

## MISSION AND SACRAMENT, PART IV: A LITURGY FOR THE BAPTISM OF MUSLIMS, TO BE CONDUCTED ON THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

*By Abu Daoud<sup>1</sup>*

### 1. How liturgy is both good and Biblical

Many evangelicals have an inherent antipathy towards liturgy. Rarely are they able to formulate why exactly this is the case. In many cases the reason is psychological, but not Biblical. Specifically, they experienced liturgy in churches that did not teach them the meaning of the Good News, and so they associate liturgy with such a church. But this neglects the reality that there are many liturgical churches that enunciate and preach the Good News, and likewise that there are many 'free' churches (i.e., churches that allege not to have a liturgy) that likewise fail to communicate and (more importantly) live out the good news— that the Kingdom of God is at hand, and one can prepare for its final and complete arrival and avoid damnation by repenting and being baptized into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Biblical verses deployed to resist liturgy likewise fail. The Bible is replete with liturgy, whether in the Tabernacle, the Temple or yes, the Apostolic Assembly/Church. The word itself certainly appears in the New Testament, making it automatically more Biblical than the so-called 'altar call'. The work done in the Temple was called liturgy (Luke 1:23), and Hebrews 8:6 tells us that Jesus carried out such liturgy himself. Paul says to the Philippians, "But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service [liturgy] of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all." And finally, the offering of the Corinthians to the Church in Jerusalem is called a liturgy as well (2 Cor 9:12).

The earliest Christians certainly had a liturgical worship, in that it was somewhat structured and yes, included specific prayers or invocations which were not understood as optional. We see this clearly in the Didache, which instructs a very specific prayer to be said at Communion. Consider this instruction, dating from around 100 to 110 AD:

Now concerning the Thanksgiving meal, give thanks in this manner.

First, concerning the cup:

We thank You, our Father,  
For the Holy Vine of David Your servant,  
Whom You made known to us through Your Servant;  
May the glory be Yours forever.

Concerning the broken bread:

We thank You, our Father,  
For the life and knowledge  
Which You made known to us through Your Servant;  
May the glory be Yours forever.

As this broken bread was scattered over the mountains,

And was gathered together to become one,  
So let Your Body of Faithful be gathered together  
From the ends of the earth into Your kingdom;  
for the glory and power are Yours forever.

But let no one eat or drink of your Thanksgiving, unless they have been baptized;  
for concerning this is taught, "Do not give what is holy to dogs."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Didache 9, online at [web.archive.org/web/20101009033540/http://ivanlewis.com/Didache/didache.html](http://web.archive.org/web/20101009033540/http://ivanlewis.com/Didache/didache.html) (Accessed 14 March 2014).

Examples of the Church's earliest liturgies from Justin Martyr and then Tertullian and the Apostolic Tradition likewise reveal what was clearly a liturgical pattern that was versatile but, on certain points, mandatory.

But why opt for the traditions of men when we have the Spirit and Bible to guide us? The answer comes easily: that this is a false dichotomy. We need not choose between the two. I call this the American fallacy, for only could Americans in large numbers conceive of having to choose between truth and tradition. Praise be to God, the Muslims with whom we share our faith do not have this awkward and strange presupposition. But let me quote Jesus on this: that the scribe who is instructed in the ways of the Kingdom is like the master of a household who brings out of his storehouse treasures old and new. Our task then is not to purge tradition (something that is not really possible, in any case), but rather to identify with humility which traditions no longer serve the mission of the church.

If that is not enough, Paul himself endorses tradition, explicitly. The word *tradition* is from Latin and means, literally, things handed down. Paul in teaching on the Eucharist quotes tradition: what was passed down to him and what he passed on to the Christians in Corinth. Likewise he endorses when he instructs his disciples to teach to others what he (Paul) taught in the presence of others. So opposing 'dead tradition' to the Bible reveals just how un-Biblical the imagination of some parts of evangelicalism have become. Rather, the task is more nuanced but more fruitful, to regularly prune and trim the tradition, so that it remains Biblical and fruitful.

