

The Liturgical Movement in Context of Secularization: Late Modern Developments

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Abstract

The article highlights secular influences in contemporary understandings of liturgical participation by exploring the relationship between visions of the early modern liturgical movement and contemporary ways of understanding participation in the Church of Sweden. The constructs *opine*, *understand*, and *do* are used in the comparison as are the concepts *participatio plena*, *participatio conscia*, and *participatio actiosa* in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. An overall reflection based on the analysis is that secular ideologies and trends not only influence liturgical form but tend to erode theological language itself. Religious individualism, combined with “internal ecclesial secularization,” tends to imbue the very understanding of church and of liturgy. A new phase in the liturgical movement called the “late modern liturgical movement” is discussed. The church appears here as the “church of the individual” and the liturgy in the sense of *ordo* is seen as an “open” order and framework, rather than as juxtaposition and sacramental event.

Keywords

liturgical movement, secularization, *ordo*, participation, Mass, Church of Sweden

I. Introduction

The modern liturgical movement has been central to the ambition of the last century to strengthen liturgical participation in Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, and Reformed contexts. Intentions to promote participation today can at first glance look like the liturgical movement of the early 1900s. However, both understandings of liturgical participation and strategies to promote liturgical participation tend to differ in various times and contexts. In the article “Four Liturgical Movements,” Frank Senn argues that it is more accurate to speak of liturgical movements in the plural. He explains the complexity of the movement by the fact that it is colored by two different cultural backdrops—romanticism

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and modernity—which are linked to two different images of God; one transcendent and one immanent.¹

Senn calls the first movement “Restoration.” It arose in the 1800s and strove to recover the liturgy based on ideals found in an earlier so-called “golden age” (which at the same time differed among various church traditions). According to Senn, this movement was influenced by romanticism. Unlike arguments related to the Enlightenment about the need for a more comprehensible and uncomplicated liturgy, the restoration movement gave prominence to the idea of liturgy-as-mystery, and as an encounter with God.²

The liturgical movement denoted by efforts to promote liturgical participation, which began in the early 1900s, differs according to Senn from the restoration movement by expressing modernism. He calls this movement “Renewal,” as it is rooted in the Enlightenment’s ambition to make worship that is relevant to the worshiper and that is not only about honoring God.³ Using examples from the American context, Senn also shows how “liturgical movements” in recent times are colored by modernism. He sees, for example, influences of modernism in the application of “user-friendly” popular culture in worship, and in the architecture of new district churches, where rooms for education and all-purpose rooms are assigned higher priority than adequate worship space.⁴

The present article is influenced by Senn’s perspective and based on analysis in my monograph *Delaktig i vilken mening?* [*Participation in what sense?*] (2021). In that earlier study I discerned three participatory strategies that are particularly evident throughout history in the Church of Sweden:⁵ “the teaching strategy,” “the simplification strategy,” and the “in-socialization strategy.” While my monograph focuses on participatory strategies, applies theories in ecclesiology and pedagogy, and uses historical and contemporary ideas and methods to involve children in worship as illustrative examples, the focus of the present article is secular influences in contemporary understandings of liturgical participation.

This article addresses the following research question: *How can secular ideologies and trends influence contemporary understandings of liturgy and liturgical participation, and how can this affect the interpretation and fulfillment of the visions of the liturgical movement?*

The aim is to shed light on secular influences in depictions of liturgical participation and ways to perceive church and liturgy. As a concluding step, I shall indicate a new phase called the “late modern liturgical movement” for further reflection.⁶

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1. Frank C. Senn, “Four Liturgical Movements: Restoration, Renewal, Revival, Retrieval,” *Liturgy* 19.4 (2004) 71.
 2. Senn, “Four Liturgical Movements,” 71; Marie Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?: En teologisk analys av delaktighetsstrategier i svenskkyrkligt gudstjänstliv* (Skellefteå: Artos, 2021) 148.
 3. Senn, “Four Liturgical Movements,” 70, 73; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 148.
 4. Senn, “Four Liturgical Movements,” 73–74; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 148.
 5. The Church of Sweden is an Evangelical Lutheran Church and can be described as a national church. See <https://www.svenskkyrkan.se/default.aspxid657792> (accessed June 26, 2023).
 6. “Late modern” here refers to Anthony Giddens’ definition of high or late modernity: “the current phase of development of modern institutions, marked by the radicalising and globalising of basic traits of modernity.” Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) 243.

