

RECONCILING EVANGELISTIC METHODS WITH WORSHIP MODELS A CONSIDERATION OF APOLOGETIC APPROACHES IN THE WORSHIP FRAMEWORK



Gregory Woodward, Ph.D.

*Dr. Woodward is Assistant Professor of Conducting, Chair of Church Music Ministries
at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
New Orleans, Louisiana*

The following paper was originally presented at the Southwest Regional Evangelical Theological Society Meeting in the spring of 2011. Because I was a guest among scholarly theologians, I began the presentation with what I viewed to be appropriate delimitations.

Before I begin, a few delimitations are in order. I resonate with Stapert's reluctance in presenting a book on the songs of the early church.¹ Stapert explains that he is approaching the subject as one who would not be considered a specialist in the field of early worship practice and yet saw an obvious need for research in early worship practices. Likewise, C. S. Lewis warns his readers that he is not approaching his study on the Psalms from the standpoint of a theologian.² So I too admit to you that I come to the topic of worship theology as one involved in training worship leaders, one holding music education degrees, and one who teaches a leadership class on the subject of worship at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary but not as a theologian.

In terms of theological bias I bring to the subject, I was raised in a Southern Baptist worship setting with my primary formative years occurring in the 1980's and 90's. The glory of God was never questioned but not particularly emphasized as the primary focus of worship. Evangelistic meetings hold a prominent place in my childhood and adolescent memories of worship. I do not believe I ever sought to distinguish what was worship from what was evangelistic. As I moved from being a part-time worship leader to a full-time worship leader and youth pastor in 1999, I began to explore worship from a philosophical standpoint. In fact I have engaged in a decade long self-evaluation process in relationship to a philosophy of worship. This process began in earnest during a period of time when I worked under the leadership of the Dr. Eric Erskine,

¹Calvin Stapert, *A New Song for an Old World: Musical Thought in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 10.

²C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms: The Celebrated Musings on One of the Most Intriguing Books of the Bible* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 1958), 1.

pastor at First Baptist Church Havana, Fl. In many ways Eric introduced me to the Reformed perspective, which was an aspect of his training at Dallas Theological Seminary.

I will admit that I began to recognize, even at that time, that the Reformed tradition perhaps did a better job of emphasizing a theology of worship and particular worship forms that match Reformed theology than did the traditions of my childhood and youth.³ I will also admit that while I have not been converted to the Reformed tradition, I am consciously influenced by the thoughts of this tradition, particularly in regard to worship.⁴

Recent writings reveal that there is a perceived problem regarding the proper aim in the corporate worship experience. Ligon Duncan states that “worship is not evangelism (even though many churches confuse the two).”⁵ Vernon Whaley and David Wheeler recently produced a book that directly addresses the relationship between evangelism and worship.⁶ A recent project at New Orleans Baptist Seminary revealed the sensitivity associated with the purpose of the corporate gathering being about evangelism or worship.⁷ I, too, have wrestled with the question of whether the corporate gathering experience should be mainly about worship or evangelism. I tend to be on the side of worship being the primary driver of the corporate experience, while recognizing that in any given service one should anticipate the movement of the Spirit toward salvation.⁸ At the same time, I affirm that it is the leadership team’s responsibility to be committed to a clear articulation of the gospel in various ways.

In spite of my own view regarding the priority of worship in the corporate gathering, I hope to present a valid case for rethinking one’s apologetic approach in the corporate worship setting, particularly if one views that experience as being primarily an evangelistic opportunity. Certainly,

³Another important aspect of my journey to understand worship began for me during these years as Dr. Carl Peters introduced me to the writings of Robert Webber, Associate Pastor for Music, Worship and Discipleship at Anchor City Baptist Church, Lexington, KY; During a 7 year tenure at Truett-McConnell College in Georgia I continued to understand the importance of Webber’s influence through the mentoring I received from Dr. Jon Duncan, Music and Worship Specialist for the Georgia Baptist Convention.

