

THE LORD'S SUPPER AS A SACRIFICIAL BANQUET

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Jesus did not explain the significance of his death to his disciples. He taught them repeatedly that he had to suffer, be rejected by his own people, be killed by them, and rise from the dead (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34; cf. 12:1-11). Yet, even though this was the goal of his mission as the Messiah, he was strangely reticent about it. Only once did he actually allude to the reason for his death as an act of redemption (Mark 10:45). He did not give his disciples an explanation of his death because that would have been of little use to them. Instead he gave them the sacrament of his body and blood as a ritual enactment.¹ By instituting the Lord's Supper, he conveyed the benefits of his death to them. It announced what they received from him as their crucified, risen Lord. Through that sacred meal he interprets his death as an act of sacrifice. His death was the perfect, definitive sacrifice for all the members of the human family. And the Lord's Supper is a sacrificial banquet, similar to the holy meals that were a regular part of the divine service at the temple and yet different from them.

The sacrificial character of that meal is evident from its setting within the context of a Passover celebration² as well as the words that Jesus spoke over the bread and wine. When he identified the bread with his body and the wine with his blood he used technical sacrificial terms for the two parts of an animal that had been ritually slaughtered for presentation to God, the meat that was either burnt or eaten and the blood that was poured out on the altar (Deut 12:27). Moreover, by declaring that his blood, which was to be drunk, was poured out for the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:27), he interpreted his death as a sin offering for the world³ and established the sacrament as a priestly meal in which his disciples as his fellow priests ate his body, rather than the flesh of an animal that had been sacrificed as a sin offering.

In 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 St Paul too treats the Lord's Supper as a sacrificial banquet. On the one hand, he contrasts it with the religious meals that were eaten by pagan people at the temples of their gods. The food that had been offered to the idols did not, as they fancied, establish communion with their gods, but with the demons that were evoked by them through these idols. On the other hand, he compares the Lord's Supper with the meals that Israelites ate as God's guests at the temple in Jerusalem. When the Israelites presented their peace offerings there, God provided them with holy meat to eat from his table, the altar for burnt offering. Through the holy meat that had been sanctified by its contact with the altar,⁴ they enjoyed fellowship with God and each other. Paul connects the Lord's Supper with these sacred meals in which the Israelites ate the meat from the peace offerings. Like the Israelites, the members of the church are guests at the Lord's table; through their common participation in the holy body of Christ they have communion with God and each other.

Much has been written about whether the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice or not. Even more has been written about what kind of sacrifice it is. The debate on this has been clouded by the semantic confusion that comes from reading general concepts of sacrifice back into the New Testament rather than reading what it has to say about the Lord's Supper and Christ's death in the light of the Old Testament. We Lutherans have usually dealt with this topic defensively and offensively by mapping out our

position over against those Protestants who deny the real presence of Christ's body and blood and against those Roman Catholics who teach that the Mass is a propitiatory sacrifice that the church offers to God the Father. This is, of course, useful and most necessary. But we dare not stop there. We need to develop our teaching on the Lord's Supper in positive terms and draw out its full pastoral significance for our people so that they will be able to appropriate the riches of Christ that is available to them in it.

It is instructive that there is no general term for sacrifice in the Old Testament. The most general term that comes closest to this English word is *qorban*, which means something that has been brought near to God, something that has been presented directly to him ⁵. This word is usually translated rather imprecisely in English by "offering." The only other general term is *'ishsheh leyhwh*, a gift or food gift for the Lord. This refers to those parts of the offerings that are reserved for the Lord and handed over entirely to him ⁶. But the writers of the Old Testament usually avoid general terms and concepts. Instead they refer to the specific classes of offerings, such as the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, and the peace offering. Each of these has its own place and its own function in the whole of sacrificial ritual. Each gains its significance from its location and enactment within that context.

