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LITURGICAL WORSHIP IN THE ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (EELC) DURING AND AFTER THE ERA OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT WITH THE SWEDISH LUTHERAN MISSION–BIBLE TRUE FRIENDS (SLM–BV)

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A THESIS

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To my beloved ones: Fikade, Jedidiah, and Azariah.

CONTENTS

PREFACE vi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS vii

ABBREVIATIONS viii

ABSTRACT ix

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION 1

    A Brief Historical Background of 1

    the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) 1

    The Liturgical Tradition of EELC 4

    The Present State of the Research 7

    The Method of Research 7

    The Sources of the Research 9

    The Outline of the Thesis 10

2. WHAT IS LITURGY AND LITURGICAL WORSHIP? 12

    A General Overview of Liturgy and the Lutheran Perspective on Liturgy 12

    Martin Luther's Conception of Liturgy 16

    Heritage of the Swedish Liturgy 21

    General Description of EELC Liturgical Worship Formation 27

3. LITURGICAL WORSHIP IN EELC 31

    SLM–BV and Its Missionary Works in Ethiopia: A Brief Background 32

Liturgical Worship of EELC during SLM–BV 36

4. WHY DID EELC BECOME LESS LITURGICAL? 47

Internal Factors That Affected the Continuity of Liturgical Worship in EELC 48

The Pietistic Background of SLM–BV 48

Pietistic Influence after Independence from SLM–BV 49

Church Government and Administration 54

Bearings on a Lutheran Liturgical Worship in EELC 54

External Factors that Affected the Continuity of Liturgical Worship in EELC 60

The Socio –Political Conditions of Ethiopia 60

During the Church's Government Transfer in 1970s 60

5. THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS 75

6. CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS 88

Appendix

1. EELC LITURGY OF THE MASS AND ORDERS FOR VARIOUS SERVICES, AUGUST, 1984 95

2. EELC LITURGY OF THE MASS AND ORDERS FOR VARIOUS SERVICES, AUGUST 2022 102

3. EELC LITURGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER FROM THE AGENDA OF AUGUST, 1984 and 2022 110

WORKS CITED 116

PREFACE

I was born to Lutheran parents in the town of Asella, where I received catechesis in basic Lutheran teachings at my home church, the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC), Asella congregation. During my early years, our congregation practiced Lutheran liturgical worship. However, I have witnessed a decline in liturgical divine service over the years. For the past twelve years, I have been working with the EELC, which has given me the opportunity to travel and observe various synods and congregations. My personal experience has shown that Lutheran liturgical worship within the EELC is diminishing, and it has ceased to exist in many congregations.

During my S.T.M. studies, I have been exposed to confessional Lutheran teachings and liturgical practices, which have motivated me to examine the Lutheran liturgical divine service practices of the EELC. Many captivating moments throughout my studies have provided additional insights and stimulated me to reflect on my church in relation to its liturgical divine service history, development, and worship. Throughout this journey, one question has lingered in my mind: Why is the EELC's Lutheran liturgical worship continually declining? I have also considered the driving impulses within the church, as well as the external factors that have influenced this change.

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I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the institutions and individuals who have contributed to my S.T.M. studies and this thesis. First and foremost, I am deeply thankful to my thesis advisor, Professor Daniel Johansson, for his invaluable guidance and advice throughout this thesis work as well as his support during my entire S.T.M. studies. I am also very grateful to Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne (CTSFW) and Församlingsfakulteten for the opportunities they provided. Additionally, I want to extend my appreciation to the Swedish Lutheran Mission–Bible True Friends (SLM–BV) for their generous support of my S.T.M. studies and research, which included access to literary materials and personal encouragement. I would like to thank Professor Naomichi Masaki for his guidance and encouragement throughout my studies as well. My gratitude also extends to the leaders and pastors of my church, the EELC, for their ongoing support. Last but certainly not least, I would like to express my love and appreciation to my dear wife, Fikade, and our two sons, Jedidiah and Azariah.

ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Augsburg Confession
ALTS	Asella Lutheran Theological Seminary
Ap	Apology of Augsburg Confession
BSLTS	Bossa–Soro Lutheran Theological Seminary
CoS	Church of Sweden
ECFE	Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia
EECMY	Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus
EELC	Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church
EFS	*Evangeliska Fosterlands– Stiftelsen*
ELCK	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
LCEt	Lutheran Church in Ethiopia –Friends of the Bible
LW	Luther's Work
SLM–BV	Swedish Lutheran Mission – Bibeltrogna Vänner
SMBV	Swedish Mission Bibeltrogna Vänner
SBLTS	Sodo–Bossa Lutheran Theological Seminary
SD	Solid Declaration
SEM	Swedish Evangelical Mission

ABSTRACT

Eyob Dinku Tadesse “Liturgical Worship in the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) during and after the era of Church Government with the Swedish Lutheran Mission (SLM–BV).” STM thesis, Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary, 2026.120 pp.

This thesis examines the practice of Lutheran liturgical worship in the divine service of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC). The objective is to understand why the liturgy of the EELC has become less liturgical, particularly following the complete transition of the church's governance from foreign missionaries to Ethiopian leaders. The study identifies several reasons for the decline of liturgical worship in the EELC, including both internal factors within the church and external influences from its surrounding environment.

Internal factors include the pietistic tradition of the missionaries, the church’s own practices, and its governance structures. External factors encompass the social and political conditions during and after the transfer of government, as well as the impact of Pentecostal and charismatic movements.

The thesis provides a comprehensive overview of Lutheran liturgy, examining it from both historical and theological perspectives. It then delves into the Swedish liturgical tradition, highlighting its direct connection to the Lutheran liturgical practices of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC). The study also focuses on the historical and ecumenical influences of other denominations and church bodies in Ethiopia, which are relevant to the main research question.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A Brief Historical Background of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC)

The Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) has come to existence through Swedish and Danish Missionaries under one organization — Swedish Lutheran Mission — Bible True Friends (SLM–BV). The mission works started in 1921 and continued four decades, before a national church was established in 1960 with name, 'Lutheran church of Ethiopia– Friends of the Bible.'[1] Later on it has been named as 'Lutheran Church in Ethiopia– Friends of the Bible,' and used this name until 2010. In 2010 the church changed its name to its current name, "Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC)."

The missionary works of SLM–BV started slowly and in different parts of Ethiopia, albeit progressing steadily and systematically.[2] The pioneers used different types of social services, like medical care and educational programs, as a tool for the

[1] Bengt Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*: *The Background, Formation, and Development of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Part II (Stockholm: BoD-Books on Demand, 2023), 9.

[2] According to Bengt Hjort, the first service stations of SLM-BV were Addis Abeba, the capital city; Harar; Dire-Dawa in the eastern part of the country; and Monessa-Damo in the southeast, which is predominantly occupied by the Oromo people. Mekonnen Geremew, Bengt Hjort, and Rune Imberg, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel, The Background, Formation, and Development of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Part I, ed. Bengt Hjort (Stockholm: BoD-Books on Demand, 2022), 121.

Gospel cause. Through those efforts the first congregation in Addis Abeba was established as early as the mission work started in the beginning of the 1920s. This and the following congregations developed steadily through a joint effort of the missionaries and indigenous people despite cultural, economic, and political challenges.

One of the most devastating encounters that severely impacted the mission work and the development of the church were the 1935 Italian invasion and occupation which lasted until 1941. As result of that, the Swedish missionaries left Ethiopia, and the Ethiopians who had been working with the missionaries for several years took over the mission work. However, the mission organization continued its contact with the Ethiopians, with financial support.[3] Due to the Second World War, the absence of permanent missionaries continued until 1945.[4] "But after the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and the Second World War, ten years later, the missionaries came back to the mission field."[5]

After the Italian occupation and the return of missionaries, the joint effort continued with expansion both geographically and numerically. As a result, a new congregation was established, and the Wollaita congregation which was established by the native people of Wollaita joined LCEt, after agreement made between the

[3] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*, Part II, 88–89; 105–109.

[4] Dawit Tuffa, "The Influence of the Lutheran Missionaries in Shaping the Leadership Practice and History of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church," (Master's thesis, Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, 2017), 32.

[5] Tuffa,"The Influence of the Lutheran Missionaries in Shaping the Leadership Practice and History of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church," 37.

congregation leaders and LCEt.[6] After the establishment of LCEt in 1960, many other congregations continued to be formed in different places.

The church government was carried out jointly by the foreign missionaries and their Ethiopian co–workers and leaders before it came to an end in 1975 with an agreement between the mission society and the Ethiopian leaders.[7] The so–called "Integration Agreement" was a mutual arrangement signed between the church and SLM–BV, giving full authority to the church for self–administration.[8] The 1970s were also the time when there was social and political unrest happening in Ethiopia due to the Socialist revolution, which forced the missionaries to leave the country after transferring the church government to the Ethiopian leaders.

When the church (LCEt) was established in 1960, there were only eight congregations with approximately 300 members,[9] from which it grew to eight synods with 130 congregations and an estimated number of 30,000 members.[10] The eight synods are: Addis Abeba and Surrounding, Arsi, Dawro, Eastern, Kamba, Kindo, Hadiya, and Woloyita.

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[6] Bengt Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel: The Background, Formation and Development of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Part III, (unpublished manuscript, 2025), 28–39.

[7] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III,* 360-365.

[8] The Lutheran Church in Ethiopia (LCEt) and the Swedish Lutheran Mission – Bible True Friends (SMBV), "Integration Agreement," 1975. The organization formerly known as the Mission Society Bible True Friends (SMBV) changed its name to the Swedish Lutheran Mission-Bible True Friends (SLM –BV) in 2005. This name is used throughout the thesis unless indicated otherwise.

[9] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*, Part III, 258.

[10]The figure is taken from the general assembly of EELC of 2024 and SLM-BV official website. https://elmbv.se/etiopien/ (accessed June 30, 2025).

The Liturgical Tradition of EELC

The liturgical tradition of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) is directly linked to the establishment of the church.[11] The liturgy of EELC was developed based on the Swedish liturgy, or it could be said it was translated from the Church of Sweden (CoS) liturgy with certain adaptations, and the missionaries at the time were behind the work.[12] Following this Swedish tradition, EELC held a Lutheran liturgical divine service at the outset.

However, over time, EELC has become less liturgical, particularly in its divine service worship. The situation became prevalent, especially after the complete transfer of church governance from the Swedes to the Ethiopians in 1975, particularly in newly established congregations across the eight synods of the church, with an exception to the Addis Abeba congregation. Moreover, in many congregations, the liturgical divine service worship is being mixed up with what is called "Charismatic worship." Only in the Addis Abeba congregation (the headquarters of the EELC in the capital city) is an intact Lutheran liturgical worship still practiced. Therefore, EELC's divine service worship is still liturgical in the case of the Addis Abeba congregation, yet significantly charismatic in other EELC congregations.

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[11] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*, *Part II*, 9.

[12] According to Bengt Hjort, with whom I made an interview and, the author of the book *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*: *The Background, Formation, and Development of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church,* the Swedish missionaries had worked to produce the first Divine Service Liturgy agenda of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC). According to, the late Swedish missionary, Rev. Leif Norrgård, Leif Norrgård was the first missionary in the service of SMBV on the Ethiopian field who had been ordained a priest already on the first arrival in the field. Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 313. He largely influenced the order of worship within EELC. Interview by author. Asella. November 30, 2025.

Through my personal observations, I have noticed a decline in liturgical worship of the divine services in the EELC. This realization has stemmed from my travels across the eight synods of the church over the past ten years in my role as a member of the financial evaluation team (internal auditor). Additionally, I have visited several EELC congregations for various meetings and conferences. These experiences have allowed me to witness a gradual diminishing of Lutheran liturgical worship. This trend has been acknowledged not only by me but also by others within the EELC community. For example, during the 2024 General Assembly of EELC, a debate took place regarding the regular use of liturgy and the church's agenda in divine services.[13] During that session, it was discussed that ordained pastors should be used regularly in the divine service. Based on my personal experience and the concerns raised at the General Assembly, I believe there is a decline in liturgical worship within the EELC.

In my thesis, I examine the decline of liturgical worship within the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC), particularly following the complete takeover of the church's governance by Ethiopians. I analyze the internal factors within the church as well as external influences from the surrounding environment that have affected the continuity of Lutheran liturgical worship in the EELC.

The thesis investigates the reasons behind the decline of liturgical divine service worship in EELC, taking the full church's government transfer from the SLM–BV to the

[13] The General Assembly, which was held in Addis Abeba, has discussed the issue of liturgy and related matters under agenda 15.The Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC), General Assembly, "Munities" (Addis Abeba: EELC, 2024),7.

Ethiopians as a historical pivotal period. An event known as "Integration agreement"[14] took place in 1975[15] and brought in a 'new' church government with the result that EELC was recognized as a second national Lutheran church in Ethiopia, next to the Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus (EECMY).[16]

However, in the years following the complete transfer of church government, the practice of Lutheran liturgical worship during the divine service has noticeably declined from time to time for various reasons. These reasons could be seen from two perspectives, namely,

1. After the church became a national church and was governed completely by Ethiopians, a sentiment began to develop that sought to promote independent and indigenous worship practices within the EELC. The Charismatic and Pentecostal movements among all Ethiopian Protestant churches further shoved and affected the Lutheran liturgical worship of the church.

2. By the time the church government was fully transferred from the Swedes to the Ethiopians in 1975, remarkable political and social upheavals were occurring in Ethiopia, which had a significant impact on the ecclesiastical arena.[17]

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[14] Before the signing of the 'Integration Agreement,' the church government was held by the SMBV and Ethiopian leaders jointly. Before the integration the Church was governed by the Church Board known as Executive Committee, and the mission work (schools, medical work administration etc) was governed by SLM-BV. After the integration the Church Board, all its members are Ethiopian, was responsible for all the work. The agreement brought a new era when the Ethiopians solely governed the church. The agreement has ten articles, which state both the doctrinal and administrative issues that the two parties agreed on. It also clarifies the relationship that would continue between the local government and the mission society. LCEt and SMBV, "Integration Agreement," 1975.

[15] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*, Part II, 9.

[16] The Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus (EECMY) was established as a national church January 21, 1959. See https://eecmy-dassc.org/about-us, (accessed Jun e 10, 2025).

[17] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*, Part III, 9.

The Present State of the Research

Although no research has been conducted on the EELC liturgy so far, a few attempts have been made to look into the impact of Pentecostal/Charismatic influence on the EECMY and other Protestant churches' liturgical worship and music.[18] For instance, Jörg Haustein has examined and confirmed that Pentecostal and charismatic movements had significantly impacted the teachings and traditions of many Protestant churches, especially with regard to music and liturgy.[19] Another researcher, Serge Dewel, summarizes how Pentecostalism was received by Ethiopians, which went along well with the indigenous cultures of the people.[20] A similar assertion was also made by Haile S. Sabab, who confirmed the blending of Charismatic elements with Lutheran liturgical worship in EECMY.[21]

The Method of Research

I begin the thesis work with a brief overview of the historical account of the Lutheran liturgical tradition in general and Martin Luther's perspective in particular. I also include a brief survey of the Swedish liturgical worship heritage, since my church's (EELC's) establishment and liturgical practice are directly connected with the Swedish

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[18] Jörg Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia: A Historical Introduction to Largely Unexplored Movements" In *Multidisciplinary Views on the Horn of Africa*, edited by Hatem Elliesie, 109–127 (Köln: Rudiger Koppe, 2014): 109-127.

[19] Haustein,"Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia," 122.

[20] Serge Pierre Dewel, "The Charismatic Movement in Ethiopia Historical and Social Background for an Identity Problematic." 1–15, Paris: INALCO Université Sorbonne, 2016. https://hal–inalco.archives–ouvertes.fr/hal–01315593.

[21] Haile S. Sabab, "African Traditional and Charismatic Gifts in the Worship of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)" In *International Journal of Arts and Humanities, vol. 4. no. 1, 18–29,* Center for Global Research Development, 2018. www.cgrd.org. (accessed May 1, 2025)

Lutheran Mission–Bible True Friends (SLM–BV), which itself, in turn, evolved from the CoS.

With this in the background, I proceed to study the development and progress of the liturgy of EELC. Here, I focus on the liturgy of the divine service throughout the church's history. I study EELC official Service Books (Agendas) and compare the different versions.

Based on the study and findings of the divine service liturgical practice of EELC, I reflect on EELC's liturgical tradition. The ecclesiastical developments of EELC, historical circumstances, and theological foundations help me see a broader view of my church's situation in the past and present.

In this study, the complete church government transfer in 1975 is taken as pivotal and crucial. There are a number of reasons why I emphasize this period, as the autonomous authority of the church did affect the liturgical practice of the EELC. For example, the transitional period started to produce a sentiment and passion to introduce indigenous worship practices.

This period was also politically turbulent in Ethiopia. The imperial ruler Haile Selassie I was replaced by a socialist military regime after a bloody revolution. The Protestant churches were marginalized and persecuted even before the revolution by members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, but they were now facing an even worse repression and persecution under the military regime.

It was also in this period that Pentecostalism and Charismatic movements were introduced into Ethiopian Christianity, and they influenced many Protestant denominations, the EELC being no exception.

In this context, I aim to explore the research question of my thesis: Why is the divine service in the EELC liturgy becoming increasingly less liturgical? This investigation considers the complete transfer of church governance from missionaries to local church leaders, the prevailing political situation, and the emerging presence of charismatic movements. The methods I employ throughout the thesis work will be:

1. A study of the liturgical worship tradition in the wider Lutheran tradition, which will rely upon other scholars' work with primary sources.

2. Archival documents and information at the head office of EELC is used, and I analyze the development and practice of EELC liturgical worship and related discussions. An archival investigation presents data, especially on the process by which the church's government was fully transferred from the SLM–BV to the Ethiopian leaders.

3. I have also conducted interviews with selected people who can give additional information. This information serves as a corrective for my own analysis of the material. But I am also aware that people's reminiscences may be wrong and should be corrected in the light of what I find in my source material.

The Sources of the Research

The following materials are primary sources in this thesis work:

1. Liturgies produced by SLM–BV missionaries during the period when the church was administered by jointly SLM–BV and Ethiopians.

2. Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Liturgy Agenda, Addis Abeba: EELC, 1984 and 2022.

3. Archives which have recorded historical events of EELC, the church government transfer made between SLM–BV and Ethiopians, church orders, hymns books, catechetical materials, and other liturgy–related documents.

Bengt Hjort's books, three volumes on the history of EELC and the missionary work by SLM–BV has been very significant in my work. I have also made an interview and email correspondence with Bengt Hjort for more information and clarification. I have also had an interview with Fikru Geleto who has been teaching for 25 years at Asella Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTS), and he was the principal of the seminary for three years. He had been also a student of Rev. Leif Norrgård, one of the pioneer Swedish Missionaries who produced the first complete Divine Service Agenda of EELC. In addition to the primary sources, I have consulted secondary materials, including relevant books and articles by Ethiopian and foreign scholars.

The Outline of the Thesis

The outline of the thesis follows the following order: In chapter 2, a brief summary of liturgy and liturgical worship in general, and particularly the Lutheran context, is discussed before proceeding to the liturgical heritage of the Church of Sweden. This chapter is vital as a background for subsequent discussions.

In chapter 3, historical accounts of EELC and her liturgical worship practice during the SLM–BV ruling and after are explored. The current liturgical practice of EELC is also discussed in this particular chapter. The insights from this chapter help us to see EELC's divine liturgical worship in different periods. This chapter is also pivotal in connecting chapter 2, which is concerned with the background of liturgy, with chapter 4, which deals with the very research question of the thesis.

In chapter 4, based on the foregoing chapters, I attempt to answer the research question. Through historical reviews, analysis, and reflection, I discuss the internal

impulses within the church and external factors that have contributed to the decline of liturgical worship in EELC. In the final part of the thesis, chapter 5, I raise theological insights related to the topic and summarize the findings of the research work. Finally, I discuss practical and pastoral issues, which could be taken as a suggestion for my church servants and leaders.

Definition of Terms

In this thesis work there are some keywords and terms that should be defined for their contextual usage. Accordingly, the term "liturgical worship" would be understood as the order of worship on regular Sundays or holidays' of the divine service of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC). The rite incorporates: Invocation, Confession and Absolution, *Kyrie, Gloria in excelsis,* Salutation and Response, Hymns, Service of the Word (text reading and sermon), Creeds, Benedictions and Prayers, regardless of contextual differences in time and place. In a related context, "charismatic worship" would mean a non–Lutheran liturgical divine service worship, where an informal worship style is followed, emphasizing a 'visible' presence of the Holy Spirit. This visibility is perceived through expressive and prolonged hymns, emotional and random prayers including speaking in tongues, and self–inspired preaching. It is important to note that all Bible texts in this thesis are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS LITURGY AND LITURGICAL WORSHIP?