⁴Since arriving in New Orleans my theological views continue to be shaped by the excellent teaching of Dr. Bob Stewart through two basic theology classes.

⁵Ligon Duncan, “Traditional Evangelical Worship,” in *Perspectives on Christian Worship: Five Views*, ed. Matthew Penson (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2009), 120.

⁶Vernon M. Whaley and David Wheeler, *The Great Commission to Worship: Biblical Principles for Worship-based Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2011).

⁷David A. Hasker, “Developing a Strategy to Transition First Baptist Church, Melbourne, Fl, from Venue Worship to a Multigenerational Worship Model” (D.Min. project, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 47-48.

⁸Warren Wiersbe, *Real Worship: Playground, Battleground, or Holy Ground* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 2000), 224; Wiersbe provides a compelling argument for the priority of evangelism.

the ideas that will be presented are also valid for those who might see evangelism as a secondary goal of the worship experience. I will explore this issue through the lens of Boa and Bowman's excellent taxonomic reduction of apologetic methods in *Faith Has Its Reasons*.⁹ Each apologetic category presented by Boa and Bowman will be considered for its merits in a worship setting.

Reformed Apologetics and Worship

The Reformed tradition is quite important in the development of worship practices among evangelicals. For instance, Luther's allowance for artistically compelling celebrative worship experiences bespeaks a richer musical foundation than early Baptist worship practices. Particular aspects of the Lutheran movement were at least evangelistically sensitive. Luther was a champion for worship that was accessible for common persons. Furthermore, Luther's encouragement of liturgies that matched local worship inclinations hints of the cry for relevance by those who would be in favor of evangelistic worship presentations.¹⁰ In regard to Calvin, Grout, Burkholder, and Paliska compare late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Calvinist polyphonic settings to "popular Christian music."¹¹

Boa and Bowman present the modern Reformed apologetic method as "two streams" flowing from the foundational work of Calvin: Scottish and Dutch Calvinism.¹² The presuppositionalist approach appears to be a landing point in Boa and Bowman's description of Reformed apologetics, and in relationship to this study the presuppositionalist approach is quite appealing in terms of a marriage between worship and apologetics.¹³ The elegance of this relationship is found in the consistent clarity of expressing the chief aim of man, which is consistent with the Reformed tradition in general. Furthermore, although other areas of Reformed theology may be problematic for a given worship leader, this same leader may still find ideal aims in considering the presuppositionalist approach for believers and nonbelievers. Consider, for instance, how the presuppositionalist approach can affect the attitude of the worshipers as they enter the worship setting: Van Till suggested that one's presuppositions color all that is observed, so the confidence of a believer entering the gathering with a filter toward the Sovereignty of Christ and the beauty of His Word would appear to result in a most excellent mindset toward praise.

⁹Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic, 2001).

¹⁰J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2010), 214.

¹¹Grout et. al, 221; these polyphonic settings would not be performed in church settings.

¹²Boa and Bowman, 222 and 227.

¹³*Ibid.*, 259-283; Boa and Bowman actually use a phrase from Van Til as the title of one of their four chapters committed to the Reformed approach; after an introductory chapter, Van Til and Clark are referenced primarily with references to Plantinga being the main exception.

The Reformed apologetic approach of Van Til's student, Francis Schaeffer, raises other considerations in the worship context. Namely, Schaeffer's extension of the presuppositionalist approach toward including a Christianly view of history and the arts in history provides a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of one's apologetic approach in worship.¹⁴ A major theme in Schaeffer's review of history is seeking a resolution to the ever-present philosophical problem of reconciling universals and specifics. In relationship to this philosophic problem, Schaeffer presents a disparate perspective on reality that emerges in the Middle Ages.¹⁵ The higher view (universals), which is labeled grace, emanates from the Creator, and includes absolutes. The lower view (specifics), which is labeled nature, emerges from man's perspective, and includes a scientific understanding of that which is visible. What begins in the Middle Ages as a reasonably reconcilable view of reality ends with an irreconcilable upper and lower view of reality, with non-reason or faith leading to hope and reason leading to despair, which occurs in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ According to Schaeffer the Reformed movement came the closest to providing a cohesive solution to the problem of reconciling universals and specifics.¹⁷