In his *Examination of the Council of Trent* Chemnitz wisely clarified the state of the controversy between the Lutherans and the Catholics by using the various classes of offerings in the Old Testament to show what he meant when he used the term: sacrifice as a ritual-theological term ⁷. This essay which commemorates the tenth anniversary of *Logia* and recognizes its contribution to the enrichment of Lutheran sacramental piety, will attempt to take a similar approach to discover what light the Old Testament ritual legislation throws on the function and significance of the Lord's Supper ⁸. Our basic contention is that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ as a new kind of sacrificial banquet. It was not just a new Passover meal but something broader than that as well. He took the divine service that God had instituted through Moses and inserted the Lord's Supper into it as its new heart, its hub. Just as God had given the daily burnt offering as the sum of his gifts to Israel in the covenant that he made at Sinai ⁹, so Jesus gave the Lord's Supper as the sum and substance of the new covenant ¹⁰. While it connected the liturgy of the church with the temple liturgy it also reshaped the ritual structure and theological dynamics of the divine service that the church had inherited for Israel ¹¹.

a. The Place of Sacrificial Meals in the Old Testament

Most modern readers would agree with von Rad in his assessment of jumbled profusion of sacrifices that we find in Leviticus and in its account of the inaugural service at the tabernacle. He says:

The account of Aaron's first sacrifice shows a quite baroque accumulation of burnt offerings, sin offerings, and peace offerings (Lev ix). This being so, we must abandon from the outset with P any idea that it is possible to presuppose, behind each kind of sacrifice, a precise theory of the sacral event in question exactly distinguishing it from all other kinds. ¹²

He therefore doubts whether Leviticus portrays a well thought out sacrificial system. His remarks reveal the presuppositions that create the problem for him. He, like many

modern scholars, holds that the ritual communicates ideas. Thus those who participate in them need to know what they mean. But that is not how ritual works. Its actual significance does not depend on what it means but on what it does, its function. The function of a ritual act is determined by its context.

If we wish to make sense of the various offerings in the Old Testament we need to place them within the context of the divine service that was enacted twice each day at the temple ¹³. The daily sacrificial liturgy provided the framework and template for all the offerings. This service was performed by the priests as a public act on behalf of the whole nation. Its basic structure was established by presentation of the daily burnt offering with its grain offering. The order of that service was expanded to include the other public offerings as well as the personal offerings brought by the people. Additional public offerings were added to the service on special occasions, such as on the Sabbaths as well as on the three great festivals (Num 28-29). The personal offerings of the Israelites, the chief of which was the peace offerings, were incorporated into pattern established by the daily service ¹⁴. They functioned within its context and gained their significance from it.

1. The basic order for the divine service was sketched out by the enactment of the daily burnt offering of a male lamb to the Lord (Exod 29:38-46). It was accompanied by the presentation of a grain offering consisting of fine flour, part of which was burnt on the altar and the rest of which was eaten by the priests on duty at the temple (Exod 29:40-41; Lev 6:14-18). The performance of the daily service proceeded in three stages. The first stage centred on the rite of atonement with the blood from the lamb (Lev 1:4). After the lamb had been ritually slaughtered ¹⁵ the blood from it was “dashed” ¹⁶ against the sides of the altar (Lev 1:5,11; 9:12). Through this act of atonement with the blood God purified the altar and the priests. The priests could therefore enter the Holy Place to burn the incense on the altar before the curtain (Exod 30:7-8) and approach the altar to lay out the burnt offering on it, without desecrating God’s holiness by their impurity and so incurring God’s wrath.

In the second stage of daily service the lamb and the grain offering were “sent up in smoke” ¹⁷ as “an aroma pleasing to the Lord” (Exod 29:41; Lev 1:8-9,12-13). By means of this enactment God met with the congregation at the altar for burnt offering and gave them access to his grace, like a king holding an audience with his subjects, so that they could present their petitions to him (Exod 29:42-43) ¹⁸; he came to them there to accept them (Lev 1:3) and to bless them (Exod 20:24) ¹⁹; by his theophany in the fire and the smoke at the altar he consecrated the temple, the altar, and the priests (Exod 29:43-44; Lev 9:4,6,23-24). This was the heart of the daily service, the main purpose for its enactment.

In the third stage the priests ate the bread made from the flour of the grain offering (Lev 6:14-18) ²⁰. In this meal God was their royal host; they, his courtiers, were his honoured guests who ate the food from his table, the altar. Since part of that bread had been burnt on the altar, the rest was most holy (Lev 2:3,10; 6:17) Those who ate it shared in God’s holiness (Lev 6:18). Thus after God had cleansed the priests and had met with them to attend to their needs, he provided a sacred meal for them. The daily service culminated in that sacred priestly meal.

