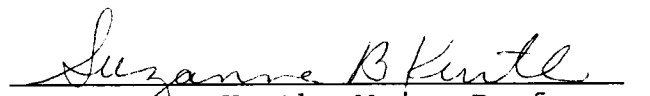
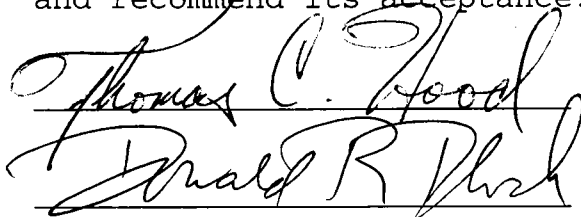


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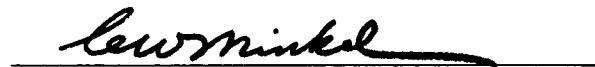
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Walter Haupt Bower III entitled "Sources of Liturgical Variation." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Sociology.

  
Suzanne B. Kurth, Major Professor

We have read this thesis  
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:

  
Associate Vice Chancellor and  
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SOURCES OF LITURGICAL VARIATION

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Walter Haupt Bower III

August, 1998

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my great great great grandfather Rev. James McChutchen Hillyard (1829-1903) a Methodist circuit rider (who's original saddlebags I possess); my great grandfather Rev. Dr. Oscar Ethan Allison (1880-1955), a Methodist minister who attended the Uniting General Conference in 1939 held in Kansas City, Missouri; and my grandmother Mildred Smith (1917-), who at age 75 took a lay training course in geriatric ministry and joined the church staff at Golden Hill United Methodist Church as a "Pastoral Visitor," calling on sick and homebound members of the church family. She also played an important part in the creation of the Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of Greater Bridgeport, Connecticut.

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Appreciation is also extended to the United Methodist ministers, administrative assistants, and members of the United Methodist Church who provided valuable help in the collection of the data. I hope their contributions to this work will be repaid in some measure by the clarifications offered in this work. It is my hope that the thesis provides further assistance to those who are involved with United Methodist liturgy.

## ABSTRACT

Liturgy is a neglected area of study within the sociology of religion. To examine variation in liturgy and possible sources of variation, one mainstream Protestant church, the United Methodist Church was selected. This exploratory study focused on the 70 United Methodist congregations in Knox County, TN.

Possible sources of variation in liturgy that were explored are: denomination history, ministerial influence, congregation history, and congregation characteristics. Multiple types of data were gathered using a variety of techniques. First, various resources (church histories, interviews) were analyzed to identify when key changes and mergers occurred within the organization that became the United Methodist Church. Second, a purposive sample of ministers was drawn on the basis of congregation size with 16 ministers participating in the interview process. Third, worship services at 23 different churches were observed and the presiding ministers and various congregants informally interviewed. Fourth, on two separate occasions each United Methodist minister in Knox County was asked to supply a Sunday worship bulletin for a specific date. Bulletins from the two dates were compared ( $n = 55$ ) to see if changes in services occurred in churches which experienced ministerial changes. And, the liturgy in a bulletin was compared with that in other congregations' bulletins, as well as the

standard worship service in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989).

The ministers did not believe they had a great deal of influence on a congregation's relative adherence to United Methodist liturgy. Congregational characteristics (e.g., socioeconomic status) were related to the degree of formality in the worship service and adherence to the official template in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989). Churches with larger memberships and budgets most closely adhered to "The Basic Pattern of Worship" prescribed in the standard hymnal and had more formal worship services. In some small congregations the ministers struggled to maintain some semblance of the liturgy prescribed in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989).

The religious traditions of congregations and individual members were related to acceptance of United Methodist liturgy and the degree of formality found acceptable. Churches which were affiliated with the Evangelical United Brethren before the merger forming the present United Methodist Church or had a substantial number of members who were previously Southern Baptists were less likely to adhere to the standard liturgy.

Further research using a sociological approach to liturgy should explore the consequences of variation in liturgical performance (relative adherence and formality), as well as the development of variation.

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## CHAPTER I

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This thesis is an examination of how church liturgy is presented in different congregations and why liturgical variation may exist. A denomination presents its clergy with a liturgical template to use in worship services, for example, in the United Methodist Church "The Basic Pattern of Worship." The extent to which specific worship services adhere to such templates is an empirical question.

Why have I selected the Methodist liturgy as opposed to, for example, a Roman Catholic liturgical mass? I was interested in exploring variation. Pressures for local preference may be greater in religions which avow a more participatory model of governance than in churches, such as the Roman Catholic Church, which are more hierarchical. The historical development of the United Methodist Church may provide more support for liturgical variation in individual churches than is provided in organizations such as the Roman Catholic Church. Also, I am most familiar with Methodist liturgy and its rituals.

Rituals vary in how detailed the prescriptions for behavior are. Fraternal organizations, religious denominations, and service organizations have specific written directives about what activities should be performed

and in what order. On the other hand, families may develop rituals which are subject to more frequent consensual modification. I am interested in the nature and extent of deviation from formal directives in worship rituals.

My specific research questions are: Do Knox County United Methodist churches follow the denomination's prescribed liturgy (as presented in The United Methodist Hymnal [1989]) in their printed representations of their services? If they do not, what are the types of variations? And, what may be the sources of variation: ministers' influence, denominational and congregational traditions, or the socioeconomic characteristics and religious backgrounds of congregation members?

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature on liturgy in general and United Methodist liturgy in particular is relevant to this project. The chapter reviews sociological literature on liturgy and ritual. Next, the development of the United Methodist Church and its liturgy is presented. Then contemporary United Methodist liturgy is reviewed with discussion of the proposed intent of various components of the worship service.

#### Liturgy

The sociological study of liturgy is underdeveloped. Sociologists Garry Hesser and Andrew Weigert (1980) identify the need for critical exploration of liturgy and its consequences. They argue that much excellent work has been done by liturgists and anthropologists, but sociologists simply have not recognized liturgy to be an important area of study (Hesser and Weigert 1980). In a similar vein, French sociologist Francois Houtart (1986:363) notes that "we still lack empirical research in this field." Overall, Donald Capp's (1979:337) assessment that "psychologists of religion have paid less attention to religious rituals than any other form or expression of religion" is equally true of sociologists.

What is being neglected? British sociologist Kieran Flanagan (1985:193) identifies liturgy as the "public ceremonial forms of worship of the main Christian Churches." And, Hesser and Weigert (1980:216) refer to liturgy as a "public religious performance involving two or more actors, either individual or teams." Houtart (1968:350) defines liturgy as "an internal act of the Christian community that expresses itself outwardly." These definitions suggest liturgy is a public religious or Christian performance with Houtart further specifying it as representing community belief.

#### Liturgy as Ritual

Social scientists can examine liturgy as ritual, as prescribed sequences of acts. Rom Harre (1984:302) proposes "a sequence of actions interpreted as acts is like ritual if the actions must be repeated in the same form, or in the same order, on every occasion of use in order to have their conventional effect." A religious ritual is the repetitive patterns and acts through which individuals attempt to come into contact with the sacred, strengthen their faith, and receive the favor of the divine (Chalfant, Beckley, Palmer 1987). Worship services can be seen as public performances of religious rituals.

The early sociologist Emile Durkheim identified the social significance of ritual in his study of the elementary forms of religious life. He argues people learn to

anticipate a sense of unity when they engage in rituals, a collective consciousness (Durkheim 1954). Houtart's (1968) argument about liturgy representing community belief appears to parallel Durkheim's. In contemporary society, Flanagan (1991) proposes Christian denominations, congregants and clergy may assign different meanings to the liturgy even while experiencing a sense of unity from religious rituals.