Schaeffer's explanation of the dualist forms of approaching truth from the Middle Ages through the modern age may serve as a mechanism for evaluating the inadequacy of corporate worship experiences that embody the same dualistic mindset. For many worship leaders and participants, the song portion of the service is seen as the entry point to faith, with reason playing little to no role; whereas, the sermon is the rational path to faith. Rather, recognition of God's transcendent underpinnings for all thought should under gird the cohesiveness of the entire service.

How might one begin a service in the Reformed tradition assuming there may be some consideration of the liturgical calendar? For example, for Sunday of March 20, 2011 Rom. 4:1-4 is a focal passage in more than one liturgical guide. Thus, righteousness through faith might be the final destination of the music portion of the service. It could begin with a song that speaks of God as Creator and reflects a "basic" belief in God, a belief which Alvin Plantinga emphasizes as

¹⁴Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005); At the outset of *How Should We Then Live*, Schaeffer appears to be using the word "presupposition" in a manner similar to that of Van Til, but his full explanation of presuppositions and the general content of the book reveal that he is more specifically referring to a particular view of European history from the fall of Rome through the 20th century.

¹⁵Schaeffer, 55; Boa and Bowman, 447; Boa and Bowman note the influence of Herman Dooyeweerd on Schaeffer in relationship to disparate views of reality beginning in the Middle Ages.

¹⁶Schaeffer, 55 and 163.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 84.

a legitimate view for the Christian philosopher.¹⁸ If Plantinga is correct regarding the immediate nature of this knowledge of God, it could be that the singing of Creator God with the low pipes resonating on “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”¹⁹ or bass guitar providing a firm aural foundation on “How Great is Our God” is an ideal apologetic for the Spirit’s confirmation of this Romans 1 truth.²⁰

“Jesus Messiah” written by Chris Tomlin would be an excellent choice for the song of confession, reminding believers of righteousness imputed and convicting the lost of their need for righteousness.²¹ The service could then transition toward an offering of self and tithes to the Lord through a modern version of “Blessed Assurance.”²² The worship leader could then offer a brief reminder that the promise of blessing over Abraham came through faith (Gen. 22: 15-18), which under girds the Romans passage. “Come Thou Fount” might be an ideal choice to complete this worship set.²³ The clarity of the prophetic passage in Genesis connected to Christian hymnody within the larger context of a clear progression of theology through worship songs resonates with Paul’s call for clarity in 1 Cor. 14: 22-25. Thus, a worship ministry of clear proclamation edifies the church and brings sinners to repentance.

Evidentialist Apologetics and Worship

To the extent that a Reformed approach, rooted in an unquestioning authority of Scripture, might appear to be most appropriate as a mindset for planning and experiencing the worship experience, so the evidentialist approach might at first glance appear to be the least suited toward reconciling worship with an apologetic approach. After all, we would hope that most of the Christians attending our services do not have to be convinced again and again that the Resurrection did indeed happen. But, I have observed that a powerful aesthetic is often involved in a clear presentation of evidentialist arguments for the existence of God and the Resurrection.

¹⁸Boa and Bowman, 296-97; F. S. C. Northrop, *The Logic of the Sciences and Humanities* (New York: Meridian, 1947; reprint, New York: Meridian, 1959), 50, 111, 142, 195. Boa and Bowman explain that by “basic” Plantinga means a belief that is not “inferred from other beliefs;” Northrop makes a similar observation in separating scientific knowledge that is known directly by intuition from scientific concepts that are formed through reasoning: “concept by intuition” versus “concepts by postulation.”

¹⁹Henry J. Van Dyke, “Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee” (Public Domain, 1907).

²⁰Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, and Jesse Reeves, “How Great Is Our God” (Brentwood, TN: EMI Christian Music, 2004).