In this chapter, I present a summary of liturgy in general and the Lutheran tradition in particular. The Swedish liturgical heritage is also surveyed before looking into the connection between the Swedish liturgical tradition and EELC's liturgical practices in subsequent discussions.

A General Overview of Liturgy and the Lutheran Perspective on Liturgy

The Greek word for "liturgy" derived from the *λειτουργια*, originally meant a public service.[1] In the Old Testament Jewish context, the word was specifically applied to the temple service, whereas, in the New Testament it is would mean Christian service of God.[2] In a general sense, "the liturgy denotes the whole system of formal, prescribed services, including the text, the seasons and festivals of the church year, the prescribed ceremonials, etc."[3] In its specific way, a liturgy could mean the celebration of the Eucharist or the liturgical worship directly related to the Eucharist in the early church.[4]

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[1] Apology of Augsburg Confession article XXIV, 80, in Theodore Tappert eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 264.

[2] See for example 2 Chr. 8:14, 25: 1in the LXX and Phil. 2:17.

[3] Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 19.

[4] Acts 2:42: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." The text clearly indicates believers were engaged in kerygma as well as prayer. Moreover, the Eucharist was part of the worship service. A similar notion is maintained in Acts 20:7: "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread." In this text, the very reason for believers gathering was to break the bread or to celebrate the Eucharist. In both texts, primary

Peter Brunner describes worship and worship service, or, using his own term, "service of God" (Gottesdienst) as a place where "…man encounters God's Word, and Sacrament."[5] Furthermore, "the worship of God depends upon what is pleasing to Him."[6] For Brunner, what pleases God must be enclosed in His Word and commandment.[7] From Brunner's description, it is possible to understand that God comes to humans through His Word and Sacrament, not vice versa. Following the presence of God with His Word and Sacrament, man responds with worship and proper liturgy.

Therefore, the basis of a Christian worship is the above, briefly summarized points, which are fundamentally biblical in their assumptions. The fundamental element of the Word of God is crucial, as Christian worship rites, practices, and traditions are rooted in biblical motifs and descriptions. "With relatively few or brief exceptions, Christian worship in general has been and is liturgical."[8] But what is liturgy and liturgical worship in Lutheran perspective?

The Lutheran understanding of liturgy is based on our Lord's words, where He entrusted the mandates of the ministry to His apostles.[9] In these words, our Lord has outlined the ministry of the church, which involves the preaching of the Gospel and the

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elements of liturgical worship, namely, teachings of the apostles, prayer, and the Lord's Supper, are described as the integral parts of the divine service. It would be possible to assume a divine service, since the worship day was also the first day of the week (Sunday.)

[5] Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, Translated by M. H. Bertram (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1968), introduction 375, kindle.

[6] Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, 382.

[7] Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, 390.

[8] Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 19.

[9] Mat.28:18-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

administration of the Sacraments by the pastor. Through these services, God's promises are offered to those who receive them in faith, and this faith is nurtured by the Gospel.[10] Following this, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession gives us the very nature of the Lutheran liturgy.

> Thus it squares with our position that a minister who consecrates shows forth the body and blood of the Lord to the people, just as a minister who preaches shows forth the gospel to the people, as Paul says (I Cor. 4:1), "This is how one should regard us, as ministers of Christ and dispensers of the sacraments of God," that is, of the Word and sacraments; and II Cor. 5:20, "We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."[11]

The liturgy is directly connected to the office of the Holy Ministry, where the Lord provides His Word, Body, and Blood. Thus, worshiping through the liturgy is a gift, and our response is one of gratitude and praise.

Another vital and integral part of Christian worship is faith. And here also “faith presupposes revelation.”[12] Faith is not hung upon a mere dazzling wish or speculative–subjective ideas. “It rests upon something objective.”[13] That objectivity is the Word of God revealed through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[14] Moreover, faith is not just a feeling or emotion; rather, it is an inward assurance created in the heart of a believer by the Holy Spirit.[15] As we receive faith from God, we are receiving God’s

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[10] Augsburg Confession article XXIV 32, in Theodore Tappert eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 264.

[11] Ap, XXIV, 80.

[12] Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy, A Study of the Common Liturgy of the Lutheran Church in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1947), 5.

[13] Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 5.

[14] Ap IV, 1–3.

[15] Ap V, 1–4.

blessing which are bestowed upon us because of His mercy rather than our own merit, because of Jesus Christ. With accordance the Apology summarizes, "Faith is that worship which receives God's offered blessings; the righteousness of the law is that worship which offers God our own merits."[16] As Thomas M. Winger correctly noted, "true worship, by contrast, cling faithfully to all that Christ has promised to do, not letting go of anything He has given, neither teaching nor name nor sacrament, never giving up on Christ's promise to be with us always (Matthew 28: 16 –20)"[17]

In Lutheran liturgical worship, there are two central elements or guiding principles, namely *Sacramentum* and *Sacrificium. Sacramentum* is "sacramental acts – acts of God by which, through means, he offers and bestows his wholesome grace and blessing."[18] These means are the Word and the Lord's Supper in the divine service worship of the Lutheran church. *Sacrificium* on the other hand, is sacrificial "acts of worship directed toward God – words and acts of the church in faithful response to the gracious words and acts of God."[19] In the middle of both acts is God Himself offering His Word and the Sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, through the means of grace. And through the service of the Word in preaching, the essential message of Scripture, namely 'Justification by Faith', should be proclaimed prominently. And when the *res* is properly

[16] Ap IV, 49.

[17] Thomas M. Winger, "The Liturgy Lutheran Confession Theology, Presuppositions, and Definitions" In Lutheran *Service Book, Companion to the Service*, ed.by Paul J. Grime (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2022), 5.

[18] Darius Petkūnas, "The Lutheran Liturgy: Theological Principles, Structure, and Historical Development," (2021): 48– 89.

[19] Petkūnas, "The Lutheran Liturgy," 52.

and adequately preached, the *Sacrificium* would be expressed in the proper way of liturgical worship.

In terms of its format, the Lutheran liturgy had "…many aspects the same as the service of the Jewish Synagogue at the time of Jesus."[20] For instance, in Luke 4: 17–19) Jesus went to the Synagogue and has read from the Old Testament (Is. 61:1–2)[21] which would be related to the text reading in the Lutheran liturgy. Additionally, Jesus' interpretation of the Old Testament during His New Testament era reaffirms the Lutheran practice of incorporating readings from both Testaments into their liturgy. Jesus concluded in verse 4:21 at the synagogue, stating, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." This further emphasizes the Lutheran focus on Christ and His Word at the center of worship.

Martin Luther's Conception of Liturgy

Martin Luther was "primarily an exegetic and a preacher, and his theology were basically an attempt to interpret Scripture …."[22] He carved out his theological stances based on his interpretation of Scripture. For Luther the Word of God is a creative and re-creative agent uttered by God using human mouth, written in Scripture.[23] As Paul Althaus described it, "For Luther, the Word is first and last the spoken word, that is, the living

[20] Mats Giselsson, *Having A Meeting With God* (Horred: Scriptura, 2007), 3.

[21] Luke 4:17-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,"

[22] Bryan D. Spinks, *Luther's Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon* (Sidney: Synoptic Text Information Services Inc., 2021), 23.

[23] Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology: The Wittenberg Way of Thinking for The Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2008), 131.

proclamation, which in any particular situation."[24] He firmly associates the Christian worship service with the preaching of the Word of God and prayer.[25] Based on his refutation of his time's type of worship practice, Luther reaffirms the apostolic kind of worship. He was calling for the preaching of the Word at a central worship of the Christian faith. He asserts, "When God's Word is not preached, one had better neither sing nor read or even come together."[26] Although he had written on numerous topics and his reformative works had wide ranges, there is a unity in his theological thinking. As Robin Leaver properly noted it, "the touchstone of this unity is his understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith."[27] And the doctrine justification by faith is Luther's fundamental understanding and summary of the Word of God.

Compared to his exegetical, homiletics, and polemical writings, Luther's liturgical works might be considered insignificant.[28] There is still an ongoing debate about Luther's liturgical works, their content, and intent. For example, Luther Reed criticizes Luther's

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[24] Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, Translated by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 72.

[25] Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, 390.

[26] Martin Luther, in *Luther's Works: Liturgy and Hymns, Vol.* 53 ed. Ulrich S. Leupold and Helmut T. Lehmann, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 11.

[27] Robin A. Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 174.

[28] In the introductory section of *Luther's Works: Liturgy and Hymns*, Vol. 53, it is stated, "Luther's liturgical works occupy an uncertain and controversial place in his literary work." However, it is endorsed that there are some short literature works related to the liturgy; the G*erman Mass (Deutsche Messe)* of 1526 is mentioned as an example. LW 53: XIII.

liturgical reform, "…drastic action in cutting into the Canon like a surgeon …."[29] However, scholars like Bryan D. Spinks argue against these kinds of misjudgment.[30]

Luther's main and most important liturgical works are: the *Formula Missae* (FM) (1523) and the *Deutsche Messe* (DM) (1526).[31] The *Formula Missae* is a conservative revision of traditional liturgical Mass in Latin. Luther rejected the sacrifice of the Mass. The Eucharistic prayers of the Mass of the Catholic Church, with its Roman sacrificial languages either left out or modified according to an evangelical theology. Luther's rejection of the sacrifice of the Mass lies in his conviction that the Eucharist is God's testament declared by the Word—*Verba Testamenti*, signed by the true sacrifice of Christ. Therefore, there is no other sacrifice other than Christ. For Luther, "at any celebration of the Mass, the work of God in Christ must be given prominence in proclamation and action."[32] As Leaver observed, "anything that would undermine, obscure or nullify these *Verba* was to be removed, and in practice that meant the whole Canon, apart from the essential *Verba Testamenti*."[33] However, he retained the Latin language and some of the visible elements of the liturgical worship."[34] But as Reed

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[29] Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 329.

[30] John T. Pless correctly noted in his foreword to Spinks' book, "It took an Anglican to rescue Luther from the Lutheran liturgical gurus." Spinks, *Luther's Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon*, iv.

[31] Luther had other reform works including "… two baptismal rites (1523 and 1526), an Order of Marriage (1529), an Order for Confession, a German and Latin Litany (1529), an Ordination rite." Spinks, *Luther's Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon*, 1.

[32] Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, 176.

[33] Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical* Music, 177.

[34] Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical* Music, 175.

observes, "the *Formula Missae* was intended as a local program and not a general order of the whole church."[35]

Luther's most important liturgical reform work was the *Deutsche Messe* (DM), 'German Mass and Order of Service,' where Luther reorganized the service of the church in the German language.[36] Although Luther allowed the usage of customized service orders in Germany, at the same time he was reluctant to totally abolish the old Latin Mass. Nevertheless, with the request of some people and with his own will, he came up with the *Deutsche Messe* as a solution for the intriguing situation of the time.

In his liturgical reform work of 1526, *Deutsche Messe*, "Luther prepared it with a quite distinct group of worshipers in mind—the *Deutsch."*[37] Based on his prime theological position, the doctrine of justification, Luther tried to adapt and develop a vernacular liturgical formula for the German people. In his attempt, Luther had to work on the existing Latin liturgy to fit the 'new Lutheran' German Mass. He insisted, "The German service needs to be a plain and simple, fair and square catechism."[38]

Martin Luther's German Mass contents hold the preface, which presents a general description and situation in which the liturgy is prescribed.[39] The next chapter, "Concerning Divine Worship," presents the purpose of the rite, which is the preaching and the teaching of the Word emphasized.[40] The order of Sunday divine service is arranged as follows: a hymn or

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[35] Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 72.

[36] LW 53:5.

[37] Petkūnas, "Lutheran Liturgy," 116.

[38] Martin Luther, "The German Mass and Order of Service," in *Luther's Works, Volume 53, Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold and Helmut T. Lehamann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 82-83.

[39] LW 53:113

[40] LW 53:114

psalm in German, Kyrie, a collect, an epistle reading, a hymn (in German), a gospel reading, a creed (a German translation), a sermon (on the gospel reading), a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, and an exhortation to the communicants.[41] The following Lord's Supper service starts with the Words of Institution, the Elevation, the German Sanctus, the Collect of Thanksgiving, and the conclusion with an Aaronic benediction.[42]

One of the peculiarities of Luther's German Mass is his programming of the order with musical elements and compositions. Still in his reformative work of the Mass, Luther wanted the *Verba* not to be read or recited but rather to be sung as thanksgiving for God's gift of His sacrificed son. Following this conviction, "in contrast to *Formula Missae*, in which he was content simply to outline the musical aspects, Luther concluded that music was fundamental to the new liturgy and that it should therefore include musical notation."[43]

In general, Luther's intention and subsequent liturgical suggestions were not to eliminate the Roman Mass and replace it with a new one; rather, he was trying "… by means of books and sermons among the people to call their hearts away from godless opinions of ceremonies …."[44] With this regard, his major target was the sacrifice of the Mass, where the Mass had been celebrated as a sacrifice itself. On the basis of his basic theological assertion—justification by faith —Luther tried to address and reform his time's liturgical divine service worship. Moreover, he wanted to engage the congregants

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[41] LW 53:114–115

[42] LW 53:114–117

[43] "When *Deutsche Messe* was published in 1526, 27 of its 49 pages were filled with musical notation, and the remaining 22 pages contain frequent references to the musical aspects of the liturgy." Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical* Music, 181.

[44] Martin Luther,"Formula Missae (1523) and the Deutsche Messe (1526)," in *Liturgies of the Western Church*, ed. Bard Thompson, 106–140 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1998), 106.

in the divine service more closely around the Word, precisely around the Word of institution.

Heritage of the Swedish Liturgy

In the history of Ethiopian protestant churches, the involvement and contribution of mission organizations from Europe and the USA were immensely significant. Among those mission organizations, the Swedish ones established several denominations.[45] In the case of EELC, SLM–BV's role was crucial, and, as we shall see the liturgy of the CoS was brought by SLM–BV missionaries to EELC. Therefore, it is necessary to look at its liturgical heritage.

"The Lutheran Church never adopted one agenda or form of worship to be used everywhere by all, such as one finds in the Roman Catholic Church and the Book of Common Prayer in the Church of England."[46] "When one surveys Lutheran liturgy in Germany, Eastern Europe, and Scandinavia one immediately struck by the wide variety of agendas and church orders."[47] This notion holds in case of Swedish worship practice.

Olavus Petri (1493 –1552), "… who is normally ascribed the title of the father of the Reformation in Sweden, studied at the University Wittenberg from 1516 to 1518."[48] His brother, Laurentius Petri (1499 –1573) was also a student in Wittenberg, became the

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[45] The Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) played a significant role in the establishment of EECMY. Hailu Yohannes Bulaka, "Theology of Holy Spirit: Experiences of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus," In *Lutheran Society for Missiology*, viewed in *Missio Apostolica 23, no. 1,* 2015, 126–139.At http://lsfm.global,/126. (accessed May 1, 2025). And Swedish missionaries were behind one of the prominent Pentecostal churches in Ethiopia, the Full Gospel Believers' Church (FGBC). Dewel, "The Charismatic Movement in Ethiopia," 6.

[46] Petkunas, "The Lutheran Liturgy," 63.

[47] Petkunas, "The Lutheran Liturgy," 48.

[48] Naomichi. Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!: The Vitality of the Lord's Supper in Theodor Kliefoth and in the Swedish Church of the Nineteenth Century,* (Gothenburg: Församlingsförlaget, 2013), 45.

first Lutheran arch bishop at Uppsala in 1531.[49] Another prominent figure was Laurentius Andreae (1470 –1552), a co–translator of the New Testament to Swedish and, "who contributed to church polity and cannon law."[50] However, with their variety of efforts, they tend to retain a peculiar conservative Swedish liturgical tradition.[51]

As Oloph Bexell noted:

> The Lutheran Reformation in Sweden was not primarily of a liturgical but of a theological and pastoral. It took a very different course, still noticeable today, from the Reformation in the rest of Scandinavia and, for example, in Germany. When theological changes were made, the structure of the Mass was kept intact as far as possible. The medieval lectionary, with its series of epistles and gospels, was kept unchanged, but it was supplemented in 1862 with additional texts for preaching for Sunday.[52]

Olavus Petri prepared the Swedish Mass in 1531, "five years after Luther's German Mass." [53] This made it "… one of the most complete early vernacular liturgies in any Lutheran land."[54] Petri followed to some extent Luther in his liturgical revision, by excluding the Roman Offertory and Canon, but the overall structure and liturgical elements, such as the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, and *Laudamus* remained the same as the medieval liturgy.[55] Some changes should be observed. The private confession of the priest and the ministrants was turned into a general confession of sins by all participants. The pastor

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[49] Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 111.

[50] Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!*, 45.

[51] Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy!*, 111.

[52] Oloph Bexell, "Church Life and Worship in a Lutheran Church: The Example of the Church of Sweden – A Historical Introduction, 1-23" in *The Meaning of Christian Liturgy: Recent Developments in the Church of Sweden*, edited by Oloph Bexell (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 6.

[53] Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 112.

[54] Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 112.

[55] Olaus Petri, Samlade Skrifter, Band II (Almqvist & Wiksell, Uppsala, 1915), 413– 419.

begins by addressing the brothers and sisters gathered to celebrate the Lord's Supper by reminding them why Christ instituted the Supper and that they all are sinners who need to ask the Lord of mercy and forgiveness. He then invites them to join him in a confession of sin with words formulated by Olaus Petri, which is still in use today in the CoS liturgy. Other changes to be observed are the use of hymns in Swedish instead of the *graduale* in Latin before the Gospel reading. The Sermon was placed after the reading of the Gospel which was then followed by the creed. This was changed in 1575 so that the creed was confessed after the gospel reading, before the sermon. The order from 1531 is still in all essentials in use in Sweden, the main difference being the placement of the *Sanctus*. Petri places it after the words of institution, since the 1942 liturgical order it is placed before the words of institution.

While there was a return to the earlier medieval wordings and ceremonies during the reign king John III (1569–1592), manifested in the 1576 revision of the Service Book, the so called "Red Book"[56], the church assembly in 1593 (*Uppsala Möte*), rejected the liturgy of John III and re–established the Church Order of 1571 and the earlier liturgy and manuals.[57] Yet "… it took a long time before the liturgical changes of the Reformation period gained their full impact throughout Sweden."[58]

In the 17th century, during the reign of Gustavus Adolphus, a new handbook (Agenda) was approved in 1614,[59] "in which the introit was abolished (to be reinstated

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[56] See Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!*, 49; Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 118.

[57] Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, 119.

[58] Bexell, "Church Life and Worship in a Lutheran Church," 5.

[59] Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!*, 51.

only in 1915)."[60] Other features of the handbook include common confession of the congregation, and changes to some medieval hymns.[61] Following a strong policy from the state for uniformity, and an approval of new church law, a new Agenda was adopted in 1693, with slight alternation from the 1614. [62] Hence, this period is known for its Lutheran orthodoxy, liturgical uniformity, and strictness.

The next important era in Swedish liturgical history would be the 19th century, when a new Swedish Service Book was completed in 1811. In the composition of the Service Book, some adjustments were made; omission of the old gradual, since the epistle would be read from the altar and the Gospel reading merged with the service of the pulpit; moreover, the "Hosanna" and "the Lord Sabaoth" were removed. [63] However, due to its apparent Enlightenment influence, this Service Book has been described as "the lowest point in Swedish liturgical history."[64]

As Naomichi Masaki noted in his book, there were "a number of groups within the church who were not pleased with the 1811 liturgy."[65] Among these groups, some of them were also influenced by the pietistic Moravian and Rosenius movements, known as traditionalists.[66] Here, it is interesting to note that the Swedish Lutheran Mission–Bible

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[60] Bexell, "Church Life and Worship in a Lutheran Church", 6.

[61] The Medieval Latin hymn of "Laudamus" was given an alternative in the hymn "All Glory to God on Hugh" (*Allena Gud i himmelrik*, ELW 410:1), Bexell, "Church Life and Worship in a Lutheran Church," 6.

[62] Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!,* 52.

[63] Bexell, "Church Life and Worship in a Lutheran Church," 5; Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!,* 52–53.

[64] See Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!,* 52-53.

[65] Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!,* 53.

[66] Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!,* 53.

True Friends had emerged from that kind of pietistic Moravian background. In chapter three, the discussion of SLM–BV background and its relation with EELC will be presented.

"It is in this *Swedish Service Book* (of 1811) that the CoS was for the first time given an order for a non–Eucharistic main Sunday service."[67] This is also a remarkable phenomenon where a non–Eucharistic Sunday service is practiced in EELC may have its root in the *Swedish Service Book* of 1811.