Religious communities gather together to hear scripture, to receive the sacraments, to join in prayer, and to experience Christian fellowship as an outcome of their activities (Langford 1993). The ritualized weekly order to a worship service presumably functions to reassure people about the enduring nature of church activities. Through ritual action, a congregation is able to create and renew its sense of unity, and individual members are able to identify with the group and its goals. As Dinges (1987:144) concludes "through repetitive, stylized, and uniform ritual activity, group cohesion and structure are systematically reinforced."

Many of the ideas presented thus far about religious rituals are encapsulated in Randall Collins' (1982) conception of ritual as a social energy machine. A social energy machine has three components. First, the group must be assembled. Second, actions must be ritualized, regular, and rhythmic. Third, there must be a symbolic object that focuses the group's idea of itself (Collins 1982).

Meredith McGuire (1992) builds on Collins' framework in her focus on symbolic actions. In order for rituals to provide a sense of unity and shared symbols, people must receive instruction. The content of an act is not what makes it a ritual act, but rather the symbolic meaning attached to the act by the members of the congregation gives the act meaning and shape (McGuire 1992). Liturgy serves a didactic function through the use of scripture readings and the sermon. Both of these communicate information about beliefs and values and how they should pertain to the worshipper's life. People learn the beliefs of their religious group and the symbolic meanings assigned to ritual performances.

In sum, liturgy creates ritualized public performances which teach and reinforce the symbolic meaning of actions and provide those who engage in the performances with a sense of unity. Denominations have evolved somewhat different liturgies.

#### Development of United Methodist Church Liturgy

To understand the current United Methodist liturgy, its evolution through the historical stages of the United Methodist Church (UMC) is presented. Since the eighteenth century, worship in the denominations that united to form the UMC went through several phases.

#### Early Stage: Development and Growth

Shortly after the American Revolution in 1784, John

Wesley sent Dr. Thomas Coke to America to provide leadership for the early settlers. Coke brought with him Wesley's The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America (Finke and Stark 1992; Maser 1992; Kennedy 1958) which was specifically prepared for American Methodism. One reason for the Methodists' separation from the Church of England was a reaction against the structured nature of the latter's service.

At first strong emphasis was placed on biblical preaching, but it declined rapidly as preachers tried to make their sermons more popular with people living on the frontier (Hickman 1991). Many of the ministers' sermons were filled with more personal experiences than references to scripture. The style of worship which developed was indigenous to the frontier church and the plain meeting houses (McCulloh 1964). Preaching was often done by Methodist circuit riders in pioneer cabins or in the open air. They wore practical clothing that was better suited for inclement weather than gowns and vestments. Overall, "it (the frontier church) lacked many of the elements of form and nicety, just as the pioneer cabins lacked the formal order of the English country cottage and garden" (McCulloh 1964:629).

Through the middle of the nineteenth century, the Methodist church relied on an uneducated clergy; "they (the ministry) had little education, received little pay, spoke

in the vernacular, and preached from the heart" (Finke and Stark 1992:76). As the movement of population into the cities increased, more opportunities for ministerial education emerged through the creation of seminaries. An apprenticeship program was instituted in the early nineteenth century with a recommended plan of study assigned by the minister's conference. Younger ministers trained under the direction of senior ministers. The apprentice system tended to encourage perpetuation of traditions.

#### Division

The Methodist Episcopal Church split largely over the issue of slavery (Thomas 1992). The church split in the pre-Civil War period and differences could be observed in the two branches. The Southern Church (Methodist Episcopal Church, South) was perceived as quite casual. "Thomas Summers alone is credited with the retention of a certain liturgical formality about Southern Methodism in an age when primitive crudeness was the prevailing preference" (Pilkington 1964:174). He was the editor of the Hymnal, the Discipline, and the Book of Worship for the Southern Church during the late 1840s.

The frontier preference for more spontaneous services was strongly held by some members of both branches. In 1881, structure had been classed with "improper amusements" as a danger to Methodism. The proper place of ritual was said to be "in the wastebasket" (McCulloh

1964:636) .

Gradually, Methodists began to accept forms of structure that Methodists in the late nineteenth century had rejected. The Northern Church (Methodist Episcopal Church) adopted an order of worship which was printed in the front of the hymnal. Requirements for order and uniformity in worship services appeared in the 1886 Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The worship service pattern was:

Singing  
Prayer  
Reading a Lesson out of the Old Testament,  
and another out of the New Testament  
Singing  
Preaching  
Singing  
Prayer  
Benediction

Yet, participation in services had both spontaneous and structured aspects. Examples of spontaneous sharing during a sermon included shouts of "Amen" and "Praise the Lord." Verbal expressions that punctuated preaching, such as "Hallelujah," served as an "affirmation of a truth expressed in word or gesture" (Hovda 1990:174). In revivals, shouts rose from the congregants' pews and worshippers were moved and encouraged to make their voices heard. This format is referred to as "free worship" (Webber 1985; McCulloh 1964). Structured participation took place in the unison praying of the Lord's Prayer and of responses such as the Gloria Patri and the Doxology (McCulloh 1964).

### Reunification and Consolidation

Essentially the same order of worship was adopted by both the Northern and Southern churches and presented in the form of a joint hymnal in 1905 (Maser 1964). An innovation in congregational participation was the responsive reading of the Psalter. Overall, an increased emphasis on liturgy is apparent in the 1905 joint Hymnal. The "Order of Public Worship," facing the title page, was:

Voluntary  
Singing  
Apostles' Creed  
Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer  
Anthem  
Lesson from the Old Testament  
The Gloria Patri  
Lesson from the New Testament  
Notices  
Collection  
Singing  
Sermon  
Prayer  
Singing  
Doxology  
Apostolic Benediction

The changes represented by this order of worship "caused a storm in many Methodist churches" (Harmon 1947:234). The greater structure and detail particularly concerned older members. "The older generation (of Methodists) wondered what the church was coming to" (Harmon 1947:234).

The two decades of the twentieth century were characterized by movement towards an established order of worship, the greater use of ritual, and reliance on formal

prayers (McCulloh 1964). These shifts are apparent in the next hymnal and order of worship, The Methodist Hymnal (1939), negotiated by three organizations: the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church. The Order of Worship was:

The Prelude  
The Call to Worship  
A Hymn  
The Prayer of Confession  
The Silent Meditation  
The Words of Assurance  
The Lord's Prayer  
The Anthem  
The Responsive Reading  
The Gloria Patri  
The Affirmation of Faith  
The Lesson from the Holy Scriptures  
The Pastoral Prayer  
The Offertory  
A Hymn  
The Sermon  
The Prayer  
The Invitation to Christian Discipleship  
A Hymn  
The Benediction  
The Silent Prayer  
The Postlude

More acts were specified in this order of worship. A significant change was the placement of the hymn "Holy! Holy! Holy!" first in the 1939 hymnal. It succeeded the Charles Wesley hymn "O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing" in the 1905 hymnal. This change suggested a greater emphasis on corporate worship, and was another indicator of the growing trend toward a more complex liturgical service (Maser 1964). (The current hymnal goes back to "O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing.")

During this period, the denominations that make up the current UMC moved from the basic pattern to an increasingly detailed order of worship. For example, in the basic pattern, the mention of singing was a guideline for what should be included. But, in an order of service, it is specified when in the service the hymn should be sung (Hickman 1989).

### Decline

During the later half of the twentieth century, Methodist worship underwent further changes (Langford 1993). These changes produced an even more detailed, longer order of worship with the incorporation of more ritual and formal prayers. The current template for United Methodist liturgy found in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) is:

- Gathering
- Announcements and Welcoming
- Organ voluntary
- Opening hymn
- Collect
- Litany
- The Gloria Patri
- An Anthem
- Prayer for illumination
- Old Testament Scripture
- Psalm
- New Testament Scripture
- Hymn
- Gospel Lesson
- Sermon
- Invitation to Christian discipleship
- Hymn of invitation
- Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed
- Joys and Concerns
- Pastoral Prayer
- Call to Confession
- Prayer of Confession
- Silent Meditation

Act of Pardon  
The Peace  
The Offering  
The Doxology  
The Lord's Prayer  
Hymn  
Dismissal with blessing  
Organ voluntary

By the end of the twentieth century the church had moved far from the spontaneity of the frontier period.