And our liturgy is part of that tradition. Now almost every church is liturgical in some sense. Children understand this very well. You try going into a Baptist church and putting the sermon before the hymns (or praise and worship concert) and see if the people do not revolt. Why? You have violated their liturgy. They will not use that word, but the soul of a human perceives that things must be ordered in some way, and that some sense of order is good and right. I suspect that this is born from our being created in the image of God who himself in the Creation narrative in an orderly and gradual and, yes, *repetitive* manner created all things, visible and invisible.

In the first three installments of this series, all of which were published in *St Francis Magazine*,<sup>3</sup> I advanced the proposal that the pattern of the early Church is beneficial to us in relation to our present mission to Muslims, whom God loves and for whom the Word Incarnate was suffered and died on the hard wood of the Cross. This current article is specifically a continuation of Part III of that series.

In this article I am using a contemporary liturgical resource, which is the *Book of Common Prayer* (1982) of the Episcopal Church of the USA. I encourage you to explore your own roots or those of your grandparents in whatever tradition taught them to be disciples of Christ— Methodist, Lutheran, Catholic, Orthodox, or something else. It is true that many of these denominations have become riddled with heresy, but their liturgical documents, you will find, keep them honest and connected to a Biblical form of worship which is healthy and fruitful, when carried out in accord with the mind of Christ.

I commend this liturgy to you, brothers and sisters called to reach Muslim with the faith of Christ. The Biblical readings are for the Feast of Pentecost,<sup>4</sup> which is a particularly fitting time of the year to initiate new believers who

are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.  
(Hebrews 12:22-24)

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<sup>3</sup> Abu Daoud 'Sacrament and Mission go together like Bread and Wine. Part I: Baptism, Discipleship and the Apostles' *St Francis Magazine* 4 no 1 (June 2008); 'Mission and Sacrament, Part II' *St Francis Magazine* 4 no 3 (December 2008); 'Mission and Sacrament Part III: A Paleo-Orthodox Approach to Contextualization in the Muslim World' *St Francis Magazine* 5 no 2 (April 2009).

<sup>4</sup> We read in Tertullian's writings that baptism was administered in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century ideally on Easter eve, but also on Pentecost. Pentecost, as a celebration of the birth of the Church and the sending of the Holy Spirit, has been chosen for this liturgy, though the *Book of Common Prayer* can easily provide similar such liturgies for Easter Eve, Easter, Epiphany, Ascension, or some other holy day.

Other auspicious days for baptism are Easter Eve and the day when Jesus' parents presented him in the Temple, but of course there is no immutable law about this. Rather, we live within a tradition which encourages us to be free in Christ, and a freedom in Christ which blesses us with a rich treasure which has been handed down to us by faithful saints and martyrs. Let us draw forth the treasures, old and new, from our storehouse.

## 2. A liturgy for the baptism of Muslims, with readings for the Feast of Pentecost

*As people enter are seated songs are sung, such as 'Give Thanks' and 'Crown him with many crowns'*

*The people are instructed to stand and the Celebrant<sup>5</sup> says*

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*People* And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.

*Celebrant* There is one Body and one Spirit;

*People* There is one hope in God's call to us;

*Celebrant* One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;

*People* One God and Father of all.

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

*People* And also with you.

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

### *The Collect of the Day<sup>6</sup>*

Almighty God,  
on this day you opened the way of eternal life to every race and nation  
by the promised gift of your Holy Spirit:  
Shed abroad this gift throughout the world by the preaching of the Gospel,  
that it may reach to the ends of the earth;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God,  
for ever and ever.

*Celebrant and People* Amen.

### *The Lessons<sup>7</sup>*

Joel 2:28-32 is read

*The Reader says* The Word of the Lord.

