identity linked to a particular place. Māori traditionally did not have a sense of personal ownership of land—instead they understood themselves as stewards (this gave rise to immense difficulties when European settlers 'purchased' Māori land and later began to confiscate it).

¹⁵⁶ 'Moana' is a Polynesian word used in Māori, Hawaiian and other languages to mean ocean; it encompasses the whole marine environment and implies a deep connectedness and sense of stewardship.

anew in each context, just as Christ is present in and responsive to every context. Juan Oliver suggests the danger of any failure to contextualise our liturgy is that we shape “a people who think they can be close to God while remaining far from the everyday world, or who expect the arrival of the Reign to be *only* an interior event, between the individual’s heart and God.”¹⁵⁷ He considers this uncritical approach to be “a form of idolatry—worshipping another culture, or another time or place, instead of the living God present in their own culture, time and place. This idolatrous liturgy, being sacramental, is also efficacious: it forms (I should say deforms) the participants.”¹⁵⁸

Further, any sacramental theology must be contextual because, in essence, it must be missional. This challenge was articulated at the beginning of our prayerbook revision process by The Rev’d E. B. Algar,¹⁵⁹ when he opened a theological colloquium on “A Prayer Book for New Zealand” at St John’s College in August 1964.¹⁶⁰ Algar insisted that liturgical reformation must precede or accompany liturgical renewal: “presumably... by infusing such ideas of the Liturgical Movement as: the common offering to God of our corporate life in Christ’s Body, active participation of the whole people in the life, worship, and witness of the Church—in other words to instil in us... that ‘Liturgy is Mission.’”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Oliver, “Worship, Forming and Deforming,” 13.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁵⁹ Algar was a member of the St John’s College faculty and would become the PCPBR’s first Secretary. The challenges raised by Algar still seem relevant to the church of today.

¹⁶⁰ Algar was very pointed in his comments, noting that “almost to a man we, clergy and laity—are little better than interested amateurs in liturgical matters, if not ignorant or obscurantist.” E. B. Algar, “Liturgical Developments,” *The New Zealand Theological Review*, 1 (1966), 33.

¹⁶¹ Algar, “Liturgical Developments,” 34.

At the same time, renewal in the life of the church is first of all God's work; as Geoffrey Rowell expresses it,

The sacramental life of the Church into which Christians are plunged at their Baptism is cosmic in its dimension. Christ is the one who fills all things, the one through whom all things are created, and 'from his fullness we have, all of us, received....' (John 1:16). The sacramental expression of that saving and transfiguring reality, whether it be in 'the sacraments' narrowly so defined, or in the setting forth of this vision in buildings, art and liturgy, calls us to a contemplative awareness, a transformation of our imaginations...¹⁶²

And again, with perhaps a more local sensibility, by Rowan Williams, who wrote,

Church is not primarily an event in which we do something, think something, feel something; it is being together in a situation where we trust God to do something and to change us—whether or not we notice it, let alone fully understand it... One of the challenges of being church [is]... how to create an environment in which church can happen in the fullest sense, with the sacramental life flowing through as a sign and channel of God's action...[considering] what sort of environment allows God to be God, actively and transformatively.¹⁶³

To frame this constructive task, I use 'sacramental imagination' to name a way of perceiving and inhabiting the world as graced and ordered towards communion with God: an imagination formed by baptismal identity and eucharistic practice. 'Sacramentality' here refers not only to particular liturgies but to a symbolic world in which God's reality is lived out, communally and ethically. Accordingly, sacramental worship does not primarily express content but forms those who engage in it: it shapes perception and desire to become aware of what Lizette Larson-Miller calls 'an expansive view of reality' so that Christian life becomes possible.

In this view,

the Triune God of Christian understanding is the Creator of everything that is, continues to interact with all of creation, is present in that interaction in various ways... is desirous

¹⁶² Geoffrey Rowell, "The Significance of Sacramentality," in *The Gestures of God: Explorations in Sacramentality*, eds. Geoffrey Rowell and Christine Hall (London: Continuum, 2004), 6–7.

¹⁶³ Rowan Williams, "Address to the Fresh Expressions National Pilgrimage, Coventry Cathedral, December 2008," in *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition*, eds. Steven Croft and Ian Mobsby (London: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2009), 7.

of an ongoing relationship with humanity and creation, inspires and enables that relationship... and is, above all, love—love for us. The gap between Creator and created is... mediated in many ways, but creation, or matter, is essential to this relationship because it is created good by God; it is the fundamental meeting place of humanity and divinity...¹⁶⁴

Rowan Williams also offers a necessary theological criterion for this section's argument:

“Sacramentality is not a general principle that the world is full of sacredness: it is the very specific conviction that the world is full of a life of a God whose nature is known in Christ and the Spirit.”¹⁶⁵ In the New Zealand context, this matters acutely. We live amidst strong environmental reverence and ‘spiritual ecology,’ yet the question for formation is how wonder becomes a graced encounter that is recognisably and particularly ordered towards Christ rather than remaining diffuse or self-referential.

David Brown is a resource here, offering a description of how perception can be schooled. In *A Sacramental World: Why it Matters*,¹⁶⁶ he worries that much recent writing tells the story of sacramentality “from the inside out”,¹⁶⁷ assuming it has validity only if it “starts with Christ and his church”,¹⁶⁸ he notes that this leaves little room for genuine dialogue with those who do not share that starting point.¹⁶⁹ He offers three proposals through which the world

¹⁶⁴ Lizette Larson-Miller, *Sacramentality Renewed: Contemporary Conversations in Sacramental Theology* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2016), xii.

¹⁶⁵ Williams, “Foreword,” xiii.

¹⁶⁶ David Brown, “A Sacramental World: Why it Matters,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology*, ed. Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 603.

¹⁶⁷ Brown, “A Sacramental World,” 605.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

understood as sacramental—“even without appeal to revealed theology”¹⁷⁰—might help bridge the gap. First, he appeals to sacramental imagination as the connective work of analogy and symbol— “analogies, images, metaphors” —that can relate “two spheres” without collapsing them.¹⁷¹ Second, he emphasises the “open-ended” and multivalent character of imagery and symbol, which can carry meaning beyond a single, closed interpretive frame.¹⁷² Third, he stresses the social conditioning of perception and how Christian proclamation builds on the way in which people are actually “situated,” pointing to Christ’s own use of culturally shared images and, paradigmatically, to the Eucharist as the place where this bridging becomes most concrete.¹⁷³

With Williams’ criterion in mind, Brown’s proposals help to demonstrate how the church might speak plausibly in a secular and religiously sceptical culture—not by competing with spirituality, but by offering a communal, eucharistic practice that shapes our perception and desire so that creation’s witness is received within the triune economy of grace.

This possibility of training our awareness returns me to the power of Chauvet’s notion of competence as *God’s gift* for those who participate in or ‘perform’ the Eucharist.¹⁷⁴ Set against the feelings of struggle and protest against change is the grace of God constantly at work in every individual who continues to engage in the practice of the Eucharist, even when (perhaps especially when) they experience it as destabilising or fluid. The Eucharist as a bodily practice is indeed, as Chauvet puts it, *a way of conversion*, and it can be no other. All of us have been

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 609.

¹⁷² Ibid., 610.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 612–13.

¹⁷⁴ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 133.

formed in some way by our participation in the liturgy and its polysemous symbolic world, and by God's grace, that formation will be unending.

As David Power notes, "The fundamental point in sacramental conversion is the readiness to let oneself be invited into the world of the sacrament, to hear the word, to enter into the prayer and ritual, and to let oneself and one's world be called into question."¹⁷⁵ This vulnerability is risky—it demands that we be willing to experience liturgy as a site of questioning rather than certainty, and our symbolic world as fluid rather than rigid.

This stance of openness is a hopeful one; continuing to engage in liturgical practice means that any person's symbolic world and identity can be polysemous, and open to ongoing change through God's always-present offer of grace. It is the community's responsibility to constantly hold open the invitation to participate, and to understand liturgy as a practice that is always new; we enter into it again and again, and begin, again and again, always with the possibility of an ever deeper conversion.

If eucharistic worship has the goal of communion-with-God-for-the-life-of-the-world, then the question of *where and with whom* this communion is practised becomes unavoidable: it must be practised repeatedly in place, in time, and in the communal realities of three-tikanga life.

3.2 Theology of place and contemporary pressures

I consider place and seasonality, and then the communal demands of three-tikanga life; following these considerations, I go on to explore the pressures that distort formation and the particular stakes of sacramental renewal.

¹⁷⁵ David Power, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 265.

3.2.1 Place as sacramental context

The popular term ‘Godzone’, an abbreviation of the phrase ‘God’s Own Country,’ has been used by ‘Kiwis’ for over 100 years to describe New Zealand, suggesting that people regard the natural environment as in some sense sacred; we are immensely blessed to live in a stunningly beautiful part of God’s creation, and our relationship with it is rich and complex.

While New Zealand is thought of as a ‘western’ nation, and the imprint of Western and colonial values on the national psyche is dominant, Māori, the indigenous people, or *tangata whenua*, of our country, hold a covenanted relationship through Te Tiriti o Waitangi¹⁷⁶ with all others who consider this land to be home. *Tangata whenua* can be translated literally as ‘people of the land’, and Māori identify profoundly with the land of their iwi (this is their *tūrangawaewae*, their place to stand),¹⁷⁷ with features such as mountains or rivers being acknowledged as ancestors (*tūpuna*) in their *whakapapa* or genealogy.¹⁷⁸ Whenever a Māori person introduces themselves, especially in a formal setting, the format of this self-introduction

¹⁷⁶ Te Tiriti o Waitangi (translated as The Treaty of Waitangi) is New Zealand’s founding document, a written agreement made on 6 February 1840 between the British Crown and over 500 Māori chiefs (though not all iwi participated). It is a covenant establishing a government to manage British settlement while promising to protect Māori rights (including customary rights, for example to the use of lands and sea resources), authorities and treasures. Anglican missionaries were instrumental in the process, and there were two distinct texts (one in English and one in te reo Māori) which have turned out to be not exact translations of each other, leading to enduring debate. The majority of the Māori chiefs signed the Māori text, which gave the Crown *kāwanatanga* (governance) but guaranteed the chiefs *tinio rangatiratanga* (full and exclusive sovereignty) over their lands and people, while the English text states that Māori ceded all rights and powers of sovereignty to the Queen. Given this difference, our government and legal practice over time has established a set of ‘treaty principles’ to be applied in law, which include partnership, active protection in Māori interests and participation in government.

¹⁷⁷ ‘Tūrangawaewae’ literally means ‘a place to stand’ (*tūranga* means a standing place and *wae* means feet). The concept refers to a place where one feels empowered, connected and at home in relation to ancestral and kinship ties—it represents a foundational sense of belonging and identity.

¹⁷⁸ In recent years, New Zealand law has recognized features like the Whanganui River (2017) and Mount Taranaki (Taranaki Maunga) (2025) as legal persons, with ‘all the rights, powers, duties and liabilities of a legal person—this creates an ongoing structure for governance and advocacy and reshapes how the interests of these land features can be articulated (and protected) in law and policy.’

includes acknowledgement of the gift of life and the whole of creation, and then their local mountain, river and other ancestry and relationships. The injustice and destruction of colonisation—the dishonouring of Te Tiriti— inevitably damaged this deeply grounded sense of identity for Māori. Yet with the Māori renaissance (initiatives to recover language, place in public life and institutional reform across New Zealand society) from the early 1970s onwards, Māori understanding of the interconnectedness of humanity and creation has become much more a part of our common awareness.

Pākehā have had a complex relationship with the land, evolving across the generations since the colonial era.¹⁷⁹ However, today, many Pākehā are seeking to deepen their identity as *tangata tiriti*, people of the treaty, understanding that it is Te Tiriti o Waitangi that gives us a place to stand in partnership—along with the responsibilities of partnership—with Māori. Outside the church, New Zealanders share a strong sense of enjoyment of and connection with the environment as a source of sustenance (spiritual and physical), recreation, belonging, and shared responsibility, although these deeply held values are becoming increasingly contested and fragile in the face of corporate and political interests.

Our province also includes the Diocese of Polynesia, and Pacifika identity and spirituality are similarly intertwined with the ocean—the moana. The moana is not the empty space between islands but is rather the source of life and interconnectedness for people, histories and identity across the Pacific.

¹⁷⁹ In his DMin thesis, the late Bishop Jim White articulated this sense of dis/placement, a tension for Pākehā of past generations between knowing no other home and feeling attached to this landscape, and yet also feeling like an exile. “Remarkably, until the middle of the last century, it was not uncommon to hear Great Britain referred to as ‘home.’” James Andrew White, *Locus Iste: Sacred Space as Sacrament* (Doctor of Ministry thesis, School of Theology, University of the South, 2020), 4.