#### History of the United Methodist Church

The liturgy of a church in part is a product of the denomination's evolution, so historical developments provide a framework for examining liturgical change. For this reason, the history of the church in this country is reviewed. The United Methodist Church in the United States changed as it went through an early stage of development (1736-1816) and growth (1817-1843), division around the time of the Civil War (1844-1865), reunification (1866-1939) and consolidation (1940-1968), and membership decline in recent decades.

#### Early Stage: Development and Growth

The English Wesley brothers, John and Charles, arrived in colonial America as Anglican missionaries in 1736 and stayed less than two years for their structured program was not embraced. The first Methodist society in America was organized around 1760 (Maser 1992). In 1784, the Methodist movement was organized into an independent church, the Methodist Episcopal Church in America (Maser 1992; Eller

1957; Kennedy 1958).

Two churches important in the later development of Methodism, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association or Albright's People, emerged in the early eighteen hundreds. The members of Albright's People represented "a living protest against the formality of their denominations and (they) were finding an answer to their needs in the warm fellowship, spirited singing, impassioned preaching and strict discipline of the new movement" (Maser 1992:52). Early figures in both churches were associates and the groups shared similar religious beliefs (Stokes 1986).

Methodism grew in the first part of the nineteenth century as converts were gained rapidly through revivals and camp meetings. The Methodist itinerant system of circuit riders was well suited to the sparsely populated frontier. The Methodists outgrew Baptists and substantially outgrew Presbyterians and Episcopalians during the period from American independence to before the Civil War (Finke and Stark 1992). But, gradually the debates over slavery affected the Methodist Church division as well as other social institutions.

### Division

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held in 1844 ended with the Church splitting primarily over the issue of slavery (Thomas 1992). The

Methodist Episcopal Church, South splintered off (Yrigoyen 1992). Despite the split, the Methodists constituted more than 34% of the nation's church members, approximately 2.6 million persons (Finke and Stark 1992).

#### Reunification and Consolidation

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South lost approximately 36% of the membership due to the destruction of the Civil War, and many of its church buildings were seriously damaged or destroyed (Yrigoyen 1992; Ferguson 1983; The Book of Discipline 1992). On the other hand, the Methodist Episcopal Church flourished during the years after the Civil War with extemporaneous prayer, freedom from an order of worship, and extensive use of "popular" hymns (McCulloh 1964).

In the 1890s both churches formed commissions on federation. In 1898, the Joint Commission on Federation met and adjourned with the two churches co-existing side by side, while still retaining their own identities.

The awareness of a common heritage represented in hymnody and liturgical practices was one of the major influences bringing the branches of Methodism back together (McCulloh 1964). By 1905, the Joint Commission on Federation had assembled a common hymnal, The Methodist Hymnal, Official Hymnal of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and a common order of worship for both churches. In 1916, a Joint

Commission on Unification held a series of meetings to address three issues dividing the churches: the General Conference and its powers, the Jurisdictional Conferences, their number and their powers, and the status of the African American Methodists (Maser 1964). In 1920 the plan for unification was completed.

Church leaders and members did not all share the same vision. The plan resoundingly passed the General Conference of the Southern Church in 1924. And, it passed the Southern Annual Conference by a majority vote, but failed to attain the necessary three-fourths of all the votes cast due to strong opposition from the laymen in the Southern Church. David Barbee, a layman from Memphis, Tennessee stated, "the Southern Church has no intention of entering a church in which Negroes have social and ecclesiastical equality with the whites" (Maser 1964:440).

Still, few obstacles existed and various changes facilitated bringing the two churches together. Theology and doctrine were no obstacle, as evidenced by the common hymnal and common order of worship (Maser 1964). Also, the denominations agreed on the necessity for an episcopal form of government. The passage of time created changes, as younger congregants were not part of the split in 1844. Further, a changed perception of union resulted in part from a greater emphasis upon education and leadership from Methodist seminaries (Candler School of Theology of Emory,

Vanderbilt, Duke, and Perkins School of Theology of Southern Methodist University). Finally, the introduction of a third party (the Methodist Protestant Church) not involved in the 1925 defeat facilitated a new attempt at unification (Maser 1964).

The Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church were united into the Methodist Church in April, 1939 at the Uniting General Conference. In 1968, the present United Methodist Church (UMC) was created when the former Evangelical United Brethren Church (EUB) and the former Methodist Church (MC) united at the constituting General Conference in Dallas, Texas (The Book of Discipline 1992; Doran and Troeger 1991; Sledge 1997). The EUB church brought about 737,000 people (Kelley 1977). The union of the two churches created a membership of approximately eleven million persons. Not all of them held the same beliefs, for the former EUB churches differed in noticeable ways from the Methodist Churches.

Evangelical United Brethren Churches. The EUB church had some historical similarities to Methodism, but may not have had as structured a liturgy at the time of its merger with Methodism. In 1946, the Evangelical Church and the Church of the United Brethren Church in Christ were united into the Evangelical United Brethren Church with 700,000 members.

Some Eastern Tennessee former EUB churches differ from former Methodist churches. Shaped notes have a regional tradition in Eastern Tennessee emanating from the early "singing schools." Although these "singing schools" are not central to this historical analysis, they provide an interesting piece of local history.

In the early 1730s, "singing schools" were begun in New England as an effort to improve congregational singing in the churches (Horn 1978). Salaried and professional positions in churches were always filled first by professional imported musicians in the New England area, so a group of clergymen were forced to seek work elsewhere (Chase 1955). Clergymen and other musical pioneers of early America migrated to the rural frontier and isolated settlements. The "singing schools" focused on teaching people how to read music and mark time (Wolfe 1977).

In the late seventeenth hundreds, camp meetings provided an outlet for the carrying on of the tradition of "shaped note singing" as well as satisfying both a religious and social need. The generation of Eastern Tennesseans in their late sixties, seventies, and eighties that perform in the "Old Harp Sings" or "Harp Sings" are the contemporary remnant of the "singing schools" (Horn 1978).

#### Decline

Methodism did not draw new members in the twentieth century as it did in the first half of the nineteenth.

Mergers were more important than conversions for membership size in the twentieth century. By the late 1960s Methodism and other mainline denominations in the United States "had fewer members the next year and fewer yet the year after" (Kelley 1977:1). As members left or died they often were not replaced so that "in 1985 a third of the nation's Methodist churches had performed no baptisms, infant or adult" (Finke and Stark 1992:167).

Multiple explanations are offered for Methodism's shift from growth to decline in market share beginning in the 1850s. I first use Finke and Stark's (1992) religious economy analysis of the growth and decline of the United Methodist Church, and then focus on other explanations generally offered for the decline of mainline Protestant denominations.

Religious economies are comprised of marketplaces with potential buyers and religious organizations which are suppliers (Finke and Stark 1992). The success of a religious organization in the marketplace depends on four aspects: the organizational structure, the religious organization's representatives, organization's message, and marketing strategy.

The organizational structure of the church may lead to success. The United Methodist Church has had a centralized structure with local power officially residing in the hands of the clergy. On the other hand, a long standing tradition

of Sunday School classes served to bring local laypeople together. The classes allowed for close contact with other members and the continual renewal of shared beliefs (Finke and Stark 1992). Even though the Methodist Church governed the membership using a hierarchical structure, the people on the local level were largely independent of the central body of the church.