*People* Thanks be to God.<sup>8</sup>

Psalm 104:25-37 is read<sup>9</sup>

Acts 2:1-11 is read

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<sup>5</sup> Normally this would be an ordained elder or elder with oversight (that is, a bishop).

<sup>6</sup> A 'collect' is a prayer for a specific day or occasion intended to 'collect' the people into one place and direct their attention to the worship of God.

<sup>7</sup> Ancient tradition allows for the readings to be done by respected laypersons, but the Gospel reading is of such importance that it should be done by a deacon or elder.

<sup>8</sup> Interspersed with the readings and the Psalm, this is the preferred time to sing various songs or hymns.

<sup>9</sup> It is normal for the reader to read a verse, and then the congregation to respond with the next verse, or for all to read the psalm together. The decision belongs to the celebrant.

*The Reader says*           The Word of the Lord.  
*People*                       Thanks be to God.

*Then, all standing, the celebrant reads the Gospel, first saying*  
                                  The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John  
*People*                       Glory to you, Lord Christ.

John 20:19-23 is read  
*After the Gospel, the Reader says*           The Gospel of the Lord.  
*People*                       Praise to you, Lord Christ.

### ***The Sermon***<sup>10</sup>

#### ***Presentation and Examination of the Candidates***<sup>11</sup>

*The Celebrant says*       The Candidates for Holy Baptism will now be presented.  
*The candidates who are able to answer for themselves are presented individually by their Sponsors, as follows*  
*Sponsor*           I present N.<sup>12</sup> to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.  
*The Celebrant asks each candidate when presented*   Do you desire to be baptized?  
*Candidate*       I do.

*Then the Celebrant asks the following questions of the candidates who can speak for themselves*

*Question*       Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?<sup>13</sup>

*Answer*         I renounce them.

*Question*       Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

*Answer*         I renounce them.

*Question*       Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

*Answer*         I renounce them.

*Question*       Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?

*Answer*         I do.

*Question*       Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

*Answer*         I do.

*Question*       Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

*Answer*         I do.

*After all have been presented, the Celebrant addresses the congregation, saying*

Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support *these persons in their* life in Christ?

*People*           We will.

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<sup>10</sup> This is also called a homily. Because the words of the preacher are not the main object of attention, it is ideal for this to last less than 20 minutes. The focus of the liturgy is on Scripture and the baptism of new disciples.

<sup>11</sup> This liturgy was specifically selected with the adults converting from Islam to Christianity in mind, but the *Book of Common Prayer* allows for the possibility of the baptism of infants or babies.

<sup>12</sup> This stands for 'name', as in name of the person being baptized.

<sup>13</sup> An exorcism or renunciation of Satan is part of the earliest known baptismal liturgies.

*The Celebrant then says*

Let us join with *those* who are committing *themselves* to Christ and renew our own baptismal covenant.

### ***The Baptismal Covenant<sup>14</sup>***

*Celebrant* Do you believe in God the Father?

*People* I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

*Celebrant* Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

*People* I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

*Celebrant* Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

*People* I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

*Celebrant* Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread,  
and in the prayers?

*People* I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant* Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin,  
repent and return to the Lord?

*People* I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant* Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

*People* I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant* Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

*People* I will, with God's help.

*Celebrant* Will you strive for justice and peace among all people,  
and respect the dignity of every human being?

*People* I will, with God's help.

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<sup>14</sup> This section basically asks the candidate for baptism to confess his faith in Christ according to the Apostles' Creed. It is helpful to instruct converts who may have some Christian ancestry to know that this is the same confession their ancestors made, as this is the baptismal creed used to this day in Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

### ***Prayers for the Candidates***

*The Celebrant then says to the congregation*

Let us now pray for these persons who are to receive the Sacrament of new birth.

*A Person appointed leads the following petitions<sup>15</sup>*

*Leader* Deliver *them*, O Lord, from the way of sin and death.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Open *their hearts* to your grace and truth.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Fill *them* with your holy and life-giving Spirit.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Keep *them* in the faith and communion of your holy Church.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Teach *them* to love others in the power of the Spirit.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Send *them* into the world in witness to your love.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*Leader* Bring *them* to the fullness of your peace and glory.