Sweden is one of the most secular countries in the world according to the Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map.⁷ Considering this and the regulation of the Church of Sweden as an open nationwide folk church, examples from this church are suitable according to the aim of this article.⁸ It should be clarified that the elementary focus of this article is not the Church of Sweden per se, and how the members of this church understand participation. In line with the research question, the focus is on how secular ideologies and trends can influence contemporary understandings of liturgy and liturgical participation.

To enable an analysis of contemporary understandings of liturgical participation, a study by Fredrik Modéus from 2009 is employed.⁹ Modéus addresses parish growth using dialogues with parish employees, elected representatives, and worship participants, as well as a study of thirty-five congregations in the Church of Sweden. Modéus describes how people in the congregations understand participation, that is, the focus is not his own point of view. In this article his study is suitable in a thematic sense, but also methodologically, given its praxis-related character.

Based on dialogue with vicars, and alternatively, priests with leading positions in the studied parishes, Modéus groups six aspects describing various understandings of participation in the Church of Sweden: participation as *be, do, opine, understand, feel, and discover*.¹⁰ In my monograph, I use three of these aspects—*opine, understand, and do*—to compare visions of the early modern liturgical movement with more contemporary views and interpretations of participation in worship.¹¹ The choice of the three aspects was motivated by the similar perspectives evident in analyzed sources in my own research project. Another reason was that I found them to be analytically connected to key words within the early modern liturgical movement and the most frequently used concepts in the Second Vatican Council's constitution on the liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium: participatio plena* (full participation), *participatio conscia* (conscious participation), and *participatio actuosa* (active participation).¹²

To highlight secular influences in contemporary understandings of liturgical participation, the article begins by exploring the relationship between the visions of the early modern liturgical movement and contemporary ways of understanding participation in

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7. The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map—World Values Survey 7 (2023). Source: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/> (accessed May 17, 2023).
 8. Swedish law stipulates that the Church of Sweden shall be an open Folk Church, have nationwide coverage and have a democratic organization. Lag (1998:1591) om Svenska kyrkan [Act on Church of Sweden. Swedish Code of Statutes SFS 1998:1591].
 9. Fredrik Modéus, *Längta efter liv: Församlingsväxt i Svenska kyrkan* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2009).
 10. *Vara, göra, tycka, förstå, känna, upptäcka*. Modéus, *Längta efter liv*, 94–95; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 129–30.
 11. Based on the aim of the article it is justified to choose *opine, understand, and do*, although the other three aspects are also of interest.
 12. Martin Stuflesser, “The Many Meanings of ‘Active Participation’: A Contemporary Perspective,” in *Mediating Mysteries, Understanding Liturgies: On Bridging the Gap between Liturgy and Systematic Theology*, ed. Joris Geldhof (Leuven: Peeters, 2015) 151; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 130.

the Church of Sweden. The term “early modern liturgical movement” implies that the liturgical movement in some sense also can be seen as an ongoing movement. In this introductory section, I refer to smaller parts of the analysis in my earlier monograph.¹³ This comparison then forms the basis for further analysis and the discussion that seeks to answer the article’s research question.

The focus of this article is not on earlier versions of the liturgical movement but on secular influences in contemporary understandings of liturgical participation. Regarding the early modern liturgical movement, I depict only some elementary features highlighted in previous research. I use sources that describe the period from 1909 when the Benedictine monk Lambert Beauduin argued for full and active participation of the laity in liturgy and Church at a congress in Belgium,¹⁴ until the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) which, inspired by the liturgical movement, drew up guidelines for comprehensive liturgical reform.¹⁵ The timeframe of 1909–1965 makes it possible to compare older viewpoints within the liturgical movement with contemporary understandings of liturgical participation (exemplified through Modéus).

2. “Opine” and “Full Participation”

2.1 Participation in the Sense of “Opine”

Participation in the sense of “opine” is, according to Modéus, an understanding which he refers to as “co-influence.” He clarifies the meaning as follows: “[h]ere, participation is about having a forum outside the church service in which one can make one’s voice heard. ... The purpose is the same: everyone who wants to, should be able to participate and influence the development.”¹⁶

This understanding of participation harmonizes with the ideal of a democratically governed folk church that emerged in Sweden during the second half of the twentieth century. The emergence of this ecclesiology can be related to the ambition to bring people and church together, which, given an increasingly secularized society, were perceived to have drifted apart.¹⁷ There was a desire to get rid of the hierarchical and office-centered church (called by critics “priest church”) that historically characterized the Church of Sweden. The ambition was to make the church a “folk church,” where *folk* not only referred to the worshipping congregation but the entire population of Sweden.¹⁸

The influences of the early modern liturgical movement and its vision of “full participation” seems, in the Church of Sweden, to have partly merged with the ideal of a democratically governed folk church.¹⁹ This democratization process, transferred from the

13. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 127–51.