²¹Chris Tomlin, et al., “Jesus Messiah” (Brentwood, TN: EMI Christian Music, 2008).

²²Fanny Crosby, “Blessed Assurance Jesus is Mine” (Public Domain, 1873).

²³Robert Robinson, “Come Thou Fount” (Public Domain, 1758).

For example, a presentation by Craig Keener on his research on miracles encouraged a worshipful response when he presented his paper at the New Orleans Seminary campus in February, 2011.²⁴

How can music match this approach? Although it would be possible to offer short evidentialist statements or powerpoint slides between songs, the evidentialist argument is typically built in a rich informational manner that would not be conducive to poetic rendering. However, a themed service connecting to an evidentialist sermon to follow could carry a strong cohesive element. For example, consider the following worship set preceding a sermon on miracles:

All Creatures of Our God and King
Power in the Blood
Famous One
23²⁵

This worship set begins with a song reflecting on God as Creator, thus establishing Creation as a miracle calling for continuous wonder. The healing provided at the cross, “Power in the Blood,” is emphasized as a song of reflection and confession. “Famous One” describes Christ as one who is revealed through nature and miracles, thus connecting the transcendence and immanence evident in the person of Christ. Matt Papa’s “23” is a powerful song of healing. I personally can testify to this reality as my wife and I listened to this song during a long drive to commemorate the life of a loved one. The beauty of Matt’s setting is that it faithfully reflects the Psalm, a practice that continues to be an integral part of worship from the early church to the present.

Classical Apologetics and Worship

While Boa and Bowman argue that evidentialism emphasizes the methodological relationship between theology and apologetics, classical apologetics may be most aligned with worship in terms of form among the apologetic approaches discussed in this paper (i.e., the classical approach to apologetics may provide the best model for matching the story form tradition of Christian worship). Worship in the OT and NT is fundamentally a retelling of salvific events: Passover being the story of exodus remembered, resulting in continual rejoicing before Yahweh and the Lord’s Supper being the story of Calvary remembered, resulting in continual rejoicing over the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

The classical approach, as described by Boa and Bowman, seeks to establish a theism and then seeks to build a case for Christ. In a parallel sense, the worship planner seeks to establish God as

²⁴Craig Keener, “Are Miracles a Problem for Trusting the New Testament?” (paper presented in association with Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, February 24, 2011).

²⁵Francis of Assisi, “All Creatures of Our God and King” (Public Domain, 1225); Lewis E. Jones, “There is Power in the Blood” (Public Domain, 1899); Chris Tomlin and Jesse Reeves, “Famous One” (Brentwood, TN: EMI Christian Music, 2004); Matt Papa, “23” (San Clemente, CA: Maranatha! Music, 2006).

Lord of all creation, holy, sovereign, just, omniscient, and omnipotent toward the beginning of the service. Then the songs and Scripture readings move toward the revelation of Christ.²⁶ The centrality of Christ in the song portion of the service is particularly important in evangelical churches that rarely present the Eucharist.

This two-part framework on worship provides the worship leader with a great deal of freedom in regard to song choices. The arts can be incredibly useful for classical apologists partially because arguments can be made with greater subtlety. For example, a worship set might begin with “Indescribable,”²⁷ which aligns nicely with an ontological argument as espoused in the “maximally great” being among all possible worlds theory espoused by William Lane Craig.²⁸ While it is completely acceptable for Laura Story to say that the wonders of Creation are indescribable, the same argument would not be acceptable in making an apologetic argument for the existence for God. While the artist is free to say things the serious philosopher cannot say in an official capacity, the apologist’s argument completes the sense of wonder described in the worship art. In reality, both statements (ontological argument and worshipful sense of awe in view of Creation) are difficult to deny. In keeping with a rational movement through the service, “Give Us Clean Hands” is the logical response for sinners who recognize the holiness of God.²⁹ This song also transitions the worshipper or lost person toward the only solution for the human desire to be clean emotionally and spiritually. “Beautiful Savior” is another worship song that marries well with the classical progression of thought at this point in the service.³⁰ To review, at this point in a classical apologetic argument, one is seeking to provide evidence for God’s insertion of hope in a hopeless situation (i.e., logic of Holy God dealing with utterly sinful people would lead to pessimism without the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection). “Beautiful Savior” reminds the congregation of their hope and possibly enables the lost soul to see that this ultimate solution is simply beautiful.