As Pākehā, perhaps especially for Pākehā Anglicans with our shared history of partnership and contestation with Māori dating back to the early 1800s, our task is to dialogue with and learn from *mātauranga* Māori and Pacifika,¹⁸⁰ to walk in partnership in such a way that their values and identity are upheld and honoured and ‘*mātauranga* Pākehā’ is formed and deepened.¹⁸¹ The richness gifted to us is an expanded awareness of a sacred cosmos alive with the interconnected life of God. This insight into indigenous awareness extends to our understanding of creation, including broadening the cultural hermeneutic we bring to reading Scripture, since the Hebrew bible view of creation and humanity is an indigenous view rather than the much later overlay of spirit/body dualism.

The question remains how this widely shared and culturally layered reverence for our environment is received within Christian sacramentality.¹⁸² Williams’ criterion anchors that reception in Christ rather than something free-floating, and Brown’s account helps name the church’s role as schooling perception through our eucharistic practice.

¹⁸⁰ ‘Mātauranga’ (knowledge) is a Māori word meaning a comprehensive knowledge system encompassing understanding, wisdom and skills related to tangible and intangible aspects of existence. It is something holistic and evolving—developed over generations through observation, experience and cultural practice.

¹⁸¹ “Elder of the Ngāti Wai tribe Hori Parata said: ‘When we came to Aotearoa we were Polynesian. The land made us Māori.’... Over hundreds of years *mātauranga* Māori became uniquely shaped by Aotearoa. It can be asserted that Pākehā were European before they came to Aotearoa, but the land, and Māori made them Pākehā. Pākehā are endemic to Aotearoa and, if they are open to it, can lean in to being shaped and formed by the land, sea, birds, trees and seasons of Aotearoa, and by their relationship with Māori. The wisdom gained by Pākehā since Europeans started arriving in Aotearoa can be termed *mātauranga* Pākehā. *Mātauranga* Pākehā is a work in progress, still in need of formation, still needing to find the processes for Pākehā to belong and thrive authentically in Aotearoa New Zealand.” Michael Wallace, *Defrosting Christmas: Locating the Liturgical Year in Aotearoa New Zealand* (PhD thesis, Australian Catholic University, 2024), 21, <https://doi.org/10.26199/acu.90zqy>.

¹⁸² Creation has had a place in eucharistic worship since the early centuries; as Teresa Berger notes, the words of the Sanctus (“Heaven and earth are full of your glory”), a biblical-liturgical text rooted in the prophet Isaiah’s vision of the celestial worship of God (Isa 6:3), have been part of eucharistic praying in Christian traditions of both East and West since at least the fourth century. Berger’s essay helpfully surveys the development of contemporary creation-focused liturgy. Teresa Berger, “Introduction,” in *Full of Your Glory: Liturgy, Cosmos, Creation*, ed. Teresa Berger (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2019), 2–3.

3.2.2 Time and seasonality

Part of this journey must be a deeper inculturation of our Christian faith and liturgical tradition, including inculturation of the liturgical calendar with its seasons and feasts grounded in the northern hemisphere into our southern hemisphere context so that the liturgical cycle of the worldwide church is integrated with our experience of creation,¹⁸³ and the wisdom or mātauranga of tangata whenua as well as mātauranga Moana. In his PhD thesis, Michael Wallace argues that this will also entail deepening an awareness of ‘mātauranga Pākehā,’ the wisdom gained by Pākehā since Europeans started arriving in Aotearoa through being shaped and formed by the land, sea, birds, trees and seasons of Aotearoa, and by their relationship with Māori.¹⁸⁴ This broader conversation lies beyond the scope of this thesis, but it matters for developing a sacramental imagination here.

A local example of inculturation is the midwinter festival of Matariki; long celebrated by Māori with increasing recognition for all New Zealanders with the establishment of a public holiday by the NZ Government in 2021. Over the last twenty years, liturgical resources have been developed, although as Wallace notes, the diversity of meanings ascribed to this celebration makes this complex; “The focus of the festival is difficult to discern; is it midwinter, harvest, Thanksgiving, Halloween or a festival of national identity?”¹⁸⁵ In my own parish, we celebrate Matariki with a liturgical focus on giving thanks for those who have died and the year that is past, the year to come, and the goodness of creation and God’s provision in it as we start the

¹⁸³ Wallace, *Defrosting Christmas*, 21.

¹⁸⁴ Wallace, *Defrosting Christmas*, 21.

¹⁸⁵ Wallace, *Defrosting Christmas*, 274.

journey towards spring; we bless seedlings, and after our main service, share hospitality and then move outdoors across our church site and focus on new planting. We are planting native seedlings, many grown from seeds from our own *rākau rangatira* (mature trees) as well as swapped with other local community projects, in order to restore the urban *ngāhere* (native forest/bush ecosystem).

3.2.3 Three-tikanga and communal realities

A sacramental theology for this place in Aotearoa New Zealand must also account for the three-tikanga reality of our Anglican province. This is not simply a cultural label or the addition of local flourishes to the liturgical forms we have inherited. It is our specific ecclesial condition, because formation always occurs in a particular relationship—in the dynamic interplay of peoples, histories, languages, and authorities—and therefore cannot be neutral. Our three-tikanga life is shaped by the long and complicated history of encounter between Māori and the church, by the governance and diocesan structures of our province, by the covenant relationship of Te Tiriti and its contestation, and also by the presence of Pacific peoples. Thus, for Pākehā Anglicans, “formation” should not be imagined as the private cultivation of spirituality, nor as the passing on of ideas alone. It is always essentially social and political: it concerns how we are positioned in relationships, what stories we inhabit, and what practices teach us whose voices and bodies are recognised. In so doing, we must recognise that “There is no such thing as a cultureless person or a culturally neutral existence.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Colleen M. Griffith and Hosffman Ospino, eds., *Formative Theological Education* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2023), 66.

Within this relational and intercultural reality, for Pākehā Anglicans, a significant gift of our three-tikanga experience is a renewed sense of ritual seriousness. Māori and Pacific communities generally carry ritualised practices deeply around aspects of life such as identity and belonging, hospitality and welcome, grief and reconciliation, as well as life transitions. They do not see ritual as decorative or optional; in their worldview, it is an essential bearer of identity and a means of sustaining communal life. By contrast, in the world of many Pākehā over the past century, ritual has become much weaker. We have lost shared rites and symbolic worlds that once bound us together and gave us a sense of community; even within church life, worship can easily be broken down to preference, style, or personal resonance. As tangata Tiriti, part of our formation is to learn from mātauranga Māori and mātauranga Moana, not as a set of techniques to borrow, but as gifted wisdom that can reshape our attention, reverence, and communal responsibility. Such learning can deepen Anglican worship precisely at the point where it is most vulnerable in late modernity: the temptation to treat liturgy as casual performance or consumer product rather than as a communal enactment of the gospel.

Liturgy is one of the primary places where this belonging is enacted and, therefore, also where it is tested. The first recorded Anglican liturgy in Aotearoa—on Christmas Day 1814 at Rangihoua with hundreds of local Māori present—already suggests that Anglican worship here began as a complex cross-cultural reality shaped by relationship and power, rather than as a simple church service. Today, this remains our experience; the Eucharist gathers a diversity of people into a single symbolic world, with shared understandings of communion, reconciliation, and common life in Christ. Yet precisely because liturgy is bodily, public, and communal, it can both form and deform. It can train habits of recognition and mutuality, or through silencing or

appropriation, it can reproduce patterns of dominance, marginalisation, or cultural invisibility.¹⁸⁷

We must acknowledge and guard against the ways in which the church has acted as a colonising force, including in liturgical practice.

Living with the effects of colonisation... is like losing your voice... It's losing your own words, then struggling to understand your stories and how they used to make sense of the world we live in. Eventually, colonised people are forced to use the words and the pictures that belong to the coloniser, giving a foreign interpretation of our reality.¹⁸⁸

Questions of language, music, space, leadership, and ritual style are not merely aesthetic; they are formative. They teach participants—often beneath explicit awareness—who belongs, whose stories are centred, and what kinds of agency are possible within the community.

A renewed sacramental imagination in our province, therefore, must include accountability and mutual recognition in relation to our tikanga partners. If eucharistic worship is to form a people for communion with God and for public, reconciling life, it must also show us how to become a people with the capacity for truly open relationships across profound difference: we should learn eucharistic practices such as listening, honouring, repentance, and shared responsibility. This includes allowing the ritual seriousness present within tikanga Māori and tikanga Pasifika to challenge and reshape Pākehā attitudes of casualness, individualism, and liturgical consumerism, while keeping Williams' criterion in mind: Christian sacramentality cannot be understood as some all-purpose generic sacralty, but life in Christ and the Spirit. In practice, our sacramental formation should be sustained not only by carefully crafted rites, but by

¹⁸⁷ Hosffman Ospino writes of a “dream of a humanity birthed into a common vision... a vision that demands awareness about tensions among differences, social disparities, power imbalances, hegemonic tendencies, movements of resistance, memories of violence, and ultimately the pervasive presence of sin.” Griffith and Ospino, eds., *Formative Theological Education*, 68.

¹⁸⁸ Mike Ross, “The Throat of Parata,” in *Imagining Decolonisation*, ed. Rebecca Kiddle (Wellington, NZ: Bridget Williams Books, 2020), 32.

communities practised in mutual recognition. In our communities, our worship should carry the gospel values of reconciliation, justice, and shared holiness. Only within such a communal life can liturgy become what it claims to be: not a performance of identity or craft, but a school of communion in which we are formed in Christ.

3.2.4 Pressures of context

These local realities are intensified by contemporary pressures beyond our church. A sacramental imagination for this context must also be aware of the crises of our society, including our local experience of the global climate crisis, with our province very soon to include some of the world's first climate refugees.¹⁸⁹ Aotearoa New Zealand society is also characterised by growing inequality and poverty, very high rates of both violence against women and youth suicide compared with the rest of the OECD,¹⁹⁰ and sharply increasing struggles with racism and housing unaffordability. These pressures make explicit why sacramentality cannot remain private or aesthetic; it should shape our communities to be justice-oriented and responsive—a point to which I now turn.

3.3 Sacramentality and ethics (or, Why this is not ‘private spirituality’)

A sacramental theology must be lived; otherwise, it is incomplete—the sacramental life has ethical implications, as it forms character and informs our action in the world. Our world is

¹⁸⁹ Our province includes the nations of Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and the Cook Islands. <https://www.anglican.org.nz>

¹⁹⁰ The OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) is an international forum and knowledge hub for data, analysis and best practices in public policy, founded in 1961 and involving 38 member countries. New Zealand joined in 1973.

facing a terrible denouement of the destructive arcs driving our hyper-individualistic, late-modern, capitalist, technologically driven society.¹⁹¹

These are the ‘powers and principalities of our world’, and the love of God in Christ demands that we engage them.¹⁹² But to speak and act ethically in this context as Christians and offer both hope and challenge, we must be able to offer an alternative voice out of an authentic and alternative way of being and belonging in Christ. As Anglicans, our tradition holds liturgical worship as central to our life and identity; such worship is a ‘characterising activity’ because it involves particular modalities of communal action and ritual action.¹⁹³ “When worship occurs, people are characterised, given their fundamental location and orientation in the world.”¹⁹⁴

This demands that we engage in the practice of the Eucharist which has shaped Christians since the New Testament era. Without repeated encounters with the ‘dangerous memory’¹⁹⁵ borne by the Eucharist, the faith of Christians is easily shaped instead by the influences of this world, becoming **individualistic**, **consumerist** and **static**—namely, offering neither a demand for nor the means of transformation. One of the most prevalent theologies in our church communities is an evangelicalism that suggests the “me and Jesus religion” noted by theologian

¹⁹¹ Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory: Political and Liturgical Theology in Dialogue* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000), 17.

¹⁹² Don E. Saliers, “Liturgy and Ethics: Some New Beginnings,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1979): 180.

¹⁹³ Saliers, “Liturgy and Ethics,” 175.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*, xiii.

Bruce Morrill SJ;¹⁹⁶ it is perhaps also akin to the ‘bourgeois Christianity’ that so distressed Johann Baptist Metz—“a religion of ‘purely-believed in faith’ or mere contemplation.”¹⁹⁷

This easily becomes a self-celebrating and world-denying form of Christianity and offers little of the hope and demand of the *interruptive* gospel of Christ.