Due to the on–going criticism, the church started to revise the 1811 *Swedish Service Book* in the middle of the 19th century.[68] And finally "in 1894 it was replaced by a new edition, marked by restoration of the classic western Mass in a Lutheran format."[69] The prime leader for 1894 agenda was U. L. Ullman (1837–1930), who was influenced by his contemporary German theologians Theodor Kliefoth (1810 –1895), Wilhelm Löhe (1808 –1872), and Theodosius Harnack (1816 –1889).[70]

It did not take long before a new revision appeared, in 1917. According to Naomichi Masaki, "Herman Sasse considered this liturgy as preserving the Lutheran heritage 'in its purest form'."[71] However, the emerging ecumenical movement began to impact Sweden and the theologians in charge of liturgical revisions. Some influence from Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism can be observed in the official Agendas of 1942 and 1986. In the proposals from 1926 and 1938 a certain tension can be felt between the

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[67] Bexell, "Church Life and Worship in a Lutheran Church," 7.

[68] Bexell, "Church Life and Worship in a Lutheran Church," 9.

[69] Bexell, "Church Life and Worship in a Lutheran Church," 9.

[70] Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!*, 53.

[71] Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!*, 343.

influence of the Lutheran Confessional and Liturgical movement originating in Germany on the one hand and the ecumenically oriented liturgical renewal movement on the other hand.[72] An example of this influence is that *Sanctus* was moved from its place after the words of institution, which, as was noted above, had been its place since the 1531 Agenda, so that it now followed immediately after the *Preface,* the usual position in the early church.[73]

After the 1942 Agenda, the need for amending the strictness of liturgical regulations was raised. The work of revision continued and resulted in *Swedish Service Book* adopted 1986, which included orders for the public worship and official offices of baptism, marriage, and funeral, as well as various acts of ordination with more possibilities for variations and choices than in previous Agendas.[74] However, the 1986 *Service Book* appeared after EELC got independence from SLM –BV. It is primarily the 1917 and 1942 Agendas that are likely to have influenced the liturgical work in Ethiopia, as these were the orders of worship followed in the Church of Sweden at the time, and the orders of worship followed when the missionaries attended church services back home. There is of course the possibility that individual missionaries were familiar with the ongoing revisions taking place back home. Rev. Leif Norrgård had a keen interest in liturgy and may very well have been influenced by the discussions in Sweden which led to the 1986 Service Book.

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[72] Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!*, 347-48.

[73] Masaki, *He Alone Is Worthy!*, 348.

[74] Bexell, "Church Life and Worship in a Lutheran Church," 16-17.

Nevertheless, despite several revisions, the Swedish liturgy is still today very similar to the Olaus Petri's liturgy from 1531, the first one in the Swedish language. Its rather unique characteristic is a careful revision of the old Latin liturgy,[75] and its combination of classical liturgy and an evangelical–Lutheran theology distinguishes it from many other evangelical–Lutheran liturgies.

General Description of EELC Liturgical Worship Formation

As I have indicated in the introduction section of this thesis, the liturgical tradition of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) is directly linked to the missionary work of SLM –BV. It has evolved gradually through many years alongside the progress of the missionaries and the Ethiopians' common endeavors. The liturgical tradition of SLM–BV is reflected throughout the church's Lutheran liturgical developments.

However, there are certain indigenous elements in the EELC liturgical formulation. These elements could also be seen as products of the joint effort by the missionaries and their Ethiopian co–workers. As an example, I would like to mention two elements in EELC's liturgical formulation that have indigenous backgrounds. The first is the title given for the divine service liturgy in the Amharic language, which is *Qidase*, which means liturgy. The term is used in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) for their rigorous liturgical worship order. In EELC, this term is adopted and used until today to entitle the Sunday divine service liturgy of the church. Second, the title for a pastor, both in the liturgies of the church and in practice, is known as "priest."[76]

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[75] An example is that many melodies in the liturgy, such as for the *Kyrie* and *Sanctus*, are from the 10th to the 13th century.

[76] 'Qes' is a title equivalent to priest and it is used in EOTC as well as in Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches of Ethiopia." Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*, Part II, 109.

And this is another adaptation from EOTC. In both cases, it is possible to see there were some indigenous inputs to the liturgy, but also much of it was brought in from the foreign missionaries' traditions.[77] The influence of the EOTC was significant, as some early Ethiopians who worked with the missionaries in church matters were members of the EOTC, bringing their former traditions with them.

With regard to content, the liturgical formulation of EELC holds and reflects both *Sacramentum* and *Sacrificium*. In both the 1984 and 2022 agendas for divine service worship, the order is set within this basic Lutheran theological construction.[78] These divine service liturgies describe the pattern in which the pastor and the congregants join in the worship according to their prescription. The *Sacramentum* is expressed in the 1984 & 2022 agendas through the Absolution, the service of the Word *(*text reading and sermon*),* and Benedictions. The *Sacrificium* is also pronounced in the liturgies through confession of sin, *Kyrie,* prayers, hymns, praise, and thanksgiving. It is also written in the rubrics, with terms like 'his face to the altar or congregation' to indicate which direction the pastor should stand during the service to express the *Sacramentum* and *Sacrificium* acts of the divine service.

However, in the EELC divine service tradition and practice, the service of the Word is separated from the service of the altar. Actually, the Sunday divine service is a preaching service rather than a Word and altar service. Whether the divine service is led by a pastor or a layperson, the Lord's Supper service is not part of the divine service. The

[77] The title "priest" is also used in the Swedish tradition.

[78] The EELC has two agendas to be used for various services, one published in 1984 and the second in 2022. The divine service liturgy description in both agendas is presented in Chapter Three; section "Liturgical Worship of EELC during SLM-BV" of this thesis work, pp. 34–44.

Lord's Supper (the Holy Communion, as it is referred to in EELC) is not included in and does not follow the service of the Word. The communicant receives the Lord's Supper spontaneously throughout the year. The occasions, time, and schedule of administering the Lord's Supper differ from congregation to congregation. The Lutheran liturgical divine service practice, with *Sacramentum* and *Sacrificium,* prescription, is fading out in most EELC congregations due to the reasons that I am about to explain in coming sections of this thesis work.

Moreover, the agendas of EELC have two separate rites for the Sunday divine service and for the Lord's Supper.[79] The Sunday divine service rite is placed in chapter one, whereas the Lord's Supper is presented in chapter five in both Agendas (of 1984 and 2022.) Hence, the Sunday divine service is perceived as a separate rite from the Lord's Supper in the EELC context. Moreover, the Sunday divine service is open for anyone who is willing to attend, even if he/she is not a member of the church. In the case of the Lord's Supper service, it is a closed communion, where only EELC's congregations' members can attend.

This tradition has its roots in SLM–BV, since SLM–BV is a mission organization in Sweden, where its members normally commune in the CoS, while having their separate services. These services are usually vespers, or preaching services, with hymns and prayers.[80] Ever since the missionary works of SLM–BV started in Ethiopia, the divine service of the Word and the service of the altar, the Lord's Supper have been

[79] See the Lord's Supper liturgy of EELC at Appendix Three, Page, 110–119.

[80] The relationship between EELC and SLM-BV's liturgical tradition will be described with examples in Chapter Three, section "Liturgical Worship of EELC during SLM–BV" of this thesis work, pp. 34-44.

separate services, and members of the church seldom receive the body and blood of Christ.[81] This tradition has continued to this day. The altar service is always carried out by an ordained pastor, whereas the service of the Word is led by an ordained pastor or a layman. In the following chapter, I will further discuss EELC's Lutheran liturgical tradition.

[81] Gremerem, Hjort, and Imberg, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel I,* 124.

CHAPTER THREE

LITURGICAL WORSHIP IN EELC

Although there are various debatable views regarding the beginning of Ethiopian Christianity, it is not disputed that it was one of the earliest.[1] Based on oral traditions and some literary evidences, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) stands as the oldest Christian church in Ethiopia.[2] Today, apart from the Monophysite EOTC the other groups of Ethiopian churches are the Roman Catholics and the Protestant churches.[3] Under the umbrella of Protestantism there are numerous denominations, including Seven Day Adventists, Pentecostals, Lutherans, Baptists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Mennonites, etc.

Specifically in relation to the Lutheran, there were some Lutheran missions and missionary attempts in Ethiopia since the 19th century.[4] And the outcome of these missionary endeavors was the realization of two Lutheran churches namely the Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus (EECMY) and the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia–

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[1] Biruk Ayele Asale, summarized the traditions which explain the historical reception of Christianity by Ethiopian as; "1) the pre-Christian connection of Ethiopia to Jerusalem and the immediate introduction of Christianity through the Ethiopian Eunuch (Act 8:27– 40);4 (2) the apostolic introduction by St Matthew (and some other apostles), who came to preach the good news in Ethiopia and who died and were buried there; and (3) the introduction of Christianity in the fourth century by two brothers (Frumentius and Aedesius) which happened by accident." Bruk Ayele Asale, "Christianity in Ethiopia," in *Globethics* Library, 2015, 2. http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/225294 (accessed May 1, 2025).

[2] See E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Kebera Nagast, King Solomon, The Queen of Sheba & Her Only Son Menyelek – Ethiopian Legends and Bible Folklore* (London: Pantianos Classics, 1932).

[3] According to the Ethiopian Council of Gospel Believers' Churches (ECGBC), the largest Protestant church assembly in Ethiopia, there is more than 3000 registered Protestant church bodies, with 32,000,000 believers. https://www.ecgbc.org.

[4] Peter Falk, *The Growth of the Church in Africa* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1979), 293–294.

Friends of the Bible (LCEt), which was later, named the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC).

Since the aim of this thesis work is related to EELC and its liturgy, I present briefly below the history of the mission organization and the church. And whenever it is needed and appropriate, I also refer to the sister church EECMY.

SLM–BV and Its Missionary Works in Ethiopia: A Brief Background

As I have indicated in the introduction part of this thesis, The Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) as a church body came to existence through the missionary works of the Swedish Mission Organization known as *Bibeltrogna Vänner–BV* (Bible True Friends), which later was named the Swedish Lutheran Mission, SLM–BV. SLM–BV has a Lutheran—Rosenian profile with conservative biblical views which is closely linked with the CoS.[5] It originated within the CoS in the first half of the 19th century. Under the slogan of 'all Christians Priesthood', and influenced by Pietistic and Moravians movements, many lay people gathered for Bible study, prayer and fellowship.[6] As individuals established organizations which promoted evangelism and missionary activities the movement became less dependent of the national church. These developments led to the birth of an organization known as *Evangeliska Fosterlands–Stiftelsen – EFS* (The Swedish Evangelical Mission–SEM), which was formed on May 7, 1856.[7]

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[5] Rune Imberg and Arthur Einarsson, *In the footsteps of Jesus: Evangelical Lutheran Mission – Bible –True friends, 1911–2011* In *ELM –BV's 100th anniversary publication* (Stockholm: BV–Förlag, 2011), 57. (My translation from Swedish was done using an online translation application.)

[6] Geremew, Hjort, and Imberg, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel I*, 25.

[7] Geremew, Hjort, and Imberg , *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel I,* 32.

Some of SEM's missionary endeavors were directed to Africa, specifically targeted to reach the Oromo people in the interior of Ethiopia with the Gospel.[8] There are practical reasons for choosing these folks. There were previous efforts to reach the Oromo people, especially by other European mission organizations and individuals.[9] From the SEM side, there was a strong passion to continue the mission work among the Oromo people, taking into account the sacrifice paid by many European missionaries and indigenous citizens for a mission cause, before SEM began its endeavors.[10]

Following an extensive study and correspondence with the intended parties, SEM carried out a "… intensive missionary activities in Eritrea, while the stated aim for a long time was to reach the Oromo people in the interior Africa."[11] Finally at the close of 19th century it became possible for SEM to reach the western part of Ethiopia and had begun the long anticipated missionary work, with a significant indigenous contribution.[12]

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[8] The Oromo people are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, settled on the highlands of the southwestern and middle parts of the country. According to the latest national census (2007), the Oromo hold 34.5% of the total population of Ethiopia. Federal Republic of Ethiopia Population Census Commission, *Summary and Statistical Report of 2007 Population and Housing Census (*Addis Abeba: 2007), 28.

[9] Among others, the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) started missionary expeditions in the 19th century, with the help of some persons like Rev. Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810–1881), a German missionary, and Bishop Samuel Gobat (1799–1879), a Swiss and an Anglican missionary to Africa. Falk, *The Growth of the Church in Africa*, 288-295.

[10] SEM had made contact with Krapt and Bishop Gobat to start a mission work in East Africa, specifically among the Oromo people of Ethiopia. There was a conviction by Krapt and others that reaching the Oromo people is a key to entering the interior of the African continent. Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*, Part II, 29 and 193.

[11] Geremew, Hjort, and Imberg t, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*, Part I, 29.

[12] Onesimos Nasib and Aster Ganno were very influential natives working with SEM for the Gospel cause. They are also the one who translated the Bible into Oromo (Afan Oromo). See Arén, Gustav, *Envoys of the Gospel in Ethiopia, In the Steps of the Evangelical Pioneers* (Verbum Publisher, Stockholm, 1999), 195.

Ultimately, the mission works created a national Lutheran Church in Ethiopia — the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY).

In 1911, the Swedish Mission *Bibeltrogna Vänner–BV* (Bible–True Friends) had been formed by various members of *Evangeliska Fosterlands–Stiftelsen–EFS* (The Swedish Evangelical Mission–SEM), because they were critical that EFS had begun to undermine the trust in Holy Scripture as verbally inspired and accepted scholarly research into the origins and the interpretation of its various texts.[13] The newly formed organization, SMBV, fully accepted the Holy Scripture as a divinely inspired book against SEM's historical— critical views.[14]

"Some of the Swedish missionaries in Eritrea [where EFS/SEM mission works first started] were strongly influenced by the conflict in Sweden."[15] After the 1910 –11 split of the mission organization, missionaries of SEM to Africa disconnected them immediately from SEM and joined the new society, The Mission Society Bible True Friends, *Missionssällskapet Bibeltrogna Vänner* (SMBV).[16]

After its split from EFS/SEM, SMBV continued its missionary works with a similar goal, i.e., reaching out to the Oromo people, meanwhile carrying out its well–established programs in Eritrea. After several attempts, SMBV's work bore fruit and

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[13] Arén, *Envoys of the Gospel in Ethiopia*, 195.

[14] The Bible True Friends, *Bibeltrogna Vänner –BV*, were formally founded as an independent organization in June 1911. And since 2005, it has been named as Swedish Lutheran Mission-Bible True Friends, SLM-BV. Imberg and Einarsson, *In the footsteps of Jesus: Evangelical Lutheran Mission – Bible-true friends*, 51.

[15] Arén, *Envoys of the Gospel in Ethiopia*, 196.

[16] Geremew, Hjort, and Imberg, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel I*, 35.

established itself in the eastern as well as the central parts of Ethiopia, including the capital city, Addis Abeba.

Several dramatic and important changes took place in the mission works of SLM–BV's long engagement in Ethiopia and Eritrea. These events include the expulsion of foreign missionaries following the Italian invasion and occupation of Ethiopia from 1935 to 1941. The Swedish missionaries were expelled even before any measures were taken by the Italians against the British and the Americans. That was so because Sweden was one of the countries that supported Ethiopia during the war.[17] Moreover, the formation of independent churches in three mission countries—in Eritrea in 1957, Ethiopia in 1960, and Kenya in 1959–60, was one of the major events.[18] These churches are known as the Ethiopia Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea (ELCE) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK). The mission work of SLM–BV in Kenya is a continuation of its efforts in Ethiopia. The original plan was to develop the Kenyan mission while the work in Ethiopia was still going on. In that case, it is possible to imagine that the SLM–BV missionaries wanted to make use of the experiences and lessons learned from the Ethiopian mission work.

The missionary work in Eritrea later expanded into Ethiopia under the umbrella of SLM–BV, resulting in the establishment of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC). The national church was officially formed in 1960. However, the overall responsibility for the missionary work still lay with SLM–BV until September 1975, when EELC took over responsibility for the work. However, SLM–BV was still involved

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[17] Geremew, Hjort, and Imberg, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel I*, 35.

[18]Imberg and Einarsson, *In the footsteps of Jesus: Evangelical Lutheran Mission – Bible-true friends, 58*: Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 247– 253.

with the church, for example in by supporting certain activities of the church financially.[19]

From 1961 onwards until 1975, the church expanded, and new congregations and synods were formed.[20] It was in those years that the biggest synod among EELC, the Woliyita synod, was formed in1964, and the Dawro Synod in 1974.[21] One of the peculiar developments of that era was the ordination of new pastors, in addition to the only three in the whole church, and in 1975, the total number of pastors had reached twelve.[22]

EELC has two theological Seminaries, namely Asella Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTC) and Sodo–Bossa Lutheran Theological Seminary (SBLTS). Specifically, ALTC has been instrumental in the training of the Church's future pastors and evangelists. Its impact was visible during the liturgical development of the church in the early 1970s by strengthening the awareness and competence of the pastors and evangelists.[23]

Liturgical Worship of EELC during SLM–BV

Before looking into the liturgical worship of EELC during and after the SLM–BV church government, we shall evaluate the liturgical tradition and pastoral ministry of SLM–BV.

Starting from the time of its inception, at the first decade of 20th century, SLM–BV has been dominated by lay preachers, and the number of pastors within the

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[19]Evangelisk Luthersk Mission. https://elmbv.se/etiopien/ (accessed June 30, 2025).

[20] Hjort *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 253, 320.

[21] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 321.

[22] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 321.

[23] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 321.

origination and its leadership has been low.[24] Hence, it was a Low Church mission society with lay preachers who preached the Word without conducting any Sacramental services. Although SEM/EFS, the parent organization for SLM–BV, had a stronger connection to the CoS than SLM–BV, members of SLM–BV were also members of the CoS and received Sacramental services from the national church. Moreover, from the beginning, the missionary community of SLM–BV was numerically dominated by women.[25] Of the first seven missionaries of SLM–BV to Ethiopia, four of them were women.[26] This pattern has continued throughout the SLM–BV's mission history abroad, where women have been in the majority.[27]

At the outset, the first missionaries at the field work were not ordained pastors, but rather schoolteachers and medical workers.[28] However, they were doing the spiritual tasks alongside their professional activities. These spiritual works were mainly preaching of the Word, but when congregations were formed more comprehensive church services and pastors were needed. Hence, SLM–BV installed the first ordained pastor, Josef Sevensson, in 1925 to serve also in the mission fields.[29] Those early action were done

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[24]Imberg and Einarsson, *In the footsteps of Jesus: Evangelical Lutheran Mission – Bible-true friends*, 57.

[25] Imberg and Einarsson, *In the footsteps of Jesus: Evangelical Lutheran Mission – Bible-true friends*, 57.

[26] Imberg and Einarsson, *In the footsteps of Jesus: Evangelical Lutheran Mission – Bible-true friends*, 57.

[27] Imberg and Einarsson, *In the footsteps of Jesus: Evangelical Lutheran Mission – Bible-true friends*, 57.

[28] Milikias Petros, **አርሲ ወንጌል ስርጭት ቤተክርስቲያን ታሪክ ከየት ወዴት**? Where did the History of the Arsi Evangelical Church Come From? (Addis Abeba, Milikias Petros, 2016), 24 – 27.

[29] Josef Sevensson was one of the first SLM-BV missionaries to Ethiopia, later on, who became a pastor in the CoS and served in Ethiopia for many years. Geremew, Hjort, and Imberg, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel I*, 121.

with an anticipation of the establishment of a national Lutheran Church in Ethiopia, and the calling and ordination of native pastors.[30]

It is also worth noting that, the pioneer missionaries prepared a hymn book and translated Luther's Small Catechism, before they produced any liturgical materials.[31] Arguably that was the case since the first missionaries were more concerned with the preaching and teaching of the Word, before having a Lutheran liturgical worship and an administration of the Sacraments.[32] Although during the early years of the missionary works of SLM–BV, there was a Sunday service, it was not a full–fledged Lutheran liturgical service. Bengt Hjort describes the early Sunday worship of the church in the following way:

> I remember that there was a simple order of worship at Sunday services. The preacher (most often a lay preacher) read from a simple notebook in which the order of worship was written. As I remember, it was very reminiscent of a church service order that is sometimes used in SMBV in Sweden even today.[33]

The services consisted of preaching, prayers, and hymns, with occasional celebrations of the Lord's Supper.[34] Those sacramental rites, including baptism, were done by lay

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[30] Geremew, Hjort, and Imberg, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel I*, 123.

[31] Bengt Hjort explains about two literature development projects in 1924– 1925, where a hymn book preparation was carried out by EFS/SEM which resulted in *Sebhat Le Amlak* (Praise to God). The project was done based on the hymn book prepared by EFS/SEM missionary Bengt Lundahl (1840– 1859). The hymn book is still used with subsequent revisions both in EELC and EECMY after occasional revisions. Luther's Small Catechism was also translated from Swedish to Amharic (the national language of Ethiopia) in the year 1925.

[32] Geremew, Hjort, and Imberg, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel I*, 121.

[33] I got this information via email correspondence with Bengt Hjort on March 24, 2025. With my subsequent interview, I have also learned from Hjort that 'the simple notebook,' which is now extant, had a simple format with an opening prayer, Confession of sins, text reading, sermon, and a creed. Hjort, Bengt. 2025. Interview by author. Asella. November 30, 2025.