2. The order for daily burnt offering was the framework for the presentation of the offerings that the Israelites brought to the Lord at the temple in Jerusalem. This usually occurred on the three great pilgrim festivals: Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. On these occasions the heads of each household that lived in the land of Israel were obliged to appear before the Lord, the owner of the land, with their offerings as the annual rent for their use of his land (Exod 23:14-17). While they could, if they wished, bring some of their animals as voluntary burnt offerings, they were required to present their firstborn male livestock as peace offerings (Lev 3:1-17) and the first fruits of their crops as a grain offering (Lev 2:1-16). The peace offerings were, in fact, the main lay offering. Like the burnt offering, the rite for the peace offering proceeded in three stages. First, the rite for atonement was performed with the blood from the animal (Lev 3:2,7-8,12-13). Next the fat parts of the animal were placed “upon” the public burnt offering on the altar (Lev 3:5), together with the kidneys and the lobe of the liver²¹ and part of its accompanying grain offering (Num 15:1-16), so that they could be sent up in smoke as “an aroma pleasing to the Lord” (Lev 3:3-5,9-11,14-16). Finally, the ritual enactment culminated in a sacred meal. The priests took their share of the meat and flour home and ate it with their families (Lev 7:29-36); the people who had brought the offering ate the rest of the sacred meat and bread with their families and their guests, all of whom needed to be ritually clean (Lev 7:19-21; 19:5-8; Deut 12:17-18,27). Through the holy meat and bread the Israelites too shared in God’s holiness and enjoyed his favour. He sanctified them (Lev 20:7; 22:32), just as he sanctified the priests (Lev 21:8,15; 22:9).

3. The order for the public burnt offering was expanded to include the extra offerings that were added for pastoral reasons. Thus on certain festive occasions when a congregation of people assembled at the sanctuary, a public sin offering²² was added to purify the sanctuary, the priesthood and the congregation so that there would be no danger of defilement and desecration.²³ Since the main function of the sin offering was to atone for sin and to cleanse from impurity, the rite of atonement was elaborated to accomplish this purpose. The blood was brought into the Holy Place, sprinkled on the curtain, and smeared on the horns of the incense altar, before the rest of it was poured out on the base of the altar for burnt offering (Lev 4:5-7,16-18). The fat portions of the animals were burnt on the altar, as for the peace offering, while the rest of the animal was burnt at the ash pit outside the city (Lev 4:8-12,19-21). In this way all the impediments to the safe entry of the priests into God’s holy presence and to the safe access of the people to the altar were removed. The remarkable feature of this public sin offering is that none of the meat was eaten by anybody, for none of the beneficiaries of a sin offering could eat the meat from it (Lev 6:20).

Likewise any Israelite who had sinned inadvertently against God²⁴ was required to bring his own sin offering so that he could receive release from his sin and approach God at the temple with his offerings, without desecrating his holiness and incurring his wrath (Lev 4:22-5:13)²⁵. In this case some of the blood was smeared on the horns of the altar for burnt offering before the rest of it was poured out at its base (Lev 4:25,30,34). After the fat from this personal sin offering had been burnt on the altar, its meat, which had become most holy (Lev 6:17,25,29), was eaten by the priests (Lev 6:25-30)²⁶. Thus while the blood from the sin offering purified the sinner and brought God’s absolution to him, its meat sanctified the priests.

The daily burnt offering which was expanded to include the other animal offerings imposed its basic pattern on them. Each of them began with the rite of atonement, centred on the placement of some parts of it for sending up in smoke on the altar, and culminated in a sacred meal. In that holy meal God was their royal host and the Israelites were his favoured guests. He provided the food for them from his altar-table. The meals provided for the priest differed from the meals provided for the laity. On the one hand, the priests on duty at the temple ate the most holy food that was reserved exclusively for them: the showbread and the bread from the grain offerings as well as the meat from the sin offerings and guilt offerings. Since this food was most holy and since it communicated God's holiness to those who ate it, it could only be eaten by the priests at the temple. They and their families, provided that they were ritually clean, ate the holy meat from the peace offerings in their homes. On the other hand, the Israelites ate the sacred meat from their peace offerings as well as the sacred bread that came from their grain offerings at the temple or in its precincts. For them this was the highlight of their visits to the temple. It was, usually, the only time that they ate meat. They were, in fact, required to reserve their firstborn animals and the first fruits of their produce so that they could eat and rejoice in the presence of the Lord (Deut 12:5-7,10-12,17-18). The festivals were therefore times of feasting for them, occasions where they lived like royalty at God's expense, for he retained but a portion of their rent for his land. He gave the rest back to them, sanctified for their enjoyment.