14. Keith F. Pecklers, *Worship* (London: Continuum, 2003) 91–92.

15. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 127.

16. Modéus, *Längta efter liv*, 94–95. My translation.

17. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 131.

18. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 131–32.

19. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 133. The service book from 2018 is the result of a long process that began in 1997. In a later phase of this process democratically organized decision-making bodies at both local and diocesan level were invited to give their responses.

Swedish government and its principle of popular sovereignty,²⁰ affected not only the organization of the church but also its liturgical form and content.²¹ According to politicians in the wider society, the elected local church council representatives' influence over liturgy was crucial to establishing a liturgical form that corresponds to contemporary mindsets. Politicians emphasized the equal right of every citizen to affect the Church of Sweden and saw open and accessible church services as a tool to visualize a fulfilled open democratic folk church.²²

As I show in earlier research, “full participation” tends to have a different meaning in the vision of a democratically governed folk church than it does in the early modern liturgical movement. The contemporary meaning harmonizes with a shift in content of central theological concepts.²³ Göran Lundstedt notes that the concept of “the common priesthood” in the Church of Sweden has been linked to the distribution of power and responsibility and used to justify the democratization of the church. The concept has therefore been given a legal rather than a theological interpretation.²⁴

2.2 Full Participation

Through the ecclesiological perspectives behind the process of democratization in the Church of Sweden, participation in worship can be more unilaterally motivated by issues about rights in an external sense. This could explain why liturgical participation is often understood in accordance with Modéus' construct of “opine.” In the early modern liturgical movement, however, the argument for full participation of the laity was explicitly theological, since it referred to participation in the body of Christ and the liturgy of Christ through baptism.²⁵ The same argument can be found in the Second Vatican Council.²⁶ With reference to Reiner Kaczynski, Martin Stuflesser

Universities and schools were also invited, as well as movements, societies, and academies inside and outside the Church of Sweden. “Remissförteckning kyrkohandboksförslag (SKU 2016:1)” (Uppsala: Svenska kyrkan).

20. Klas Hansson, *Svenska kyrkans primas: Ärkebiskopsämbetet i förändring 1914–1990* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2014) 419.
21. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 133–34; Sven-Erik Brodd, “Liturgy Crossing Frontiers: Interplay and Confrontation of Ecclesiological Patterns in Liturgical Change During the Twentieth Century,” in *The Meaning of Christian Liturgy: Recent Developments in the Church of Sweden*, ed. Oloph Bexell (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012) 46–47; Göran Lundstedt, *Biskopsämbetet och demokratin: Biskopsrollens förändring i Svenska kyrkan under 1900-talets senare del: En kyrkorättslig undersökning* (Skellefteå: Artos & Norma, 2006) 126–27.
22. Lennart Ahlbäck, *Socialdemokratisk kyrkosyn: En studie i Socialdemokraternas kyrkopolitiska riktlinjer 1979–1996* (Lund: Arcus, 2003) 159–60, 165.
23. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 135.
24. Lundstedt, *Biskopsämbetet och demokratin*, 29.
25. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 136.
26. Roman Catholic Church, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html (accessed May 17, 2023).

argues that participation (*participatio*) in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* primarily means participation on the basis of the threefold office of Christ that worshipers have received through baptism. This is a condition of *full* participation.²⁷

From this theological perspective, striving to achieve full participation could mean maximizing the conditions for the glory of God to be revealed and manifested in and through the church as the body of Christ. Consistent with the meaning of the Greek word for church (*kyriakon*)—"that which belongs to the Lord"—the starting point is that everything belongs entirely to God (people of God, service of God); in contrast to the understanding of church as the people's church and worship as the property of individuals.²⁸ The "joy of recognition" which Modéus presents as a keyword in the work to create a functional worship,²⁹ gains a deeper meaning when viewed from this perspective. It is not only expected to emerge when the shape of the church service is the same, or when persons with more specific tasks in worship match the diversity in parishes concerning, for example, age and gender. The "joy of recognition" refers in a deeper sense to the event when the glory of God (revealed through full participation) enables the recognition of the Father through the Son in the Spirit and the recognition of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.³⁰