[34] The administration of Sacraments was very rare during the early years of missionary works, for instance, there were 9 Holy Communion services and 10 baptisms in the year 1928 to 1930 in Addis Abeba. Geremew, Hjort, and Imberg, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel I*, 124.

missionaries or native servants commissioned by the missionaries, but the Holy Communion by an ordained pastor yet, the occasion are very seldom in case of the Holy Communion celebration.[35] By now, it is a very common practice in EELC to have a lay preacher and a lay person leading a Sunday divine services, and to the Sacramental services to be conducted by pastors.

Such a kind of service with simple format was very typical of SLM–BV back in Sweden, where members would gather for evening (vesper) meeting in ”Mission houses” or ”Prayer houses.”[36] SLM–BV members would go to one of the CoS congregations for baptism or to receive the Lord’s Supper. Depending on local traditions, some would participate in the CoS morning service on a regular basis in addition to the afternoon “meeting” in the mission house, whereas others would normally just attend the mission house meeting. In these meetings in the SLM–BV mission house similar patterns of worship were followed, as those of the early services in EELC. The missionaries therefore seem to have taken their traditions from Sweden to the mission fields in Ethiopia.

This kind of worship form continued for many years until the beginning of the1970s. Bengt Hjort, who returned as a missionary to Ethiopia in 1973, noted that at the end of the 1970s, there was a well–developed liturgical worship realized with a more

[35] From my interview with Bengt Hjort, I have learned that there were several Ethiopians who were selected based on their academic potential and biblical knowledge to serve. Their duties were mainly preaching and leading a service. For sacramental services, the missionaries were the responsible ones, and they were not pastors. This trend continued until 1948, when the first Ethiopian pastor, Geber – Amlak Rufael, was ordained. Nevertheless, the involvement of lay preachers (both the native and missionaries) has continued afterwards.. Hjort, Bengt. 2025. Interview by author. Asella. November 30, 2025.

[36] Mission houses *Missionshus* also called "himlalador" in Swedish are houses where SLM-BV members would go in the afternoon or during night to hear more preaching after the morning service in the CoS.

prominent role of a pastor, and with an introduction of new elements.[37] The need was imminent at the time since the mission work had evolved to a comprehensive church structure. The liturgical order introduced in the 1970s follows the Swedish tradition, the Agenda of 1942. Ever since then, EELC officially has a liturgy, with subsequent editions.[38]

Initially, the Lutheran liturgical worship started in Addis Abeba, the capital city, and at Harar, the second mission station of SLM–BV.[39] As the church gradually expanded to other parts of the country, the liturgical worship practice also tended to be introduced accordingly in newly established congregations.

However, in 1975 a significant shift occurred in the church when the responsibility of the church government was taken over entirely by Ethiopian leaders. The phenomenon, known as 'integration,' brought up a new approach to the leadership of the church. In the following years, the church continued to grow steadily, geographically, and numerically. As time went on, the church tended to become less liturgical, in its divine service worship and especially in newly planted congregations across the eight synods of the church. However, the shift was not abrupt, especially in the older congregations. It was gradual and, in some congregations, like my congregation in Asella the Lutheran Liturgical worship continued for many years, even after the departure of SLM–BV from the EELC church administration. According to Fikru Geleto, the

[37] I have learned this through my email correspondence on March 24, 2025 and through an interview later on November 30, 2025 with Bengt Hjort. Hjort, Bengt. 2025. Interview by author. Asella. November 30, 2025.

[38] According to Bengt Hjort, Rev. Leif Norrgård and Jens Ipsen were the two missionaries to Ethiopia who translated the CoS liturgy into the national language of Ethiopia, Amharic, to be used in the Lutheran church in Ethiopia.

[39] Geremew, Hjort, and Imberg, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel I,* 124-128.

Lutheran liturgical worship continued in the Asella congregation even with the church government shift at the national level.[40] That was because Asella is one of the EELCs' congregations, where there was a better Lutheran liturgical worship tradition. However, a change started to become visible in the late 1980s. However, in places where a new Lutheran congregation is planted, with limited resources (both human and materials) it has been highly probable that a non–Lutheran liturgical worship would be practiced from the outset.

In the cases of the older congregations as time went by, the Lutheran liturgical practice tended to decline. The situation in those congregations is that, the liturgical divine service worship is being mixed up with charismatic worship. Only in the Addis Abeba congregation (headquarter of EELC at the capital city) is an intact liturgical worship still practiced. Otherwise, EELC's divine service worship is significantly charismatic in the vast majority of congregations.

Although the Sunday divine service with a simple format had been introduced to EELC since the missionaries began their endeavors, in 1921, a comprehensive church order book was not published until 1984. After the constitution of a national church (LCEt) in 1960, "… a simple order of worship was used for High Mass services within LCEt."[41] "It was an arrangement that SMBV's missionaries had introduced many years earlier and which was based on the 1942 *Church Agenda within the Church of Sweden.*"[42] Bengt Hjort described the order as:

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[40].Fikru Geleto, 2025, Interview by author. Asella. November 27, 2025; Hjort, Bengt. 2025. Interview by author. Asella. November 30, 2025.

[41] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 322.

[42] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 322.

> This order of worship meant that only one biblical text, the sermon text, was read, and that no liturgical singing occurred. The person who led the service, a priest or a layman, read out the order of the service. The congregation's participation consisted of, in addition to singing along in unison songs, reading along with the Apostolic Creed and praying along with the Lord's Prayer. If it was a layman who led the service, he stood in the pulpit. There was no actual altar service.[43]

This order was based on the CoS Church Agenda of 1942, strongly reminiscent of Order of worship (Order for abbreviated High Mass, alternative 1 (*Gudstjänstordning* (*Ordning för förkortad högmässa alternativ* 1) which was published by SLM–BV in the 1970s.[44]

In 1984 "An Agenda for Worship and for Various Services," an abridged church order was published. The agenda consists of orders for Sunday divine service, holy baptism (both for children and adults), confirmation, the Lord's Supper, engagement, marriage, installation of evangelists, ordination of pastors, the cemetery blessing ceremony, funerals, dedication of a church building and other buildings, and more. The agenda also includes a description of the pastors' vestments' color in accordance with church years, holy days, and occasions. Later in 2022, the agenda was republished with certain revisions. Here, the summary of the content of the divine service liturgy set in the 1984 and 2022 agendas is presented. Moreover, its relationship with the Swedish liturgy will also be addressed briefly.[45]

In general, the two divine service liturgies are similar, with some minor changes. The content and order are basically the same. Both liturgies have twenty–six sections, but the order has been changed at one place. In the 1984 liturgy, the *Absolution* comes before

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[43] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 322.

[44] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 322.

[45] See appendix 1 and 2 for the details of the two EELC's divine liturgies, published in 1984 and 2022, 95– 109.

the *Kyrie*, but in the 2022 liturgy the *Kyrie* precedes the *Absolution.* Moreover, in the 1984 liturgy, the Kyrie is worded "God the Creator, have mercy," whereas in the 2022 its wording is the traditional "Lord have mercy." In section 13, the Creed, the 1984 liturgy's heading is stated as "The Profession of faith," while in the 2022 liturgy it is called, "Confession of the Creed." Moreover, the 2022 liturgy has additional options for the Prayer of Confession of sins (section 4) and for the Prayer of the Church (section 22).

In the service of the Word (section 15, Sermon), both rubrics indicate that a priest or a preacher (which would be a layperson) could preach. Moreover, according to both EELC's liturgies, the priest or an evangelist may say the prayer of the church (section 22). It is clear that in the liturgy of the church, lay persons may be engaged in various roles. However, the rubrics do not say that an evangelist can lead the divine service. But in practice, an evangelist, or another lay person does lead the divine service, albeit without using the divine service liturgy.

After the complete church government transfer from the SLM–BV to the Ethiopians, the leaders attempted to maintain the worship tradition of the missionaries with whom they had tutored for so long. The Sunday services held during those days were mainly the preaching of the Word and hymn singing. The hymnbook known as *Sebhat Le Amlak,* prepared in year the 1924–25, has made significant contribution to the life of the congregations.[46] Later in 1935 the hymn book was published later to be used both in EELC and EECMY, incorporating more hymns, both from Western and Ethiopian authors.[47] "In 1950 a third, extended version was released.[48] "It was the result of a

[46] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel II,* 95.

[47] There is 343.hymns in this edition of the hymns book, which had been used both in EELC and EECMY.

proposal made by the Presbyterian side at the 1949 Conference of the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches (CEEC) Council meeting."[49] Again it was republished in 2017, this time adding more hymns from Baptist and Pentecostal authors.[50]

The involvement of a layperson that was more visible in divine service liturgy during the era when SLM–BV was governing the church together with the Ethiopians. During those days, although pastors were not there for liturgies, the laity was serving, with a prearranged liturgical worship order. As Bengt Hjort states, "although the role of the priest had become more prominent in the church, lay preachers were still of great importance to the work of the parishes."[51] This approach of jointly using pastors (priests) with lay person has continued until this day.

Lay person involvement in the divine service worship still exists in SLM–BV.[52] As an example, in the Kristianstad congregation I visited once, a layperson was leading the service while a pastor was preaching.[53] Normally, laypeople both lead and preach at the SLM–BV services, a tradition that goes back to the very beginning of SLM–BV's history. Sometimes lay preachers got permission to preach in the local CoS church. A

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[48] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 47.

[49] "The aim of the proposal was to select and edit the best songs from different song collections, to create a *common evangelical songbook*." Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 47.

[50] In the 2017.hymns book, there are 564 songs. Due to the ever increasing Pentecostal and Charismatic movement in Ethiopian, the two Lutheran churches in Ethiopia have been forced to include popular hymns from Baptist and Pentecostal authors.

[51] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 321.

[52] Since SLM– BV is a mission organization, not a church body, some of its members are also members of CoS; therefore, they worship at CoS churches. In contrast, some SLM– BV members are conducting their own separate services. Among them, I have taken one divine service liturgy as an example from the Kristianstad congregation, 2023 order of worship.

[53] According to the 2023 Service Book of the Kristianstad congregation, a layperson is indicated to lead the service and preach the Word. Kristianstad congregation, 2023. (My translation from Swedish with the help of online application.)

meeting in 1950 started with a divine service with Holy Communion in which Axel B. Svensson (a layperson and the mission organization secretary from 1911 to 1951), preached.[54] But in the case of EELC's 1984 and 2022 Agendas, the order of worship is described in detail, and it does not state that a layperson could lead Sunday divine service worship.

It is also possible to see the similarities of SLM–BV's earlier liturgy with EELC's. Bengt Hjort has given the order of SLM–BV's divine service liturgy of the 1978, which includes: Opening song, Introductory words: Holy, Holy, Holy, Confession of Sins, Absolution, Song, Prayer, Sermon text is read, Apostolic Creed, Song, Sermon, Song, Church prayer, Our Father, Blessing, Concluding song.[55] The SLM–BV order was primarily observed at the Rosenius Church in Stockholm.[56] In earlier years, the services at this church were notably different from many gatherings held in "missionshus" associated with SLM–BV, where often there was no liturgy at all.[57]

It is also important to note that in EELC liturgical tradition, the liturgy is said except for the hymns. However, the *Kyrie* and *Gloria in Excelsis* have been sung. For instance, in my congregation (Asella), the *Kyrie* and *Gloria in Excelsis* have been sung. Since the Asella congregation is using something like a mixed approach (where the

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[54]A series of no less than three sermons all preached by lay people followed in the afternoon – all of them in the local church. At the end of the day, they gathered at another place for coffee and "vittnesbörd"—when anyone is invited for testimonies.

[55] This information is based on my correspondence with Bengt Hjort from March 21 to 24, 2025. This format follows the order of the Divine service without the Lord's Supper in the CoS. However, liturgical parts such as the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Laudamus* between absolution and the readings have been left out, as well as the *Benedicamus* before the Blessing at the end.

[56] The information is based on my correspondence with Bengt Hjort from February 17, 2026.

[57] The information is based on my correspondence with Bengt Hjort from February 17, 2026.

Lutheran liturgy is blended with the Charismatic worship, and the *Kyrie and Gloria in Excelsis* are said if a pastor leads the service, but that is occasional.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHY DID EELC BECOME LESS LITURGICAL?

In chapters two and three, I have tried to summarize the general Lutheran perspective on liturgy, underscoring Martin Luther's conception of the liturgy as well as discussing the Swedish liturgical heritage. Subsequently, as the major theme of my thesis, I have brought in a brief historical sketch of SLM–BV and EELC, which pertain to their liturgical traditions.

In this chapter, I will proceed to the main discussion of this thesis work, a theological examination of the reasons for the decline of the liturgical divine service in EELC. I analyze both the internal and external factors that may have influenced the decline of liturgical worship in EELC.

Concerning the internal factors affecting the continuity of liturgical worship in EELC, I first would like to highlight two major points that are relevant. First, liturgical worship should be understood as a Lutheran church order practiced during a Sunday divine service at EELC. Secondly, as I have tried to show in chapter three, it is also appropriate to remark that the liturgical worship practice in the divine service liturgy of EELC is a translation of Swedish liturgy by missionaries to Ethiopia during the late 20th century. With these insights in mind, I will now discuss and examine the internal and external factors influencing the EELC Lutheran liturgical divine service tradition.

Internal Factors That Affected the Continuity of Liturgical Worship in EELC

The Pietistic Background of SLM–BV

"Lutheran Pietism appeared first of all as a reform movement with practical goals in view, but it gradually came to exert a transforming effect on theological activities and general outlook as well."[1] Based on Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705), the father of Pietistic Lutheranism of the 17th century, Bengt Hägglund summarizes the goals as, a development of personal piety through Bible study, exercising universal priesthood "… through mutual admonition and soul care."[2] In Pietism, the knowledge and confidence one has, namely faith, through the proclamation of the Word, should be correlated with and proved by personal experience.

Sweden was one of the European countries that were highly influenced by Pietism. The movement has held its ground in the CoS since the 18th century, when it was seen as a threat.[3] However, the adherents of the movement had responded in various ways for example, by consolidating themselves within local and national organizations. SLM–BV traces its origin to those historical Pietistic movements within the CoS. Consequently, the mission fields of SLM–BV have reflected the basic features of Pietism, which thus have been transmitted to and influenced countries like that of Ethiopia. From the start and throughout the missionary work of SLM–BV, Pietistic influence was apparent. But what were those Pietistic elements and how did they influence in EELC?

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[1] Bengt Hägglund, *History of Theology*, Translated by Gene J. Lund, (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1968), 327.

[2] Hägglund, *History of Theology*, 326.

[3] Wim Hulsman, RD, *Biblebelt feature: Pietism is at the roots of the Swedish Biblebelt (2/3)*, https://cne.news/article/4084-biblebelt-feature-pietism-is-at-the-roots-of-the-swedish-biblebelt-2-3-, accessed July 2, 2025.

From the inception of its missionary work oversees, SLM–BV was a lay–ministry, where the laity had prominent positions both at the organizational level (in Sweden) and at the mission fields.[4] SLM–BV was following the traditional Pietistic understanding of "the priesthood of all believers", which recognizes the rights of the laity in the church ministry.[5] The missionaries of SLM–BV to EELC were lay people with a few exceptions, and the majority of them were women.[6] These missionaries have done a lot in terms of preaching the Gospel in Ethiopia, and through the provision of different social services, like medical care and educational programs. However, in matters of ecclesiastical activities, they have maintained their lay–oriented approaches. Although a pastoral ministry developed over time, the lay–oriented tradition was evident during the time of SLM–BV presence in LCEt in the divine service worship.[7]

Pietistic Influence after Independence from SLM–BV

After the church was independent and self–governing in 1975, in most cases, the Sunday divine service would be led by a layperson, even though a pastor could be available. At congregations where a pastor was present, he was not supposed to be the liturgist every Sunday. Rather, he should be one among other laypeople who could "lead

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[4] Imberg and Einarsson, *In the Footsteps of Jesus: Evangelical Lutheran Mission – Bible-true Friends, 57.*

[5] Philipp Jacob Spener (1635– 1705) underscores with a proposal the priesthood of all believers as a basic assertion of Pietism, along with his other basic categories, namely, the emphasis of the Word of God, faith in action, and individual moral development. John M. Brenner, "Pietism: Past and Present", Essay delivered at WELS Michigan District Southeastern Conference Pastor/Teacher/Delegate Conference on January 23, 1989, and WELS Michigan District Northern Pastoral Conference on April 3, 1989, 3. https://www.cob-net.org/photos/europe/pietism-past-present.pdf (accessed July 12, 2025).

[6] Petros, *Where Did the History of the Arsi Evangelical Church Come From?* 24-27.

[7] The lay-oriented divine service during SLM-BV sole church administration is described in Chapter Three, section "Liturgical Worship of EELC during SLM-BV", pp. 33– 44.

the program."[8] However, there is a certain difference between a layperson leading a service and the pastor as a liturgist. I present the order of the two types of worship in EELC's divine service as follows:

In the case of a layperson–led service, the following order is kept in all EELC congregations, with some slight variations. The divine service begins with prayer, and all the congregants are encouraged to pray privately. The "program leader" follows a pattern according to his own preferences as he selects topics for prayers, which he himself decides, and they are accompanied by text readings, which he thinks relevant to the prayers. There is no confession and absolution, or *Kyrie eleison*, and so on. After the prayer service, "worship songs" led by a group of youths will follow.[9] On certain occasions, a choir can sing after "the worship song" service. Following the worship song service, a prayer for children and for the offering will take place. The program leader may lead this prayer or can invite anyone from the congregation. Some congregations, but not all, would confess the Apostles' Creed and read texts from Bible prescribed in the church calendar.[10] After church announcements, the service will proceed to the service of the Word. In the service of the Word, either a pastor or a layperson could preach.[11] The

[8] "Leader of the program" is the term used to describe "the liturgist" of a Sunday divine service in EELC congregations. The term is adapted from, most probably, the Baptist or Pentecostal denominations in Ethiopian protestant churches.

[9] Worship song is a widespread practice and part of the divine service of all Protestant churches in Ethiopia. In this type of service, hymns composed by different gospel singers and choirs from other denominations could be sung, and the congregation would join the so-called "worship leaders," who lead the "song worship service."

[10] In my congregation, Asella, we confess the apostolic creed and read the texts every Sunday. However, for an unknown reason, sometimes only the Gospel texts are read. In other congregations, neither the creeds nor the texts are read regularly, except in the Addis Abeba congregation.

[11] On some occasions, preachers from other denominations would also be invited to preach, which is opposed by some members of the church due to their different theological stands.

service would end with a prayer by the preacher or another invited person and with the Lord's Prayer. If a pastor is available, he could bless the congregation with the Aaronic benediction. In that case, a layperson is not allowed to say the benedictions. Moreover, the candle on the altar would be lit only if the pastor is leading the divine service.

If the divine service is led by a pastor, the following order would be used. The pastor begins the service with an invocation in the name of the Triune God, and then proceeds with the Confession and Absolution, and Kyrie.[12] The pastor may continue with more prayer on themes he thinks are appropriate for the day. Right after the closing of the prayer, the same order will be followed as that of a service led by a layperson. The only difference is that the pastor will bless the congregation with the Aaronic benediction at the end of the service. The sermon may be delivered by either a layperson or a pastor, except for the one leading the service. Hence, the pastor or a layperson who is leading the liturgy (or the service) will not preach. However, pastors do not preach wearing their pastoral vestments. They may wear a pastoral shirt with a collar or an ordinary suit.

Indeed, this type of 'blended' divine service pattern of the church has at least partly its influence from the Charismatic or Pentecostal churches, on which I will expound further below. However, the Pietistic tradition of SLM–BV has naturally made an impact since the early missionary days. For instance, it could be seen in relation to the missionaries' personal background. According to Milikias Petros's account of the missionary works of SLM–BV, there were only eight pastors among eighty–eight

[12] See Appendix 2, for the translation of the divine service liturgy of EELC, 2022, 102–109.

missionaries sent to EELC, from 1944–2007.[13] And fifty–four of them were women, who were engaged both in developmental and spiritual activities.[14]

However, as Bengt Hjort has observed, starting from the establishment of the church, the need for more pastors was felt and discussions took place within SLM–BV and their Ethiopian partners.[15] Following those discussions, the first Ethiopian pastor (Qes Geber–Amlak Rufael) was ordained in 1948. In the following years a few more were ordained, who served for many years.[16] Moreover, while a pastor was permanently settled and serving at a given congregation, he was supposed to serve altogether four different congregations on average, and he needed to travel to these other neighboring congregations whenever he was needed. It was customary for a pastor to travel to his "extension congregations" to conduct Sacramental services and whenever there were funeral or marriage ceremonies. For this reason, the Sunday service was usually led by laypersons, yet it followed the Lutheran liturgical rite. Hence, the layperson–oriented mission attitude, in addition to the lack of enough pastors within the church, led to an "uncompleted" Lutheran– liturgical divine service, even during the SLM –BV era. Moreover, during the SLM–BV era, there were fewer congregations, with more

[13]Petros, *Where Did the History of the Arsi Evangelical Church Come From?* 24-27.

