Plan for thesis on the additional use of sensory elements within traditional Anglican worship.

Preface

This dissertation explores the use of additional sensory prayer activities designed to complement the sensory elements already present in traditional worship. The sensory prayer activities that I have created aim to increase the worshipper’s sense of the embodied, transformative spirituality and teaching expressed in worship, and as a result increase the capacity for the worshipper to transfer this spirituality and teaching into their everyday lives, with the potential to manifest as a distinctive Christian lifestyle. The specific use of natural elements in these sensory prayer activities aim to enrich the participants sense of embodied relationship with Creation in a way that harmonises with the meaning of the Eucharist.

Introduction

Given that there is support for the belief that worship should have a practical outcome, and that the working out of one’s faith in everyday life is an important part of Christian witness, this dissertation will address some of the practical outcomes of Christian worship and thought, with particular reference to Eucharistic worship.

The key sensory presentation that I will be considering in this dissertation will be a mindful eating experience, which draws on the embodied elements of the Eucharist to focus on what I have called the five flavours of food. This mindful eating experience is designed to expand the meaning of the Eucharist into everyday eating; demonstrating how the practice of Eucharistic worship informs and shapes Christian attitudes towards food, hospitality and environmental concerns.

There are prayers in the service of the Eucharist which strongly imply that part of the purpose of the worship is to prepare the worshipper to live a distinctly Christian life. For example, the post communion prayer that leads up to the dismissal reads

‘Gracious God we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. May we, who share his body, live his risen life; we, who drink his cup, bring life to others; we, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so that we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.’

This prayer offers strong support for the claim that worship is expected to have a practical result within the life of those who take part in the Eucharist, as does the dismissal –

‘Go in the faith of Christ, to live and work to his praise and glory.’

The following chapters will explore ways in which the sentiments expressed in these prayers along with a detailed assessment of the embodied aspect of Eucharist worship might find support through the additional use of sensory prayer activities.

Literature to include:

Burns, S. (2006) *SCM Study Guide to Liturgy.*

Stinson, A. *Gathered to be Sent: Worship that Connects with Everyday Faith*.

Chapter One - The Eucharist

This chapter will cover the embodied and sensory nature of the Eucharist.

1. the eating and drinking of the bread and wine.
2. the community of the gathered people of faith.
3. the elements of bread and wine.
4. the grateful memory of Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross by those who take part in the eating.
5. the transformation of the bread and wine into the of sacrament of the body and blood of Christ – Creation transformed through the resurrection and looking forward to this fulfilment when Christ comes again.

This chapter will recognise the need to establish the connection between participation in the Eucharist and believer’s behaviour in the world.

Literature

Jones, C. (1997) The Eucharist. The New Testament. In: Bradshaw, P., Jones, C., Wainwright, G., Yarnold SJ, E. eds. *The Study of the Liturgy,* 3rd ed. London: SPCK, p.184-109.

Welker, M. (2000) *What Happens in Holy Communion?* Michigan: Grand Rapids.

* Welker teases out the sensory and participatory elements of the Eucharist, with some historical background to Anglican Eucharistic theology.

Mendez Montoya, A.F. (2009) *The Theology of Food.* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell*.*

* Explores the physicality of eating and embodiment in the Eucharist, which a focus on taste as a way of knowing.

Falque, E. (2015) This Is My Body. In: Kearney, R. and Treanor, B. eds. *Carnal Hermeneutics*. New York: Fordham University Press.

* Describes humanity in terms of animality. Builds a theology of flesh and blood for the inclusion and transformation of the whole human being. Uses the symbolism of marriage to express intimacy between God and worshipper, via the concept of the image of the love feast.

Chapter Two - Food and the Eucharist

This chapter will demonstrate connections with food production, eating and Christian expressions of embodied living in relation to the above five elements of the Eucharist.

Literature.

I will use the theologians Angel Mendez Monoya, Emanuel Falque as mentioned above.