3. "Understand" and "Conscious Participation"

3.1 Participation in the Sense of "Understand"

Participation in the sense of "understand" means, according to Modéus, to "gain insight." One can here emphasize "a connection between understanding and daring to participate—and a connection between knowledge and mysticism."³¹

The idea that worship should be understandable is often associated with the Reformation and its emphasis on the value of vernacular language in the Mass. The ambition to make liturgy understandable had already arisen during the Renaissance but became particularly evident during the Enlightenment, which entailed a rationalist approach to worship.³² The meaning of participation as to "understand" is therefore closer to the viewpoints of the early modern liturgical movement than the construct "opine." Whereas the vision in the past was about closing the gap between the liturgy of the priest and the liturgy of the laity through increased comprehensibility,³³ today it

27. Stufferer, "The Many Meanings of 'Active Participation'," 148; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 136. The doctrine "the threefold office of Christ" states that Jesus performed three offices (prophet, priest, and king) in his ministry.

28. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 137.

29. Fredrik Modéus, *Mod att vara kyrka: Om församlingsbygge och kyrkans identitet* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2005) 206.

30. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 137.

31. Modéus, *Längta efter liv*, 95. My translation.

32. Frank C. Senn, *New Creation: A Liturgical Worldview* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000) 14; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 138.

33. Godfried Danneels, "Liturgy Forty Years After the Second Vatican Council: High Point or Recession," in *Liturgy in a Postmodern World*, ed. Keith F. Pecklers (London and New York: Continuum, 2003) 7–8.

is more about dealing with the gap between a sacred perspective on reality and a dominant secular one which affects the very understanding of liturgical participation and liturgy.³⁴ In the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Uppsala in 1968, and following meetings of Faith and Order and the Lutheran World Federation, it was said that the traditional liturgy lacked the ability to reach contemporary people which could be explained by the sacralization and ritualization of the liturgy. The liturgy therefore needed to be “desacralized.”³⁵ In line with this thinking, the General Assembly and the Council of Bishops in the Church of Sweden approved extensive liturgical experiments in the 1970s.³⁶ In research about worship in the Church of Sweden in 1968–2008, Ninna Edgardh points out that in a new social situation when the individual is accustomed to justify his or her actions with reason, and to democratically influence the offer of services, a collision arises between the rite as a cult and as a culture.³⁷ She finds it likely that employees and regular worshippers fulfill a vicarious function for a latent ritual need among large parts of the population of Sweden; a need that has a spiritual dimension linked to belief in God, but which, to a lesser extent, is experienced as a belief in a personal God.³⁸ However, the vicarious function is, according to her, increasingly difficult to fulfill at a time when people approach the church as they approach other social institutions, with claims for quality and service, with the expectation of logic and with expectations of being able to influence the various services offered. Edgardh sees growing expectations in society for quick experiences and results; few people persistently attend church services each Sunday to gain a deeper understanding of the faith that worship embodies.³⁹

3.2 Conscious Participation

Influences from the liturgical movement made it a fundamental concern for the Second Vatican Council that the liturgy should be understood by the worshiping congregation:⁴⁰

In this restoration, both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; the Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease ...⁴¹

34. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 138–39.

35. Marie Rosenius, *Spänning och samspel: En orientering i ecklesiologi och liturgi* (Skellefteå: Artos & Norma, 2019) 98; Åke Andréén, “Liturgiska utvecklingstendenser i världens kyrkor under de senaste decennierna,” in *Svenska kyrkans gudstjänst: Huvudgudstjänster och övriga gudstjänster*. Bilaga 1. Gudstjänst i dag. Liturgiska utvecklingslinjer, SOU 1974:67 (Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet, 1974) 14–16.

36. Brodd, “Liturgy Crossing Frontiers,” 42–43; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 139.

37. Ninna Edgardh, *Gudstjänst i tiden: Gudstjänstliv i Svenska kyrkan 1968–2008* (Lund: Arcus, 2010) 133.

38. Edgardh, *Gudstjänst i tiden*, 133–34; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 139.

39. Edgardh, *Gudstjänst i tiden*, 134.

40. Danneels, “Liturgy Forty Years After the Second Vatican Council,” 11; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 140.

41. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 21.