Fideist Apologetics and Worship

I admit that I was probably the least favorably disposed toward fideism as a useful apologetic in worship before beginning this study. My primary concern is that many churches that seek to use their worship service as an outreach event choose songs only for their aesthetic or cultural appeal with too little concern for a rigorous theological approach in worship that provides a solid apologetic.

²⁶This two-part framework could be viewed as a variation of the standard two-part form.

²⁷Laura Story, “Indescribable” (Brentwood, TN: EMI Christian Music, 2004).

²⁸William Lane Craig, “The Ontological Argument,” in *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview*, ed. Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 128.

²⁹Charlie Hall, “Give Us Clean Hands” (Brentwood, TN: EMI Christian Music, 2000).

³⁰Stuart Townend, “Beautiful Savior” (Brentwood, TN: EMI Christian Music, 1998).

As the name suggests, fideism is an apologetic approach that emphasizes faith over reason. Boa and Bowman admit that fideism is usually applied in a negative sense.³¹ However, they present a legitimate fideist approach as one that emphasizes faith over reason yet falls short of rejecting reason, and they view Kierkegaard as providing the primary foundation for fideism.

From Kierkegaard's perspective, faith over reason was the best response for the enlightened humanist. According to Schaeffer, Kierkegaard believed that reason (the primary tool of enlightened humanism) always leads to despair, thus "optimistic answers" are only available through faith, which is above reason.³²

The potential for the fideist approach, specifically in relationship to worship, may be seen most clearly in the secular continuation of Kierkegaard's thoughts. Specifically this potential will be examined in the relationship between fideism and art. It is interesting to note that the artistic movements of Kierkegaard's era were very much a reaction against enlightened thought. As the philosophical pendulum shifted in Europe from the triumph of reason to a recognition of a spiritual reality, artists became the new priests of Europe. This can be seen clearly in the cult following of Goethe or Wagner. Thus within the Christian context, art became the best tool for igniting faith based on reasonable principles without using reason.

Particularly the existentialists, the secular disciples of Kierkegaard in the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, discovered the power of art to convey their ideas. Ravi Zacharias explains this connection between existentialist philosophy and art. The following quotes come from separate lectures by Zacharias, the first referring to Nietzsche as perhaps the modern originator of the wise combination of art and philosophy:

He may well have been the bridge between academic philosophy and artistic philosophy because today many young people may say they are not interested in philosophy but their songs philosophize, their movies philosophize, so they are coming up with a philosophy that is not born by studying long treatises on ideas, but they are philosophizing in the sense, they want to tell you what life is all about.³³

³¹Boa and Bowman, 338.

³²Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 163; Boa and Bowman, 349; Boa and Bowman explain that Kierkegaard saw even the potential triumph of reasoned arguments for Christianity (e.g., historical arguments) as inadequate if the ultimate aim is faith.

³³Ravi Zacharias, "The Loss of Truth: Part One," mp3, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries [Online]; available at <http://www.rzim.org/resources/listen/justthinking.aspx?archive=1&page=20>; accessed on March 6, 2011.