Baldoza, A.O. *Eatheology: A Theology of Food and Eating It.* Seminar with Interdisciplinary Practices (APT 301) Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/9547620/Eatheology_A_Theology_of_Food_and>

* Describes the way in which the Eucharist informs eating.

Capon, R.F. (2002) *The Supper of the Lamb*. New York: The Modern Library.

* Describes a sense of balance and respect in the process of food preparation; celebrating culinary pleasures which involve the joy of cooking and sharing food as a theology. Expresses a relationship with food that is personal and respects that which is eaten.

Laura Hartman. (2010) Consuming Christ: The Role of Jesus in Christian Food Ethics. Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics 30 no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2010). Available at: [www.researchgate.net/publication/298555123](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/298555123)

* Focusses on the relevance of fair-trade and sustainability as part of Christian expression.

Wirzba, N. (2019) *Food and Faith*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

* Presents a theology of food as a gift from God. Speaks from the perspective of the farmer, using the image of God the Gardener to explore the way soil, plant life and creation as a whole express God’s love and creative power, in which humanity is invited to participate.

Chapter Three - The Five Flavours of Food

This chapter will show how the concept of the 5 flavours illustrated in the Mindful Eating presentation are underpinned by the 5 elements of the Eucharist described in chapter one, and the theologies of food addressed by Montoya, Wirzba, Falque and Capon discussed in chapter two. I will also include a discussion of Babette’s Feast as an illustration of self-giving sacrificial feeding.

The five flavours identified are

1. The material taste of the food (material life)

2. The company one eats with; the gathered community (shared experience)

3. The nutritional quality of the food (health and wellbeing)

4. The person who cooks (the sharing of love in food preparation – sacrifice, gift of self)

5. The ethical production of the food (environmental awareness, fair trade concerns)

I have coined the expression Five Flavours of food as a way of distilling concepts drawn from the above theologians into a neat package that makes connections of food with the Eucharist more easily identified as follows -

a. the eating and drinking of the bread and wine (materiality and taste of the food)

b. the community of the gathered people of faith (shared experience)

1. the elements of bread and wine (nutrition, health and wellbeing)
2. the grateful memory of Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross by those who take part in the eating (the person who cooks)
3. the transformation of the bread and wine into the of sacrament of the body and blood of Christ (the continued presence of Christ in the world through the Eucharist, and within those who take part.

Leading to transformed Christian living for those that take part in a way that overtly expresses Christ’s presence in the world. This translates, along with all the other ‘flavours’ into ethical concerns for others and in particular for the environment/Creation care and fair-trade issues, which connects with farming, consumption, biodiversity and responsible choices by those who eat.)

As there is not enough room to go into the details of each of these five flavours the next chapter will focus on the ethical and environmental aspect, as in some ways the other four flavours all make a contribution to this aspect. In addition, the Church of England is now making creation care a priority with such ventures as ‘Eco-Congregation’ now on the agenda for many churches.

Chapter Four – The Eucharist, Eating and Environment

This chapter explores the flavour of ethical eating – theologies of food, creation care.

Literature

Wirzba, N. (2019) *Food and Faith*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

* Promoting the concept of working with the integrity of creation as co-gardeners with God, with particular reference to food production.

Provan, I. (2020) *The Environment, Climate Change and Covid-19: An Opportunity for Serious Reflection.* Online lecture, Regent College, Delivered March 2020.

* Addresses criticisms made by secular environmentalists of the negative effects of Christian beliefs (as made by Bron Taylor and James Lovelock), in order to demonstrate Christianity’s unique position with regards to environmental care in general, from a biblical perspective.

McFague (1993) *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology.* London: SCM Press

* Presents an anthropology based on ecological integrity,

Chapter Five – The Sensory Presentations

This chapter will discuss the ways in which my sensory presentations are underpinned by the theologies used in the previous chapters, in order to demonstrate their appropriateness within the context of the Eucharist.

What I hope my plan shows is my attempt to triangulate the theology of the Eucharist, theology of food, and the ethics of food and the environment.