However, if the liturgy—in line with *Sacrosanctum Concilium*—should be able to be the source and summit of all ecclesial activity,⁴² conscious participation (*participatio conscia*) according to Stufflester means more than simply understanding texts, prayers, and songs. The focus is on the deeper spiritual dimensions of the liturgy.⁴³

Susan K. Wood writes about participatory knowledge of God within the liturgy, which is more analogous to kinesthetic knowledge than to rational knowledge.⁴⁴ She describes it as an incarnate, embodied knowledge that is mediated through the symbol system of the liturgy. It does not take place individually but in the context of community.⁴⁵ Wood emphasizes that the knowledge of God in the liturgy is not an object that is acquired, it is a broadened relationship and horizon; a process by which something new is created within people.⁴⁶ Worshipers enter, according to her, an environment through the liturgy which shapes their vision, relationships, and knowing.⁴⁷ Godfried Danneels also rejects the image of liturgy as an object of knowledge. He describes liturgy instead as a source of knowledge: it is the epiphany of God's dealings with his church and contains as such a core (mystery) which is ungraspable. He points out that the core can only be entered in faith, and consequently, the liturgy remains incomprehensible to those outside of the faith.⁴⁸

The symbolic language of the liturgy is often presented as problematic in the ambition to make worship understandable, but the experience of liturgy as incomprehensible has, according to Danneels, not as much to do with liturgical symbols.⁴⁹ Rather, the problem is a loss of the symbolic universe in which the symbols operate. A liturgical symbol that is removed from its context can, according to him, be likened to “a fish out of water” that has been deprived of much of its vitality.⁵⁰

The didactic aim of the liturgy is, according to Romano Guardini, “that of teaching the soul not to see purposes everywhere, not to be too conscious of the end it wishes to attain, not to be desirous of being over clever and grown-up, but to understand simplicity in life.”⁵¹ He emphasizes that the liturgy has no purpose, it is not a means adapted to

42. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.

43. Stufflester, “The Many Meanings of ‘Active Participation’,” 155–56. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 140.

44. Susan K. Wood, “Participatory Knowledge of God in the Liturgy,” *Studia Liturgica: An International Ecumenical Review for Liturgical Research and Renewal* 29.1 (1999): 30; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 141.

45. Wood, “Participatory Knowledge of God in the Liturgy,” 29–30; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 141.

46. Wood, “Participatory Knowledge of God in the Liturgy,” 30; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 141.

47. Wood, “Participatory Knowledge of God in the Liturgy,” 29; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 141.

48. Danneels, “Liturgy Forty Years After the Second Vatican Council,” 13; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 141–42.

49. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 142.

50. Danneels, “Liturgy Forty Years After the Second Vatican Council,” 14; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 142.

51. Romano Guardini, “The Playfulness of the Liturgy,” in *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology: A Reader*, ed. Dwight W. Vogel (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000) 44.

attain a certain end. “[The liturgy] does not exist for the sake of humanity, but for the sake of God,” it is, according to him, an end in and of itself.⁵²

4. “Do” and “Active Participation”

4.1. Participation in the Sense of “Do”

Participation in the sense of “do” means, according to Modéus, “practical participation”; that is, “having a task” such as “carrying a candle, reading a text, or praying the intercession.”⁵³

This understanding harmonizes in some respect with the visions of the early modern liturgical movement. Lambert Beauduin’s 1909 lecture was already advocating for active participation of the laity in the liturgy,⁵⁴ and in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the call for active participation of the laity recurs several times. Many churches have been inspired by this vision of the liturgy, including the Church of Sweden.⁵⁵ While priests in this church were previously perceived as sole actors in worship (in a horizontal sense), many different concrete tasks are today managed by laity.⁵⁶

However, understandings of liturgical participation are colored by predominant ideologies through history. As I have actualized in previous research, the strong individualism that characterizes contemporary society could have influenced the understanding of active participation in accordance with “do.” There is a tension between the individual autonomy emphasized in individualism and the theological understanding of the church as the body of Christ.⁵⁷ We can of course, like Edgardh, speak of a kinship between individualism and a Christian emphasis on the unique value and responsibility of each individual, as well as with the tradition of Protestantism and pietism that emphasized the authority of the individual before God, but there is, as she notes, also an inherent contradiction:

Christian faith presupposes interdependence between human beings, just as it presupposes the dependence of all creation on God. Rather than the autonomy and self-determination of the individual, Christian faith is based on heteronomy, that is, the subordination of the individual to an external authority that ultimately comes from God.⁵⁸