The second quote emphasizes the power of connecting art and philosophy:

But let's face it, most human beings will never crack open a book by a Socrates, or Plato, or Aristotle. And have no particular interest on Kant's view of ethics. How do most people today really come to their belief systems? . . . I believe today they come to their belief systems by an invasion of the imagination through the arts, which is a second level in philosophy.³⁴

Zacharias goes on to explain that existentialism came to be delivered primarily through the arts in higher education by the 1960's and 1970's. He suggests that the current "popular mind" comes to philosophy primarily through the arts.³⁵

Even as a musician, it is exactly this artistic framework that seems to flow naturally from the fideist approach that concerns me most. I prefer to get my theology from the Bible primarily and secondly from trustworthy books or persons (lecture setting or informal discussion). But I have also been fascinated for some time with God's apparent plan to use stories to communicate fundamental Old Testament truths in a worship setting, namely the Passover and the Festival of Booths. Do we believe God was incapable of passing on information to Israel primarily through propositional explanation—again, this is what I prefer—assuming that many of you share my affinity for written and spoken truth?³⁶

To review, I was most doubtful prior to writing this article that fideism would provide a substantial apologetic. Yet, two valid points remain from the fideist approach: 1) the continued legitimacy of Kierkegaard and by extension Karl Barth's argument against modern thought and 2) the recognition that art plays a critical if not a primary role in defining the philosophical systems of the twenty-first century.

Furthermore, I would suggest that what is to be gained in considering fideism is not primarily content but an "infrastructure" for delivery.³⁷ Boa and Bowman support the fideist idea of infrastructure in a different sense: a life lived for Christ, particularly characterized with love, should be an important aspect of our apologetic.³⁸ I would suggest that this high view of ethics be compared to infrastructure in the sense that our ethic is not the message itself.

³⁴Ravi Zacharius, "Is Atheism Dead, Is God Alive," mp3, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries [Online]; available at <http://www.rzim.org/resources/listen/letmypeoplethink.aspx?archive=1&pid=1965>; accessed 6 March 2011.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Please note that this argument can be made in accordance with Scripture. Many sections of Scripture are presented in story form. Of course, a counterargument can be made that some of the most crucial aspects of Scripture are presented as careful explanations in propositional form.

³⁷Zacharias, "Is Atheism Dead?" Zacharias refers to an "infrastructure of the arts."

³⁸Boa and Bowman, 480 and 489.

Integrating Apologetic Approaches in Worship

In seeking to combine the approaches listed above, the primary concern is a thoughtful approach toward choosing materials for a given worship service and toward presenting worship materials over a season or year. Again, the use of Boa and Bowman's comprehensive approach to apologetics proves most useful. The manner in which they highlight various combinations of the four apologetic approaches, including specific examples of which approach to use for which specific apologetic scenarios, is certainly thoughtful. Furthermore, their reasonable recognition of value within each approach encourages individuals who might be either purposively narrow in their apologetic approach or unwittingly narrow because of limited reading and experience to equip themselves with a broad range of apologetic tools. Similarly, worship leaders are often limited in their apologetic approach because of a commitment to a particular worship format, limited reading on the subject, or limited experience in various forms of worship. The primary admonition for these leaders is: "Be more thoughtful in your approach to worship content."

As stated above, the Fideist approach can be integrated with all the approaches by simply recognizing the power of art in worship. Theologians who fail to recognize this reality do so to their peril. I applaud the movement among Reformed church planters to include relevant art in their presentations. As a general caution regarding extremes, I would warn against the use of artistic presentations simply for their own sake. Worship leaders may be limited in their use of artistic mediums based on church size and culture, but there should be a relentless commitment to excellence regardless of accessible mediums. Thus, a thoughtful approach toward using artistic mediums should be a regular part of evaluating the effectiveness of one's apologetic approach in worship. Indeed, there appears to be a common acceptance of the importance of artistic mediums by young pastors, but a comprehensive approach to presenting the gospel does not appear to be as pervasive. The inherent logic of the Reformed and Classical approaches may be best suited to a systematic gospel presentation.

Another direct connection of the Fideist approach to various worship settings can be deduced from Witherington's recognition of worship as the highest ethic.³⁹ As stated previously, Fideists highlight ethics as a primary source of one's apologetic. Thus, literally saying in corporate worship that loving God through worship is the highest ethic encourages the non-believer toward a crisis of belief. The Reformed perspective fits well with this call for worship as the highest ethic for the following two reasons: 1) The God of the Bible is not to be questioned but rather recognized as the Triune God and worshipped, and 2) the chief aim of man is emphasized.