b. The Lord's Supper as a Sacrificial Banquet

By his death and resurrection Jesus fulfilled the whole of the ritual legislation in the Old Testament (Matt 5:17). In his death he offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for humanity (Eph 5:2; Heb 7:27; 8:14; 10:10,12-14). He fulfilled the function of all the bloody offerings: the sin offering that cleansed people from the taint of sin, the guilt offering that brought forgiveness for acts of desecration, the burnt offering that gained access to God's grace, and the peace offering that established holy communion with God²⁷. All these were superseded by him. He replaced them with the preaching of the gospel, the good news of what we receive from him by virtue of his great act of sacrifice, and the enactment of the sacraments by which he conveyed what he had gained for them by his death²⁸. What's more, through his resurrection and ascension he has been established as the high priest in the heavenly sanctuary, the mediator between God and the human family (Heb 4:14-16; 7:23-28). As our high priest he consecrates his disciples as priests to perform the divine service together with him in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 2:11). There he now hosts a heavenly banquet in which he conveys all the benefits of his great act of sacrifice for them. He who took his own flesh and blood into the Father's presence and offered them to him on their behalf, now gives them his own most holy body and blood as heavenly food and drink to us in the Lord's Supper. That new sacrificial meal differs from the temple meals by virtue of its context, its host, and its food.

1. Jesus has established a new context for his holy meal. It is not enacted at the temple in Jerusalem, but in the heavenly sanctuary. His disciples, as the writer of Hebrews asserts, eat that meal of grace with food from a different altar outside Jerusalem (13:9-14). Through the flesh and blood of Jesus they have open access to the Father's presence in heaven itself (Heb 10:19-22). They do not need to go up to the earthly city of Jerusalem to eat and drink in God's presence. Instead, whenever they gather to

celebrate the Lord's Supper, they enter heavenly Jerusalem to feast there together with the whole communion of saints in the presence of the angels and God the gracious judge of all (Heb 12:22-24). That meal then is part and parcel of the heavenly liturgy, the divine service in which Christ is the chief liturgist (Heb 8:2,6) with the angels as his liturgical assistants (Heb 1:14; 12:22).

2. This meal has a different host who, as a priest, provides this meal for his fellow priests. The risen Lord Jesus is its host. He himself shares the food from his offering to his guests. He differs from all the hosts in the Old Testament by eating none of the meal. Jesus was not just the host of the Passover meal that he ate with his disciples on the night that he instituted this sacred meal. He remains its host. He did not hand it over to his apostles and their successors. Instead he appointed them to host the meal together with him. They are to sit with him at his table and celebrate that meal together with him (Luke 22:28-30). Luke makes it quite clear that Jesus remains the host of the meal by the story of his appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35). He draws a parallel between the actions of Jesus at the last supper and his actions in their house. In both cases he takes the bread, blesses, breaks, and gives it to his disciples. The performance of this ritual act in their house is quite unexpected, rather presumptuous from a human point of view, for, though present in their house as their guest, he nevertheless acts as their host. So the sacrament is his supper (1 Cor 11:20). It presupposes his presence. The cup from which we drink is his cup; the table that supplies us with this meal is his table (1 Cor 10:21).

3. In his holy supper Jesus provides his disciples with unique food. The menu at his table differs from the menu that God provided for the Israelites at the temple in Jerusalem. It is both a matter of scandal and a cause of amazement. To be sure, the meal seems similar. Its guests eat bread and drink wine, just as the Israelites did in their meals at the temple. But that bread is his sacrificed body; that blood is his atoning blood.