[14] Petros, *Where Did the History of the Arsi Evangelical Church Come From?* 24-27.

[15] In my interview with Bengt Hjort's I have learned that the need for pastors was significant and relevant, especially for the work in the Arsi province. But the need was also felt in other places, not least with a view to the future. Hjort, Bengt. 2025. Interview by author. Asella. November 30, 2025.

[16] In following years, before the church government fully transferred to the Ethiopians, more pastors were ordained: Worqalemmahu Negire in 1950, Getaneh Meshesha in 1950, Denneqe Tjeckol in 1962, Wubeshet Lemma in 1963, Israel Loloamo, Mochona Laloto in 1964, Dawit Tale, Batha Betsuamlak, and two others in 1967, and Alazar Neamin in 1972. Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 260.

centralized administration, which promoted homogenous worship traditions among them.

Nevertheless, there is an important difference between the divine service worship during the era when SLM–BV governed the church and thereafter. During the SLM–BV church government along with the Ethiopians, the divine service might be led by a layperson, but the order of worship basically followed the Lutheran liturgical rite. The Service Book used was the translation of the CoS's Service Book.[17] But after the transfer of the church government, most congregations of the church gradually began to deviate from the traditional Lutheran liturgical worship in their divine services. Nevertheless, a common feature in both eras is the involvement of lay people in the Holy Ministry, a feature which can be traced to the Pietistic tradition of SLM–BV from the start of their mission endeavors.

For further information concerning the development of the church liturgical tradition, I have interviewed Fikru Geleto.[18] According to Geleto, the liturgy of the church before 1971 was simple; it included a prayer, confession, and a sermon. During holidays (New Year, Christmas and Easter) services were held without any formal liturgy. After the development of a comprehensive liturgy by Rev. Leif Norrgård, Jens Ipsen, and Helge Lundh, the church began worshiping with a formal and full–fledged

[17] Bengt Hjort, with whom I corresponded from March 21 to 24, 2025, provided me with the following information about how the EELC liturgy has developed from the CoS liturgy. Mr. Hjort had been in contact with Rev. Leif Norrgård, who was a primary figure along with his colleagues in the liturgy development of EELC's liturgy, and had the following response from Rev. Norrgård for his question. "Around 1970, Jens Ipsen and I tried to translate Swedish liturgical tradition to Amharic. Until now, one had probably followed a translation of the Church of Sweden's Agenda (1942) as best as one had been able to do."

[18] Geleto, Fikru. Interview by author. Asella. October 20, 2025.

Lutheran liturgy. This time liturgical worship developed and deepened further.[19] Bengt Hjort describes the development as follows:

> A liturgy for the priests, with explanations of robes, liturgical colors, etc., was produced and translated into Amharic. …, the new order of worship brought about were that an epistle text was also read and that the congregation participated by singing certain parts of the order. A priest who led a service was assumed to be dressed in alba and stola. A full application of the new order of worship in practice required organ accompaniment.[20]

In comparison with the earlier and simpler order of worship, the new order brought in a rather comprehensive liturgy. Although it had not been implemented in all congregations, it fundamentally created stability in the liturgical tradition of the church. Moreover, the lack of enough pastors had an impact on the application of the new liturgy.[21]

Church Government and Administration
Bearings on a Lutheran Liturgical Worship in EELC

Like many other Protestant churches in Ethiopia, EELC was established and progressed steadily amid the social, economic, and political upheavals of the country. Before having its current structural and ecclesiastically profile, the church had gone through different periods. Those periods are also characterized by certain events that can be seen as defining moments in the history of the church. For the purpose of this thesis, I am considering two periods, namely, the years during and after SLM–BV held the church's government. In this particular section, I am trying to see how the church administration in both periods would affect the worship of EELC in the divine service.

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[19] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 322.

[20] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III*, 322.

[21] On this matter Bengt Hjort commented that, the application of the new order of worship could thus sometimes in practice be quite stripped down, especially if the service was led by a layman." Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel III,* 322–323.

By and large, EELC has grown in terms of congregations and members since its beginning. It has emerged from a single preaching station to a dispersed synodical national church.[22] The church has also developed with regard to organizational and administrative capacity. The Swedish missionaries were solely responsible for the government and administration of the church, from the beginning in 1921 until the Italian invasion in 1935. "Every plan, proposal, and implementation was done by the missionaries."[23] Ethiopians (also Eritreans) participated as schoolteachers daily laborers, helping at clinics, and with church activities.[24]

During the absence of foreign missionaries due to the Italian occupation, Ethiopians had been leading the work until the missionaries' return in 1945 and when the missionaries came back to the mission field in Ethiopia they took over the whole leadership from the Ethiopians' hands."[25]

And since then the church has continued expanding geographically and numerically.

Until the church government complete transfer in 1975, the missionaries were the leaders in all matters. The type of leadership style they were using was a centralized one, where instructions and direction were given from top to bottom. With few congregations

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[22] The synodic structure has been implemented in EELC since 2002, after the decision made by the Executive Committee, the higher decision-making body of the church. But it is worth mentioning that SLM-BV missionaries have contributed their part in the process.

[23] Tuffa, "The Influence of the Lutheran Missionaries in Shaping the Leadership Practice and History of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church," 25.

[24] Tuffa, "The Influence of the Lutheran Missionaries in Shaping the Leadership Practice and History of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church," 26.

[25] Tuffa, "The Influence of the Lutheran Missionaries in Shaping the Leadership Practice and History of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church," 37.

and members of the church, it was much easier to control the overactive activities of the church.[26]

The organizational and leadership conformity of the period contributed to a unity and uniformity of worship. Although there was not a full Lutheran liturgical worship in all congregations, the existing type of worship tradition was similar in all places.[27] Moreover, the type of worship of the time was quite different than the current trend. The centralized church government run by the missionaries helped the church to practice a better Lutheran liturgical worship in the divine service. As Hjort noted concerning the ecclesiastical activities of those years, "the very backbone of the congregational work was, by all accounts, Sunday services at 10:00 a.m.; a service began that could last until 12:00 p.m."[28] Hjort is here referring to the Addis Abeba congregation as an example, but it looked in much the same way in the other congregations too.

During the years when the missionaries left for Europe due to the Italian invasion and World War II, the Ethiopians assumed control of the church's government. They were given responsibility in difficult times without being equipped with leadership knowledge.[29] However, even if the missionaries had left Ethiopia because of the situation

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[26] There were fewer than 10 congregations from 1921 to 1948. Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*; part II, 95.

[27] Most missionaries of SLM-BV were not actually well-educated theologians, not even pastors. They were school teachers, medical practitioners, builders, etc., with high spiritual commitment and motivation. Tuffa, "The Influence of the Lutheran Missionaries in Shaping the Leadership Practice and History of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church," 29-30.

[28] Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*, Part II, 95.

[29] Tuffa, "The Influence of the Lutheran Missionaries in Shaping the Leadership Practice and History of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church," 35.

both in Ethiopia and in Europe, "… they were behind every activity."[30] That was possible through reports and correspondence on a regular basis. Ethiopians, who took over the church work, should report to missionaries in Sweden about the progress, challenges, and opportunities they encountered both in spiritual and developmental activities. Financial reports are also included since the mission organization was responsible for the economic resources of the church.

The 1975 church government transfer from the missionaries to the Ethiopians could be described from different angles. On the one hand, the church, which was known as "the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia – Friends of the Bible (LCEt)" at the time, enjoyed full autonomy as a national church. With the "Integration Agreement" signed between the church and SLM –BV, the church obtained full autonomy in self–administration.[31] On the other hand, the missionaries were still influential; they remained in Ethiopia overseeing the overall spiritual and development activities of the church and assisting in the church in maintaining a Lutheran orientation.

However, as the time went by, the involvement of the missionaries began to decline. The missionaries participated in the administration of the church only by a single representative stationed at the capital.[32] As a consequence, the Ethiopians became more empowered and made their own decisions. Nevertheless, a close relation between the church and the mission organization has continued to this day. Under the leadership of the Ethiopians, the missionaries have continued to influence the ecclesiastical

[30] Tuffa, "The Influence of the Lutheran Missionaries in Shaping the Leadership Practice and History of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church," 37.

[31] LCEt and SMBV, "Integration Agreement," 1975.

[32] Tuffa, "The Influence of the Lutheran Missionaries in Shaping the Leadership Practice and History of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church", 38.

administration and leadership. For instance, the Swedish missionaries worked along with the Ethiopians in the development of the constitution and bylaws of the church.[33] And as already mentioned, SLM –BV missionaries also developed the first liturgy of the church, and which was published later in 1984 as an order of worship of the church.[34]

Nevertheless, after 1975, the new leaders of the church tried to pursue the vision and mission of their predecessors. Keeping their Lutheran identity both in faith and practice was one of their attempts in this regard. With the inauguration of new congregations in the eastern, southern, and central parts of the country, the church was obligated to make a new organizational structure. The new establishment of the church made arrangements where the congregations of the church were structured under synods. The synods are now clustered based on the geographical location of the congregations, and the synods are directly accountable to the head office of the church. Nevertheless, the synods have more autonomy compared to the SLM–BV's structure and administration. Although the synodic structure could be considered as viable for administration purposes, it has drawbacks on certain ecclesiastical matters. The church's worship practices are undoubtedly one of the issues to be considered in this context.

During the SLM–BV church government years, there was a uniform type of divine service order and practice in all congregations. And it was much easier for the foreign leaders of the church to look after the ecclesiastical activities, due to the small number of churches, servants, and members. Moreover, the natives had great respect for

[33] Tuffa, "The Influence of the Lutheran Missionaries in Shaping the Leadership Practice and History of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church", 41, and Archives of EELC.

[34] The early version of the divine service liturgy of the church had not been published, but typed on paper, duplicated, and circulated for use in congregations. In 1984 a complete church order (agenda) was published, mainly by the expertise of Swedish missionaries. Later in 2022 the church order (agenda) was republished after minor changes. This revision was done by the Ethiopians alone.

the missionaries; hence, rules were kept well. Nevertheless, in the synodic structure of the church, due to the autonomous self–administration and the distance of some synods to the head office, to control the activities of each church and synod was not easy.[35] Especially newly established congregations and synods have tended to divert from the traditional Lutheran teachings and practices.[36] One of the reasons for such an inclination is that not all the pastors and evangelists have a Lutheran background.[37] It has become a common practice to hire an evangelist outside the Lutheran circle since accessibility and affordability is an issue.[38]

As these pastors and evangelists are now serving in the Lutheran church, they are not allowed to teach non–Lutheran doctrine, but they are significantly influencing the worship practice of EELC with their charismatic approaches. This influx is difficult to manage by the church leaders both at the synod level and the head office level. But this development is also due to a lack of enough awareness and commitment of the leadership at different levels, and in fact some of them even encourage the Charismatic influence both in their teaching and practice.

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[35] Some new synods in the southern part of the country which are very far away stationed in very remote areas of the country.

[36] These synods are mainly in the southern part of Ethiopia, known as Wolaita, Dawro, Hadia, Kamba, and Kindo synods.

[37] Most of the pastors and evangelists of the new congregations and synods have a Baptist or Pentecostal background. Actually, only very few pastors and evangelists have studied in the seminaries of the church.

[38] After the church government transfer, the financial support given by SLM–BV was decreasing. It became the policy of SLM-BV to cut the support for EELC year by year. Due to the shortage of budget, the church was struggling to recruit the right evangelist. Therefore, the church would go to hire from the Baptist or Pentecostal churches, which are more available and demand lower salaries.

External Factors that Affected the Continuity of Liturgical Worship in EELC

In this section of my thesis I will evaluate the external factors outside the church (EELC) that have had a significant impact on the church's Lutheran liturgical tradition. Specifically, the influence those external factors imposed on the liturgical practice of EELC after the church government transfer in 1975 would be considered. I will address two major aspects that have had a major impact on the Lutheran liturgical worship of EELC, namely the socio–political situation of the country during and after the church government transfer and the Pentecostal – Charismatic influence.

I will start with the general perspectives of each factor and then move to the specific issues pertaining to the Lutheran liturgical worship practice of EELC.

The Socio –Political Conditions of Ethiopia During the Church's Government Transfer in 1970s

There have been pivotal periods in Ethiopian history when significant shifts occurred, which have had immense impact on subsequent events. Those crucial moments in history, the result of political impulse, and social trends have also had weighty impact on religious matters. One of these eras in Ethiopian history was the 1970s. In 1974, the imperial ruler Haile Selassie I was replaced by a socialist military regime after a bloody revolution. At the beginning the revolution was not violent and tried to address "the … alleged exploitation, incompetence, and callousness of Haile Selassie's administration."[39] It could be understood as a public reaction against the monarchical feudal system, which had been in power for centuries. The Revolution was mainly led by the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, which was later transformed into the provisional

[39] John Brown, "Religion and Revolution in Ethiopia" https://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/rcl/09-1-2_050.pdf, 50, (accessed September 15, 2025).

Military Administrative Committee known as the *Derg (*an Amharic word for a committee*)*. However, "conflict developed within the *Derg*; fighting broke out among various Marxist groups."[40] The event led to what is popularly known as 'The Red Terror,' which made the period one of the most horrible years in modern Ethiopian history. The atrocities, killings, robberies, and many kinds of violations of human rights made the country one of the most hostile in the world during that time.[41]

The military government, the *Derg* followed the ideology of Marxism–Leninism, and with its 'Ethiopia First' slogan, it was against idealist thoughts like religion.[42] The materialistic–socialist ideology of the *Derg* was exhibited in its political, economic, social, and foreign policies. As for religion, *Derg*'s policies were partly based on its Marxist–Leninist ideology and partly grounded in the country's culture. This dual approach of the regime can be explained in the following way. On the one hand there was a constitution that declared state and religion as two separate entities, and that all religious groups had equal rights. At the same time, the *Derg* regime members and leaders at different levels remained on a good footing with the major players of Ethiopian Christianity, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, and Ethiopian Muslims,[43] and this in turn made them hostile to certain religious groups, especially the Protestants.

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[40] Brown, "Religion and Revolution in Ethiopia," 50.

[41] Mekonnen Geremew, "Human Dignity in Armed Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of Christian Ethics and Kantian Philosophy in Ethiopia's Tigray, Oromia, and Amhara Regions," (PhD diss., Gelila International Seminary), 39.

[42] Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia," 115.

[43] John Brown describes *Dreg's* attitude as, "many heroes of the revolution have been buried according to the rites of the Church. In 1978 a calendar was published with a picture of Colonel Mengistu flanked by the Patriarch and the leading Sheikh," Brown, "Religion and Revolution in Ethiopia," 52.

However, throughout its reign, the *Derg* regime was not consistent with its policies and even acted against its written laws. Due to its socialist political views and affiliating itself with the 'Eastern wing,' the *Derg* had an antagonistic attitude towards the Western countries. Consequently, as most Protestant churches in Ethiopia had a relationship with the Western world, the *Derg* regime was repressive towards them, including the Lutherans.[44] These repressions were of different kinds, like imprisonment of the leaders of churches, abduction of members, and seizure of land and properties of churches.[45]

The devastating political, social and ecclesiastical situation of the period was further intensified by human right violations and insecurity. This situation led to the departure of missionaries in many protestant churches and organizations, so also the SLM–BV missionaries in Ethiopia.[46] As mentioned above, the church government fell into the hands of the natives after the departure of the missionaries. The transfer was officially approved by a signed agreement, known as "Integration agreement" between the missionaries and the local leaders.

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[44] For instance, the *Derg* regime was openly hostile to religion, especially to "Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses," and … it unilaterally and illegally cancelled the contract with the Lutheran authorities by closing Radio Voice of the Gospel and taking over the station as Radio Voice of Socialist Ethiopia." Brown, "Religion and Revolution in Ethiopia," 52.

[45] The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo (EOTC) Church Archbishop Patriarch Abune Tewoflos was arrested in February 1976 and executed in July 1979. The general secretary of EECMY, the Rev. Gudina Tumsa (1929–1979), was also jailed and died in prison. Brent L. Kipfer, "Persecuted and Thriving: Meserete Kristos Church Leadership during the Ethiopian Revolution (1974 –1991)," DoM diss., (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2017), 110.

[46]Dawit Kawo wrote, "Following the revolution, all missionaries were told to leave the country. It was during that challenging time that the missionaries left the work in the hands of untrained Ethiopian teachers and workers to lead the church." See Tuffa, "The Influence of the Lutheran Missionaries in Shaping the Leadership Practice and History of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church," 39.

But how could the socio–political field impinge on the worship tradition of EELC? Below, I outline the basic features of the phenomenon.

First, the 1970s was a translational period both nationally and locally at the ecclesiastical level. It was an era of regime change in the political arena and a leadership shift in EELC, which was by itself caused by the political conditions of the period. The new native leaders of the church were less experienced than the missionaries, so it would have been somewhat difficult to stand up to every challenge, also with regard to sacred activities.[47] In a politically volatile environment and with a new and less experienced leadership, the church was struggling to keep up maintaining its tradition.

Although EELC (called LCEt at that time) had all the legal right as a national church in Ethiopia, it was nevertheless facing repressive actions by the government.[48] The government (*Derg*) also had a policy to organize the local community under certain clubs known as "discussion clubs," with a goal to educate the society with a Marxism–Leninism ideology. As members of the society, church members had an obligation to participate in those "discussion clubs." Some church members were so active in these clubs that they brought challenges to the church by enforcing socialist views in the church environment.[49] These kinds of intimidations weakened the church's life by imposing more political views than spiritual outlooks and practices.

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[47] See the quotation from Tuffa in the previous footnote.

[48] For instance, pastors and evangelists had been in jailed, and buildings were taken over by the government.

[49] For example, in Asella and Kofele Congregations, there were some members of the church who were also members of the Sociality party, who had been working as informants to the government against the church.

Therefore, the socio–political turmoil of the 1970s in Ethiopia brought significant impact on the ecclesiastical order and practice of EELC, both in terms of a leadership change and new severe challenges to the church and its members. A significant problem was that, the Ethiopian leaders of the congregations were not as strong on doctrinal thought and practices as their Swedish counterparts. Although it was written in the "Integration agreement," article II, under the title "Doctrinal Basis," which the native church leaders had to maintain the Lutheran convictions; for different reasons, the Lutheran views and practices tended to decrease.[50]

Like any other social structure, the church (EELC) was under pressure, and the status quo was disturbed by political events. Although the church continued her mission with a struggle throughout the communist regime, her traditions and practice had been affected. And one of the areas where those distributions occur was at the worship practice and tradition of the church. The Lutheran liturgical tradition started and implemented by the missionaries was jeopardized, partly because of the political situation.

As I have pointed out above, the socio – political trends of the time impacted the Lutheran liturgical tradition in certain ways. However, the most crucial factor that affected the Lutheran liturgical worship of the divine service would be the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement in Ethiopia, which was by itself as a result of political compulsions. To this we turn next.

[50] These convictions were described under the three universal creeds (the Apostolic, Nicaea, and Athanasius Creeds) and "the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small and Large Catechisms" LCEt and SMBV, "Integration Agreement," 1975, article II, 1.

The Pentecostal and Charismatic Influence

The Montanist movement of the 2nd century could be taken as precursor of the modern day Pentecostalism and Charismatic movement.[51] However, Pentecostalism in its real sense is a 20th century idea started in United Sates of America.[52] Nevertheless, the Movements' pervasiveness was so high and it reached many parts of the world within years.[53] Among other continents in the world to which Pentecostal and charismatic movements spread was Africa, where their effect was enormous. And Ethiopia was no exception.

However, the theological precepts of Pentecostalism and Charismatic movements of the established churches of Africa have peculiar features. Although "origins may be exogenous", the African Pentecostalism has many "local reinventions."[54] "As a result of reinterpretation, innovation and the development of autonomous Churches, African Pentecostalism has effectively followed its own path."[55] In addition to the basic characteristics like the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and exercising divine healings including excursion, traditional and cultural elements are blended with the African Pentecostalism. And due to these unique characters most of the theological

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[51] "The Montanist sect originated in Asia Minor in the middle of the second century, and spread from there to Rome and North Africa. It was remarkable for its strong emphasis on prophecy and the free gifts of the Spirit, for its belief that the end of the world was near, and for its rigid asceticism and strict practice of penance." Hågglund, *History of Theology*, 57

[52] For a general presentation of Pentecostalism, see Donald W. Dayton, Theological Roots of Pentecostalism (Grand Rapids: Baker Academy, 1987).

[53] "The movement has spread to the most nations of the world, and altogether it may include 25 to 35 million Christians." Walter J. Hollenweger, *Black Pentecostal Concept* (Geneva: The World Council of Churches, 1970), 9.