To challenge the ‘me and Jesus’ religion (in which worship is often evaluated on the basis of ‘meeting my needs’) and propose a more ethically aware form of faith—one that has the capacity to open participants up to the grace of God and form them for life in Christ—it is essential to consider the witness of scripture: the primary and normative source of our faith.

3.4 Scriptural and Ecclesiological Grounding

In his study on the ecclesiology of the Eucharist in the early church, Jean-Marie-Roger Tillard undertakes an analysis of central passages in Paul’s letters (particularly 1 Corinthians and Ephesians), the gospel of John, 1 John and James. He observes that across the New Testament, the writers consistently comment much more on believers’ behaviour towards others than on “an ethics centred on an individual.”¹⁹⁸ He considers that “God and others are the overall coordinates of Christian life. Christian life is a life in and of the church.” It is clear from Tillard’s analysis that, for the earliest Christian communities, this is not an abstract theology but one shaped and expressed by sacramental practice and shared life.

¹⁹⁶ Personal lecture notes, 17 June 2021; Professor Bruce T Morrill S.J.: Liturgy and Ethics 2021 (Sewanee Advanced Degrees Programme).

¹⁹⁷ Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*, 34.

¹⁹⁸ Jean-Marie R. Tillard, *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ: At the Source of the Ecclesiology of Communion*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 1.

The governing metaphor developed by Paul for the life of the community in Christ is ‘the body of Christ.’ We see this in his first letter to the Corinthians, especially across chapters 10, 11 and 12, which deal inseparably with the Eucharist and the church.¹⁹⁹ “For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit,” (1 Cor 12:13), and for Paul, ‘the body’ then becomes almost synonymous with ‘the church’ (Col 1:18-19, Eph 1:22-23).²⁰⁰ As Tillard notes, “Therefore, to receive salvation from God is to be inserted into a body animated by the Spirit of God, the body of Christ, the church.”²⁰¹ This is an extraordinarily powerful contrast to the notion of ‘my personal salvation’ which characterises some contemporary forms of faith. Tillard goes on to explain, “The life that is reconciled with God is led with others, and this by its very nature. It is not only a life *in the church* but—the nuance is of crucial importance—a life *from and by the church*.”²⁰² The out-working of salvation—our *sanctification*—cannot occur in isolation, in Paul’s logic.

Tillard surveys Paul’s equally powerful and complex use of the body metaphor in Ephesians, and also gives consideration to the Johannine analogy of the vine, an image with a resonant history in the memory of the people of God,²⁰³ in the gospel of John as well as 1 John. He also explores the ecclesiological metaphors used in James and 1 Peter. Critically, it is clear

¹⁹⁹ Tillard, *Flesh of the Church*, 25.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² *Ibid.*, (italics original).

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 13–16. Note especially, “The Johannine tradition is firm and constant in its vision: abiding in Jesus, which is the very definition of the Christian way of life, necessarily implies a living and concrete relationship with others, branches of the one vine which Jesus constitutes with and in his own in a reciprocal interiority or inclusion. The relationship with Jesus is never a relationship with an isolated Jesus, shut in within the boundaries of his transcendence. The disciple always joins him in his own relationship with his Father and with those whom the gospel calls his friends (John 15:14–15).”

from the way that these images are used that the collective identity—*koinōnia* or, in Aotearoa New Zealand, we might say *whanaungatanga*²⁰⁴—which is the pathway for growth in holiness, is interwoven with and built up by participation in the community’s shared life (‘works’ in James) and their sacramental worship. There is a resonance here with Bishop George Selwyn’s original vision for St John’s College: that students be involved in ‘useful industry’ together as a community, as well as in their shared worship and academic study. The New Testament witness includes a complex interweaving of the liturgical and ecclesial, which Tillard makes explicit in his analysis of 1 Corinthians 10–12.²⁰⁵ Importantly, the sacramental practice of these communities—the sharing of the bread and the cup²⁰⁶—is a participation in or rehearsal of a shared symbolic order or world in which they are given identity and located in relation to one another and to God, in Christ.²⁰⁷

Conclusion

Considered together, these strands show that a renewed sacramental imagination cannot be reduced to a simple aesthetic appreciation of creation or to liturgical technique. Eucharistic worship forms our communion with God *by* forming communion with one another, and therefore

²⁰⁴ <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/10068> (1. (noun) relationship, kinship, sense of family connection - a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging. It develops as a result of kinship rights and obligations, which also serve to strengthen each member of the kin group. It also extends to others to whom one develops a close familial, friendship or reciprocal relationship.) Cited 30 September 2021.

²⁰⁵ “[These chapters] deal inseparably with the Eucharist and the church. Without these chapters, we would know very little, not only of the Eucharist of the Lord, but also of the very nature of the church united to its Lord and unified within itself by a communion (*koinōnia*) whose source is wholly sacramental before being juridical.” Tillard, *Flesh of the Church*, 25.

²⁰⁶ See Tillard’s extended analysis pages 25–28. “The Eucharist is explained by the church, the church is explained by the eucharist.” Tillard, *Flesh of the Church*, 28.

²⁰⁷ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 70.

draws us into lives characterised by reconciliation, justice, and hope. In Aotearoa New Zealand, this formation is inevitably conditioned by our place, by the relational realities of three-tikanga life, and by contemporary pressures that distort our attention and our sense of belonging. The question that should be considered next is what patterns of formation—especially for clergy—will best sustain such sacramental participation as a lived ‘way of conversion.’

Implications for Formation

Church is not primarily an event in which we do something, think something, feel something; it is being together in a situation where we trust God to do something and to change us—whether or not we notice it, let alone fully understand it... how to create an environment in which church can happen in the fullest sense, with the sacramental life flowing through as a sign and channel of God’s action... [figuring out] what sort of environment allows God to be God, actively and transformatively.²⁰⁸

Introduction

In this section, I diagnose the mismatch between what liturgy does—forming persons and communities in Christ for identity and mission through repeated participation—and what our current training pathways tend to prioritise. I show how formation often becomes fragmented into academic knowledge, technique, and “relevance,” rather than cultivating the sacramental imagination and participatory competence needed to sustain lifelong conversion and communal worship in a complex and changing context.

In what follows, I examine this mismatch by viewing current formation practice through the formative logic of liturgy itself. I first identify the dominant priorities that shape contemporary priestly training in this province, especially under conditions of institutional anxiety and decline. St John’s Theological College serves as a primary subject for this analysis, not because it is our only site of formation, but because it is an especially revealing one: our province’s main residential formation context,²⁰⁹ where understandings of ministry, worship,

²⁰⁸ Rowan Williams, “Address to the Fresh Expressions National Pilgrimage, Coventry Cathedral, December 2008,” in *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition*, eds. Steven Croft and Ian Mobsby (London: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2009), 7.

²⁰⁹ Several of our dioceses have local, part-time non-residential training options for nonstipendiary ordained ministry. The Diocese of Nelson (the most theologically conservative of the Pākehā dioceses) has Bishopdale, a residential college offering its own diploma-level qualifications and degree studies through formal affiliation with Laidlaw College, the largest interdenominational theological tertiary institute in New Zealand. Many of

leadership and theological competence are evident in practice. From there, I explore the key distortions that arise when liturgical formation is marginalised, and I conclude by identifying the implications for a renewed approach to formation that can sustain sacramental participation as a lived and communal way of conversion.

A helpful way into this diagnosis is to consider a wider account of the contemporary priestly vocation and the competing expectations now placed on it. In her book *The Nearness of God: Parish Ministry as Spiritual Practice*, Julia Gatta contends that ‘for some time now, the pastoral vocation has seemed adrift: a calling in search of a job description.’²¹⁰ Gatta goes on to describe how, since the mid-twentieth century, Anglican clergy have been variously formed as counsellors, managers, and leaders. I regularly supervise students from our provincial seminary on placements in my parish, work with curates, serve as a spiritual director for participants in our Diocesan Training Programme, and occasionally teach this latter group as well (the DTP is a part-time training programme in the Diocese of Auckland for those preparing for non-stipendiary ordained ministry).

My observation is that Gatta’s statement is true. Our training establishments—our seminary in particular—have often been a lightning rod for the anxieties of the wider church and up until recently, promoted a ‘missional leadership’ model²¹¹ that had no grounding in our tradition and which disregarded formation in liturgy and the sacramental and contemplative

Bishopdale’s faculty have nondenominational backgrounds and one is licensed to the NZ branch of GAFCON, the Church of Confessing Anglicans of Aotearoa New Zealand.

²¹⁰ Julia Gatta, *The Nearness of God: Parish Ministry as Spiritual Practice* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2010), xii.

²¹¹ “Our graduates will be missional leaders who are growing spiritually, biblically literate, theological thinkers and bi-cultural partners.” St John’s College website, cited 29 September 2021 <https://stjohnscollege.ac.nz/#/the-college/> The College has undergone significant change since that period, including a new website, but still has no teaching capacity in sacramental theology.

life.²¹² Developing capacity for missional leadership in our students is not mistaken in itself, nor is it misguided to expect practical competence, the ability to innovate, and public engagement. In a church wrestling with institutional decline, cultural change, and resource pressures, these anxieties are fair. The problem, however, is not ‘missional leadership’ language but its isolation from a theological understanding of formation that involves ecclesiology and sacramentality. When ‘leadership’ is treated primarily as a set of transferable skills, strategic techniques, or personal capacities, it can displace the deeper question of who the church is and how Christians are formed in Christ through shared worship. I am therefore not seeking to build an argument against mission or leadership in the life of the church and its clergy (both are essential), but against their abstraction and disconnection from liturgical participation, belonging, and the slow work of conversion.

What we need, then, is not less mission but a fuller account of priestly formation grounded in the practices that constitute priestly ministry. Gatta has woven her reflections on priesthood around the central tasks of parish ministry; this serves as a profound reminder that these are the practices that should most shape our identity and work as priests (over against all the other tasks and expectations that get pressed upon us and arise within us). These practices are presiding at the Eucharist, preaching, and pastoral care.

²¹² “It is increasingly likely that the church will have resources to form ministers, through the St John’s College Trust, but lack established places of ministry. This suggests that training of priests for mission could be the priority. This will involve formation in community-facing ministry, with skills to connect the liturgies of the church with people unfamiliar with established patterns of worship. Training to give a three-minute devotional for a youth group, engage in faith formation online or lead Eucharist in an inter-generational messy church type context, seem much more essential for those called to ordained ministry in 2040. *Given this reality, much of the training we experienced, which was focused on established ways of gathering and leading worship, will be meaningless.*” Steve Taylor and Animoa Goold, *Te Pae Tawhiti 2040: Final Report*, report commissioned by Te Kotahitanga (Lent 2024), PDF, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, accessed February 6, 2026, <https://www.anglican.org.nz/Media/Files/Te-Pae-Tawhiti-for-Te-Kotahitanga>. 69. Emphasis mine.

The mismatch between what liturgy does and what our current training pathways prioritise becomes especially visible in my province's principal formation institution, St John's College, where the pervasive forgetfulness of our sacramental tradition has been particularly consequential. Established by George Augustus Selwyn in 1841, the College has had a complex history. It aspires to hold together the breadth of theological diversity present across our province, and also our cultural diversity; it is structured around the three tikanga that make up our provincial life. As a priest in the Diocese of Auckland, I trained for ministry at St John's College in 2005–2007. The College has recently been subject to a significant independent review process²¹³ commissioned by our Primates and our General Synod Standing Committee (the provincial governing body), on which I have recently concluded three consecutive two-year terms, and has since undergone significant changes in faculty and governance, and the curriculum is currently moving through a change process. The challenges facing our College are critical to the life of our church and our mission and ministry in Christ. I am a current member of Te Kaunihera, the Board of Governors of St John's College. These layers of institutional complexity and personal involvement frame the evidence that follows; the mismatch I am describing is not theoretical, but visible in curricular choices, liturgical practice, staffing, and ministerial expectations.

Sacramental theology has been almost completely absent from the College's academic and ministry formation curricula in recent years. Some years ago, as a means of addressing this

²¹³ Miriam R. Dean and Doug Martin, *Arotakenga Motuhake Nō te Ahurea o te Kāreti o Hoani Tapu mō Ngā Take o te Whakapono Karaitiana / Independent Review of the Culture of St John's Theological College* (report, August 9, 2021), PDF, accessed March 21, 2026, <https://www.anglicantaonga.org.nz/content/download/67675/340507/file/%20AROTAKENGA%20MOTUHAKE%20NO%CC%84%20TE%20AHUREA%20O%20TE%20KA%CC%84RETI%20O%20HOANI%20TAPU%20-%20ST%20JOHN%E2%80%99S%20THEOLOGICAL%20COLLEGE%20REVIEW.pdf>.

lacuna, it was mooted that students could take a course in ‘Anglican Worship’ at the local Baptist seminary. At the time of the independent review, of the five full-time Pākehā teaching faculty, only two were ordained, and none had themselves been formed in a residential seminary setting (Anglican or otherwise). Diocesan clergy recall leading ordination retreats at which ordinands were hastily learning the manual acts and enquiring about how to set a credence table. Liturgy has long been viewed as a special-interest add-on, rather than central to Anglican ministry and identity. One diocese recently sponsored a student for a place at College who had not yet been baptised. College worship²¹⁴ was characterised for many years by ‘creative’ use of our prayerbook; this approach, in which the liturgy becomes the object of endless variation, weakens its formative force. The community has forgotten that they themselves are the object of God’s grace at work through Christ in the Spirit, and the means of opening ourselves to this work is our repeated²¹⁵ participation in the liturgy.