A tension between individualism and Christian faith is also actualized by J. D. Crichton. He shows how the sociological term “face-to-face relationship” can be understood theologically in the church: that members of a congregation like the analogy of the body of Christ are persons bound together by faith and love.⁵⁹ This, according to him,

52. Guardini, “The Playfulness of the Liturgy,” 41; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 143.

53. Modéus, *Längta efter liv*, 94. My interpretation.

54. Pecklers, *Worship*, 91–92; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 144.

55. Stephan Borgehammar, “Om de många sätten att delta i en gudstjänst,” in *Kristen gudstjänst: En introduktion*, ed. Stina Fallberg Sundmark (Skellefteå: Artos & Norma, 2018) 215.

56. Edgardh, *Gudstjänst i tiden*, 93.

57. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 144–45.

58. Edgardh, *Gudstjänst i tiden*, 42. My translation.

59. J. D. Crichton, “The Church as Community,” in *The Complete Library of Christian Worship: Volume 2. Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship*, ed. Robert E. Webber (Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group, 1994) 360; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 145.

means that church members need to act as a community if the relationship is to be strengthened. Crichton sees an internal contradiction in the phrase “private acts of public worship.”⁶⁰ The theme is also raised in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: “Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the church, which is the ‘sacrament of unity’.”⁶¹

Without an understanding of liturgy as incarnational, striving for active participation tends to result in worship like a forum.⁶² The ideal of active participation, as Stephan Borgehammar describes it, can “lose its proper, spiritual content” if it is “reduced to democratization and a distribution of practical tasks.”⁶³

4.2 Active Participation

In the article “The Many Meanings of ‘Active Participation’,” Stuflessler gives a detailed description of active participation and its meaning with reference to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. The active participation recommended by the Council is, according to him, not limited to purely abstract inwardness, it also reveals itself outwardly:⁶⁴

To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence.⁶⁵

“A ‘movement of externalization’ whose criterion is ‘everybody should have something to do’” is, however, according to Stuflessler, not based on the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.⁶⁶ When the Council argues for active participation (*participatio actiosa*) in worship, internal and external participation must be seen as a balanced entity.⁶⁷ Stuflessler points out that the word *actiosus* itself clearly illustrates the tension between internal and external participation: “As with all Latin words ending in ‘-osus’, *actiosus* means the state of being internally filled with something; in this case, with activity.”⁶⁸

Danneels offers a similar argument. He emphasizes the importance that active participation is situated within a contemplative attitude—that is, an orientation towards God with a readiness to listen.⁶⁹ Active participation as a gift to the people of God is otherwise, according to him, in risk of imperceptibly making liturgy the creative terrain and “property” of individuals. Danneels holds that it can go so far that liturgy-as-a-cult is

60. Ibidem.

61. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 26.

62. Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 146.

63. Borgehammar, “Om de många sätten att delta i en gudstjänst,” 215–16. My translation.

64. Stuflessler, “The Many Meanings of ‘Active Participation’,” 157; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 146.

65. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 30.

66. Stuflessler, “The Many Meanings of ‘Active Participation’,” 157.

67. Stuflessler, “The Many Meanings of ‘Active Participation’,” 156; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 146.

68. Stuflessler, “The Many Meanings of ‘Active Participation’,” 157.

69. Danneels, “Liturgy Forty Years After the Second Vatican Council,” 10; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 147.

turned into a social event, and that the real subject of the liturgy is no longer Christ, but the human person or the worshiping congregation.⁷⁰

5. “The Late Modern Liturgical Movement”

The comparison has shown that secular ideologies and trends influence contemporary understandings of liturgical participation. The meanings here linked to the constructs of “opine,” “understand,” and “do” indicate an immanent and functional—rather than transcendent and substantial—view of liturgy. The understandings of liturgical participation in the examples from the Church of Sweden tend to be pragmatic and not based on reflective ecclesiology.

Secular ideologies and trends also influence ecclesiology. The understandings of liturgical participation here obtained from the Church of Sweden harmonize with the aforementioned idea of a democratically motivated folk church that emerged during the second half of the 1900s. It also harmonizes with the perspective on church as a service-oriented folk church, which arose at the same time. The employees of the church are supposedly tasked with creating an experience of participation in the worshiping congregation by adapting the liturgy to the cognitive abilities of each individual and to people’s need to be seen and heard. Participation therefore becomes something that the employees of the church should “enable” in the liturgy; rather than something that already exists in the liturgy through Christ—that is, through worship as sacramental event.