The remaining aspects of the success of a religious organization are tied to Methodism's connection to the people. Another aspect of the religious economy is the religious organization's representatives. During the nineteenth century, the Methodist ministers and leaders "came from the ranks of the common folk and to a very important extent, remained common folk" (Finke and Stark 1992). The people living on the frontier were able to identify with the Methodist ministers as people facing the same daily hardships everyone else encountered. An additional aspect is the organization's message. The Methodist Church offered "a message of conversion" as opposed to "a message of erudition" (Finke and Stark 1992:84). The Methodist ministers addressed the issues and concerns of the people living on the frontier. Finally, the Methodist Church's "marketing strategy" placed a strong emphasis on presenting a product that was accessible to the people. Circuit riders, revivals and camp meetings were effective in bringing the message to the people.

In the early twentieth century, the Methodist Church stopped growing from conversions and increasingly relied on mergers for membership as it underwent from sect to church transformation. As the members attained higher socioeconomic status and the circuit riders dismounted from their horses and become settled pastors, the Methodist Church moved away from its origins (Finke and Stark 1992).

The membership decline in the second half of the twentieth century paralleled the decline of other mainline Protestant denominations. Partly because of the movement of people from cities and to suburbs, the United Methodist Church declined from 11 million to about 8.7 million members in 1994 (The Knoxville News-Sentinel April 16, 1994). Population movement reduced the membership base of older churches, and tore apart perceptions of local communities beginning in the late 1950s and 1960s (Houtart 1968).

Another argument is that regardless of location the mainline churches are not meeting people's religious needs. Dean Kelley (1977) argues that the mainline ecumenical churches are losing members, not because they are engaging in social action and addressing social issues, but because they are not addressing questions of ultimate meaning. The mainline churches have moved away from the "seriousness/strictness" of doctrine that "makes one system of ultimate meaning more convincing than another" (Kelley 1977:xii). In a related argument, Ducey (1977) proposed the

mainline churches do not tell people what to think and how to act and have lost members as a result.

Not all religious bodies were declining in the 1960s, for example, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Assemblies of God, and the Churches of God were growing. Kelley (1977:35) argues "churches that have not tried to adjust to the times--to ingratiate themselves with the world--in many cases are not declining."

#### The Nature of Contemporary Liturgy

Further examination of contemporary mainline Protestant liturgy may yield understanding of its evolution and will provide a basis for the research project. Sociologist Keith Roberts (1990) compared two representative worship services; a United Methodist and a Presbyterian, drawn from approximately two-hundred church bulletins from various denominations, which he collected over the course of a decade. He claimed the two services represented a pattern in many American Protestant liturgies. Roberts divided the worship services into four separate themes, or moods: the first theme is designed to create a mood of awe and praise, the second theme is a "service of confession," the third theme is a "service of proclamation," and the final theme is a "service of dedication."

Closer examination of the current United Methodist liturgy provides additional insight into how the structure is intended to create moods and the evolution of the

minimalist frontier liturgy of Methodism into a complex liturgy. The ideal type or form for United Methodist liturgy is "The Basic Pattern of Worship," which presumably provides underlying unity for members despite influences of time and place. It consists of four parts: Entrance, Proclamation and Response, Thanksgiving and Communion, and the Sending Forth (Hickman 1989). Each of these parts is examined in detail below with information from Roberts and Methodist church representatives on its intended consequence.

### Entrance

The Entrance consists of the gathering, greeting, hymn, and opening prayers and praise. The gathering includes both what happens as people are entering the church and what occurs after they first sit down. The gathering ideally begins on the way into the building, outside the sanctuary, or as people begin to encounter one another. According to Roberts (1990) many United Methodist (and Presbyterian) churches request in their bulletins that worshippers sit in silence and focus their attention on the presence of God. The gathering theoretically sets the tone for the remainder of the service.

The placing of the welcoming of visitors and announcements varies with some churches having them as part of the gathering (Hickman 1989). Bill Fowler (1994), senior pastor at Church Street United Methodist Church, places the

Concerns of the Community during the gathering, so "this very necessary time for giving and receiving information" will not interrupt the mood and flow of worship, of ritual performance.

The organ voluntary (formerly the Prelude) is also a part of the gathering. It is a piece of music intended to lift one's spirits according to Roberts (1990). Church liturgist Hickman (1989) asserts that the music is part of the worship service, as an offering by the musician(s) to God on behalf of the whole congregation.

#### Proclamation and Response

The "Proclamation of the Word" and the "Response to the Word" both have several parts. The "Proclamation of the Word" includes the prayer for illumination, scripture readings, a hymn, and the sermon. The prayer for illumination, a bridge between the "Entrance," and the "Proclamation of the Word" is intended to invoke "the blessing of the Holy Spirit upon the reading, preaching, hearing, and doing of the Word" (Hickman 1989:34).

Two or three scripture readings are prescribed prior to the sermon. Ministers are expected to vary the readings over time so the congregation hears a balanced reading of Scripture from the Old Testament, the Epistles, and the Gospels. A hymn typically is placed between the Scripture readings to create a "call-and-response" pattern. The sermon ideally follows the last Scripture reading to

emphasize the connection between the readings and the "Proclamation of the Word."

The "Response to the Word" may include an invitation to Christian discipleship to bridge the proclamation and the response (Hickman 1989), followed by a hymn of invitation, concerns and prayers, a call to confession, a prayer of confession and act of pardon, and the offering. The phrase concerns and prayers is intended to be more inclusive, to incorporate the entire congregation rather than only the pastor at prayer (Hickman 1989). The offering is symbolically a giving of the people and all they have. The location of the offering in the "Basic Pattern" varies between the 1966 and 1989 Hymnals. Hickman (1989:49) argues the symbolism of giving "is the basis for recommending that the offering be a response to the Word rather than preliminary to the Word."

#### Thanksgiving and Communion

A prayer of thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer is included in the Thanksgiving. The unison praying of Lord's Prayer is to express communion with God.

#### Sending Forth

The Sending Forth concludes the service with a final hymn, the dismissal with blessing, and an organ voluntary. The dismissal with blessing is addressed by the pastor to the people. The pastor and people are to be looking at each other and thus the minister is to be in the front of the

church. After the dismissal with blessing is given, the congregation then returns to the secular world during the voluntary (Hickman 1989).

### Summary

Liturgy is a neglected topic of sociological investigation. Sociologists have considered liturgy primarily as they explore the meaning of the public rituals participated in by a community of believers. Whether participants assign the same meanings to ritual behaviors is a matter of debate, although possible variations in assigned meanings are not perceived as an obstacle to development and maintenance of a sense of community.

The liturgy of the UMC changed as the church evolved. Early in its American history, the UMC liturgy was less structured than the Church of England's (John Wesley's model). This less structured approach facilitated rapid expansion of church membership, for ministers, such as circuit riders, had the opportunity to present Methodism in ways which related to their audiences.

By the twentieth century, the order of worship was becoming more codified so that by the end of the twentieth century Methodists had a detailed order of worship with specified occasions for hymns, prayers, litanies, responsive readings, and rituals. Some liturgical freedom is retained in that churches are not required to adopt the order of worship in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989).

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This is an exploratory study of sources of variation in the liturgy performed in UMC worship services. The examination of church liturgy in Knox County United Methodist churches was facilitated by use of qualitative research techniques. The research techniques used were interviews, observation, and content analysis. Using multiple qualitative techniques allowed me to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people give meaning to the order of worship (Berg 1989:6).

#### **Population**

I decided to use the whole population of Knox County United Methodist Churches. The county has 70 churches with 56 churches in the Knoxville District. (The remaining 14 churches are in the Oak Ridge District, Morristown District, and the Maryville District.)