The examples above are not incidental failures; they disclose a deeper formational logic that has become normalised in our province. When liturgical and sacramental formation is marginalised, the result is not simply uneven preparation for ministry but a redefinition of ministry itself. Priestly formation is increasingly imagined primarily in terms of knowledge, competencies, and adaptability, while the slow work of being formed through common worship (and learning to lead worship that is formative of the community) is displaced or assumed. In

²¹⁴ Daily chapel worship involving a version of the daily office, and a weekly community eucharist. Typically these are all planned and lead by teams of students (a mix of first, second and third year students drawn each of the three tikanga or cultural streams that make up our College). During this period, all liturgies tended towards the ‘creative’.

²¹⁵ “One of the foundational elements of good liturgy is a certain repetitiveness. For a community to enter deeply into a rite, familiarity is essential.” Louis Weil, “The Shape of Liturgical Formation: Vertical/Horizontal, Horizontal/Vertical,” *Sewanee Theological Review* 52, no. 1 (2008): 46.

what follows, I identify three distortions that follow from this mismatch between the formative logic of liturgy and the current logic of our training pathways.

Diagnosing three distortions

I now focus on three interwoven distortions in the life of our province and our College. The absence or impoverishment of sacramental theology is deeply problematic for both the College community and the church and world its students will one day serve. As Lizette Larson-Miller puts it,

If we have ... clergy who do not know what they are doing (not the mechanics of liturgical structure or manual acts but *that what they are doing participates in the meeting of heaven and earth*), who will help worshiping communities move beyond the shallowest interpretations of participation, hospitality, and pilgrimage?²¹⁶

Instead we have a critical need for priests who have been and continue to be formed by intentional liturgical practice—a daily and weekly round of immersion in the ‘pattern of meaning’ that the Eucharist offers us (the ‘symbolic world’ in which we are led through the enactment) again and again—of that which we hope for, that which we allow ourselves to be shaped for, and which is God’s gift to us: participation in the reign of God, and the life of grace. This practice transforms us; to recall Chauvet’s term, it *converts* us and shapes us to view the world sacramentally.

A recovery of such sacramental practice in the community of St John’s College would begin to shift its faith and formation away from the individualistic, consumerist and static by exposing people to a christology of the dangerous memory: the ‘practical knowledge,’ the praxis,

²¹⁶ Larson-Miller, *Sacramentality Renewed*, 159. Emphasis mine.

of the *imitatio Christi*.²¹⁷ I turn to consider how such sacramental practice might impact these three interwoven characteristics of recent College life and worship: individualism, consumerism and the lack of transformation.

To work against the deep individualism that characterises most of us raised within a Western worldview, it is vital to become aware of our identity as belonging to the *assembly*: the gathered people of God participating in the Eucharist, and so being constituted as the body of Christ. This is one of the deep gifts of the multicultural College community for Pākehā students—living, studying and worshipping alongside Māori and Pasifika students who have a profoundly collective sense of identity.²¹⁸ Intentionally shared participation in the Eucharist shifts the nature of faith from being solely about belief or intellectual content to being about *praxis* in the context of belonging. To recall Tillard,

At its source, the Christian way of life is radically, in virtue of God's very self, the absolute negation of any form of self-sufficiency, of any sort of self-absorption. The relationship to the other—this other who is first of all God, but God grasped in the unity between brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus—is intrinsic to the Christian way of life. It constitutes it.²¹⁹

We are, of course, still individuals.²²⁰ But we are called to our fullest identity by ongoing sacramental encounter with *other* (God and other persons), and shaped in the ongoing experiences of service and reconciliation that community offers.

²¹⁷ Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*, 34.

²¹⁸ One of the great gifts of our province is the partnership model of our life and governance. This is lived out in the College community in a unique way in that the College's day to day life is ideally shaped by and expresses Māori and Pasifika tikanga as much as Pākehā. Students from the three parts of our church live, study and worship alongside one another.

²¹⁹ Tillard, *Flesh of the Church*, 3.

²²⁰ "Of course, the faithful fully live this life in their personal destiny. They do not disappear into a great mass. They remain the object of God's love concerning their person, their needs, their own resurrection." *Ibid.*, 12.

Non-liturgical worship (or the ‘time of worship’ some parishes introduce with long contemporary choruses prior to moving into a eucharistic liturgy, which can easily be reduced to a coathanger supporting various disparate elements of a service) tends to create an experience of being an audience, a collection of individual passive observers rather than a gathering of active participants. This now very natural mode of being in our contemporary world is deeply problematic: it is symptomatic of our being formed by what M. Francis Mannion calls the “ontologization of individual experience,” which bears fruit in a loss of confidence in, and relationships with, history, future vision, politics, and social and cultural institutions.²²¹

However, the assembly itself is one of the primary elements of the symbolic order that the Eucharist invites us into, standing in opposition to our deep individualism and the cultural forces that tend to reduce faith to the personal and private.²²²

There is a powerful thread in our consumer culture which teaches us (or forms us) to commodify everything—to value it for what it achieves or how it might meet our needs. In his insightful analysis, Vincent Miller notes that “consumer culture encourages a shallow engagement with the elements of religious traditions because we are trained to engage beliefs, symbols and practices as abstract commodities that are readily separable from their traditional contexts... [in other words] *we are trained by our consumption of commodified culture.*”²²³ The climate crisis is the most critical example of what happens after decades of abuse of the creation; human slavery and sex trafficking (ongoing today in many parts of the world) are others. College

²²¹ M. Francis Mannion, “Liturgy and the Present Crisis of Culture,” in *Liturgy and Spirituality in Context: Perspectives on Prayer and Culture*, ed. Eleanor Bernstein (Collegeville MN: Order of St. Benedict, 1990), 4.

²²² Mannion, “Liturgy and the Present Crisis of Culture,” 5.

²²³ Vincent J. Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 30. Emphasis mine.

worship on a daily and weekly basis must be both real worship of God by a real community and support students in learning the mechanics of planning and liturgical leadership; but to reduce it to an exercise in planning and execution without active oversight²²⁴ or a sense of its larger purpose inevitably leads to liturgy that serves our interests rather than God's. The Eucharist—whether daily or weekly, supported by the daily office—should be the heartbeat of the life of a Christian community and the most sacred action. “Normatively considered, faithful liturgy is the fundamental imaginal framework of encounter with God in Christ...[it] forms intentions in us in and through the affections oriented to God revealed in Christ as their goal and ground.”²²⁵

It is not uncommon to hear people commenting on worship ‘meeting their needs,’ or expressing approval (or otherwise) of stylistic elements of a service. Mannion notes,

The search for liturgical expressions adequate to interior personal disposition, crisis, or need appears as a constant and intense preoccupation. The official and inherited liturgical forms tend to be regarded as of lesser value and are routinely replaced or supplemented by novel forms thought more authentic because they arise from the experience of individuals or groups in particular moments or situations.²²⁶

In following this cultural trend without discernment, we risk making liturgy a possession, something that exists for our edification or comfort. John Baldovin writes of “the perverse notion that worship is somehow our good idea in the first place.”²²⁷ Equally problematic, we can reduce liturgy to a tool (such as for learning)—a means of making things happen—or attempt to make it

²²⁴ A priest drawn from amongst the faculty or postgraduate student body has often been rostered to preside at each eucharist but would typically turn up and simply perform the part assigned rather than offer oversight; there has been no consistent standard of planning or overall set of expectations (for example, a chapel customary), although with a recently appointed full time College Chaplain (a newly created role), this is now improving.

²²⁵ Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 176.

²²⁶ Mannion, “Liturgy and the Present Crisis of Culture,” 7.

²²⁷ Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*, 13.

relevant or ‘cool’,²²⁸ which, unfortunately, means it will say more about us than about God or about who we are called or challenged to become in Christ. As Saliers points out, “When praying becomes a special instrument for getting things done, such a conception is not far from magic.”²²⁹ This strips worship of its essential nature as praise, thanksgiving and anamnetic enactment of the mystery of faith.²³⁰

The part we play in communal prayer is the glorification of God and the sanctification of humanity²³¹—the eucharistic mode of prayer is one of praise and thanksgiving; it is for the sake of the *other* (who is God, in Christ). “Prayer is thus not an aid, psychological or otherwise, to the living of a spiritually healthy or ethically sensitive life. It is not a set of motivating techniques. Rather, prayer is part of having a life formed in joy, gratitude, awe and compassion.”²³²

Saliers later makes the point that prayer can never be reduced to its ‘results’; if we begin to consider its ‘effectiveness’ or as a mechanism for getting things done, then we are beginning to treat it as something magical.²³³ Similarly, Chauvet notes that the “properly Christian ‘success’ of a celebration is not linked [with any kind of ‘value’ but instead] the liturgy has another, fundamental aim: the communication of the gratuitous gift of God, entrance into the mystery of Christ’s passover.”²³⁴ The only proper response is thanksgiving.

²²⁸ Bruce T. Morrill, S.J. *Practical Sacramental Theology: At the Intersection of Liturgy and Ethics* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021), 129.

²²⁹ Saliers, “Liturgy and Ethics,” 181.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 187.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 183.

²³² Saliers, “Liturgy and Ethics,” 183.

²³³ Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 177.

²³⁴ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 87.

The deep call on Christians and on those called to lead them is what Morrill calls *sanctification* and Chauvet calls *conversion*. The casual, ad hoc nature of worship within the College community—often with a complete lack of transcendence or ritual seriousness—and the treatment of liturgy as an afterthought that meets my needs (on a good day) emphasise a ‘me’-centred and undemanding faith. The notions that our character and identity are sites of critical formation and transformation *for the life of the world*, and that in our tradition, liturgical encounter and service (*diakonia*) are the central pathway, have been forgotten. But, as Saliers notes, “The liturgical assembly is the place where enlivened Christian imagination is formed and expressed.”²³⁵

In Johann Baptist Metz’s work on the powerful image of the gospel as the dangerous memory of Jesus Christ, the *memoria Jesu Christi*,²³⁶ as brought into dialogue with liturgical theology by Bruce Morrill, Metz’s demanding mysticism offered fruitful possibilities for the formation of faith in community. The anamnesis at the heart of the Eucharist is the liturgical practice that brings us into solidarity with the human community—with *other*—and which should hold up to our awareness and to God’s awareness the suffering of our world.

Although Metz’s work is considered suggestive and open-ended rather than fully realised, Morrill continues this dialogue in a closer exploration of the particular virtue of poverty of spirit to engender a true openness in our own need for grace and transformation.²³⁷ This is the virtue ‘upon which all others depend,’ our “capacities for sorrow and joy, mourning and expectation, generosity and gratitude, friendship and loyalty, and solidarity with others in their suffering and

²³⁵ Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 176.

²³⁶ Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*, 30.

²³⁷ Morrill, *Practical Sacramental Theology*, 132.

struggles.’²³⁸ These capacities—together with the humility grace brings and the willingness to risk the anger, heartbreak and hope for our world that apocalyptic keeps alive—would seem essential for transforming and transformative priests today.

If these are the distortions, what would a recovery require in practice?

Resources for recovery

A recovery of the liturgical tradition as central to the community life of St John’s College, because it is seen as urgently necessary for the formation of our priests, would have a powerful effect on the culture of the community²³⁹ and the way candidates are formed for ministry as priests in the Anglican church in these islands. This would require some key resources.

The first measure has recently been achieved: a Chaplain committed to sacramental theology and practice, as lived out in priestly ministry in community, has taken responsibility for the active oversight of College worship, working alongside students in both planning and executing services. This could be extended by having students reflect on their experiences. This has started to lift liturgy standards, particularly through a return to a simple, reverent practice of the Eucharist, involving both spaciousness and repetition, rather than an endless sequence of ‘creative’ or thematic services. Ideally, this would be accompanied by a reintroduction of sacramental theology to the curriculum. This would encourage a growing understanding of the history and theology of the Eucharist as the common ground for our shared identity, through

²³⁸ Morrill, *Practical Sacramental Theology*, 133.