[54] Cédric Mayrargue, "The Paradoxes of Pentecostalism in Sub-Saharan Africa," (Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales (Ifri), 2008), 4.

[55] Mayrargue, "The Paradoxes of Pentecostalism in Sub –Saharan Africa," 5.

features of African Pentecostalism (including the Ethiopian) are presented orally. This makes it difficult to undertake a thorough theological analysis with literary references on the subject.

Before going through the effects of Pentecostalism and Charismatic traditions on the Lutheran liturgical worship practice of EELC, it is appropriate to take a brief look at the denominational landscape of Ethiopia.

Undoubtedly until the 20th century, Ethiopian Christianity had been expressed by a sole entity dominance — the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC).[56] For centuries EOTC had been orchestrating the ecclesiastical life in the country. The dominance of the church had been felt not only in spiritual spheres, but also in cultural and political realms.[57]

However, starting from the 20th century onwards, through Protestant missionary endeavors, Protestantism began to gain a foothold in Ethiopia.[58] These Protestant churches had different denominational backgrounds, including Lutherans, Anglicans, Baptists, Presbyterians, and so on. And then the Pentecostals came, starting their mission

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[56] The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is the largest of the Oriental Orthodox, or non-Chalcedonian Orthodox churches and its history dates back to the 4th century. David Appleyard, *Eastern Christianity*, Editor: Ken Parry, (Oxford: 2007Blackwell Publishing Ltd.), 117. This traces its roots back to the beginning of the 1st century, as mentioned in Acts 8:26 – 40.

[57] "Until the 13th century, the EOTC and the government were one and the same. Where there was an official office for the ruling regime of the kingdom, there was EOTC. The rulers often took with them priests from the EOC to establish their kingdom and allow the priests to open the church in their vicinity." Dawit Yohannes Wario, "Factors Sustaining the Growth of Local Congregations: The Case of the Three Congregations of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Addis Ababa, Dodola, and Awassa, Tabor)," a thesis submitted to the Religious Department of the Norwegian Teacher Academy, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Religious Education, Bergen: 2008, 27.

[58] According to Bruk Ayele, the roots of the first Western missionary attempt to the Northern and Western parts of Ethiopia could be traced back to the seventeenth century while the fastest expansion in the South only started at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ayele,"Christianity in Ethiopia," 10.

work in the year 1950.[59] The pioneer missionaries of Ethiopian Pentecostalism were not Americans, as one may think, but rather Finnish and Swedish mission initiatives.[60]

The Pentecostal movement started to grow steadily, especially among the younger generation of high school, college, and university students.[61] And eventually those geographically scattered groups that evolved out of the movement settled down and begun forming independent denominations. These include "Full Gospel Believers Church," "Paradise Church," and "Light of Life Church." In the following years, many more independent Pentecostal churches have sprung up and grown all over the country.

The Pentecostal movement in Ethiopia also had a huge influence on churches that were established by Protestant and evangelical mission works. These include "The Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Mekane Yesus (EECMY)," a Lutheran church, "Kale Heywet Evangelical Church (KHC)," of a Baptist tradition, and "Meserte Kirstos Church," of a Mennonite background.[62] Although these early Protestant–evangelical churches of Ethiopia have tried to keep their doctrinal traditions over against Pentecostal teaching, in praxis, they have been taken over by Pentecostalism. Despite political pressure from the government and religious attacks from the existing church bodies, like that of the EOTC, the Pentecostals have maintained their existence and impact. Currently,

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[59] Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia,"111.

[60] "The first Pentecostal missionaries with long-term presence in Ethiopia were the Finnish couple Anna-Liisa and Sanfrid Mattson, who arrived in Addis Abeba in 1951." "The second group of missionaries was Swedish Pentecostals, who embarked on a number of mission initiatives from 1959 onwards." Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia," 111.

[61] Jörg Haustein, "Navigating Political Revolutions: Ethiopia's Churches during and after the Mengistu Regime." In *Falling Walls: The Year 1989/90 as a Turning Point in the History of World Christianity*, ed. by Klaus Koschorke, 117–136 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 117 – 136.

[62] According to Jörg Haustein, "…Pentecostal faith and practice noticeably spread Protestant into the mainline churches." Haustein, "Navigating Political Revolutions," 132.

almost all Ethiopian Protestant churches are experiencing what is known as a Charismatic movement due to Pentecostal influence.[63]

Pentecostals in Ethiopia share common identities like the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues (γλῶσσα), and exercising divine healings. Apart from that, there are also some unique features in the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions of Ethiopia. According to Serge Dewel, Pentecostalism in Ethiopia was "a genuine response to sociocultural pressures" imposed by the Imperial State of Ethiopia, which was pro–Orthodox.[64] Dewel comments further,

> Some features of the Pentecostalism are also those that might have seduced some Ethiopians as reflecting indigenous cultural practices: an open space for the expression of individual experiences, an oral theology and a direct contact between the worshipper and God with no hierarchy to interfere. Considering the fact that a large part of the population has no direct access to medical or sanitary structures, the healing doctrine that brings a new therapeutic hope with the help of the Holy–Spirit is not the less/considerable. And last but not least, the prosperity gospel, the possibility of becoming rich here and now, without culpability and without needing to wait for the paradise, must also has attracted some of the followers. [65]

These kinds of spiritual experiences were quite new and inviting, particularly for the younger generation that was willing to experiment. In the 'older' EOTC rigorous liturgical tradition, the people do not have individual experience, like in the new Pentecostal movement. One of the reasons for that is that the liturgical worship language of EOTC is Ge'ez, which is only known and understood by the clergy. Moreover, due to the hierarchical worship tradition of EOTC, the people heavily rely on the clergy and

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[63] Haustein describes the charismatic influence on the worship of the Ethiopian Protestant churches taking the case of 'Meserte kirstos Church as an example. Haustein, "Navigating Political Revolutions," 133.

[64] Dewel,"The Charismatic Movement in Ethiopia," 7.

[65] Dewel,"The Charismatic Movement in Ethiopia," 8.

their service. The lack of enough social services in Ethiopia, like medical treatments, leads people to see spiritual healing as an alternative solution. Apart from that, in the wider African culture, spiritual healing of different kinds has pertinent aspects in the lives of the people. Moreover, many people consider their economic problems may have divine solutions, rather than relying on personal effort or governmental resolution. Therefore, as Annsi Simojoki has commented on East African Pentecostalism, "instead of the gospel of the forgiveness of sins, the center is occupied by miracles and the improvement of the quality of life, along with temporal blessings from God."[66]

The basis for the type of worship that the Pentecostals and Charismatic groups entertain in Ethiopia has the above briefly described theological background. In the Ethiopian Pentecostal/Charismatic worship traditions include spontaneous, individual poignant prayers; expressive and prolonged hymnals, including speaking in tongues; and self–inspired preaching often accompanied by 'prophetic messages'. It is hard to regard this kind of worship practice as liturgical. And this is the kind of worship which has become common in EELC congregations.

Here, it is important to raise a question: how could the Pentecostals be able to influence most Protestant churches in Ethiopia, especially with their type of worship tradition? In most cases, the influence came through youths who had contact with Pentecostal groups in their locality.[67] A given Protestant church member or servants may

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[66] Annsi Simojoki,"The Other Gospel' of Neo-Pentecostalism in East Africa," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 66:3 (2002): 272.

[67] For instance, Haile S. Sabab has presented the experience of the EECMY charismatic movement among youths. According to Sabab, "The first charismatic movement started in EECMY in the 1970s in Gore, Iluababur, among the youths, including Rev. Itafa Gobana, who later became the president of EECMY for eight years (2001-2009). A similar movement started in Nekemte (Central Synod) by young Christians, which resulted in conflict with the congregational elders." Sabab, "African Traditions and Charismatic Gifts in the Worship of the Ethiopian Evangelical Mekane Yesus (EECMY)", 26 –27.

come across Pentecostals and would be fascinated by their spiritual experience and may try it himself. Such encounters usually happen since Pentecostal youths and youths from other denominations could meet at schools, colleges, or universities.

There are also other reasons for the rapid dispersion of Charismatic impulse among the Ethiopian protestant churches. These factors are directly related to the repression of Pentecostals both by the government and by other religious groups during their early days. Starting from the end of the 1970s, the military regime *Derg*, on the basis of its "scientific materialistic" ideology, violently campaigned against the Pentecostals. The prominent Pentecostal church, FGBC, was shut down and their leaders imprisoned.[68] The repression was also backed by the EOTC and Muslims who had unpleasant sentiment towards the Pentecostals.[69] These situations led the Pentecostals to go into hiding and forced them to continue their worship and evangelism practices underground.[70] One of their hiding places was established Protestant churches like EELC and EECMY. These Pentecostal "… had to rely on private secret house meetings…."[71] Some of these house meetings were at the homes of other Protestant church members who had sympathy for the new "revivalists." At the same time, the Protestant church members, especially the youths, became attracted to the Pentecostals' teachings and

[68] Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia," 115.

[69] Dawit Yohannes Wario has describes the situation of EECMY during the *Derg* time, "If it were not the for mighty hand of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, the few members in the congregations like Addis Ababa and Dodola at the beginning, would not have been existed and grown in the midst of persecution from the Orthodox believers and Muslim community." Wario, "Factors Sustaining the Growth of Local congregations," 62– 63.

[70] Haustein describes the FGBC situation during the Derg regime as, "The FGBC relied on home meetings until almost the end of the Derg time." Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia," 116.

[71] Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia," 116.

attitudes.[72] These developments led to the realization of Charismatic movements in most of the Protestant churches of the country.

The Charismatic movement in the Ethiopian Protestant church also had other subsequent consequences. The general public started labeling both the pre–established Protestant church members and the new Pentecostals as if they were identical.[73] At the same time, the government extended the repression on the Pentecostals to the mainline Protestant churches as well. "Therefore, when the *Derg* began to attack the mainline church, officials increasingly applied the derogatory term 'Pete' to all Protestants, though it originally had denoted Pentecostals only."[74] Nevertheless, the influences of Pentecostals and the Charismatic movement within the mainline Protestant churches continue to prevail and influence.[75] The word 'Pete,' which is an abbreviation for Pentecostals or Pentecostalism, now, applies generally to all Ethiopian Protestants, regardless of their respective denominations. It is somewhat surprising that the Ethiopian Protestants accepted this derogatory label, and some even appreciate it.

One of the most influential aspects that the Pentecostals has had on Ethiopian Protestantism is their type of worship. As Jörg Haustein noted, the influence could be explained as, "the mainline Protestant churches, Pentecostal theology and practices have

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[72] Among other things, the Pentecostals abstained from alcohol, and they had a defiant attitude towards worldly authorities. Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia,"116.

[73] "The word 'pete' was designated for both the Protestants and the Pentecostals since 1970, for Ethiopian Christians who are not Orthodox, nor Catholics; in other words, those who are somehow Evangelicals." Dewel, "The Charismatic Movement in Ethiopia," 2.

[74] Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia," 116 –117.

[75] Haustein describes the situation, "The proliferation of Pentecostal theology and practices into mainline Protestantism continued at an accelerated rate in the last two decades. Almost all Protestant churches are now deeply influenced by Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity and have adopted central Pentecostal propositions in their theological statements and regulations." Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia,"120.

become a way of marking a difference to the founding missions, especially with regard to music and liturgy."[76] Rather than following the Western liturgical pattern and translated hymns, the Pentecostals uses traditional folk Ethiopian musical arrangements at the center of their worship services. Moreover, prayers are accompanied by speaking in tongues and exorcism has a given place. Perhaps not so surprisingly, these kinds of practices were quite appealing to many mainline Protestant church members, given that, the Pentecostal movement incorporates the basic Pentecostal traditions together with cultural elements of the people.[77] Therefore, Haustein correctly observe that, "the combination of modern technology in Pentecostal services with a rather traditional outlook may be attractive for people aspiring to be part of contemporary global culture without losing their heritage."[78]

The Pentecostal influence on the mainline churches prevails, and almost all Ethiopian Protestant churches have started to endorse Charismatic theology and practice. This has led to theological cooperation between mainline Protestants and Pentecostals, which has its organizational association in the Evangelical Churches' Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE).[79] And the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) is one of the church bodies that established ECFE.[80]

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[76] Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia", 122.

[77] For instance, exorcism could be related to traditional spirit invoking practices of many tribes in Ethiopia. Physical healing could also be connected with traditional healing, which could be caused by evil spirits.

[78] Haustein, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ethiopia," 122.

[79] Daniel Fite, "The Challenges of Denominational Conflicts in the Context of Ethiopian Evangelical Churches" (B.Th. Thesis, Mekane Yesus Seminary, Addis Ababa, 2001), 21.

[80] The founding denominations of ECFC are, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church, Ethiopian (Ye)Heywet Birhan Church, Meserete Kristos Church, Full Gospel Believer's Church, Ethiopian Gennet Church, Baptist Evangelical Association,

Due to their firm convictions, percussive approaches, and their adoption of cultural elements in their spiritual practice, Pentecostals in Ethiopia have succeeded much. Their success could be measured in terms of number and influence.[81] With regard to influence, by now almost all Ethiopian Protestantism has fallen under the Pentecostal influence. The best illustration of that is the worship practice of the Ethiopian Protestant churches. It is getting identical from time to time across the country mainly due to the prevailing charismatic movement. Indeed, EELC is also facing this influence. By now it seems the major theological debate between the Lutherans and the Pentecostal/ charismatically oriented denomination is all about baptism and the Lord's Supper. Otherwise, their worship style is getting closer to each other every day.

Conclusion

Based on a historical and theological assessment of EELC's Lutheran liturgical worship tradition and its decline, both internal and external factors have been examined, with recognition of its more charismatic nature. Although the decline was not apparent at the outset, the complete transfer of church governance to Ethiopian leaders from SLM–BV's missionaries in 1975 can be considered as its starting period. Furthermore, leadership competence and structural adjustments have had a noticeable impact. It is also important to note that the traditional Pietistic nature of the mission's origins, which was carried over to the church, unintentionally influenced its subsequent worship practices.

Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC), Emnet Kristos Church, Ethiopian Gospel Music, https://ethiopiangospelmusic.net/src/ecfe/. (accessed November 11, 2025).

[81] According to US department of State, 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Ethiopia, the evangelical Christian and Pentecostal proportion of the Ethiopia population is increasing. US Department of State, "Report on International Religious Freedom Ethiopia," 2022.

Externally, socio–political dynamics overlapped with the church's government complete transfer, created a complex and challenging environment in which the church struggled to maintain its doctrinal and liturgical integrity. During this period, the church faced pervasive Pentecostal and Charismatic influences, which likely affected most the Lutheran liturgical worship tradition.

All internal and external factors have influenced the current worship practices of the church across its congregations to varying degrees. The cumulative effects of these factors are evident today. Additionally, the decline in Lutheran liturgical worship practices did not occur suddenly or uniformly across all congregations; rather, it has developed gradually and persistently over time.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

In this section, theological reflections and analyses pertinent to the research's theme are discussed, based on related articles of the Book of Concord and Lutheran theologians' writings, including Martin Luther's. An attempt is also made to see these theological stances in line with EELC's liturgical divine service, liturgy, tradition, and practices described under the preceding sections. The flow of the theological reflection follows the order of the thesis presented in chapter four.

On Pietistic Background of EELC

As I described in Chapter 4, subhead "The Pietistic Background of SLM–BV," EELC has inherited a Pietistic tradition from its founding organization, SLM–BV. It is also discussed that lay ministry is one feature of Pietism, which was prominent in SLM–BV and EELC. Based on those discussions, the following theological reflections can be offered.

From the start, during the SLM–BV time, the laity has a significant duty in the divine service. That is not only because of a lack of enough pastors for the service but also the lay–ordinated tradition of the SLM–BV, which continued throughout the history of the church (EELC). Hence, after the complete church government transfer, the laity's position in the church continued. If the laity–oriented tradition and practice of the church are evaluated in light of the Lutheran Confessional symbols, the following ideas could be highlighted.

As I have mentioned in Chapter Four, subhead “The Pietistic Background of SLM–BV”, the underlying assumption for putting a layperson in the Office in EELC pertains to the Pietistic understanding of the term “the priesthood of all believers” in its literal way. But what would our confessions teach about the Holy Office and its servants? And how did the lay ministry have its influence on the decline of Lutheran liturgical worship in EELC?

According to the AC XIV, “no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he is regularly called.”[1] And the Lutheran fathers base this confession on nothing other than Holy Scripture itself. Our Lord's mandate in Matthew 28:16–18 anchors the preaching, teaching, and administration of the church's Sacraments. William C. Weinrich also related the Office of the Holy Ministry with texts in Eph. 4:11 and 1 Cor. 4:1.[2] However, this theological assertion of the Confession is not properly understood and practiced in the EELC context. Yet, there are historical and practical reasons for that.

As I have briefly described in chapter three, the pioneer missionaries and their organization had a Pietistic tradition, which they carried with them to their mission fields. Furthermore, the church came out of their mission work and continued with what it received from the missionaries. Even during the time when missionaries were leading the church alongside the Ethiopians, there was a growth in pastoral ministry; the laity were significantly influential in the church’s ministry.

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[1] AC XIV.

[2] William C. Weinrich, “Called and Ordained: Reflections on the New Testament View of the Office of the Ministry,” *Logia* 2 (Epiphany 1993), 212.

There were also practical reasons for having a lay ministry in the church. At the beginning, the mission work of the SLM–BV started at a small scale and grew steadily, in a way that did not seek a full ecclesiastical order and practice. Even during the time that a structure was fully established, it was not easy to exercise a pastoral ministry across all the church's congregations. And that was mainly because there were not enough trained pastors in the church. Therefore, for those reasons, the church was relying on a lay ministry from the start.[3]

But did the lay ministry contribute to the decline of Lutheran liturgical divine service worship in the church? I would say, yes. But it is appropriate to see the phenomenon from two periods. First, when the missionaries were leading alongside the Ethiopians, and second, when the church was governed by the Ethiopians alone.

During the time of SLM–BV, the missionaries were leading the church together with the Ethiopians. Although there were not enough pastors who could be liturgists in the divine service of the church, the church was following the traditional Lutheran liturgical format. Yet, the services were led by a missionary or an Ethiopian layperson. Those kinds of traditions have been practiced in many congregations of EELC and have continued in older congregations even after the full church transfer of 1975.[4] As time went on, the lay ministry approach of the church was adapted to the newly established congregations, with the endorsement of the Lutheran liturgical order of worship. In older congregations (except the Addis Abeba congregation), although there are pastors who can be liturgists, the existing tradition of the laity has been continued. In those older

[3] See Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*, Part III, 321.

[4] See Chapter 3, 3.2., starting from pages 38–48.

congregations, although there was an old Lutheran liturgical worship tradition, due to contemporary charismatic influences, it has become impacted. The impact has created, in some cases, a blended (of the Lutheran and Charismatic) worship order or a complete charismatic worship style. Complete charismatic worship styles are more prominent, especially in newly formed synods and congregations. For this reason, the church is now experiencing a heterogeneous divine service across her synods and congregations.

Therefore, although the lay ministry traditions have contributed a lot to the expansion of the church ministry, they have had an effect on the Lutheran liturgical worship of the church. The effect could be an indirect and unintended one, but its outcomes are visible in almost all congregations of the EELC.

On Church Government and Administration

According to the Augsburg Confession article VII, a church is defined as "… the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel."[5] This is one of the fundamental and biblically comforting grounds on which to evaluate the Lutheran church's teaching and practice. Accordingly, the church primarily stood for the preaching of the Word and for administrating the Sacraments, in accordance with the right biblical assertion. However, the church could take different approaches within this basic framework to execute her mission. As AC VII continues, "It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that ceremonies instituted by men should be observed uniformly in all places."[6]

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[5] AC VII, 1.

[6] AC VII, 1.

In this context it would be right to conclude what the AC article VII clearly approves; a Lutheran church has a liberty to develop and could use her own worship order. Although the FC, SD article X, 9 states,

> We further believe, teach, and confess that the community of God in every place and at every time has the right, authority, and power to change, to reduce, or to increase ceremonies according to its circumstances, as long as it does so without frivolity and offense but in an orderly and appropriate way, as at any time may seem to be most profitable, beneficial, and salutary for good order, Christian discipline, evangelical decorum, and the edification of the church. Paul instructs us how we can with a good conscience give in and yield to the weak in faith in such external matters of indifference (Rom. 14) and demonstrates it by his own example (Acts 16:3; 21:26; 1 Cor. 9:10).[7]

Both articles assert that the Lutheran church everywhere in the world could come up with its own type of order, as long as long the basic doctrine of the church is kept appropriately. It is very important to note terms written as such, *without frivolity and offense but in an orderly and appropriate way*, in the context of EELC organizational and liturgical worship practice. Meaning, there should be order without triviality in the church polity and liturgical arrangement. It also has a connotation that there should be uniformity in church order both in the organizational arrangement and worship practice. It is also true that a Lutheran church's organizational and liturgical order should be established on the firm preaching of the Word and the right administration of the Sacraments.