To obtain the population, I contacted Wanda Henderson, the assistant in the District Superintendent's Office. Henderson provided me with current mailing addresses for the Knoxville District United Methodist Churches and their pastors.

I also learned which churches had formerly been EUB, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and Methodist Episcopal

Church. I consulted with Loretta Best, the ministers' secretary, at Church Street United Methodist Church and obtained the 1967 and 1968 Holston Conference Journals. By comparing the Methodist Churches in the 1967 Journal with the United Methodist Churches listed after the merger in the 1968 Journal, I was able to deduce which churches were formerly EUB churches. A minister in South Knoxville verified my list of eight former EUB churches.

#### Ministerial Sample

To select a sample of ministers for interviews, the churches were divided into three separate categories based upon the size of the church membership and the minister's annual salary (See Appendix A).

The definition of a small membership congregation as having 100 members or less appeared in a document issued by the United Methodist Council of Bishops (Gangler October 14, 1994:3). All churches with less than 110 members were grouped into a small church category. (A couple of churches had slightly more than 100 members so 110 was used as an upper limit.) Those with over 500 members were grouped into a large church category. The remainder (churches with between 111-499 members) were categorized as medium sized churches. Once divided into these three groups the minister's salary was entered into the categorization process. By comparing the size of ministers' salaries with the membership size of their congregation, I was able to

conclude that the three categories were distinct. The ministers at the largest churches had substantially higher salaries than those at medium and small membership churches. And, the ministers at medium sized churches had substantially higher salaries than those of ministers at small sized churches.

### Interviews

To obtain the information from ministers I needed, interviewing was the most appropriate technique. Personal interviews were selected rather than mailed questionnaires because they typically produce a higher response rate than mailed questionnaires (Babbie 1992:269). And, as this was an exploratory study I was interested in the flexibility and depth that could be obtained from a set of guiding questions. To obtain the ministers' views I developed an interview guide which examined the influence of the minister on the worship service with the assistance of my advisor. I used an initial version of the interview guide with a minister in West Knoxville to clarify and refine questions before beginning data collection (See Appendix B). During the process of conducting the interviews I modified the guide to include additional questions based on responses from my initial interviews.

Because I interviewed human subjects, I followed appropriate procedures for working with human subjects. The University of Tennessee's Committee on Research

Participation approved this research project. A copy of the approved consent form can be found in the appendices of this thesis (See Appendix C). The subjects knew their participation was completely voluntary and that none of the information obtained in the interviews would be used to misrepresent, harm, or embarrass them. In addition, ministers were informed the research project was independent, i.e., it was not sponsored by the United Methodist Church or any of its agencies. I explained my goals in pursuing this research were to fulfill the research component of my Master's program and to contribute to the sociological literature.

I used the complete list of Knox County churches grouped by size and selected every nth church unit to obtain a minister. I decided to interview 14 ministers (about 1/4 of the population) given the limits of time and the exploratory nature of the study. As a result of my selection procedure I had five churches from the small membership category, five churches from the medium membership category, and four churches from the large membership category. Letters were sent to the ministers of these churches informing them I would be contacting them in a few days (See Appendix D). The senior minister at a church was interviewed if there was more than one minister at the church.

One minister refused to participate in the study

stating he did not have time to be interviewed and thought "it would be better if I had interviewed someone else." I made five or six unsuccessful attempts to contact two of the ministers. I left four to five messages on two other minister's answering machines at various times of the day and moved to the next minister on the list when neither of them responded in a timely manner. After I had scheduled three additional interviews, the two ministers for whom I had left messages returned my phone calls and expressed interest in scheduling a time to be interviewed. Consequently, I interviewed 16 ministers.

All the interviews were tape-recorded and a majority of the interviews were transcribed by the author. The interviews were conducted at the location most convenient for the minister. Most of the interviews were conducted in the minister's office at the church. Two of the interviews were held in the fellowship hall of the church. Because two of the ministers at the small membership churches did not have an office at the church, the interviews were at their residences.

On average, an interview lasted an hour and a half. The shortest interview was forty-five minutes while the longest interview took two and a half hours. The interviews conducted with the ministers at the large membership churches tended to be shorter than those with the ministers at the small and medium membership churches. Ministers at

large membership churches claimed more demands on their time and also seemed to be concerned about possibly revealing information that might be harmful to their position within the UMC. Referring to the future of small membership congregations, a minister at a large membership congregation commented "the family chapels should be eliminated from the (Holston) Conference and go find their own pastors and support." The minister then expressed concern that the previous statement "might get him into trouble."

The ministerial sample varied by sex and age. Four of the ministers interviewed were women, the remainder were men. Using names as a basis for ascertaining gender, the sample probably had a higher proportion of females than the population. The ministers' ages ranged from early 30s to mid 60s. Some of the ministers at the small and medium membership churches were pastors at more than one church.

#### Content Analysis

Another source of information about liturgy was the weekly church bulletin. The senior minister at each church in Knox County was sent a letter on Wednesday, May 11, 1994 which requested a copy of the Sunday, May 15, 1994, order of worship (See Appendix E). The mailing included a self-addressed stamped envelope to improve the response rate.

The date was chosen for two reasons. The letter was sent in the middle of May because the Holston Annual Conference occurs in early June. Under the premise that the

Annual Conference would cause some shifts to occur among the ministers of the United Methodist Churches in the Knoxville area, the letter was sent prior to the Annual Conference. Also, no special religious events occur in the middle of May, so the order of worship could be assumed to be reasonably typical.

I obtained a total of 61 bulletins. Fifty-three May 15, 1994 bulletins were received through the mail, and eight were collected at a later date by attending the churches' Sunday worship services.

A second set of bulletins was sought to investigate whether changes had occurred in the order of worship in those churches which had experienced a ministerial change after the Holston Conference. Another mailing was sent out January 25, 1995 asking for a copy of the bulletin for Sunday, January 29, 1995, and again including a self-addressed stamped envelope (See Appendix F). Fifty-one bulletins were received from the second request. Bulletins from Sunday, January 29 were compared to those from May 15, 1994, if the church had experienced ministerial change after the Annual Conference in June.

None of the predominantly African-American churches returned a bulletin in response to either mailing. Four small membership churches and one former EUB church did not send bulletins. A minister from a large membership church, who refused to be interviewed, did not send any bulletins.

After I obtained the first set of bulletins, I reviewed them to develop a systematic scheme for analysis. The bulletins varied widely in the information they presented (religious information and non-religious information--birthdays, recipes), the order in which it appeared, and the professional nature of the presentation (quality of paper, typographical errors). Finally, I decided to compare them in three ways. First, I compared the physical characteristics of the bulletins. Second, the bulletins in churches with ministerial changes were compared for any changes in the order of worship. Third, the order of worship in the bulletins was compared with that in the current United Methodist Hymnal (1989) and whether certain variations were observed to the previous standard order of worship.

#### Observation

To further my understanding of liturgical variation and to see if congregations followed the order of worship in the bulletin, I observed the traditional Sunday morning worship service at 23 United Methodist churches in Knox County. Five of the 23 churches were formerly EUB. Some of the smaller congregations were selected for visits specifically because copies of their bulletins had not been received. Other churches were selected on the basis of convenience. The church observations were as follows: four churches in the spring of 1994; eight churches in the summer and seven

churches in the fall of 1994; two churches in the winter of 1995; one church in the fall of 1994 and the winter of 1995; and one church was observed repeatedly throughout 1993 and 1994. (No notable differences existed between the worship services observed in the summer and fall.)