²³⁹ The College’s culture was a central focus of the 2021 Dean-Martin Review; this included attention to the wellbeing of students as well as the educational/formatational outcomes.

attention to the repeated immersion in and recollection of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus—the *memoria Christi* in whose way we follow.

However, this must not devolve into something non-personal and abstract. Through personal reflection (supported by appropriate spiritual direction—not simply secular counselling—and the encouragement of personal spiritual disciplines such as the daily office and liturgical reconciliation), students can come to grasp a sense of ethics as an ‘ethics of character’ rather than an ‘ethics of obligation.’²⁴⁰ They are learning a “concrete way of life rather than the theoretical interpretations of ethical theory.”²⁴¹

Seminary-based residential formation in community is a unique opportunity to establish a lifelong pattern of learning to live out of a responsive character, deeply formed by liturgical practice informed by deep understanding rather than theory and skills. In considering the New Testament witness as a basis for this, Morrill comments, “What becomes evident in primordial Christian tradition is that human sanctification is anything but a matter simply between the individual and God; rather, God’s glorification comes through a way of life, liturgical and ethical, that is irreducibly communal, interpersonal and social.”²⁴² A simplistic imitation of Christ is not sufficient—this is too naive to be a basis for an adequate pastoral or ethical response to the complexity and ambiguity of the moral issues we face today as Christians.²⁴³ ‘Because the bible tells me so’ can often only respond in silence or harmful judgment when confronted with

²⁴⁰ Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 174.

²⁴¹ Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 172.

²⁴² Bruce T. Morrill, S.J. *Practical Sacramental Theology: At the Intersection of Liturgy and Ethics* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021), 126.

²⁴³ Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 175.

people suffering from the impacts of contemporary agonies such as social isolation or racism, conversion therapy, addictions, child and sexual abuse, suicide, or the climate crisis.

The liturgical life of the College must also be held in active relationship with shared service. “The basis of the moral agency in the Christian life is *diakonia*, the service of God and humankind manifest in Jesus, the Christ.”²⁴⁴ Students and faculty together could develop opportunities for active service to one another and to the wider community, and reflection on this practice in relation to their liturgical prayer. “The whole of human life is offered, and the whole of God’s self-giving is to be the orienting vision of the moral life.”²⁴⁵ This could include building connections into *te ao Māori*²⁴⁶ networks such as the *kai* sovereignty movement²⁴⁷, so that students from all tikanga have the opportunity to contextualise their eucharistic theology in relation to their own cultural identity.

Part of the heritage of St John’s College is the original vision of Bishop George Selwyn, which included an expectation of students to demonstrate ‘useful industry’; interpreted most broadly, this could be a basis for service projects that connect students with the needs of their local Auckland community. This could offer a practical expression to the dynamic tension Saliers suggests between liturgy as cultus (*leitourgia*) and the people’s liturgy in the world (*diakonia*).²⁴⁸ Like the community of Acts 2, and the hope expressed in 1 Peter, “They were to offer themselves

²⁴⁴ Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 184.

²⁴⁵ Saliers, “Liturgy and Ethics,” 186.

²⁴⁶ Te ao Māori is the Māori world or the Māori worldview.

²⁴⁷ *Kai* is the Māori word for ‘food’ and all the practices involved in growing and sharing food within Māori culture (much of which was stamped out during colonisation with the confiscation of land, but which is beginning to be recovered today).

²⁴⁸ Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 180.

to God in both worship and daily service. Such a *double work of liturgy* is the true vocation of the church.”²⁴⁹ It would be immensely valuable for students to come to understand the deep and dynamic connection between the eucharistic life and the service life of their community.

At St John’s College, there is usually a high degree of theological and cultural diversity in the community. In a small province with limited training options, students and faculty come from a huge range of cultural, theological, educational and socio-economic backgrounds. There is a profound need to learn to see Christ in the other, and the Eucharist must be the primary location, returned to again and again, where this encounter is explicitly shaped.

A Christian moral theology based on virtues and character formation depends upon the grace-dimension of liturgy, the utterly gratuitous gift of God’s favour, God’s loving care and mercy, experienced in moments of genuine revelation through specific [liturgical] symbols, words, gestures and personages that (re)orient how believers venture into life’s challenges with and for others.²⁵⁰

In this context, this will necessarily include experience of the Eucharist in the different languages and cultural settings of the College community, so that these are experienced in the liturgical assembly. Tillard notes that the Letter to James is the most significant for his thesis because it offers a spontaneous vision of the life of faith and the life of the church.²⁵¹ He indicates the importance of the context of the letter being that of a liturgical assembly: in such a context, “the insistence on others is all the more significant. Confession of faith, liturgical worship and concrete concern about *others* necessarily go together.”²⁵²

²⁴⁹ Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 181, emphasis mine.

²⁵⁰ Morrill, *Practical Sacramental Theology*, 130.

²⁵¹ Tillard, *Flesh of the Church*, 17.

²⁵² Tillard, *Flesh of the Church*, 18. Emphasis mine.

In all this, there must be attentiveness to the gap that opens between our theological ideals and our lived reality, and to opportunities for facilitated reflection that allow students to notice this gap and learn from it. “The gap between the worship of religious communities and their works of justice, mercy and love is so great at times as to generate the prophetic rebuke of all liturgy.”²⁵³ The call to conversion of life is always a call to begin again. There is a need for humility and non-expertise in this shared journey of formation, with a constant return to the interruptive memory borne in the gospel, in the Word, and in the broken symbols that sit at the heart of our worship. Saliers returns to this ‘gap’ in his later writing, suggesting that no matter how authentic and proper the liturgy is, there is no guarantee that participants will gain the capacity to face the suffering and gladness of the world honestly and fully: “Spiritual deception is always possible.”²⁵⁴ Yet, the grace of reconciliation is always available, offering a further opportunity for transformation.

To return again to Juan Oliver’s comments on formation, “...worship forms the whole person, attitudinally and not only intellectually, by rehearsing our selves, our souls, our bodies through verbal and nonverbal means, engaging us in a semblance of the reign of God.”²⁵⁵ The event of the liturgy and our bodily experience of it through practice constitute a symbolic world that forms us in profound ways. We are formed not simply in the use and language of the texts and gestures of our liturgy but in a way of regarding the world,²⁵⁶ as well as our own stories and those of others with whom we share the journey. The complexity that opens up between liturgy

²⁵³ Saliers, “Liturgy and Ethics,” 188.

²⁵⁴ Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 17.

²⁵⁵ Oliver, “Worship, Forming and Deforming,” 8.

²⁵⁶ Saliers, “Liturgy and Ethics,” 184.

and ethics as lived out in community is rich, dynamic, and demanding. The grace of God in Christ we encounter is found "...between enactment of the story of faith and the lived narratives of our lives."²⁵⁷

Likewise, it is helpful to recall Chauvet's notion of conversion in the eucharistic liturgy, and his framing of this as a journey, an itinerary that we travel or walk along. "The realization by human beings of the performance of thanksgiving demands that God *give them the competence*. The itinerary that the Eucharistic Prayer makes us travel is thus exemplary of the way of conversion which Christians are called to walk throughout their lives."²⁵⁸ Chauvet suggests that it is by God's invitation and grace that we are enabled to participate in or 'perform' the act of thanksgiving. The word 'conversion' derives from Latin and Old French words carrying the meanings of 'altogether,' and 'turn about; turn around; send in another direction. Thus, the profound effect of entering into the symbolic world of the liturgy again and again is always to change us or our direction and return us to a pathway of grace.

It is only through such ongoing conversion that Christians and those who hope to serve as priests in our communities can be formed such that they can offer an adequate ethical response to the suffering of our world,²⁵⁹ and speak the Word to others that offers life and a future so that all may be invited into a truly human place under the sun.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 187.

²⁵⁸ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 133.

²⁵⁹ "The prayer of Christian liturgy faces the world's ambiguity and evil." Saliers, "New Beginnings," 181.

²⁶⁰ "Some words save; some words kill. Symbolic efficacy in any case touches the subject to the quick. Speech is the really hearty 'bread'.... at times the content of what is said does not matter; the important thing is to communicate, therefore to be recognised as occupying a truly human place under the sun." Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 92.

Conclusion

Overall, this analysis suggests that renewing priestly formation for our province must involve more than piecemeal adjustments to curriculum or technique. Any approach should include the following five strands. First, the restoration of sacramental theology and liturgical formation to the heart of our ministerial training, so that worship is understood as formative rather than an optional add-on; the development of steady patterns of shared prayer (including Eucharist and office) so that repetition can do its slow work over time;²⁶¹ training students to preside with participatory competence and ritual seriousness, rather than endless novelty or personal expression; bringing together contemplative and pastoral formation (e.g., through exploring prayer, spiritual direction, reconciliation, and trauma-aware practice) so that ministry is sustained out of a deep sacramental imagination; and finally, weaving liturgy together with *diakonia* and public discipleship, so that students experience worship that forms communities for reconciliation, justice, and care for creation in a three-tikanga context. The next section turns from these implications to explore practicable pathways—at provincial, diocesan, and parish levels—by which such a renewal of liturgical formation might be pursued and sustained.

²⁶¹ “When priests have celebrated a rite for many years using a particular pattern of ritual gestures... that pattern... through repeated use over many years, become[s] their natural ‘body language’ as presiders.” In other words, repeated liturgical practice becomes a kind of bodily grammar for those who preside. Louis Weil, *Liturgical Sense: The Logic of Rite* (New York: Seabury Books, 2013), 13–14.

Pathways to New Flourishing

To meet God means to enter into the ‘cave of a tiger’—it is not a pussy cat you meet—it’s a tiger. The realm of God is dangerous. You must enter into it and not just seek information about it.²⁶²

Priests in the Church are called to build up Christ’s congregation... above all they are to proclaim God’s word, and take their part in Christ’s prophetic work, to declare forgiveness through Jesus Christ, to baptise, to preside at the Eucharist, to administer Christ’s holy sacraments.²⁶³

Introduction

In this section, I shift from diagnosis to proposal and outline hopeful, practical pathways to the renewal of liturgical formation at provincial and diocesan levels. In these proposals, I hope to reconnect worship and formation, restore liturgy as a primary means of lifelong formation and conversion in parish and seminary contexts, and honour our three-tikanga realities and contemporary constraints.

In the previous section, I diagnosed the mismatch between what liturgy does—forming persons and communities in Christ for identity and mission through repeated participation—and what our current training pathways tend to prioritise. I drew on an analysis of training at St John’s College, our provincial seminary, to demonstrate the consequences of forgetting and sidelining formation in our sacramental tradition. This has resulted in a redefinition of ordained ministry itself; priestly formation is reduced to knowledge, competencies and innovation, while the slow work of being formed through common prayer (and learning to lead formative worship)

²⁶² Archbishop Anthony Bloom, *Beginning to Pray* (New York / Mahwah N.J.: Paulist Press, 1970), 15.

²⁶³ Church of the Province of New Zealand (Te Hāhi o te Porowini o Niu Tireni), *A New Zealand Prayer Book—He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, 901.

is neglected. We have forgotten that in liturgy, we create space for exposure to the divine. As Farwell puts it,

...liturgy is a privileged site where belief arises... hope... arises through the bodily, gestural, verbal and symbolic ritual practices of the liturgy. In the liturgical action of the church, the faith is rehearsed bodily, by word and song, silence and movement, before the very One from whom faith flows and toward whom it carries us.²⁶⁴

Against this diagnosis, I now propose several pathways that could support the renewal of liturgical formation.

A renewal of liturgical formation demands clarity about what “formation” is for, and what kinds of practices actually deliver it. In his essay on the liturgical formation of ordinands for a 2003 conference of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC), Tomas S. Maddela suggested that preparing ordinands for liturgical leadership should involve a dynamic combination of education, training, and formation.²⁶⁵ Education concerns the “classics of liturgical studies”: learning the historical, theological, pastoral, spiritual, and structural dimensions of Christian worship. Training concerns the acquisition and honing of the skills required to craft and lead good liturgical celebration—presiding, preaching, reading, and musicianship. Formation concerns the deeper practices and disciplines that imbue a person with an authentic liturgical “spirit and power,”²⁶⁶ so that leadership in worship flows from a life being formed by worship rather than merely managing it.

²⁶⁴ James Farwell, *This Is The Night: Suffering, Salvation and the Liturgies of Holy Week* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005), 4.

²⁶⁵ Tomas S. Maddela, “Liturgical Education, Training, and Formation for Ordinands,” in *Worship-Shaped Life: Liturgical Formation and the People of God*, eds. Ruth Meyers and Paul Gibson (London: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2010), 71.