These astonishing gifts come into their own against the backdrop of the sacrificial banquets of the Old Testament. Jesus, the host of this meal, does not give his disciples the holy meat from an animal that he has offered to God as peace offering. He does not, as a priest, invite them to eat some of the most holy meat that he has presented to God as a sin offering or a guilt offering, which, in any case, was not allowed, nor does he invite them as his fellow priests to join him in eating the most holy bread from the grain offerings. Instead he gives them his own sacrificed body to eat. In this meal he presents himself as the bread of God (John 6:32),²⁹ the life-giving bread who gives his flesh for the life to the world (John 6:51). That flesh is not the dead meat of an animal, but the living flesh of Christ, his resurrected, life-giving body (John 6:52-56). Those who eat it do not gain added physical nourishment and increased biological vitality. They receive eternal life, divine life through the Spirit-filled, Spirit-giving body of Christ (John 6:54,63; 1 Cor 10:3). Through that food they share in Christ's own holiness (1 Cor 1:30; Heb 2:11-15; 10:10).

Christ's provision of his own body as the bread of God from heaven is unexpected and scandalous enough. But even more unexpected and scandalous is the provision of his own blood as a life-giving drink for his disciples³⁰. This is utterly new and entirely without precedent in the Old Testament, for the blood from the sacrificed animals was reserved exclusively for God and used only in the rite of atonement³¹.

The taboo against drinking blood was so strict that any Israelite who violated it was cut off by God himself from the congregation of Israel (Lev 17:10,14). The blood that had been splashed against the altar in the rite of atonement could only be used for one purpose. It was used in the ordination of priests. On that occasion some of the blood was placed on the right ear, the right thumb, and the right big toe of the priest to purify him before it was splashed against the altar (Exod 29:20-21; Lev 8:23-24). After that had been done some of the most holy blood was taken from the altar, mixed with the most holy anointing oil, and sprinkled on the priests and their vestments to consecrate them (Exod 29:21; Lev 8:30). But even then they did not imbibe it.

When Jesus commanded his disciples to drink his blood in his last meal with them he told them to violate the divine taboo on drinking blood. Yet that act did not really violate that taboo, because it was the ultimate reason for it. He gave them his own blood to drink in Holy Communion (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 10:16; 11:25), the blood by which he made atonement for them (Rom 3:25) and established peace on a cosmic scale with his death on the cross (Col 1:20), the most holy blood that he brought with him at his ascension into the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 9:11-12). That blood gives life, his own divine life, eternal life through the Holy Spirit (John 6:53-56, 61-63).

Christ's gift of his blood to drink in that sacrificial banquet distinguishes that meal most sharply from all the sacred meals of the Israelites in the Old Testament. By means of his blood he conveys all the eternal blessings that he gained for the faithful through his self-sacrifice. Through his blood they have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28; 1 Cor 11:25; Eph 1:7). His blood justifies them before God the Father (Rom 5:9) and cleanses them from all impurity (Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:7). They can therefore approach God the Father through his blood in the divine service (Eph 2:13; Heb 10:19). By means of that blood they are consecrated as priests together with Christ (Heb 10:29; 13:12) and equipped well for their priestly service of him (Heb 13:20-21). As priests whose robes have been washed with his holy blood (Rev 7:14), they can use his blood to overcome Satan and triumph over the powers of darkness (Rev 12:11). His blood is a "spiritual drink" for them because it fills them with his Holy Spirit (1 Cor 10:4; 12:13), the Spirit that is given through his blood to bear witness to him (1 John 5:6-8).

In the light of all this it comes as no surprise that the description of the divine service in Hebrews 12:22-24 culminates in "the blood for sprinkling." Our involvement in the heavenly liturgy is only possible through the blood of Jesus, the blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. Through his blood the risen Lord Jesus gives God's holy people access to the heavenly city here on earth; through it he unites them with the angels and the whole communion of saints and presents them as purified sinners before God the Judge. In Holy Communion Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, "sprinkles"³² their hearts, their conscience, by giving them his holy blood to drink (Heb 9:13-14; 10:22; 12:24; 1 Pet 1:2). That blood speaks to them of forgiveness and grace, purification from sin and holiness.