To make observations as consistent as possible, I sat close to the front of the sanctuary during the worship services. Some ministers were difficult to understand because of their speech patterns, so it was necessary to sit in front. At each church my presence was recognized. Some congregations were so small that my presence as a "non-member" of the church was obvious to all. During the welcoming of visitors, ministers at these churches typically pointed out there was a visitor, requested that I stand and say why I was there. In contrast, at the larger churches a visitor was not unusual. (At one of the larger churches I was given a visitor information packet which included a cassette tape and a spiral notebook.) In all cases I indicated my affiliation with another United Methodist church and stated I was visiting area United Methodist churches.

Hesser and Weigert (1980) identified categories which could be used to observe liturgy. Using their categories, I developed a list of information to be recorded. After a worship service ended, information about the congregants (e.g. dress, ethnicity) and how the congregation was seated

was recorded. Ministers use of vestments and style of presentation were noted. The architectural structure of the church and whether the pulpit or the altar table dominated was noted. Deviations from the printed bulletin and the prayer practices (a unison act, a solo performance and/or a spontaneous behavior) were recorded.

I examined the information on the church cornerstone in almost every church I visited. In the narthex of one, the former affiliation with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South is engraved in stone overhead. The information on the church cornerstones enabled me to verify my list of former EUB churches.

Data were collected from two predominantly black churches, but they are not included in my analysis. Hesser and Weigert (1980) reported differences between "mainline Protestant" and "urban black" churches supporting this decision. The churches were different enough from the others to suggest they should be considered separately, but too few in number to do so.

As I proceeded through the phases of data collection and began my analysis, my emphasis shifted away from my initial focus on the role of the minister in shaping liturgy. Increasingly I focused on the order of worship in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) as the official or normative standard to which services and bulletins could be compared. In accord with this shift, I began to address two

characteristics, formality and relative adherence, as sensitizing concepts (van den Hoonaard 1997). During data collection and analysis the characteristics or concepts evolved. The concept of formality appeared in Hesser and Weigert (1980) but without standard or precise definitions.

My analysis of the data is divided into three parts. The next chapter focuses on the ministers' characteristics and perceptions of the liturgy. The subsequent chapter focuses on the differences in formality observed during worship services. Another chapter reports the content analysis of the relative liturgical adherence of worship services as they are represented in the church bulletins.

## CHAPTER IV

### MINISTERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE LITURGY

Ministers' perceptions of the liturgy are drawn from interviews with 16 Knox County United Methodist ministers. The chapter briefly describes the ministers' religious backgrounds, when they were called to the ministry, ministerial training, and their first church experiences. The primary focus of the chapter is ministers' perceptions of how much influence they have on their churches' worship services and what else influences the services. The concepts of formality and liturgical adherence are derived from the interviews. A discussion of the influence of other religious traditions on a congregations' liturgical preferences concludes the chapter.

#### Ministers' Characteristics

##### Religious Background

An individual's religious background presumably affects subsequent perceptions, so ministers' religious backgrounds were explored. The majority of the ministers had lifelong involvement in United Methodist Churches in Tennessee. A few of the ministers' fathers were United Methodist clergy.

Some were from other religious backgrounds. Two were raised as Southern Baptists. One distanced himself from the religion of his youth by saying he was "brought up as a

Southern Baptist and got over it." (This minister perceived himself as being too liberal for the Southern Baptist denomination.) A third was raised as a Roman Catholic; and another in the Church of the Brethren. (The Church of the Brethren is not related to the EUB church.)

### Call to Ministry

The ministers decided to pursue the ministry at similar ages and for a relatively limited set of reasons. The ages at which the ministers decided to pursue the ministry were typically in their early 20s. A few decided before age 18 and a couple in their 30s. Males and females described being called or at least reacting to being called somewhat differently.

One male decided to join the ministry "when the Lord paid him a visit" and gave him a choice, "follow Him or else." He then had a life changing religious experience with God during the 1960s and decided to join the ministry. Another cited "a burning desire to help people," as a reason rather than a specific religious experience. The reasons these two respondents gave were very representative of the males.

The females reported feeling a call to the ordained ministry, but unlike the males had never encountered ministerial role models of the same sex. One believed she "was probably called to the ordained ministry for a long time but had never met a woman in the ministry, and that

scared her." The women perceived themselves as part of the first wave of feminism breaking barriers in a traditionally male dominated occupation. One explained that "women were allowed to be ordained in 1956, but it wasn't until the mid 1970s that women began to matriculate from seminaries."

In a study of ministerial students at a Protestant seminary in the midwestern United States, sociologist Sherryl Kleinman (1984) also interviewed women who complained they had not had a general role model. Kleinman (1984:87) reported that "many of the women had never seen, let alone known, a female minister."

#### Seminary Training: A Major Influence

The ministers' liturgical training appeared to be typical for a mainstream Protestant denomination. The majority of the ministers attended seminary; all but one attended theological school in the Southeast. The ministers typically attended United Methodist seminaries, although two attended the more conservative Asbury seminary. Two completed a two year course of study to become licensed pastors; one went to a Bible college.

Most of the ministers reported their formal training and informal experiences at theological school as a primary influence on how they viewed the liturgy. Thus, most ministers presumably were influenced by a "Methodist viewpoint" because the majority attended Methodist seminaries. Of particular interest is what they learned

about what the liturgy is expected to do for participants. A typical response was that in seminary they discussed how language and words have power over congregants and were trained to see the liturgy "as an empowering kinda thing."

Three ministers said their training at seminary had no influence on how they saw the liturgy at all. Their responses may have reflected the lack of importance they attached to the liturgy. One of the three ministers went to Asbury seminary, and he said he was influenced by its "free church, old-fashioned holiness orientation," with "free church" a synonym for "loosey-goosey."

The seminary experiences of some females in the 1960s and 1970s led them to question some aspects of the liturgy and the relationship between the minister and her congregation. One minister's formal and informal experiences encouraged her to integrate non-sexist language into liturgy. Some of her fellow female seminarians questioned how closely they should adhere to the liturgy. They even gathered together and created a more inclusive liturgy during the weekly Wednesday chapel. Another female minister perceived the weekly chapel, university chapel, and the variety of worship experiences in the churches had a far greater impact than the coursework taught at the seminary.

In some cases, the female ministers' experiences in seminary were epiphanies. During one woman's first day of orientation at a Southern Methodist seminary, the President

of the school announced the next day would be a picture day and reminded everyone to wear their suits and ties effectively overlooking the fifteen women students. Professors would begin class by addressing the students with "Good Morning, Gentleman," even if a woman were sitting right in front of them. At a midwestern seminary, a professor walked into the classroom on the first day of the semester, looked at three women in the class and said, "I don't even know how to talk to you." These incidents made the women continually aware not only that they were entering a traditionally male-dominated occupation, but also that they should be sensitive to minorities.

Their marginal status in the seminary led the women to have questions. One woman remembered thinking that seminarians were being prepared for white suburban churches. She perceived the most helpful class she took in seminary was "Church of the Black Experience." She thought the "class taught us to be much more situational and encouraged us to be sensitive to who the people in our churches were, and just don't fit everybody into the same mold."

### Church Experiences

#### First Church Experience

The first experiences with their own congregation often introduced ministers both to new settings and different orientations to the liturgy. One set of ministers' first placements were in small rural churches. These ministers

typically learned that their congregations had little or no interest in the liturgy as outlined in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989).

For example, one male minister assigned to a circuit in a Southeastern state said one of his congregations preferred not to have any structure in the worship service. They were "dead set against the thought, even the thought, of a bulletin or anything like that whatsoever." His description of the church membership as skilled laborers who wore blue jeans and overalls suggested educational level may have shaped their outlook.

A female minister assigned a circuit after leaving seminary said a member of one of her congregations dismissed the liturgy prior to the sermon referring to it as the "preliminaries." Ministers recognized the educational background of the congregation needs to be taken into consideration when employing the liturgy. According to one minister, his working class congregation views liturgy "as just something you have to do and endure until you get to the Sermon." His people are "geared towards very literal kinds of things, you don't get very far with metaphors." He believed an educated congregation, like at a large suburban church, places more emphasis on the liturgy and order of worship.