²⁶⁶ Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (December 4, 1963), sec. 14.

Maddela’s three-fold proposal echoes the logic of Sacrosanctum Concilium: the church desires “fully conscious and active participation” in the liturgy as the “primary and indispensable source” of Christian spirit, yet such participation cannot be realised unless ministers themselves are “thoroughly imbued with the spirit and the power of the liturgy.”²⁶⁷ In other words, the aim is not only informed explanation or competent performance, but leaders whose own formation in worship enables the formation of the whole baptised people.

The International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC)—the liturgical network of the Anglican Communion—has developed and applied this same logic for the contemporary Communion. In its vital report, *The Liturgical Formation of All the Baptised*, liturgical formation is described as Spirit-driven growth manifested in discipleship, occurring *through* liturgy and *for* liturgy as the people of God learn through habitual participation.²⁶⁸

According to this report, the process of formation should thus entail both theological depth and practical competence—with attention to symbol, language, music, space and the particular community²⁶⁹—which are integrated through habituated participation (the report acknowledges the need for repetition²⁷⁰). The proposals in this section are intended to integrate education, training and formation under the particular conditions of our provincial context.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, *IALC Report on Liturgical Formation of All the Baptised (ACC-18)*(Anglican Communion, January 24, 2023), 2, accessed January 13, 2026, https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/493609/The-Liturgical-Formation-of-All-the-Baptised_ACC18_IALC_2301.pdf.

²⁶⁹ International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, *The Liturgical Formation of All the Baptised*, 4.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 10.

To better understand how liturgical formation is currently viewed in our context, I briefly consider two recent texts from this province. The *Te Pae Tawhiti 2040* report²⁷¹ was commissioned recently by Te Kotahitanga²⁷² to inform the future of theological education and ministry training, and intentionally listened to younger Anglicans and those at the margins, as part of imagining the church we hope to become. The report is framed around formation, leadership, belonging, and mission—worthwhile themes for any future-facing church.

However, it is striking that the vision presented in *Te Pae Tawhiti 2040* is developed without any sacramental grammar; there is no sustained attention given to eucharistic worship or common prayer as the primary school of Christian or Anglican identity or mission. Even when worship is mentioned, it functions only descriptively as one practice amongst others rather than theologically as the practice by which the church is made and remade in Christ. This is significant; it points to a deep assumption regarding the life of our church, namely, that the Eucharist does not function as the generative centre of formation. Given this, it is unsurprising that our theological education and ministry training are imagined primarily in terms of strategy, skills, and relevance rather than sacramental imagination and participatory competence.

A similar approach can be identified in contemporary renewal literature. In his review essay on Justin Duckworth and Alan Jamieson's recently published book *In-tensional: A Way Forward for the Church*, Andrew Shepherd argues that the book's centre-edge proposal leans

²⁷¹ Steve Taylor and Animoa Goold, *Te Pae Tawhiti 2040: Final Report*, report commissioned by Te Kotahitanga (Lent 2024), PDF, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, accessed February 6, 2026, <https://www.anglican.org.nz/Media/Files/Te-Pae-Tawhiti-for-Te-Kotahitanga>.

²⁷² Our provincial commission on theological education with canonical responsibility for advising the St John's College Trust Board which funds all education initiatives across our province.

towards late-modern assumptions regarding growth, entrepreneurial leadership and innovation, while operating with “an absence of a theologically robust ecclesiology.”²⁷³

My interest is not in whether one agrees with every aspect of Shepherd’s critique, but in the way he lays bare an underlying framework in Duckworth and Jamieson’s work which encourages the church to imagine its future through strategic and organisational categories rather than through the formative logic of worship and the gospel.²⁷⁴ If the Eucharist is treated as peripheral to the formation of Christian identity, then any renewal strategy will most naturally focus on novelty, relevance, and appeals to cultural assumptions; precisely the problematic pattern identified in Section Four as a mismatch between what liturgy does and what our formation pathways often prioritise.

The six pathways proposed below respond to this gap or mismatch by suggesting what is missing; practicable possibilities for renewal in which Anglican identity and mission are re-centred on formation through liturgy and for liturgy. In other words, in these pathways, education, training and formation are integrated within our three-tikanga reality, while responding to the contemporary pressures in our context that affect our sense of attention and

²⁷³ Andrew Shepherd, “Centring the Edge, Churches, Crises and White-Hot Faith: A Review Essay on Duckworth and Jamieson, *In-tensional: A Way Forward for the Church*,” *Journal of Anglican Studies*, FirstView (2025): 1.

²⁷⁴ “The centre-church we are told ‘has much to offer... and enormous strengths; however, the paucity of words the authors offer... speaks volumes. In contrast to the edge[-church] that is valorized throughout, in two short paragraphs, the authors outline the strengths of the centre-church: it’s visibil[ity] to the wider community and recognition for community work, access to faith-based schooling, aged-care facilities and social housing, provision of weddings and funerals, youth events, buildings available for community use, credibility, inherited tradition and institutional strength. Here, the centre’s detailed strengths consist merely of access to resources. *There is no mention of the richness of theological, liturgical or musical traditions that have sustained and nourished the faith and worship of Christians over centuries.*” (Emphasis mine.) Shepherd, “Centring the Edge, Churches, Crises and White-Hot Faith,” 14, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355325000063>. Published in 2024, *In-tensional* is co-authored by The Most Reverend Justin Duckworth, Archbishop for Tikanga Pākehā, and Baptist minister Alan Jamieson.

belonging. These proposals can be pursued in parallel at provincial, diocesan, seminary, and parish levels.

Six pathways for renewal

1. Restoring common prayer as the heartbeat of formation

During my curacy, my vicar, Jim White, would often speak of Sunday worship as the ‘engine room’ of the parish community’s life—it unites, shapes, and sends us out for mission. In any Christian community, it is the most important thing we do together each week; for any parish priest, time spent preparing for this is central to our role.

However, at St John’s College, worship has been isolated from formation; over the past year, a weekly rhythm of eucharistic and office-based chapel worship has been restored, but this is not yet explicitly linked to formation. Participation in chapel worship should be a non-negotiable expectation for all students and faculty together.

There is a rich theological rationale for this formative practice, which I have explored earlier in this thesis and which should be taught to students. Chauvet argues that our pattern of common prayer should be “celebrated again and again and again: such a work of conversion has to be always begun again.”²⁷⁵ Conversion in this sense is lifelong. Participation in liturgy must be understood as an embodied practice that works within us at a level below cognition. This is supported by the work of Mark Johnson,²⁷⁶ Mark Searle and Catherine Bell. In their scheme for liturgical formation, the IALC emphasises that active participation in common prayer gives rise

²⁷⁵ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 94–95.

²⁷⁶ “...Meaning is shaped by the nature of our bodies, especially our sensorimotor capacities and our ability to experience feelings and emotions.” Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body*, 9.

to formation;²⁷⁷ they also emphasise the value of repetition.²⁷⁸ The preparation of College chapel worship (and reflection and feedback on offerings) should be supported by the faculty responsible for formation and should be reverent and ritually serious.

In parishes, opportunities should be sought to make the formative power of our worship explicit—this can be through occasional comment during services, preaching, and adult education offerings. This will also involve re-educating and resourcing parish clergy.

For College students, there is always the challenge of managing their academic load, along with the additional expectations of a College programme, especially parish placements, chapel participation, and other activities. Residential seminary life is undoubtedly highly demanding of time and energy. However, setting formation as the keystone with chapel worship as the engine room would help to evaluate and integrate these various activities into a more coherent programme.

2. Restoring sacramental theology and ecclesiology as core curriculum

It has been many years since sacramental theology was included in the academic offerings at St John's College; the last time a course was run, it was optional. This long absence of academic teaching has weakened sacramental theology's visibility and coherence within our provincial awareness and formation. Such a course should be incorporated into our College's diploma and degree programmes²⁷⁹ as a core, mandatory subject for ordination candidates. It

²⁷⁷ International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, *The Liturgical Formation of All the Baptised*, 8.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁷⁹ St John's College is currently re-developing its academic programmes, including moving towards a jointly taught theology degree with Trinity Methodist College; the two Colleges have a long shared history on the Meadowbank site and a shared commitment to contextual theology and Māori and Moana theologies.

should cover teaching on the Eucharist and Baptism as essential to our ecclesiology, as well as exploring their historical development, symbolism, sacramentality, the Holy Spirit's role in liturgy, and ethics.

'Education' serves as a key element of Maddela's scheme; he suggests focusing on "the classics of liturgical studies": this is the knowledge necessary to understand the historical, theological, pastoral, spiritual, and structural aspects of Christian worship. The focus of the IALC's report aligns closely but expands to include "how liturgy shapes our [ecclesiology], which is the context for all ordered ministries."²⁸⁰ Our academic courses in preaching, pastoral theology, and missiology should also explicitly link to sacramental theology, fostering an integrated understanding among students.

Furthermore, students should be encouraged to draw on their academic knowledge while reflecting on their experiences in chapel worship and parish placements. While increasing the academic focus on sacramental theology risks encouraging an overly intellectual approach, students should also be given opportunities to relate their academic learning to their practical 'heart' learning and formation, as well as their decision-making regarding worship preparation. Over time, this approach will help build a solid theological foundation for the future leadership they will offer in the sacramental life of the church.

Achieving this is more difficult within diocesan programmes where ordinands are not pursuing degree studies, but there should still be an increase in the content on sacramental theology, clear links to other parts of the programme, and its integration into reflections on practical liturgical training. For ordinands in both College and diocesan programmes, written

²⁸⁰ International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, *The Liturgical Formation of All the Baptised*, 9.

work and shared presentation tasks that encourage reflection on liturgical experiences through drawing on elements of sacramental theology will be a critical task at all levels; for example, assessments could include two essays in sacramental theology and an integrative reflection relating sacramental theology to an observed worship practice in chapel or their placement setting.

3. Training participatory competence and ritual seriousness

In our provincial culture of continual innovation and ‘needs-based’ worship, it is easy for presiding to become performance and for the assembly to become an audience of passive consumers rather than active participants, or for worship to be seen merely as a means of delivering content. We recall Mannion’s warning:

The search for liturgical expressions adequate to interior personal disposition, crisis, or need appears as a constant and intense preoccupation. The official and inherited liturgical forms tend to be regarded as of lesser value and are routinely replaced or supplemented by novel forms thought more authentic because they arise from the experience of individuals or groups in particular moments or situations.²⁸¹

To address this, we need to reestablish a model of presiding focused on encouraging and supporting full participation.²⁸² Students will require a structured practicum that intentionally forms them to embody the ritual with competence and seriousness, infused with ‘spirit and power’,²⁸³ deeply aware of the ritual use of voice, pace, silence, stillness, gesture, space, repetition, symbols, and the importance of intentional preparation that fosters this kind of participation. A presider who conveys a ritually serious presence invites the assembled

²⁸¹ Mannion, “Liturgy and the Present Crisis of Culture,” 7.

²⁸² *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, sec. 14.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

community to respond in kind, thereby developing ritual competence and enabling full participation in the shared symbolic world of praise, thanksgiving, reconciliation, and sending. Such leadership offers a powerful counter to the late-modern cultural forces that typically shape us as individual consumers of novel and entertaining experiences.

IALC's proposal for liturgical formation is valuable because it emphasises that formation and practice are interconnected; the liturgy is seen as the school where God works, and where all the baptised learn discipleship. Those who lead must be equipped to facilitate this process. The IALC's report, therefore, highlights a set of practical skills that supplement theological knowledge for those presiding; these skills are not aimed at performance as an end but at the formation of the assembly. These include "confidence in symbolism," "knowing the need for repetition," wise preparation, and the ability to "empower lay ministries in worship."

This corrective is vital in our context, where even in the seminary setting, liturgical formation can easily be assumed to be simply an aspect of personal spirituality, an academic interest, or a 'leadership skill', all pursued as options and in isolation. Participatory competence integrates these; it is a steady and embodied capacity to inhabit the rite in such a way that the assembly is also invited to inhabit it. To recall Catherine Bell's language, this may be understood as a degree of 'ritual mastery'; this is not a matter of clerical performance or control, but rather an embodied practical competence in the schemes of ritualisation, acquired through disciplined participation and capable of sustaining communal formation.²⁸⁴ Presiding in this mode is neither personality-led performance nor unsettled and unsettling creativity, but rather the learned ability to hold the ritual space with sufficient clarity, steadiness, and reverence so that the community

²⁸⁴ "I used the term 'ritual mastery' to designate a practical mastery of the schemes of ritualization as an embodied knowing, as the sense of ritual seen in its exercise." Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 107.

can respond with confidence and participate actively, bringing their voice, gesture, silence, memory, and desire. Conversely, where such formation is lacking, clergy may not only lead worship thinly or unevenly but may also exercise unreflectively the asymmetries of authority inherent in presiding, so that the liturgy becomes too controlled, too casual, or unduly shaped by personal style rather than ordered toward the full participation of the assembly.²⁸⁵

In practice, this pathway would involve a structured approach in diocesan and residential formation contexts that trains students and clergy in the following areas.