*People* Lord, hear our prayer.

*The Celebrant says*

Grant, O Lord, that all who are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ your Son may live in the power of his resurrection and look for him to come again in glory; who lives and reigns now and for ever. *Amen.*

### ***Thanksgiving over the Water***

*The Celebrant blesses the water, first saying*

The Lord be with you.

*People* And also with you.

*Celebrant* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* It is right to give him thanks and praise.

*Celebrant:*

We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water.

Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life.

We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism.

In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

*At the following words, the Celebrant touches the water*

Now sanctify this water, we pray you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, that those who here are cleansed from sin and born again may continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Savior. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. *Amen.*

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<sup>15</sup> This ancient form of prayer is called a litany.

## ***The Baptism***

*Each candidate is presented by name to the Celebrant, or to an assisting priest or deacon, who then immerses, or pours water upon, the candidate, saying*

N., I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon *these* your servants the forgiveness of sin, and have raised *them* to the new life of grace. Sustain *them*, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give *them* an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. *Amen.*

*Then the Bishop or Priest places a hand on the person's head, marking on the forehead the sign of the cross [using Chrism<sup>16</sup> if desired] and saying to each one*

N., you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever. *Amen.*

*When all have been baptized, the Celebrant says*

Let us welcome the newly baptized.

*Celebrant and People*

We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.

*The Peace is now exchanged<sup>17</sup>*

*Celebrant*      The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People*                      And also with you.

## ***Alternative Ending (without Communion)***

*If there is no celebration of the Eucharist, the service continues with 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,  
for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*The Celebrant then says*

All praise and thanks to you, most merciful Father,  
for adopting us as your own children, for incorporating us into your holy Church, and for making us worthy to share in the inheritance of the saints in light; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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<sup>16</sup> That is, oil blessed by the local bishop, or senior pastor in a region, even if he is not present.

<sup>17</sup> That is, all the people in the congregation, the celebrant, and the baptized greet each other in the name of Jesus Christ.

*An offering is taken up and the hymn 'A Mighty Fortress is our God' is sung*

*Other prayers may be added,<sup>18</sup> and once this is done, the service is concluded with this prayer*

Almighty God,  
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
from whom every family in heaven and earth is named,  
grant you to be strengthened with might by his Holy Spirit,  
that, Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith,  
you may be filled with all the fullness of God. *Amen.*

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<sup>18</sup> As Blessed Ramon Llull is the father of Christian missions to the Muslims, the following prayer may be included:

*O God, who didst adorn Blessed Ramon, Thy martyr, with zeal for the salvation of souls and the spread of the Gospel, grant us, Thy servants, that through his intercession and mediation we may faithfully preserve unto death which we have received in Thy grace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Or this verse from Bl Ramon Llull:

*The Beloved gave Love his freedom, and allowed men to take him to themselves as much as they would; but scarce one was found who would take him to his heart. And for this cause the Lover wept, and was sad at the dishonor which is paid to Love by the ungrateful among men and by false lovers.*

And this litany is especially suitable:

LORD, convert all humankind to your holy religion and sanctify us in one Church.  
Give all Christians unity of the Faith *and peace within the walls of the Church.*  
Give all Muslims submission to your true will *that brings perfect freedom.*  
Give all Hindus devotion to the eternal law *and love of the Most Holy Trinity.*  
Give all Buddhists joy and hope in Jesus Christ *for this life and the life to come.*  
Give all Jews deliverance through their Messiah *and regraft them into your chosen people.*  
Give all unbelievers the light and life of your truth *and the wisdom of your love.*  
Give all others entry into the peaceable Kingdom of God, *the God who was born to save us.*  
LORD, convert all humankind to your holy religion and sanctify us in one Church.