The Reformed emphasis on liturgy as a systematic vehicle for addressing the full counsel of God's Word on various life issues provides a thorough and thoughtful apologetic approach. The story form of worship, emphasized above in relation to classical apologetics, offers a weekly

³⁹Ben Witherington III, *We Have Seen His Glory* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann, 2010), 7-8; Witherington clearly has established himself as an evidentialist, and yet his emphasis on ethics that flowing naturally from his theological disposition reveals some connection with fideism.

framework for beginning worship with the concept of transcendence and ending with the concept of immanence.⁴⁰ The sustained history of the liturgy would suggest to us that people do not grow tired of hearing and more importantly participating in the story of Holy God creating humans, humans becoming aware of their sin, Christ atoning for human sin, humans praising Christ for His victory over the grave and our sin, and humans anticipating eternal worship that has already begun.

The repeated story form itself appears to bring together the classical approach and Reformed approach in an interesting manner. Classical apologists clearly value logic and consistently reveal their commitment to proving God's existence and the legitimacy of the biblical record of Christ. Presuppositionalists argue that logic itself proves God's existence,⁴¹ which would include the logic of the classical approach to apologetics. One could also say that the Bible and by extension history presents the Triune truth in the most logical manner, which matches the progression of thought in the classical tradition. Thus, the logic of the story form of worship is the most glorious progression of logic because of the unparalleled result of the logical progression. By extension, the wisdom and the beauty of the redemption plan (reason at its best) is the primary indication of God's existence, if one adheres to the transcendental argument, among all possible arguments from reason both individually and collectively.

The suggestion that the story form be repeated continuously also includes some aspects of evidentialism, which coincides with Boa and Bowman's recognition that classical apologists sometimes appear to be evidentialists when seeking to achieve their second aim, a proof for Christ. In some sense the evidentialist is hoping to overwhelm the lost soul with evidence of a Creator in the hopes that the person might recognize the existence of God as Creator.⁴² A person who has consistently heard songs about God as sovereign, all-powerful, Creator may be in a better position to recognize the truth of this prophetic message. This overwhelming evidence is most important for our children but could also play a role for the lost person who begins attending worship services seeking answers.

In conclusion, an eschatological perspective reminds us of the priority of worship. In Witherington's recent book on worship he emphasizes the following question in the final battle between God and Satan as recorded in Revelation 5: "Who shall humans worship?"⁴³ Although

⁴⁰I am not suggesting a rigid adherence to this model but rather a recognition of the logical presentation of this material.

⁴¹Boa and Bowman, 303; Boa and Bowman make reference to the transcendental argument, but a more basic explanation is included in Anderson's review of apologetics; Owen Anderson, Warfield, Kuyper, Van Til, and Plantinga on the Clarity of General and Revelation and Function of Apologetics (Lanham, MA: University Press of America, 2008), 55.

⁴²Boa and Bowman, 157-59, 171-73, and 211-12.

⁴³Witherington, 151.

most evangelicals likely recognize personal evangelism as the most effective approach within an apologetic framework, relational evangelism that leads the lost soul to a corporate worship setting should result in the realization that these strange new friends are indeed worshipping Jesus. In the more likely scenario, the person who leads one to Christ should look forward to the opportunity to invite this new convert to a corporate worship setting that reinforces the various aspects of the apologetic that might have been used to win this soul to Christ. Certainly, there should be no apology that the beauty of logic or evidences or presuppositionalist arguments will diminish once one becomes a Christian and encounters less convincing worship material. Rather, Witherington argues for the use of the best of Christian poetry in our corporate setting. Certainly new converts should be overwhelmed with the thoughtful presentation of the Word through various worship mediums both on a Sunday to Sunday basis and from a cyclical manner. Furthermore, new converts should be overwhelmed with the sheer beauty of poetry that tells the story that they have come to love in a manner that is beyond artistic; it resonates with Divine glory.