The understanding of liturgical participation that appears through the examples obtained from the Church of Sweden coincides in some sense with perspectives on liturgy and liturgical renewal that Senn links to modernism and an immanent image of God. Promoting participation is here about making the liturgy and liturgical language understandable, allowing people in the local community to control the liturgy directly or indirectly through “tailored” worships, and insert many tasks in the liturgy which anyone can perform. The latter strategy, like the former, focuses on all ages, but becomes particularly evident in the efforts to promote the participation of children. In a doctoral thesis from 2021, in which Karin Rubenson interviewed children and employees in five parishes in different parts of the Church of Sweden, three different models adopted by the congregations to enable children’s participation are described:

the “ministerial model,” where a relatively fixed group of children perform liturgical tasks on the basis of a rolling schedule; the “board model,” where children, when arriving at church services, are met by a board with a list of tasks to choose between; and “the spontaneous model,” where one of the worship leaders asks children who happen to come to worship if they, for example, want to carry something in the procession. The procession seems to primarily function in some congregations as a tool for including as many people as possible by expanding and duplicating the objects (such as the cross) that need to be carried.⁷¹ This echoes the immanent and functional view of the liturgy already discussed.

70. Danneels, “Liturgy Forty Years After the Second Vatican Council,” 8–9; Rosenius, *Delaktig i vilken mening?* 147.

71. Karin Rubenson, *Karnevalesk gudstjänst: Barns plats i kyrkans liturgi* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2021) 93–94.

5.1 A Reductionist View of Ordo

The service book in the Church of Sweden from 2018 suits the contemporary understandings of liturgy and of liturgical participation that this article has brought to the fore. The meaning of *ordo* in this service book tends to be reduced to the four main parts of the service (Gathering, Word, Meal, and Sending) which are here called “the basic action-patterns of the church service.”⁷² These have been considered by the Church of Sweden as sufficient to enable “recognition,” regardless of where the worship is celebrated.⁷³ Because of this reductionist view of *ordo*, a large number of optional elements and alternatives within the elements have been possible to incorporate into the central order of High Mass.⁷⁴ Although the order of the common worship in the service book has been reduced to the order of High Mass or Mass/Worship, it appears through the existence of many options to be a “picking box,” which harmonizes with the later liturgical movement Senn links to the postmodern generation and calls “Retrieval.” He describes it as a movement where disconnected material from various sources is brought into the church service and gives the service an eclectic character.⁷⁵ The current service book matches the ambition to create tailor-made worship services that provide space for different needs at the individual and parish level and efforts to implement participation strategies of various kinds. In a text from 2018, Mikael Löwegren describes the liturgical development as follows:

The Swedish High Mass—in definite form and singular—is a thing of the past. The Church of Sweden lives in an ecumenical and multi-religious context, and the differentiation within the denomination seems to continue to increase ... Obviously a previously very strong uniformity has been replaced by a great diversity and the faith expressed in the worship life of the Church of Sweden varies.⁷⁶

5.2 The Theological Language

An overall reflection based on the analysis of the article is that secular ideologies and trends not only affect the liturgical form but tend to erode the theological language itself. The central concepts in the early modern liturgical movement tend to unwittingly gain a different meaning in a secular country like Sweden. Participation is basically understood in the same way in liturgy as in secular contexts. The ways to understand liturgical participation are not necessarily based on the body of Christ analogy, but rather on immanent egalitarian values. Although these ecclesiological and interpersonal

72. *Kyrkohandbok för Svenska kyrkan: Antagen för Svenska kyrkan av 2017 års kyrkomöte. Del 1* (Uppsala: Svenska kyrkan, 2018) 10. My translation.

73. Kyrkomötet, Läronämndens yttrande 2017: 1y, *Kyrkohandbok för Svenska kyrkan del I*, 5. [The General Assembly, The Doctrinal Board’s opinion 2017: 1y, Church Manual for the Church of Sweden part I, 5].

74. Rosenius, *Spänning och samspel*, 112.

75. Senn, “Four Liturgical Movements,” 70–71.

76. Mikael Löwegren, “Gudstjänst i Svenska kyrkan,” in *Kristen gudstjänst: En introduktion*, ed. Stina Fallberg Sundmark (Skellefteå: Artos, 2018) 133–34. My translation.

perspectives are related to each other, a crucial dimension separating liturgy from ceremony tends to fade away. A loss of theological language greatly affects the church's ability to fulfill the visions of the early modern liturgical movement, even if it is not obvious to churches operating in highly secular countries such as Sweden. In a secular view, the visions themselves appear differently.