By what he accomplished in his death and resurrection Jesus shifted the centre of gravity for us in the divine service from making atonement through the blood of the sacrificed animals to receiving the fruits of his atonement through his blood, from gaining restricted access to his grace in the temple to using our unlimited access by

faith to his gracious presence in the heavenly sanctuary for our benefit and the benefit of others, from seeking partial fellowship with God at the temple to enjoying the fullness of Christ's own fellowship with his heavenly Father through union with his resurrected body. And so its focus is on the sacred meal. There Christ waits on us with his body and blood (Luke 22:27); there he conveys himself and all God's gifts to us as we faithfully eat his body and drink his blood. All we do is eat and drink.

Conclusion

We Lutherans all too often limit our teaching and preaching on the sacrament to the questions posed by Luther's *Small Catechism*. They do indeed deal with the essence of the sacrament. But there is much more to the sacrament than that, as Luther himself shows in his many tracts and sermons on the Lord's Supper. Pastors preach a sermon on the sacrament at least once a year on Maundy Thursday but seldom go much beyond that. It is almost as if we believe that it is un-Lutheran to dwell too much on the sacrament. We therefore do not relate the whole of the faith to the Lord's Supper, nor do we relate the Lord's Supper to the whole of our lives. Rather it sits there by itself, disconnected from most other things.

Since Luther quite rightly rejected the teaching that the Mass was a sacrifice that the priest offers to God the Father to atone for the sins of the living and the dead, we are wary about understanding the sacrament in sacrificial terms. We are uneasy about using the teaching on the offerings in the Old Testament to throw light on what happens in it. We therefore forget that it involves us in bringing our thank offering to God the Father. This wariness is complicated by the decrease in the level of Biblical literacy in our congregations. Most people know little or nothing about the Old Testament, let alone the ritual legislation in the Pentateuch. If they are versed in that most unpopular part of the Bible, they don't know what to make of it. It's all outmoded Jewish law! No gospel there! So, even though we may celebrate the Lord's Supper more frequently than our predecessors, this does not seem to be matched by an increased appreciation of its inexhaustible riches.

Yet we are surrounded by unchurched people who hanker for mystery and long for solid spiritual realities rather than mere religious rhetoric. What could be more wonderful and more appealing to post-modern people than participation in the heavenly banquet that Christ has established here on earth, a banquet in which he is our host and we sinners are his honoured guests, a banquet that is celebrated locally anywhere on earth but is enacted supernaturally in heaven, a banquet in which we are surrounded by the angels and associated with the whole communion of saints, a banquet in which we share in Christ's holiness and have holy communion bodily with each other, a banquet through which we already now participate in the divine life of the Holy Trinity and so receive a foretaste of the glory that will overtake us at the resurrection of our bodies. No wonder that the angel congratulated St John in Revelation 19:6 with the words: "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb."

¹ See Hermann Sasse, "Church and Lord's Supper," *The Lonely Way. Selected Essays and Writings by Hermann Sasse* 1 (1927-1939), tr. John R. Stephenson and ed. Matthew C. Harrison (Concordia: St Louis, 2001), 384.

² Matt 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-16. See also Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, tr. Norman Perrin (SCM: London, 1966), 15-88.

³ In Rom 8:3 and 2 Cor 5:21 St Paul refers to Christ as a "sin offering."

⁴ According to Exod 29:37, everything that touched the altar became most holy. The altar therefore sanctified the offerings that were placed on it.

⁵ See Lev 1:2; 2:1; 3:1; 4:38. This noun is derived from the verb *qarab*. This is used as a technical term in the Qal for approaching God at the altar and in the Hiphil for bringing offerings to him there.

⁶ See Lev 1:9; 2:3; 3:3, and Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, The Anchor Bible (Doubleday: New York, 1991), 161-62. The usual translation for this term is "fire offering."

⁷ Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent* ii, tr. Fred Kramer (Concordia: St Louis, 1978), 439-98.

⁸ This article is a summary of the data that will be developed more fully in the commentary on Leviticus that I am preparing for the *Concordia Commentary*.