However, the present–day EELC's liturgical practice, which could be related to the organizational structure, has certain deviations from the statements of AC VII, and FC X. In terms of organizational exercise, the synods of the church are not following a uniform deliberation. For instance, some synods have pastors trained in the Lutheran

[7] SD, FC X, 9, 612.

seminaries; others from non–Lutheran centers.[8] In certain synods, the synodical authority has full and firm regulation over ecclesiastical matters, especially on liturgical worship.[9] Yet in some synods, due to loosened communication between the syndical authorities and their congregations, organizational and liturgical homogeneity lessens. Consequently, a loosening of uniformity in liturgical worship practice is exhibited in EELC as a whole.

On the basis of the Lutheran Confessions, Robert D. Preus describes the mission of the church as a proclaiming and serving church.[10] Preus summarizes the motif of the Confession with regard to 'the proclamation' as "… the church has a message to proclaim."[11] So the Confessions prelude repeatedly 'we believe, teach, and confess' in its articles. At the same time, the church is a serving church where the Spirit works for the salvation of people through the means of salvation [the means of grace].[12] "It is a *cultus*, a service, an activity of response to the Gospel, an activity which is made possible only by the power of the Gospel."[13]

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[8] In recent years, as more congregations have been established, it has become increasingly difficult to find pastors who have been trained at Lutheran-affiliated seminaries or colleges. Additionally, the two seminaries of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) — Asella Lutheran Theological Seminary and Sodo-Bossa Seminary — have not been able to train enough pastors and evangelists due to limited capacity. Furthermore, those pastors and evangelists who have completed their training in EELC's seminaries often leave their congregations, primarily because of the low salaries offered by the church. As a result, many congregations tend to seek pastors and evangelists from outside sources to meet their needs.

[9] The Addis Ababa and surrounding synod serve as a relevant example in this context. The congregation in Addis Ababa continues to adhere to traditional Lutheran liturgical worship, despite facing pressures from both internal and external sources. Internally, the pressure comes from the youth, who are significantly influenced by charismatic movements. Externally, leaders from other synods and congregations are advocating for a more "open" charismatic divine service to be implemented within the congregation.

[10] Robert D. Preus, "The Confessions and the Mission of the Church: With Special Emphasis upon the Ecumenical Movement," *In the Springfielder 39 No.1: 20-39.,* 1975, 20.

[11] Preus, "The Confessions and the Mission of the Church," 21.

[12] Preus "The Confessions and the Mission of the Church," 27.

[13] Preus, "The Confessions and the Mission of the Church," 27.

The organizational and structural arrangement of a Lutheran church consequently should assume the above paraphrased confessional formation. All levels of a confessional Lutheran church should understand the biblical assertion found in the AC VII. Otherwise, the Lutheran church would not be able to hold on to her confessional identity, let alone to carry out her mission. The mission of the Lutheran church is what our Lord gave to His apostles according to the Gospel of Matthew 28:18: to baptize, preach, teach, and make disciples. Meanwhile, the confessional identity of a Lutheran church would be what is presented in the Book of Concord, with its *norma normata.*

In view of the structure and organization of EELC, especially after a complete church government transfer, taking into account the Lutheran Confessional understanding here, and I would like to make the following main point.

To begin with, the Book of Concord and its application in the life of congregations have not been fully endorsed by the church. According to the constitution of the church, article 2.3, only the Augsburg Confession of 1530 and Martin Luther's Small and Large Catechisms are endorsed. [14] Apart from the AC, SM, and LC, the remaining symbols are not accepted in EELC officially. Therefore, it would be possible to state that the Book of Concord is not fully recognized officially in EELC.

Moreover, in practical terms, the Book of Concord is an obscure book in EELC in its content and presentation.[15] Although it is available in the national language, Amharic, it's very seldom used by pastors and evangelists in their preaching or teaching.

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[14] EELC Constitution, article 2.3. Addis Abeba, 2012.

[15] The Book of Concord was translated into the national language of Ethiopia, Amharic,' in the year 2010 by an organization known as the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. Moreover, EELC's pastors were also part of the translation team.

Especially, it is unknown around the newly established congregations and synods of EELC. Indeed, the Asella Lutheran Theological Seminary–ALTC includes the Book of Concord in its curriculum; yet pastors and evangelists who had studied in the seminary have not made the Book of Concord part of their business. Therefore, one could argue that without a consistency policy, it would be difficult to have a uniform liturgical worship.

Another aspect that the Augsburg Confession article VII prescribes concerning a church is the administration of the Sacraments along with the preaching of the Word. In EELC, the holy baptism and the Lord's Supper are fully endorsed as sacraments. The holy baptism and infant baptism are practiced well by all congregations. Members of the church in all synods and congregations bring their children for baptism. This service is carried out despite a shortage of pastors in some areas.

The Lord's Supper celebration is one of the services that the church was struggling with even during the missionaries' time.[16] That was mainly because there were few pastors available for the service. Due to this fact, the celebration of the Lord's Supper is detached from the divine service from the start. This tradition is still kept, even at the congregations where a pastor is available. Hence, the Lord's Supper is celebrated occasionally and on varied schedules in the congregations of the EELC.

With this regard, I would argue that, if the Lord's Supper is celebrated along with the divine service, there would be two outcomes. First, proper Scriptural understanding of the Word and Sacraments in AC VII would be correctly maintained in the liturgical

[16] Bengt Hjort asserts that the distribution of the Lord's Supper was uncommon in the early days of SLM-BV. It might be celebrated three or four times a year, sometimes once a year. Hjort, *Joint Endeavor in the Work for the Gospel*, Part III, 104, 124 and 330.

worship of EELC. Moreover, as we have briefly read in chapter 2.2, about Martin Luther's liturgical reformation works, the *Verba Testamenti* would be at the center of the divine service worship. Secondly, if the Lord's Supper was part of the divine service worship regularly, the current decline in Lutheran liturgical worship would have been minimized, even if not avoided. That is mainly because the Word and the Sacraments are the two inseparable elements that a Lutheran church should hold on to as a confessional church, expressed in her life and liturgical worship practice.

Another organizational structure in EELC that has an impact on the Lutheran liturgical worship is the financial and economic aspect. During the 1975 integration agreement, it was agreed that SLM–BV will continue to support the church financially.[17] However, SLM–BV has decided to decrease its support, so the church should find a way to manage itself financially. Although SLM–BV is supporting certain projects and the ALTS financially, the church is self–dependent for its economic needs.

In EELC, there are different kinds of approaches and methods for raising funds to support the ecclesiastical activities. These include different income–generating commercial efforts and raising funds from members through tithes, offerings, gifts, and special donations. Generally speaking, these methods are common for all Ethiopian Protestant churches for their economic inputs. And that makes the churches economically dependent on their members. Although self–sufficiency is something to be appreciated, it has its own side effects. One of those drawbacks is that churches make a lot of effort to

[17] In the "Integration Agreement" article V. 5, it stated that "*Missionssällskapet Bibeltrogna Vänner* as a supporting agency has been supporting the Mission and the Church by providing finances, personnel, and other aid, according to its ability," LCEt and SMBV, "Integration Agreement," 1975.

satisfy the spiritual needs of their members so that their members continually support their church. However, that situation can put churches and their leaders under the interest and need of their members. At the same time, such a situation created competition among churches to retain their members and get more members. The attempt to get more members of the church is not only through evangelism but also by drawing members of other churches. Otherwise, the churches may face financial difficulties.

The same scenario is evident in EELC, where its members are tempted by the widespread, inviting, and fascinating charismatic churches around them. And as I have discussed in Chapter Four, subhead "The Pentecostal and Charismatic Influence", the Pentecostal and charismatic movements have been influencing EELC significantly.[18] To retain its members from the ever–threatening intrusion of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, EELC congregations are forced to adopt Charismatic practices, especially worship styles. In turn, that leads to the decline of the traditional Lutheran liturgical divine service worship in EELC congregations.

On Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement

One of the fundamental distinctions between Confessional Lutheranism and Pentecostalism would be the way they interpret Scripture. For Lutherans, the Law and Gospel dichotomy is the basic hermeneutical tool. Confessional Lutherans use the Law and Gospel framework to guide their doctrinal beliefs and worship practices.[19] In Pentecostal theology, the Holy Spirit provides unique insights into the Holy Scriptures for believers. Therefore, each individual may have separate and varying interpretations of

[18] See Chapter Four, under subhead "The Pentecostal and Charismatic Influence" pp. 63-72.

[19] See Chapter Four, subhead, "Church Government and Administration Bearings on a Lutheran Liturgical Worship in EELC", pp.52-57.

a given pericope. This kind of private spiritual experimental experiences gives the Pentecostal worship its spontaneous and expressive nature.

In the Ethiopian Pentecostal tradition, a believer should be baptized with the Holy Spirit, and as outward confirmation of that, he has to speak in tongues. And the baptism of the Holy Spirit could happen anywhere and in any way.[20] Such a practice of the Pentecostals in Ethiopia has similarity with the Enthusiasts of Luther's time, since both groups claim that they would receive the Holy Spirit without the means of grace.[21] Like the Anabaptists or the Anabaptist Pentecostals and Charismatics do assert that a believer may receive the Holy Spirit without the means of grace. Moreover, the Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper only have symbolic meaning and is to be practiced as a sign of faith rather than as a means of grace in the Ethiopian Pentecostal tradition.

As one of the early Protestant church bodies established by missionaries of the Western world, EELC has been significantly impacted by the Pentecostal movement in Ethiopia. The impact was especially prevalent in the EELC case, since the emergence and prevalence of Pentecostalism collided with the church government transition of the church. As we have seen in the preceding section, there were two significant events at that time. One was the seizure of power by the Marxist Derg government and consequently the departure of many of the Swedish missionaries who were involved with the ecclesiastical matters, especially in liturgical worship of the church. On top of this,

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[20] There is a common practice among Pentecostals and Charismatic movements in Ethiopia, where someone with a special gift would lay his/her hand on a believer so he/she could be baptized with the Holy Spirit. The believer may be instructed to fast and pray for a couple of days to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Yet as confirmation, he/she has to speak in tongues. Otherwise, the attempt will continue until the confirmation is self-evident.

[21] Martin Luther forcefully condemned the Enthusiasts' claim that they received the Holy Spirit "without and before the Word." SA, VIII, 312–313.

the influence of Pentecostalism, contrary to the Lutheran liturgical worship traditions, has caused further implosions in the liturgical practice of EELC.

As a Lutheran church body, which had few ordained pastors and a limited theological background of the Lutheran confessions, the impulses from the Pentecostals were irresistible. Although the leaders of the church made an effort to keep the Lutheran identity of the church, it was impossible task given the situation. There is an exception at the central church in the capital, Addis Abeba. In this congregation, the traditional Lutheran Sunday service worship is still practiced without any alteration. The very reason for such strength comes from the availability of better–trained pastors and a robust leadership in the capital city.[22] These pastors and the leaders are committed to keep the Lutheran confessional identity through their teachings and liturgy. The leaders of the congregation, who have working with the foreign missionaries, have a better understanding of the Lutheran heritage and teachings.

However, in other EELC congregations, such capacities were not available. There were very few pastors who could serve at these congregations. And there are many congregations without a pastor, as well as a lack of leadership. These kinds of circumstances have made the congregations vulnerable to Pentecostal intrusion.

This thesis suggests that the Sunday divine service of the EELC, which reflects a traditional form of Lutheran liturgical worship, has experienced a decline and a shift towards Charismatic worship due to both internal and external factors. Among the internal factors are the church's Pietistic tradition and historical administrative features,

[22] Since its establishment in the 1920s, the Addis Ababa congregation has been the strongest in terms of Lutheran liturgical worship. This strength can be attributed to the consistent availability of missionaries each year, as well as improved organizational and administrative church structures, which included availability of pastors.

which have contributed to the changes in its liturgical practices. Additionally, the country's political and social dynamics have also had unforeseen impacts on these shifts. A significant influence has come from the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, which have notably affected the traditional Lutheran liturgical worship of the EELC. While this thesis does not fully quantify the extent of influence of each factor, the literary data presented and my personal experience suggest that the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements are major contributors to this transition.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

In this thesis I have studied the divine service worship practice of the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC). My study takes a pivotal time period as point of reference to make comparisons between the liturgical practices of the church at different eras. The crucial period in my study is when the foreign missionaries who had pioneered the establishment and leadership of the church transferred the church governance to the Ethiopians.

I have demonstrated that, the liturgical worship divine service in EELC deviated from its traditional Lutheran form overtime, due to both internal and external reasons. The internal causes are the lack of robust and continual catechism teaching of both pastors and laypersons, and administrative deficiencies in the church governance at all levels, caused by the departure of the foreign missionaries and a rather fast–growing church. Externally, the political situation of the 1970s, when the church's transfer of government took place, also had an indirect impact on the Lutheran liturgical practice change in EELC. More than anything else, it paved the way for the enormous impact of the Pentecostal– Charismatic movement on EELC divine service practices, which began around the same time.

Although it requires further study, this study concludes that the Pentecostal–Charismatic trends in Ethiopia had a greater impacted the Lutheran liturgical worship within EELC than any other causes. Due to its pervasiveness and acceptance among the Protestant community of Ethiopian, Pentecostalism is becoming Protestantism in the

Ethiopian context. With a few exceptions, the worship practice of Protestant churches in Ethiopia has become uniformly similar under the influence of by Pentecostalism. In EELC, the only exception in the Addis Abeba church, which still holds on to the traditional Lutheran liturgical divine service worship, where the other congregations of EELC have assimilated into the Pentecostal–Charismatic type of worship.

My study has also shown that, the pioneer missionaries to EELC and their mission organization, SLM–BV had a pietistic background. For this reason, EELC has had pietistic characteristics from the very beginning, which for example did not draw a sharp line between the Office of Holy Ministry and lay ministry, and thus both pastors and lay people preach and lead services. This trend has become even more evident after the departure of the missionaries, and this in turn has influenced the worship practice within EELC congregations. Thus, the divine service worship in EELC is more often led by a layperson than a pastor in many congregations, and consequently the order of worship is a rather simple liturgy surrounding the sermon, instead a full Lutheran divine service liturgy.

The coincidence of the political shift of the 1970s and the subsequent turbulence of the transition to new leadership in the EELC led to many unexpected consequences. The new, native leaders at different levels of the church were not ready and competent enough to sustain the Lutheran traditions in all congregations of the church. The Pentecostal–Charismatic influence further intensified the turmoil caused by the political situation.

The shortage of pastors who are trained in the Lutheran Seminaries is also a huge challenge for the EELC to hold on to its Lutheran identity. Because a lack of pastors the

church is forced to hire evangelists from non–Lutheran denominations, to serve as pastors. These evangelists are often already absorbed by the pervasive Pentecostal–Charismatic waves.

Practical Suggestions

> Today the need of the hour for the Lutheran church is to become a teaching church again.[1]
>
> —Hermann Sasse

But, where shall EELC go from here? How shall the leaders and the genuine Lutheran pastors of the church react towards the ever –diminishing Lutheran liturgical worship in their church? These are very critical questions that the church may ask and try to answer as a Confessional Lutheran church. And I am not here to answer them with this thesis work. But it would be possible to endorse the following major ideas as implication of the thesis finding, which may show some path to the answer for the above raised questions.

The major response to EELC liturgical worship difficulty would be, *ad fontes,* going back to the Source — Scripture. It should be known that, as a confessional Lutheran church, EELC should hold on to the true doctrine of Scripture in her teachings and practice. The leaders of the church across the board should make sure the teachings and practice of their respective congregations are in line with the genuine Lutheran teachings expressed and confessed in the Book of Concord. Here, I would like to highlight the need for a much better understanding (even introduction in some cases) of the Book of Concord as the right exposition of Scripture across synods and congregations

[1] Hermann Sasse, *We Confess the Sacraments, Vol. 2*, Translated by Normann Nagel (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1985), 22.

of the church. Unless the servants and members of the church have equipped themselves with the right teachings of Scripture, it would be a formidable task for them to respond to any upcoming theological threats. Those threats would be defended against based on the right teachings the Word of God, and with coherent understanding of the Book of Concord.

It is also very crucial to make Luther's Catechisms, most importantly the Small Catechism, as the basic instructional manual for the pastors and all members of the church. That is mainly because, Martin Luther's catechisms, both the Small and Large catechisms with their chief components—the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer—set forth the summary of the Christian faith. Moreover, Luther's composition and rationale behind his catechisms could be seen from his major doctrinal viewpoint, namely justification by faith, as a foundation on which a confessional Lutheran church stands.[2]

However, after the departure of SLM–BV from the church leadership, major shifts were exhibited over time pertaining to the Catechism's teachings and instructions in EELC. The shifts could be summarized briefly as follows.

Primarily, Luther's Catechisms (both the Small and Large) declined and finally disappeared to be used as a basic Christian teaching material in EELC after the church government transfer. Instead, different instructional manuals produced by the church's pastors and booklets adapted from other denominations (from Baptist and Charismatic circles) were used as teaching materials for the new converts, children, and regular teaching platforms. This type of deviation, concerning church doctrine, has had a

[2] AC IV, 30.

significant impact on the life and practice of the church. The implications are practically visible, particularly in the worship service at different congregations of EELC.

Another vital point to be addressed here is that some of the pastors of the church would have a non–Lutheran background. Also, even if it is not possible to ratify with quantitative data, a significant number of the church's pastors and evangelists have not trained at the church's seminaries.[3] And the ongoing training and teaching provided for active pastors and evangelists is quite minimal.[4] In other words, due to inadequate education some pastors and evangelists of the church depart from the basic Lutheran teachings, which in turn lead to non–Lutheran teaching and practice, including the worship. Consequently, the current seminaries of the church should strive to develop doctrinally and practically bold Lutheran pastors and evangelists who can make a significant impact in both the teachings and liturgical practices of the church. To achieve this goal, it is essential to enhance the capacity of the seminaries, the academic standards, and the administration.

Thirdly, the above mentioned phenomena in the EELC did not only affect the liturgical worship but also the identity of the church in a general way. A hybrid of Lutheranism with a significant Baptist and Pentecostal influences is emerging. In order to address this situation, the following suggestions are put forward.

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[3] I was unable to obtain complete information regarding the backgrounds of the EELC pastors and evangelists. However, based on archival sources from the EELC head office, there are currently 160 pastors and 165 evangelists serving across eight synods of the church. Notably, only about twenty percent of these pastors and evangelists are graduates of the church's two seminaries: Asella Lutheran Theological Seminary (ALTC) and Bossa-Sodo Lutheran Theological Seminary (BSLTS). The Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC), "Archives for Synods, Congregations, Servants and Evangelism," Addis Abeba, 2025.

[4] The church could have a single annual pastors' conference on a regular basis to equip its pastors with the basic Lutheran teachings. However, due to financial constraints, it is not always possible to hold those pastoral conferences regularly.

The confirmation class of the church throughout its congregations should use the Small Catechism as an instructional manual, both in children and adult conformation classes. Hence, other instructional manuals, spontaneously developed by each congregations, should be replaced by Luther's the Small and Large catechisms. These attempts will eventually help the servants and members of the church to a better understanding of the Lutheran traditions and doctrine. Without clear and firm theological ground, it would be difficult to exercise the right Lutheran liturgical worship, which was established by the SLM–BV missionaries. Following and based on a proper Lutheran theological ground, the right liturgical worship could be reconstructed and practiced. To cite the Swedish bishop Bo Giertz, "there can be no normal church life without liturgy."[5]

Hermann Sasse's advice, cited above, would be something EELC, as a Lutheran church, should hold on to be a teaching church. As a Lutheran, church body, EECL should teach the Word of God and administer the Sacraments rightly. Maintaining this primary Lutheran conviction would uphold the church's identity as a confessional Lutheran church. The pastors, evangelists, and members of the church, who are rightly engaged with the Word and Sacraments, would be better protected from false teachings and practices. With these underlying principles, the traditional Lutheran and Scripture–based worship would be re–established.

I would like to emphasize the importance of understanding and wisely incorporating cultural and social elements into ecclesiastical matters, particularly in worship practices. It is appropriate to include indigenous and local elements in the church's worship tradition, as long as they align with fundamental Lutheran doctrinal

[5] Bo Giertz, "Liturgy & Spiritual Awakening," Translated by Clifford Ansgar Nelson. Rock Island, (Illinois: Augustana Book Concern), 1950, paragraph 14.

teachings and do not contradict them. For example, joyful and engaging hymns sung by both choirs and congregants can serve as a fitting illustration of this approach.