A minister assigned a small church eliminated most of the liturgy in the service. For example, the minister

eliminated the Apostle's Creed because the congregation was unwilling to read it out loud and he was reading it by himself. He attributed the lack of participation and need to revise the service to the congregation's low educational background.

The ministers were describing variation in what I will conceptualize as liturgical adherence. The ministers described different viewpoints of their influences on their congregations' adherence to Methodist liturgy. Most ministers perceived they had only "nominal" or "theoretical" freedom to modify the practices of the previous minister upon their arrival in a new church. One mentioned the difficulty of altering the practices of the previous minister early on because "in East Tennessee you have got tradition(al) and conservative folk living in a Republican area." Another declared "any modifications would meet with a good deal of resistance due to the tradition of the church." One rather pragmatic minister identified three things that should be considered before modifying liturgy: the length of the church's tradition, how beloved the previous minister pastor was, and the charisma of the current pastor.

In contrast, three of the ministers took the position that the minister has complete control over the worship service. "You're the pastor and that's your area and whatever you want to do, we will do it." "No one tells us

what to do." "Nobody tells me I can't do anything." Two ministers believed they had complete "freedom" and "autonomy" to modify the worship service.

Whatever their viewpoint on ministerial influence, all of the ministers thought worship services should be modified to suit particular congregations. One minister added the cryptic caveat that congregational preference should prevail unless "what they were doing was wrong." For some ministers emphasis on congregational preference appeared to be rooted in a pragmatic assessment of the minister's role. For example, a minister at a former EUB church said if you do not modify your services to suit a particular congregation, "you're cruising for a bruising." Others perceived that the order of worship is flexible, such as the minister who proposed the order of worship in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) was a "norm."

Liturgists have described the function of ministers as instruments of the congregation (Hovda 1990; Willimon 1989), that is, the minister is the voice, hands, arms, and feet of the assembly. When asked, most of the ministers agreed with the previous statement and then elaborated on it. For example, one agreed with the analogy, but further specified he served as a "cheerleader" and a "comedian." Another elaborated that he saw himself as the "instrument who makes the most noise."

A more directive role was suggested by some other

comments from the minister. For example, one saw himself as a "presider." Another saw his function as "one who has control over the congregation." Another saw his function as a "Prophet who spoke for God before the people." A minister told me "in a church (with) under 150 in attendance, the preacher is the person who does the service." Finally, one minister perceived his function as a "reminder" or a "visual cue."

The expectation that ministers are responsible for the ritual occasion may account for the lack of visible response to deviations from the printed bulletin. Congregations did not display restlessness or uncertainty at changes in the order of worship as printed in the bulletin.

#### Church Organization

The staff/pastor-parish relations committee is continually reported by the ministers to be an influential committee in the church. The committee indirectly influences the liturgy by having the power to hire and fire the minister.

All the ministers specifically mentioned their belief that such committees played a key role in hiring and firing the ministers. One minister even called it the "hiring and firing committee." A few of the ministers more neutrally depicted it as a "liaison" between the congregation and staff.

Congregants who are not on the committee also influence

the liturgy by informing members of such committees of their "problems" with the minister. For example, if a congregant thinks too much scripture is read in the worship service, these concerns may be expressed to a member on the committee. Thus, the committee is a part of the power structure within the church whose actions and potential for action may make the minister sensitive to the liturgical preferences of particular church members.

#### Influence of Other Denominations

##### The Southern Baptists

The influence of the Southern Baptist denomination on congregant's interest in and adherence to UMC liturgy was continually reported by ministers. Apparently, divisions within the Southern Baptist denomination have led some people to leave the denomination and affiliate with other religious organizations. These people may prefer the style of Southern Baptist worship services because they are both more familiar and more meaningful. Instead of embracing UMC liturgy, they may try to make UMC services more similar to Southern Baptist services.

Ministers could not assume church members wanted to adhere to UMC liturgy. One frustrated minister perceived that what most influenced his congregation were the religious practices of the Southern Baptists. He supported his argument by stating that almost half of the members of his congregation were former Southern Baptists and all the

others had close relationships with one or more members of the Southern Baptist denomination. Another minister always "felt a Baptist influence in the congregation." And a female minister described her church as having "a strong Baptist influence, and I mean strong." Some of the members in her church "were baptized into the Southern Baptist church, and will die a Southern Baptist." Other ministers reported the influence of the Southern Baptist denomination because their congregations were composed of as many as twenty percent former Southern Baptists.

Infant Baptism. Some former Southern Baptists' lack of commitment to UMC liturgy was evidenced by their questioning of UMC baptismal practices. (The prevenient grace theology underlying the UMC ritual is not adhered to in the Southern Baptist Convention.) Two infant baptism issues were the timing of baptism and the nature of the ritual of baptism. An example of the first is the minister who reported struggling with parents from strong Southern Baptist traditions who wanted their children dedicated as infants and baptized when they made a confession of faith at age 12. For others the nature of the ritual was an issue. For example, one minister remarked that some of his congregation believed that "you were going to Hell if you were not dunked." He elaborated that many of his congregation did not understand the sprinkling of the United Methodist tradition. Whether from lack of understanding, rejection of

the unfamiliar or commitment to another belief system, some parishioners with strong Southern Baptist ties expressed a lack of commitment to UMC liturgy. Ministers did not, however, report modifying UMC baptismal practices to accommodate parishioners wishes, as they did other aspects of the liturgy.

#### The Former Evangelical United Brethren Churches

As the earlier discussion of church history indicated, the UMC incorporated the former Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) Church in 1968. With three exceptions, the eight former EUB churches in Knox County tend to be small membership congregations in less developed, more traditional areas of the county.

Ministers at former EUB churches typically reported that their congregations did not embrace the merger of the two churches and manifestations of that merger (Methodist trained ministers, liturgy, hymnals). One minister who was the first United Methodist minister at a former EUB church thought some of the resentment from the congregation at the beginning of his appointment was because of his training at a United Methodist seminary. Another minister commented "there's a lot of hostility left over (from the merger)" and he speculated the high level of ministerial turnover at his church (every two to three years) reflected that tension.

In some former EUB churches most, if not all of the members joined before the merger. A lack of commitment to

Methodism among these people is not surprising. A minister at one of these churches reported some members of his congregation have avowed that "I will never be a Methodist." Another minister noted that "most of these churches still have the people who were EUB members in them" and they "have wanted to keep their traditions strong."

When a congregation has little commitment to the UMC liturgy, the congregation shows little interest in adhering to UMC liturgy and preference for familiar worship practices. For example, some of these congregations pressure to omit or limit the parts of the service they do not want (e.g., multiple scripture lessons, congregational participation, and use of the standard hymnal), and expand parts of the service they do want (sermon, favorite hymns, times for informal conversation).

Hymnals are also a source of contention. According to the ministers interviewed, some of the members in the former EUB churches have rejected The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) and want less congregational participation than is found in the current order of worship. For example, some ministers have encountered resistance when they have tried to incorporate Responsive Readings, Psalms, and multiple scripture readings (e.g., Gospel Lesson, New Testament, and Old Testament readings). At one former EUB church, the choir still sings the Call to Worship using the EUB hymnal, the Broadman Hymnal (1940), (which one respondent described

"as really a Baptist hymnal") and for the remainder of the service the church uses The Book of Hymns (1979). Another former EUB church uses a more ecumenical hymnal, Hymns for the Family of God (1976) issued in the 1970s.