- Repetition and stability as formational values.
- Confidence in symbolism, movement, and embodied clarity (including relationship with space).
- Voice, pace, and the craft of proclamation (including silence).
- Preparation as pastoral care.
- Empowering lay ministries for real participation.

This can be delivered within our College setting through planned opportunities for supervised leadership and presiding over liturgy with feedback, as well as in our diocesan contexts for clergy via post-ordination training and ongoing ministry development. The aim is not to ensure a uniform style but to foster leaders who can uphold liturgy's formative logic: this will enable worship that is serious enough to be trusted, stable enough to shape desire through repetition, and communal enough to prevent reducing Christian life to private spirituality.

²⁸⁵ Bell also suggests that what she calls ritual mastery is exercised within the relationships and hierarchies of a ritual world; "Ritualization always aligns one within a series of relationships linked to the ultimate sources of power...[within] the ultimate coherence of a cosmos in which one takes a particular place." Here, the 'cosmos' may be understood as the symbolic and social world constituted in and through ritual practice, including the relationships, roles, and hierarchies that the rite both presupposes and forms. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 141.

In our three-tikanga province, especially for tikanga Pākehā students in the multicultural College context, there is the additional gift of worshipping alongside students from tikanga Māori and tikanga Polynesia. Māori and Pacific communities often carry a deep sense of ritual as identity-bearing practice. Being exposed to and learning from this mode of being (with humility and a sense of partnership accountability) can help Pākehā to unlearn habits of casualness, individualism, and consumerism, allowing worship to become an act through which God forms a people in Christ for the life of the world.

4. Weaving liturgy with strands of diakonia and public service

It is common to hear people talk about worship as ‘meeting their needs’. This demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of worship, as well as the powerfully formative influence of our consumer culture. Consumerism involves the commodification of culture: “the reduction of religious beliefs, symbols and values to objects of consumption.”²⁸⁶ It trains our habits of interpretation and use so that we treat cultural objects—such as worship experiences—as consumable decoration for daily life.²⁸⁷ This de-formation also makes it easy to separate mission and social justice initiatives out into interest groups, instead of being sacramentally grounded and belonging to the whole people of God. But worship—instead—is fundamentally *for* other: for the glory of God, in Christ, and for the life of the world. The core of eucharistic worship is thanksgiving and praise in response to the encounter with the ‘dangerous memory’ of Jesus Christ.²⁸⁸ This repeated experience of anamnesis should bring

²⁸⁶ Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 19.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁸⁸ Morrill, *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory*, 30.

participants into solidarity with the suffering of our world and is thus a primary means of forming ethical Christian identity and practice.

Through their academic study of sacramental theology, students should come to understand the ethical significance of the Eucharist and should explore the implications of eucharistic *diakonia* for their context today. Students should also be supported to recognise and challenge the influences of consumer culture in their daily lives, and to reflect on how the repeated practice of the Eucharist affects this influence. The IALC's report makes the relationship between liturgy and ethics explicit, identifying this as one of the seven elements of a theology of worship that all those preparing for priestly ministry (particularly presiding at the Eucharist) should understand.²⁸⁹

In this pathway in particular, an action-reflection mode of learning will be critical, with opportunities structured into students' formation programme, including:

- Guided reflection on the ethical implications of the Eucharist in relation to planning and leading chapel worship;
- '*Diakonia*' placements, site visits and guest speakers in the student formation programme, including opportunities to visit or volunteer at the Auckland Anglican City Mission,²⁹⁰ parish-based climate response programmes,²⁹¹ parish-based Selwyn Centres, which provide a weekly social and exercise programme for elderly persons, and visits to police, prison and hospital chaplaincy services.

²⁸⁹ International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, *The Liturgical Formation of All the Baptised*, 9–10.

²⁹⁰ The Auckland City Mission is one of the largest social service agencies in New Zealand. <https://aucklandcitymission.org.nz>

²⁹¹ Many examples of church community projects can be identified through EcoChurch A Rocha NZ, of which our province is one of the supporting partners. <https://www.ecochurch.org.nz>

- Guided development of a College-based student-support network that gives concrete expression to the liturgical elements of intercession, lament, confession, peace, and sending, so that students learn to live out a eucharistic life—this could include the student community organising to deliver meals when households are unwell, offering mutual childcare when needed, community meetings adopting a *talanoa*²⁹² model rather than formal Western-style agendas and motions, ways of networking to share prayer needs, shared meals and hospitality (especially across tikanga groups), and establishing a shared community garden on the College grounds.

Ideally, student formation projects should be communal experiences involving teams rather than individual ‘heroic’ efforts.

A key challenge for this approach to formation is ensuring that students’ workload remains manageable and balanced. The formation programme should be designed so that activities are eucharistically grounded, specific, and time-limited. Most students are in residence at St John’s College for two or three years, and a formation programme should be cumulative over this longer period, and like all eucharistic ministry should be grounded in grace, sabbath and shared responsibility so that it is sustainable in the long term.

5. Formation as members of three tikanga

Our three-tikanga nature as a church was formalised in our 1992 constitution, and while we share governance at the highest levels through our provincial structures, the constitution's

²⁹² ‘Talanoa’ is a traditional Pacific term (Samoan, Tongan and Fijian) for inclusive, face to face dialogue, conversation or storytelling that fosters respectful relationships, understanding and knowledge sharing. It creates connection and empathy and seeks to build consensus.

effect over time has been to silo us. Many neighbouring Pākehā parishes and Mihinare marae-based communities have no relationship (though these are fostered more intentionally at diocesan/hui level). In practice, our constitutional arrangements can function as silos, instead of allowing Christ to be our source of unity and deep formation. St John's College is a unique community in our province, where students and faculty from all three tikanga live, study and worship together day to day.

College chapel worship is already central to community life, with students and staff from all three tikanga (including the diverse languages and cultures of the Pacific, English, and te reo Māori) regularly acting as preachers, liturgists, readers, and presiders; music and liturgy are often multilingual. This practice could have an even stronger formative influence through intentional shared reflection and learning. As noted earlier in this thesis, the formation of identity and the role of ritual practice differ significantly across our cultures. For Māori and Pacific peoples, ritual is never merely decorative or optional; in their worldview, it is a vital carrier of identity and a means of sustaining community life. It is a valuable gift for Pākehā to worship alongside tikanga Māori and tikanga Polynesia in community—an opportunity to learn from their serious approach to ritual.

It would benefit all tikanga to have opportunities to meet together for guided reflection on the continually evolving relationship between worship and culture, so that our tikanga identities serve as a foundation for formation and partnership rather than merely structure. The IALC report recommends the now-familiar four-way framework from the Lutheran World Federation's Nairobi Statement (1995) as a tool for reflection on this dynamic. It will also be vital to listen to the stories of our context and investigate how the trauma of colonisation has shaped our church's life; our College's recent commitment to nurturing mātauranga Māori and mātauranga Moana

must include fostering a sacramental theology and liturgical practice that both rely on and support these essential elements of our provincial identity.

At College, this area of learning should be incorporated into our academic teaching as well as chapel worship planning and reflection; College *haerenga*²⁹³ (diploma students have opportunity to travel to attend intensive block courses taught locally in the hui amorangi, in which College and local students learn alongside one another) are also an ideal opportunity for deep immersion in the ritual life of another tikanga. Candidates training locally through diocesan and hui amorangi programmes can now join the St John's College diploma programme and could also develop a partnership model for shared learning and reflection.

6. Parish renewal programme with episcopal support

Our parish worship is often casual and unthinking; clergy are not resourced in either sacramental theology or the change-management skills needed to lead their communities through explorations of liturgical renewal. Parishioners can be deeply and almost viscerally attached to their liturgical spaces and surprisingly resistant to change; in itself, this points to the power of liturgy in our lives and the power of our liturgical spaces to shape our awareness.²⁹⁴

While most of these pathways are appropriate for candidates training for ordination, we can also support clergy to lead parish liturgical renewal through a diocesan-based supported programme. This could be undertaken by a cohort of parishes and clergy that commit to

²⁹³ 'Haerenga' means 'journey' or 'pilgrimage' in te reo Māori and refers to both the physical processes of travel and the intentional inner processes – such as learning, recovery, spiritual growth.

²⁹⁴ A full treatment of a theology of built liturgical space is beyond the scope of this thesis but remains an area for future research, since the spaces we inherit, use and build are so vital for our experience of the liturgy. I acknowledge the work of Richard Kieckhefer and Philip Sheldrake, and the applied theology of Richard Giles.

intentional liturgical formation practices for a year, accompanied by guided reflection and feedback; these practices could be incorporated into the seasons of the liturgical year.

According to the IALC report, in our liturgical life, bishops serve as role models and guardians of tradition, bearing responsibility for teaching liturgical principles and practices and for providing opportunities for deeper liturgical formation. Therefore, episcopal support for such a program would be crucial. Clergy would require initial training in liturgy as formation—as lifelong conversion—rather than merely as a way to meet their parishioners’ needs, and to understand it as ritual practice rather than simply words on a page. They and their communities must be willing to embrace risk, change, and vulnerability on this journey, as David Power suggests; “The fundamental point in sacramental conversion is the readiness to let oneself be invited into the world of the sacrament, to hear the word, to enter into the prayer and ritual, and to let oneself and one’s world be called into question.”²⁹⁵ It should include regular opportunities for each parish community to gather to reflect prayerfully and provide feedback on what they are discovering. Richard Giles’ work²⁹⁶ on parish-based liturgical renewal will serve as a valuable resource when designing such a programme.

There are multiple possibilities for discovering the power of liturgical worship to renew and enliven parish life; each parish would agree to a process of commitment and evaluation, across the year, including repetition (giving each exploration sufficient time to ‘settle’ before

²⁹⁵ Power, *Sacrament: The Language of God’s Giving*, 265.

²⁹⁶ As Dean, Richard Giles led the renewal of the liturgical space of the Episcopal Cathedral in Philadelphia, as well as several parish churches in the UK. His book *Re-Pitching the Tent* is a practical and invaluable guide to the process and issues to consider in the renewal of liturgical space. Richard Giles, *Re-Pitching the Tent: The Definitive Guide to Reordering Your Church* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004).

responding), wide involvement of the parish community, a prayerful approach, and openness to ethical ‘spillover’ into community life.

- One of the powerful discoveries of the pandemic years for lay people in our province was the daily office, and this could be renewed for a season, with a parish community forming its own roster for a lay-led pattern of daily prayer—this could be a physical gathering or online, such as on Zoom.
- Another seasonal exploration my own parish has found very moving is a ‘Dinner Eucharist’ series (for example, weekly during Lent), with a simple but generous meal framed eucharistically, and including guided reflective conversation on themes such as hospitality, prayer, and community.
- An evening contemplative Eucharist, with a simplified liturgy that includes periods of guided silent prayer (the service could also include Taize chant, depending on the resources available in the parish), is another way to help our communities slow down and intentionally dwell in the liturgy.
- If a parish has not already adopted this, the Season of Creation (which falls in springtime in New Zealand) is a wonderful opportunity to discover the Eucharist's potential to shape or ‘school’ our perception of ourselves and of God’s creation.
- Following teaching on space and symbol and the nature of the assembly, a parish could commit to moving their church furniture ‘into the round’ for a longer season, such as Easter; based on my experience of this in my parish, this is likely to provoke some surprise and even complaint, as well as genuine delight.²⁹⁷ Such

²⁹⁷ It is amazing how many people remain oblivious to even the most dedicated efforts to inform and reflect on potential changes before they happen!

a change will provide an opportunity to discover how powerfully embodied our experience of the Eucharist is, and will profoundly change our experience of ourselves as a gathered assembly.

The temptation with such changes is to try them all at once, or too briefly; the recommendation is to let this parish-based journey unfold over a whole year, with each exploration given at least a liturgical season to ‘bed down’ and allow heart-level responses to emerge. There is a need to maintain stability and have the community journey together, rather than making this the purview of a special interest group.

Conclusion

These six pathways aim to re-establish liturgical formation as a practical, communal and theologically grounded approach to renewal in this province. I have intentionally not framed these as a single programme or as institutional reform. Instead, I have sought to weave the three strands Maddela names—education, training and formation—so that Anglican identity and mission are re-anchored in what our tradition claims as central: the slow, repetitive and transformative work of common prayer.