A central ambition of the liturgical movement in the early 1900s was to close the gap between the liturgy of the priest *and* the liturgy of the laity.⁷⁷ This gap was primarily caused by the language, which was incomprehensible to many. Latin, according to critics, prevented the congregation from fully experiencing the inner richness of worship. Language can still be seen as an obstacle in secular Sweden today. However, today it is not Latin that separates the liturgy of the priest from the liturgy of the laity; rather it is "a secular language" that conceptually separates the liturgy of Christ from the liturgy of individuals.

The religious individualism caused by the previous gap⁷⁸ has survived in secular shape and is tangible in the Church of Sweden, despite the ambitions of the early modern liturgical movement. Individualism, combined with inner church secularization, tends here to imbue the very understanding of church and liturgy. The church appears to be more one-sided, as the church of individuals and the liturgy in the sense of *ordo* is seen as an "open" order and a framework rather than juxtaposition and sacramental event.

As mentioned at the beginning of the article, it is possible to present the liturgical movement in plural. The ways to promote liturgical participation have shifted through history and the implicit perspectives on church and liturgy that the work for liturgical participation is based on have shifted as well. While the early modern liturgical movement was active from the early 1900s onwards, a new version of the movement seems to have increasingly taken over since the second half of the 1900s in folk churches in secular countries such as Sweden. The question as to whether the liturgical movement is a continuing movement can be answered differently, depending on how the liturgical movement is interpreted and understood. If the liturgical movement as a phenomenon is supposed to include the more contemporary understandings of liturgical participation presented here, as well as worship renewal in modern secular countries of today, a new term is required that clarifies changes over time and defines this phase. This movement can be called "the late modern liturgical movement." While the early modern liturgical movement was driven by an effort to recover the liturgy in the sense of service of the people based on the body of Christ analogy, the endeavor of the "late modern liturgical movement" is different.

In ecumenical discussions in the late 1960s, a desacralization of the liturgy was understood as a strategy and solution to a crisis concerning decreasing participation in the church service.⁷⁹ This strategy can be seen as a background to the immanent


77. Danneels, "Liturgy Forty Years After the Second Vatican Council," 7–8.

78. Ragnar Askmark, "Den romersk-katolska gudstjänsten efter Andra Vatikanconciliet," in *Svenska kyrkans gudstjänst: Huvudgudstjänster och övriga gudstjänster. Bilaga 1. Gudstjänst idag. Liturgiska utvecklingslinjer*, SOU 1974:67 (Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet, 1974) 229–30; Rosenius, *Spänning och samspel*, 93–94.

79. Brodd, "Liturgy Crossing Frontiers," 46.

understanding of liturgical participation that the article has highlighted and the theologically hollowed language. The ecclesiologies that dominate the Church of Sweden as a folk church seem to contribute to the continuation of desacralization. In accordance with perspectives linked in this article to the so-called “late modern liturgical movement,” the image of liturgy is reduced to an activity among other ecclesial activities whose priority and justification are determined by the interests of individuals. This changed understanding of the liturgy is evident not only in practice but also in current research on liturgy in the Church of Sweden. One example from this research is the view that liturgy is no longer necessary for the existence of the church and can be replaced by other activities that better suit the wishes of the individual.⁸⁰ Through an immanent and individualistic understanding of church and liturgy, the fundamental understanding of the liturgy as decisive for the creation and fulfillment of the Church fades away.

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80. Per Pettersson, *Utmaningar för Svenska kyrkans identitet: När behovet av kyrkan ökar men söndagsgudstjänsterna minskar* (Karlstad: Karlstads stift, 2013) 118; Caroline Gustavsson, “Delaktighet i praktiken: Söndagens huvudgudstjänst som utmaning och möjlighet,” *Tidsskrift för Praktisk Teologi Nordic Journal of Practical Theology* 37.2 (2020): 56; Jonatan Sverker, “Forskare: Välj Jesus istället för gudstjänst,” *Kyrkans Tidning*, March 2, 2023, <https://www.kyrkanstidning.se/nyhet/forskare-svart-att-na-ut-med-gudstjanst> (accessed May 17, 2023).