It would be impractical and potentially provocative to attempt an immediate reversal of the current Charismatic–oriented worship practices. Instead, a more appropriate approach would be to implement changes gradually and steadily. This process should be convincing, helping people to understand the scriptural, doctrinal, and traditional foundations of Lutheran liturgical worship. I would like also to suggest starting unilateral and bilateral discussion in EELC and SLM–BV. The conversation would be focus on the past historical events, present circumstances and future trends pertain to liturgical worship, both in EELC and SLM–BV. Only by doing this we can maintain our identity as confessional Lutherans in both our teaching and practice.

APPENDIX ONE

EELC LITURGY OF THE MASS AND ORDERS FOR VARIOUS SERVICES, AUGUST, 1984

Chapter One
Sunday Divine Service Liturgy

A. Preparatory Service

1. While the church piano is playing a soft church melody or an introductory melody, the priest approaches the altar and kneels and says a short prayer in silence.

2. **An Opening Hymn is sung**

3. **The priest invites the congregants so they approach the Lord and confess their sins, saying:**

   In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, one God Amen.

   Holy; Holy; Holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory; the Lord is in his holy temple; his throne is in heaven. He is close to those who are humble and contrite in spirit. He hears those who confess their sins and listens to their prayers. Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace in faith and confess our sins.

4. **Confession of Sins**

   The priest turns to the altar, kneels, and prays:

   O Lord, have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions and iniquity. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know, my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Our heavenly Father, hear this prayer of confession through your beloved Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The priest stands and turns his face to the congregation, saying these confession words:

If we confess our sins; he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Amen.

5. Kyrie

While the priest turns his face to the altar, the congregants and the priest sing the Kyrie.

God the Creator, have mercy,
Christ the Savior, have mercy,
The Holy Spirit, have mercy.

6. Thanksgiving

The priest turns his face to the altar and sings and reads as follow:

Praise be to God in the highest,
Peace on earth and good will toward men.
The congregants stand and sing with the priest as follow:
During Trinity Sundays hymns No. 76 from the hymns book:
Glory be to our God in heaven
For his grace and for the blessing
He has bestowed upon us
When joy and peace are given on earth
We should do His will.

During Christmas, Hymn No. 6 from Hymns book:

Hosanna to the Son of David,
The King of Israel,
Blessed is He, who comes in the name of God,
Hosanna in the highest,
Blessed is he who comes in the name of God.

During the Holy Week, Hymn No. 35 from Hymns book:

O Lamb of God,
Sacrificed for us on the cross,
O you who are patient,
O you who are compassionate and gentle,
You have borne our debt,
You have conquered the power of death,
You have given us peace, Jesus.

B. The Service of the Word

7. The priest, turning his face to the congregation, sings or reads:

"God be with you."
"God be with you."

8. Prayer

The priest says "Let us pray" while reading or singing
The priest, turning his face to the altar, prays the prayer assigned for the day.

The congregation says "Amen" in unison.

9. Scripture Reading from Old Testaments and Epistle

The priest turns his face to the congregation and reads the assigned reading from Old Testaments and Epistles reading, saying "thus says the prophet" or "the apostle."

The congregation will be seated, and the priest turns his face to the altar.

10. A Hymn is sung

11. The Gospel Message

The priest turns his face to the congregation and says, "Lift your hearts to God and listen to today's Holy Gospel."

The priest reads the Holy Gospel passage of the day, saying, "Thus says the Evangelist."

12. The Confession of Faith

The priest turns his face to the altar, saying that we all confess our Christian faith together.

The priest and the faithful together confess their Christian faith.

On regular Sundays, they recite the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His Son, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven; who sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, to judge the living and the dead; from there he will come again.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, in one holy Church, in the communion of saints, in the forgiveness of sins, in the resurrection of the body, and in life everlasting. Amen.

On feast days, they confess the Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in Him who was begotten of the Father before the world was, who is God from God, Light from light, and true God from true God, who was of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven; and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man; who was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; who suffered and was buried; who rose again the third day according to the scriptures; who ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who will come to judge the living and the dead, and in the last days of his kingdom. I believe in one God, the Son of God, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, and in the Holy Spirit, who spoke through the prophets, and in one holy and apostolic Church for all.
I believe in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

13. A Hymn is sung

14. A Sermon

The priest or preacher goes to the pulpit and preaches.

C. Prayer Service

15. Prayer

After the sermon, the priest prays:

May God, who comforts us with His Word, teach us, counsel us, and admonish us, be glorified forever. May the Holy Spirit fill our hearts with the Word of God, so that we may grow and be saved in faith, hope, love, and patience in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

16. The Priest makes various Announcements

17. Benediction

The priest says:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

18. The Priest goes to the Altar

19. The Hymn of the Offering is sung

The hymn is sung and the offering is collected.

20. Salutation

The priest turns his face to the congregation and sings (reads) "God be with you."

The congregation sings or read, saying, "God be with you."

21. The Priest says singing or reading, "Let us pray."

The priest turns his face to the altar and prays, saying, "We pray to you, eternal and almighty God, Creator and Sustainer of all, through Jesus Christ." Have mercy on us.

And do not remember our sins. Do not remember our sins, but sanctify us with the Holy Spirit and help us by your grace to walk in a holy way according to your word. Grant the believers unity through your Word and your holy sacraments; strengthen and protect them.

O Most High God, have mercy on all who live in the darkness of sin and truth. Illumine them with your saving grace through the Gospel, that they may be light and life.

For the glory of your holy name, bless the government and leaders of our country Ethiopia, and all its administrators, so that we may all live in safety.

Bless and enable the government advisors to carry out their duties in fear of you and in good faith, for the glory of your government and the development of our country Ethiopia.

Bless and protect all the people of our country. Guide our government on the right path and grant us a life of peace and security. Be a refuge and shield for our country, Ethiopia, and grant us your grace and glory. Enlighten the priests and

evangelists who have accepted your teaching, so that they may teach their people the light of truth with knowledge, sincerity, diligence, and fervent zeal, spiritual and physical knowledge without hypocrisy, and may preach the gospel of salvation to sinners according to your will. Bless our homes and all our families, and help us by your grace to raise our children as you will, so that they may grow strong in your truth and fear.

Make for us a healthy and wholesome weather. Give us sunshine and rain in due season. Show us the right and good Christian counsel in all we do. Remove all evil and harm from us, and make the seeds of our land grow for us, and increase its fruit. Bless us in all that is useful and good. Have mercy on the poor, the afflicted, and all those who are about to die. Help us when the hour of our death approaches, and after this life, grant us eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

22. The Lord's Prayer

The priest kneels and says the Lord's Prayer with the congregation

> Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The congregation says in unison, "Amen"

23. Praise

The priest turns his face to the congregation and says in melody or reading: "Let us praise God."

The priest turns his face to the altar and says with the congregation in melody: Glory to God, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah ▪

24. Benediction

The priest turns his face to the congregation and says: "Lift up your hearts to the Lord and receive his blessing." The congregation stands.

The priest:
May God bless you and protect you. May God make His face shine on you and give you His grace. May God turn His face to you and give you peace. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God, Amen. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit one God. Amen.

As the congregation stand, they sing in unison:
"Amen, Amen, Amen"

25. A Closing Hymn is sung

APPENDIX TWO

EELC LITURGY OF THE MASS AND ORDERS FOR VARIOUS SERVICES, AUGUST 2022

Chapter One
Sunday Divine Service Liturgy

A. Preparatory Service

1. While the church pianist is playing a soft church melody or **introductory music**, the priest approaches the altar and kneels and says a short prayer of conscience.

2. **An Opening Hymn is sung**

3. **The congregation is invited to confess their sins to the Lord, saying the following:**

   Priest: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, one God, Amen.

   Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. God is in his holy temple, and his throne is in heaven. He is close to those who are humble and contrite in spirit. He hears those who confess their sins and listens to their prayers. Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace in faith and confess our sins.

4. **Confession of Sins**

   The priest: Turns to the altar and kneels, praying thus:

   4.1. The priest turns to the altar, kneels, and prays: O Lord, Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions and iniquity. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know, my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Our heavenly Father, hear this prayer of confession through your beloved Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Or

4.2. Almighty and merciful God, your grace endures from generation to generation. You are a patient and powerful God. You forgive all who repent of their sins and iniquities. We have committed sins and transgressions before you. Therefore, we have become unworthy of your love and goodness. O Lord, do not hold our transgressions against us. Help us, O Lord, for your name's sake, and save us. Forgive us all our sins. Guide us by your Holy Spirit to turn away from our sinful lives and to find eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.The priest turns to the altar, kneels, and prays:

5. Kyrie

The priest: While he turns his face to the altar, the congregation and the priest sing the

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Holy Spirit have mercy

6. Absolution

The priest: Standing, facing the congregation, he announces the forgiveness of our sins.

The priest says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Amen.

7. Thanksgiving

The priest: Turns his face to the altar and sings or reads:

Glory to God in the highest
Peace on earth
and good will toward men

The congregation stand and sing with the priest:

During the Holy Trinity Sundays Psalm 76 Verses 1

A. We give thanks to our God in heaven
For his grace
On earth he grants us joy and peace
We should do his will very much.
In the Lord

Or

B. Glory to you, our God (x2)
Throne and praise are yours (x 2)
Glory Hallelujah (× 3)
Glory Hallelujah

Or

C. Let us sing to the Lord a new song
And let his praise be full in the congregation
Let the Creator of the world rejoice
Let us give him glory with all our heart.

Or

D. Glory be to God in heaven
Glory be to God in earth
Glory be to God
Glory be to God Amen

On the Christmas Day Psalm 6

A. Hosanna to the Son of David
To the King of Israel
Blessed is he who comes in the name of God
Hosanna in the highest
Blessed is he who comes in the name of God

Or

B. Let us rejoice (2x)
Let us sing with joy
The Lord saw our suffering
and came down to us.

During the Holy Week, Psalm 35

A. O Lamb of God, you were sacrificed for us on the cross
O you are patient, O you are compassionate and gentle
You bore our debt and conquered the power of death
Give us peace Jesus

Or

B. He shed His blood for me and saved me (2 x) Even though I am helpless and do not know my God, He stretched out His hand and saved me.

B. The Service of the Word

8. The Priest turns his face to the congregation and sings or reads

Priest: "God be with you"
Congregation, "God be with you"

9. Prayer

The priest: Turns his face to the altar and prays for the services of the day.
The congregation says "Amen" with or without music.

10. Scripture reading From the Old and New Testaments

The priest: Turns his face to the congregation and says the holy message assigned for day.

The congregation stands.

The priest says: The prophet or apostle says this, after reading the holy message of the day; the faithful sit down.

11. A Hymn is sung.

12. Gospel Reading

The priest turns his face to the congregation and says, "Lift your hearts to God and listen to today's Holy Gospel." The priest reads the Holy Gospel passage of the day, saying, "Thus says the Evangelist."

13. Confessing the Creed

The priest: We all confess our Christian faith together and he turn faces to the altar. The priest and the congregation confess their Christian faith together.

On regular Sundays, they confess the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His Son, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven; who sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, to judge the living and the dead; from there he will come again. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, in one holy Church, in the communion of saints, in the forgiveness of sins, in the resurrection of the body, and in life everlasting. Amen.

On feast days, they confess the Nicene Creed.

I believe in one God, the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in Him who was begotten of the Father before the world was, who is God from God, Light from light, and true God from true God, who was of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven; and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man; who was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; who suffered and was buried; who rose again the third day according to the scriptures; who ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who will come to judge the living and the dead, and in the last days of his kingdom. I believe in one God, the Son of God, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, and in the Holy Spirit, who spoke through the prophets, and in one holy and apostolic Church for all. I believe in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Congregation sits down.

14. Hymns are sung

A. From the hymn book or other hymns;

B. A hymn is sung by the choir.

15. Sermon

The priest or preacher goes to the pulpit and preaches.

C. Prayer Service

16. Prayer

The priest: After the sermon, he goes to the pulpit and prays as follows.

The priest: May God, who comforts us, teaches us, counsels us, and corrects us with his word, be glorified forever.

May the Holy Spirit fill our hearts with the Word that we have heard, so that we may be saved and grow in faith, hope, love, and patience, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

17. The priest: He announces various announcements.

18. Benediction

The priest says: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

19. The Priest says: He calls for the Collection of the Offering

20. The Offering Hymn is sung:

The offering is collected while the hymn is sung and a prayer is said for the offering.

21. The Priest: He goes to the Altar

The priest: He turns his face to the congregation and sings (reads)
The priest: "God be with you"
The congregation: "God be with you"

22. The Priest says: "Let us pray."

The priest: – He turns his face to the altar and prays.

A/ Priest: Eternal and Almighty God, Creator and Protector of all, we pray to you, for the sake of Jesus Christ, save us from sin, sanctify us with the Holy Spirit, and help us by your grace to walk in a holy way according to your word. Grant the believers unity through your word and your sacred mysteries, strengthen them, and protect them.

O Most High God, have mercy on all peoples who live in the darkness of sin. And enlighten them with your saving grace through your Gospel, that it may be light and life for them. Bless the government of our country Ethiopia, its leaders, and all its administrators, that we may all live in safety for the glory of your holy name. May the advisors of the government, for the glory of your government, and the development of our country Ethiopia, fear you and bless them and guide them in their work: Bless and protect all the people of our country, guide our government councils in the right path, and grant us a life of peace and security.

Be a refuge and shield for our country, Ethiopia, and grant your grace and blessing to the priests and evangelists, and teachers, so that they may teach the light of truth they have received with knowledge and sincerity, with diligence and fervent zeal, spiritual and physical knowledge to their people without hypocrisy, and may they preach the gospel of salvation to sinners according to your will. Bless our homes and all our families, and help us by your grace to raise our children according to your will, so that they may grow strong in your truth and fear.

Make for us a healthy and wholesome weather. Give us sunshine and rain at all times. Reveal to us honest and good Christian advice in everything we do. Remove all evil and harm, make our land grow and increase its fruit. Bless all useful and good works. Have mercy on the sick and the poor, on the afflicted, and on all those who are about to die. Help us when the hour of our death comes, and after this life, grant us eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or

A. Almighty and everlasting God strengthen and protect your Church by your holy word and sacred mysteries. We beseech you that your saving gospel may be preached throughout the world and that people may believe in it with true hearts. Help and protect our country; guide its leaders and administrators with your true light. Grant us peace and good life on earth. Bless our work; Give us what we need for our daily lives. Make us willing to help and assist our neighbors with the gifts we receive from you. In everything we live and do in our homes: to live in love and peace. Help us to raise our children in your truth and fear. Today, especially, we offer you our prayers…. Think of the sick, the poor, and the distressed. Help us to live in true faith until the end, so that after this life we may share eternal joy.

23. Our Lord's Prayer

The priest: – Kneeling with the congregation, they pray the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen

The congregation says, "Amen."

24. Thanksgiving

The priest, turning his face to the faithful, says this in the hymn or reading:

"Let us give thanks to God."

The priest, turning his face to the altar, says this with the congregation.

Glory to God
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.

25. Benediction

The priest: He turns his face to the congregation,

"Lift your hearts to God and receive His blessings," he says.

The congregation will stand.

The priest:

May God bless you and protect you. May God make His face shine on you and give you His grace. May God turn His face to you and give you peace. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God, Amen.

As the congregation stand up, in music

They say Amen, Amen, Amen.

26. The Closing Hymn is sung

APPENDIX THREE

EELC LITURGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER FROM THE AGENDA OF AUGUST, 1984 and 2022[6]

The Lord's Supper/The Holy Communion

1. **The priest approaches the Alter and kneeling down for a silent prayer.**

2. Hymn of Invocation

3. Preface

Priest: In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Congregants: Amen

4. Sermon: The priest preaches on which leads repentance and Lord's Supper.

5. Confession

The priest facing the Alter and after kneeling down says the following confession words:

I confess with my full heart that I am a wicked and sinful person, was born with sin and I was kept on doing sinful acts in all my days. O Holy, righteous God and loving Father I confess that I never loved You more that all things, never loved my friend as myself. Therefore, if You have judge me according to Your righteousness and my sin, I would have justly deserved eternal punishment. But now since You are a loving Father God gave us hope that, You accepts those one who come to You and You accepts those turn their faces to Your mercy and to the faith of our savor Jesus Christ, also You accepts with kindness and grace those who repent their sins truly. You will forgive all their wickedness and never count their sin. I wicked and a sinful person believing this has come to You for Your mercy and I ask You to forgive my sin for the seeks of Your Holy name and Your glory, in the name of Lord Jesus Christ.

Kyrie

The Priest turning back to the communicants will sing the following:

Lord have mercy;

[6] The Lord's Supper liturgies of EELC of 1984 and 2022 are similar with their content and order.

Christ have mercy:
Holy Spirit have mercy.

6. Absolution:

Priest: If you confess this with truth and repenting heart, God forgive your sin with his grace in Jesus Christ since His Word are trustworthy and certain. Therefore, I declare to you the forgiveness of your sin in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

7. Prayer of Thanksgiving

Priest: Our Almighty father who art in heaven, we thank You with our full heart, for Your declaration to us Your comforting words for forgiveness of our sin. We also pray to help us to prepare ourselves to receive the Body and the Blood of Your Son Jesus Christ with true confession and faith. Amen.

8. Thanks Giving

The priest after turning his face to the altar

Glory to the God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

9. Hymn

Priest & Communicants:

A/ Our God is worthy to be praised in Heaven
Because of His grace we become righteous
He certainly gives us happiness and peace
So, we shall do His will here on earth
B/ Glory to You our God (2X)
Throne and thanks to You too (2X)
Glory Hallelujah (4x)

Salutation

The priest after turning his face to the communicants and read or sings:

Priest: Let the Lord be with you
Communicants: Let the Lord be with you

Prayer

Priest: Our merciful Father God, You established on earth Your Church with Your living Word and with Your Holy Sacraments. Hence, we pray Lord to prepare us so we can receive Your Body

and Blood those are given to us with Your grace and as a gift with confession and faith. We pray this in the name of Your Son Jesus Christ.

Communicants: Amen.

10. Reading from the Word of God: Is. 53:1-6, Heb. 9:11-14 and John. 6:48-**5**8

11. Creed

The priest after turning his face to the communicants and call for to confess the Creed together with him

A. The Apostolic creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The Third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.
OR

B. The Nicene Creed

C. The Athenian Creed

12. Hymn of Preparation

While the priest prepares the bread and the wine the communicants will sing one song from the hymn book.

13. Thanks Giving

Priest: Lift up your heart to the Lord
Communicants: We lifted up our heart to the Lord
Priest: Let us praise our Lord God
Communicants: Let praise and thanks be to our Lord.

The priest after turning his face to the altar prays as follow:

Our Almighty and Holy God, we must give You thanks and adore You for Your amazing work, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whom He removed our death with His own death, who sacri-

ficed Himself and paid all the debt of the world and in His glorious resurrection we have an eternal life, so we give thanks to You God with multitudes of angels saying; Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.Hosanna in the highest, truly blest is how comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

14. Prayer for blessing the Lord's Supper/ The Holy Communion

The priest after turning his face to the Alter prays as follow:

Lord who you created the heaven and earth You are blest one! For You so loved the world, You gave Your only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. We give thanks to You for the salvation You prepared for us in Jesus Christ. We ask You the help of the Holy Spirit, to create faith in our heart and to take in faith our savior's body and blood. Amen!

15. The Priest will read the Word of Institution turning back his face to the Altar:

And when He had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me". In the same way He took the cup, when he had supper saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this in remembrance of me."

16. After the priest turning to the communicants and they say together:

Christ- Lamb of God who carried the sin of the world have mercy on us,
Christ- Lamb of God who removed the sin of the world have save us,
Christ-Lamb of God who carried the sin of the world give us Your peace.

17. Distribution

After saying; 'The peace of God be with all', the priest calls upon saying:

Priest: Now the whole thing is ready, communicants who are confirmed and full member of the church, please come forward in peace to the Lord's table.
While distributing the bread the priest says;
"The body of Christ given to you"
While distributing the wine the priest says;

"The blood of Christ shade for you"
In dismissing the communicants, the priest says:
Those of you who received, the body and blood may our Lord Jesus Christ preserve you for eternal life forever. Depart in God's peace.

18. Closing Prayer

After the priest turning his face to the Alter prays:

Priest: Almighty father we thank you since You prepared for us this body and blood in Your Son Jesus Christ for the sake of our blessing and salvation. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that, as we received It, for the remembrance of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and for our salvation, help us with Your grace to part take in the big feast one day in heaven.

Communicants: Amen

19. Thanks Giving

After the priest turning to the communicants says:

Priest: Let's praise the Lord
While standing both the priest and the communicants join in hymn:
Parise to the Lord
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.

20. Lord's Prayer

The priest turning back to the altar and kneeling down pray with the communicants the Lord's Prayer

Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

21. Benediction

After the priest turning to the communicants and says 'lift up your heart and receive the blessings:

The Lord blesses you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord looks upon you with favor and give you peace.

The communicants respond with a hymn: Amen- Amen-Amen!

22. Closing hymn

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