⁹ The covenant at Sinai is a bilateral agreement between God and his holy priestly people. Whereas he promises to be their God by meeting with them daily at the altar and dwelling with them in the tabernacle (Exod 20:2; 29:42-46), he requires them to observe the Decalogue as their side of the covenant (Exod 20:2-17). Thus the mandate for the divine service in Exodus 25-31 is to be understood as his gift to them in that covenant.

¹⁰ See Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 12:24.

¹¹ In Rom 9:4 Paul asserts that the church received the divine service from the people of Israel.

¹² Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* 1, tr. D.M.G. Stalker (Oliver and Boyd: Edinburgh and London), 1962, 251-2.

¹³ See John W. Kleinig, *The Lord's Song. The Basis, Function and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles*, JSOT Supplement 156 (JSOT: Sheffield), 1993, 101-108.

¹⁴ See Lev 9 and 2 Chr 29:30-35 for descriptions of the procedure for an elaborated services of festive occasions.

¹⁵ The slaughter of the animal had ritual-theological significance. The animal was not offered to God by slaughtering it but by presenting its blood and its meat to God.

¹⁶ The technical Hebrew term for this enactment is *zâraq* (Lev 1:5,11; 3:8,13). The NIV translates it quite incorrectly with "sprinkle."

¹⁷ See Lev 1:9,13,17. The Hebrew term for this is *hiqtîr*. It is usually translated by "burn," but this is somewhat misleading. It refers to the ascent of the smoke to the sky a sign of God's appearance and of his acceptance of the sacrifice.

¹⁸ See 2 Chron 7:12-16. Thus because the temple was the place of sacrifice it was also a house of prayer (1 Kgs 8:22-53). The incineration of the offerings created a two way bridge between heaven and earth, God and Israel.

¹⁹ The Lord gave his blessing to the people through the performance of the Aaronic benediction at the completion of the ritual for the burnt offering (Lev 9:23; Num 6:22-27; Sir 50:21-22).

²⁰ In addition to this, on the Sabbath the priests ate the most holy showbread that been set before the Lord on the table for it in the Holy Place for the previous week (Lev 24:5-9).

²¹ These were most likely burnt with the fat to prevent their use for augury and fortune telling.

²² See N. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature. Its Meaning and Function*, JSOT Supplement 56 (JSOT: Sheffield, 1987), for an analysis of this offering.

²³ Lev 4:1-21; 9:8-11,15; Num 28:15,22,30; 29:5,11,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,38.

²⁴ A sin offering could not however atone for deliberate, defiant sins against God, sins with a high hand (Num 15:30-31).

²⁵ The so-called guilt offering is closely related to the sin offering (Lev 5:14-6:7; 7:1-10). It was offered in cases of desecration or suspected desecration of the holy things. See Jacob Milgrom, 339-78, for a definitive analysis of this puzzling offering.

²⁶ This applied too for the meat from the guilt offering (Lev 6:17; 7:6-7).

²⁷ See Theodor Kliefoth, *Liturgische Abhandlungen 7* (Stiller'sche Hof-Buchhandlung: Schwerin, 1858), 175-203, for a good summary of this point and much of what follows.

²⁸ See Kliefoth, 183.

²⁹ See Lev 22:6,8,17,21,22; 22:7,11,25, for the use of this term for the meat from the sacrifices.

³⁰ Hermann Sasse, "The Lord's Supper in the New Testament," *We Confess the Sacraments*. We Confess Series, Volume 2, tr. Norman Nagel (Concordia St Louis, 1985), 89-90.

³¹ See John W. Kleinig, "The Blood for Sprinkling: Atoning Blood in Leviticus and Hebrews," *LTJ* 33/3 (1999) 124-135.

³² The Greek verb *rantizein* translates the Hebrew verb *hizzah* which was used as the technical term for disposal of the blood from the sin offerings by sprinkling it on the curtain in the Holy Place (Lev 4:6,17) and the vestments of the priests (Exod 29:21; Lev 8:30). On the day of atonement the blood was sprinkled by the high priest on the mercy seat and the floor of Holy of Holies (Lev 16:14,15) before was brought out from there and used to sprinkle the incense altar and floor of the Holy Place (Lev 16:16; cf. Exod 30:10) as well as the altar for burnt offering (Lev 16:19). The blood that had been made most holy was therefore used to consecrate the altar.