These pathways address the mismatch I identified in Section Four by re-centring common prayer as the ‘engine room’ of community life and restoring an understanding of sacramental theology and eucharistic ecclesiology; with these foundations, priests will be theologically equipped to understand why our rites form what they form.

They emphasise participatory competence and ritual seriousness in presiding, in order to encourage the assembly’s active participation rather than perform for it. In addition, liturgy is woven with *diakonia* to prevent our sacramentality from being reduced to private spirituality by making explicit the Eucharist’s ethical outworking in care for the vulnerable and creation.

In our three-tikanga province, intentional practices of shared worship, learning and reflection strengthen our accountability and mutual recognition as true partners and allow the gifts of tikanga Māori and tikanga Polynesia—especially ritual seriousness and collective identity—to challenge Pākehā habits of casualness and consumerism.

Finally, parish-based renewal journeys, encouraged by episcopal oversight and diocesan cohorts, provide a practical and flexible approach to change through structured experiments; these are sustained long enough for formation to occur, and the parish community should evaluate them through prayerful communal reflection. Therefore, these pathways offer a way forward that is both hopeful and concrete—this approach does not reject mission or innovation but grounds these in relation to a richer sacramental imagination and within our church's tradition of common prayer as a 'way of conversion.' In the final section of this thesis, I draw these threads together, returning to the crucial question of *telos*—where does worship take us—and what kind of priestly formation will sustain worship in a church formed in Christ for the life of the world.

Conclusion

On the whole, I do not find Christians, outside of the catacombs, sufficiently sensible of conditions. Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offense, or the waking god may draw us out to where we can never return.²⁹⁸

In this thesis, I have argued that the formation of priests in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia must be reoriented to a renewed sacramental imagination, because liturgical participation is one of the primary means by which Christian identity is formed, sustained and renewed. While acknowledging the diversity of our province, I have focused primarily on my own Pākehā context. The central problem I have explored is not simply that our clergy are under pressure or that our church faces the familiar institutional and cultural challenges of late modernity, but that our efforts at formation have too easily been isolated from the practices of our tradition through which Christian identity is shaped and sustained.

When we redefine priestly ministry in terms of skills such as leadership, strategy, or adaptability, as important as these can be, the deeper theological question can easily be lost: how are persons and communities formed in Christ? I contend that the Eucharist and the wider sacramental life of the church are not optional expressions of an already-formed Christian identity, but are among the primary means by which that identity is given, received, deepened and renewed with repetition over time. Our liturgy forms us at bodily, affective, symbolic and

²⁹⁸ Annie Dillard, "An Expedition to the Pole," in *Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 52–53.

communal levels, often beneath the level of cognition, and thus it must be recovered as a central site of Christian and priestly formation in this province.

To respond to that central problem, I have developed my argument by drawing on theological, ritual studies, historical and pastoral sources. My literature review indicates that the formative power of liturgy cannot be explained solely by cognitive understanding. The work of Juan Oliver, Bruce Morrill, Lizette Larson-Miller, Mark Johnson, Rowan Williams, Catherine Bell, Louis-Marie Chauvet, James K.A. Smith and Mark Searle, among others, demonstrates that Christian formation is effected through the body, repetition, social practice, symbol and participation in a community's ritual life. Worship forms us as a whole person, shaping our desire, perception, behaviour, and belonging, and it achieves this through repeated embodied practice as well as through bearing verbal and doctrinal content.

The literature surveyed provides conceptual and theological grounding for the claim that liturgy is not simply expressive, ornamental or a vehicle for teaching, but is profoundly formative. It also clarifies why our priestly formation should not be reduced to explanation, information transfer and managerial skills. If liturgy forms a people for communion with God and for participation in God's reconciling work in the world, then our clergy must be formed to inhabit, understand and lead that liturgical life with depth, seriousness and competence.

However, this thesis has also demonstrated that the church has not always understood liturgy in this way. The tensions surfaced particularly in Patrick Prétot's historical survey help to illustrate a central paradox: even where the church has affirmed liturgy's formative power, it has often shifted formation away from the worshipping assembly into other parts of the church's institutional life, such as clerical specialisation and the rubrical details of ritual performance. Recognising this drift is useful for my thesis because it illuminates what seems to have become a

persistent misalignment between what liturgy does and what our ministerial formation programmes often train for. It also reveals that our present challenges are not simply the result of local failure or recent decline but are part of a much longer history in which sacramental practice has been repeatedly marginalised, instrumentalised or misunderstood.

The twentieth-century Liturgical Movement sought to reverse this separation and to reestablish the formative and participatory power of worship within a sacramentally informed ecclesiology. Yet the challenge remains acute in Aotearoa New Zealand, where sacramental imagination has limited influence and the social and technological conditions of our contemporary setting exert immense formative pressure. Under such conditions, as Prétot suggests, celebration cannot, on its own, bear the whole weight of formation today.²⁹⁹ However, neither can priestly formation flourish if common prayer is displaced from the heart of our life as a church; liturgy should be restored as the keystone around which other aspects of formation are oriented.

My exploration of the history of liturgical practice in our province has shown that this misalignment has taken on particular local expressions. We have a weak approach to liturgical formation today, which has not evolved by accident. It needs to be considered against our history of colonial transplantation, missionary encounter, and contested relationships between peoples. It has also been shaped more immediately by imported Anglican assumptions, our local church's desire for self-preservation, changing patterns of pastoral practice, and a broader cultural environment in which intellectual and ritual confidence have often been viewed with suspicion. In this context, liturgy has been easily reduced to text, creativity, personal preference or local

²⁹⁹ Prétot, "Benchmarks," 37.

style, while its wider sacramental, bodily and formational dimensions have been neglected or resisted. The free experimentation to which we have become accustomed has intensified this tendency, encouraging us to understand liturgy primarily as a means of expression rather than formation. Our language and practice of the Eucharist matter deeply, yet when our rites can be endlessly adapted, we do not always dwell with their words and gestures over time in ways that allow them to work deeply and formatively within us. The historical survey, therefore, provides important explanatory context and is not merely background; it helps explain why a shared understanding of the nature of liturgical practice is so difficult, and why the formation of our clergy is so readily detached from the theology of the rites we are called to lead.

The central proposal of my thesis is that sacramentality is not a vague sense of the sacred but an approach to Christian existence as something graced, mediated, embodied, and communal. Through sacramental participation, Christians are drawn into a pattern of conversion and recognition in which our identity is continually received anew from God in Christ. Louis-Marie Chauvet's work has been especially helpful in developing my approach. His argument that grace cannot be understood as a possession—“a value-object to be received”—but rather as a symbolic receiving of oneself from God in Christ³⁰⁰ has allowed me to frame liturgical formation as lifelong, iterative conversion. Accordingly, the Eucharist is not simply a site of remembrance or obligation, but must be understood as an itinerary, a journey of thanksgiving and transformation, by which we enact again and again the paschal mystery and are thus formed in the dispositions of faithful Christian life. This is also why we cannot reduce liturgy to the expression of our ideas, identities or intentions. As Lizette Larson-Miller notes, drawing on

³⁰⁰ Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 94–95.

Robert Taft, if scripture bears God's saving words, then liturgy enacts God's saving deeds in the midst of the worshipping assembly. One of the losses amid recent decades of liturgical renewal and experimentation has been the obscuring of this recognition: that in the liturgy, God is acting on us and with us.³⁰¹ Thus, the Eucharist is not simply material we shape in order to communicate or express, but a primary means by which God shapes and forms us in Christ. It follows then that in liturgy, particularly in presiding, matters of space, ritual action, repetition, movement, speech, silence, symbol and participation are not marginal but integral to our formational culture as a church; they shape who we are becoming.

With this understanding, the implications for priestly formation are more straightforward. If our identity as Christians is shaped through repeated, embodied participation in the church's sacramental life, then it cannot make sense to approach the formation of priests simply as the acquisition of information, personal spirituality and charisma, or transferable skills. Priests today certainly need intellectual, pastoral, strategic and innovative capacities, but these are distorted when isolated from the sacramental imagination and practices that constitute the heart of priestly ministry in our tradition.³⁰² Priestly formation should involve an induction into our church's common prayer and sacramental grammar: this should encompass a participatory competence; the bodily and spatial discipline of liturgical leadership; theological imagination; contemplative and pastoral attentiveness; and an awareness of the ethical and missional implications of our worship, all grounded in theology and practice. I am not proposing an inward-looking ritualism

³⁰¹ Larson-Miller, *Sacramentality Renewed*, 75–76.

³⁰² The centrality of our sacramental identity is expressed in our ordinal: "Priests in the Church are called to build up Christ's congregation... above all they are to proclaim God's word, and take their part in Christ's prophetic work, to declare forgiveness through Jesus Christ, to baptise, to preside at the Eucharist, to administer Christ's holy sacraments." Church of the Province of New Zealand, *A New Zealand Prayer Book*, 901.

for the sake of style or nostalgia for a lost Anglican past; instead, I believe that the church's mission is weakened when our ministers are not formed by those practices that bear the church's identity and sustain its life in Christ.

In the fifth and final section of my thesis, I moved from diagnosis and theological reflection towards practical proposals for renewal. I believe that a serious response to the present mismatch in our province must go further than piecemeal curricular revision and occasional liturgical workshops. We need a coherent and comprehensive reorientation of formation around our sacramental and liturgical life. This will involve restoring sacramental theology and liturgical formation to a central place in our theological education settings. Aspects of this will include recovering sustained patterns of common prayer so that repetition can do its gentle work; training ordinands to preside with ritual seriousness and an awareness of encouraging the assembly's full participation; ensuring that contemplative, pastoral and trauma-aware formation is brought into close relationship with sacramental practice; and ensuring that liturgical formation finds expression in *diakonia*: practices of reconciliation, justice, and care for creation. These are not nice-to-haves alongside 'real' ministerial training; they should be considered as central to the church's work of forming priests who can support communities to inhabit the Eucharist as the source and pattern of their shared life.

My research has therefore given rise to a complex analysis. I do not believe that better management, more creative liturgical efforts, or the introduction of more adaptive leadership frameworks in isolation will lead to a renewal of Anglican priestly formation in our context. Instead, we need to restore common prayer and sacramental theology to their place as the primary heartbeat of formation, and renew our understanding that liturgical participation truly shapes Christian persons and communities over time.

This is not an argument that liturgy alone is sufficient, or that formation can ignore the complex realities of our world: secularisation, digital culture, bicultural and intercultural life, institutional turmoil and fragility, trauma, social change. Instead, I am arguing that priestly formation must be oriented from a clear centre outwards. Without a renewed sacramental imagination, our church will be left attempting to sustain mission while neglecting the practices by which we are made and remade as the Body of Christ. However, with such a renewal, other aspects of formation will find their appropriate place.

The significance of my project for Anglican liturgical formation in Aotearoa New Zealand is thus both practical and ecclesial. In a practical sense, I offer a framework for thinking more coherently about how our priests are formed and what capacities matter most for the ongoing life of our communities. The project challenges assumptions that reduce worship to text, personal style, or local creativity, and recalls the wider sacramental ecology within which Christian identity has always been formed. However, in an ecclesial sense, the stakes are higher; the question must be asked whether our Church has the capacity to re-envision its worship as the heartbeat or engine room of our common life—the primary school in which desire is redirected, perception re-ordered, memory deepened and connected, bodies disciplined, communities reconciled, and mission sustained. In the diversity and complexity of our province, uniformity is neither possible nor appropriate. But a renewal of common prayer may enable a more grounded, more deeply shared and more theologically coherent life across our differing contexts. In particular, from a Pākehā Anglican perspective, it may help us to recover a seriousness about ritual, communal identity and formation that has for too long been weakened by informality and consumer preference, and also to embrace stronger conditions for mutual learning and accountability within our tikanga partnerships.

This thesis argues for the recovery of a profound truth that the church has often confessed but not consistently embraced: that in the Eucharist and the wider sacramental life, God forms a people. Priests cannot be formed in isolation from that people, or from those rites—we should be formed within them and for their flourishing. To re-ground priestly formation in a sacramental imagination and liturgical life is thus not to narrow the church's identity, but to return to the original grammar of our life. It is to recognise once more that worship is not a detour away from mission or an ornament alongside other ministry, but one of the primary ways by which we as the church are converted, gathered, nourished and sent by God, in Christ. In this recovery, we will find not simply a more robust and vital account of the formation of priests, but a more hopeful future for Anglican communities seeking to live faithfully and fruitfully under these southern skies.

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