#### Liturgical Adherence

As the ministers' comments were reviewed, the concept of liturgical adherence emerged. Theoretically, the greatest liturgical adherence would be represented by following exactly the order of worship in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989), and the least by following no set order of worship. Ministers recognized difference among congregations and made pragmatic modifications in the order of worship to meet the perceived preferences of their congregations. One, the ministers indicated congregations vary in how closely they adhere to the order of worship found in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989). (When ministers were assigned to churches, they found various levels of liturgical adherence.) Two, some ministers reported modifying the order of worship in their churches to meet what they perceived to be the expectations of their congregations. These preferences typically were perceived to be based in parishioners' previous affiliation with another church (e.g., Southern Baptist or EUB) and educational level.

The idea of relative liturgical adherence emerged most clearly from interviews with two ministers who reported that

their parishioners had little interest in or commitment to UMC liturgy. Lack of interest and commitment were expressed by not participating in parts of the liturgy, actively questioning parts of the liturgy, and having worship service traditions which omitted parts of the United Methodist liturgy. In the first case, a minister at a medium sized church downtown reported the Sunday service did not have a Gospel reading because the congregation was reluctant to read two or three passages of scripture during the service. He thought the liturgy prior to the sermon was not meaningful to the congregation. Another minister regularly had members of the congregation ask questions such as: "Why do we have to say the Apostles Creed?"

#### Formality

Also, based on the interviews, the concept of formality emerged. In formal services, members of the congregation can be conceptualized as an audience at a performance which follows a set of rules. In less formal services, the members of the congregation are actively involved in shaping services.

Four indicators of formality emerged from observation of the worship services. The first indicator of formality was whether the congregants exchanged personal greetings during the worship service. Some small membership churches ask the congregants to greet one another near the middle of the worship service, while larger membership churches

usually ask the congregation to greet one another at the end of the service and do not include a personal greeting within the worship service. The second indicator is the wearing of vestments by clergy. Ministers that wear vestments commented on the perceived formality of the robe. The third indicator is the characteristics of the printed bulletin (i.e., presence or absence of a printed bulletin, picture on the front cover, use of a professional publisher, number of typographical errors). The fourth indicator is the division of labor in the worship service. Larger membership churches had a clear delineation of roles within the worship service. For example, the associate minister often performed all the parts of the worship service prior to the sermon. In an interview, one minister referred to this part of the service as the "preliminaries." The sermons were almost exclusively performed by the senior minister. The senior minister had few responsibilities during the beginning of the worship service (e.g., greeting the congregation at the start of the service). Smaller membership congregations did not have associate ministers. Larger membership congregations also had a clear separation between the choir and the congregation. Smaller membership congregations had members of the choir actively participating in the service either by making announcements or reading scripture.

#### Vestments

The ministers wore vestments, except for the ministers

at the former EUB churches and small membership churches. Several females indicated concerns about wearing vestments with one not wearing a robe because she perceived that it made her less "approachable."

Some of the female's opposition appeared rooted in perceptions of the vestments as masculine in nature, symbolic of the exclusion of women and a power differential between ministers and parishioners. One female minister wore a robe because it is a tradition in large churches to wear a robe, but would prefer not to do so. This minister took a feminist stance that the "academic robe was designed for a man's body and doesn't apply to women because women were excluded from the academic circles." She perceived the academic robe as historically exclusionary of women and as currently representing "some setting apart that is false and damaging." A third female agreed the robe set the minister apart and specified "there's a sense of authority that goes with it." For example, she perceived that some members of her congregation who came from a Southern Baptist background were uncomfortable with her wearing an academic robe. For them "the ministerial garb" was new "and they're not quite sure about all that."

Clerical garb, as representing both tradition and separation, was mentioned by others at small membership churches. One male minister occasionally wears a robe "to remind them of the tradition," but he does not wear it often

because it "can put more distance than there needs to be (between the congregation and me)." Another only wears a robe on special occasions, like baptisms. On the other hand, other ministers wear a robe because "most of our preachers wear a robe," and because it "symbolizes the set apartness of the role of the minister for that particular service." These ministers focused on how the vestments helped their transition from layperson to religious symbol: "the robe and stole takes your mind off little things" and "so the minister won't have to worry about clothes." Rather than seeing the robe as creating distance from the congregation, they see it as preventing distraction.

#### Role of the Layout of the Sanctuary

One of the major layout issues is the location of the pulpit. One minister commented on the importance of a center pulpit to his congregation. The minister perceived "it would be somewhat alienating to them if we had a divided chancel because they are interested in the preaching." Another minister suggested "communion isn't as prominent" in a church with a center pulpit. Other ministers concurred with one who stated that a center pulpit places "more attention and more influence on the minister." Yet another agreed saying the "pulpit-center sanctuary emphasizes the message or sermon as a focal point."

Two of the churches had doors leading into the church that historically were gender specific. A minister who

pastors two churches built in the 1890s reported that they have two doors on opposite sides of the front of the church. The doors (originally one for females and one for males) open into the sanctuary; there is no vestibule in which to gather prior to entering the sanctuary. The doors are no longer used.

Again, female ministers' interest in less traditional, less hierarchal arrangements is apparent in their comments about pulpit-centered sanctuaries. One said she prefers a "u-shaped sanctuary and movable chairs so...people can see each other instead of the traditional rows."

#### Summary

Interviews with ministers revealed that they perceived they had very little influence over the liturgy, but they believed their congregations should and did. Based upon their responses, liturgical adherence emerged as a sensitizing concept. Liturgical adherence focuses on action--the extent to which there is compliance/deviation from UMC liturgy. It reflects in part relative commitment to UMC rituals. Some ministers reported their parishioners had little commitment to UMC liturgy because they retained commitments to churches they felt they were forced to leave (e.g., through changes in the church or merger).

The size of a congregation may be associated with other characteristics which foster resistance to change. Ministers at small membership congregations cited the

tradition of the church as the most common "resistance" to making modifications within the liturgy.

The consensus was that the layout of the sanctuary was an issue of importance in the worship service. Many contemporary UMC churches have a divided chancel. Former EUB churches in Knox County tended to be pulpit centered. The church layout directs or reflects a congregation's orientation. Two additional ministers agreed that pulpit-centered sanctuaries emphasize the sermon and minister as the focus of the worship service.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WORSHIP SERVICES

To further explore liturgical variation, observational data were collected during visits to church services and informal interviews were conducted with ministers and congregants after various of those services. These data in conjunction with information gleaned from church records are used to identify variation in the presentation of worship services at Knox County UMC churches. The analysis is primarily based on my participant observer visits to 23 churches.

#### Formality

The sensitizing concept of formality drawn in the previous chapter from the interviews with the ministers guides the analysis in this chapter. The level of formality varies in worship services. Worship services such as the traditional Roman Catholic mass offered in Latin (before Vatican II) by designated officiants would be the most formal. (Variation in the formality of language usage is explored in the next chapter which examines church bulletins.) Formal services exhibit a clearly developed division of labor. In such services members of a congregation can be conceptualized as an audience watching a performance and following a written set of rules governing

their responses. At the other extreme would be informal services using everyday language, having few or no written rules, not relying on formally trained officiants, and having congregants actively involved in shaping services.

#### Components of Worship Service

Variation in formality was most apparent in specific aspects of the worship service. Ministers and congregants behaved differently during three aspects of the worship service: announcements, Ritual of Friendship, and prayer requests.

Announcements. Larger membership churches exhibited more formality in making announcements than the smaller membership churches and the medium membership churches were in between. In large membership churches, the robed minister typically stood at the front of the sanctuary and made the announcements to the congregation prior to the start of the service. In contrast, at one small membership congregation, many of the announcements were made by the choir. The ministers in most of the small membership churches I observed asked congregants to stand while making their announcements during the service. (Some of the congregants remained seated while making announcements.)

Ritual of Friendship. The formality of the ritual of friendship seemed to be related to congregation size. The ritual of friendship in small membership churches typically consisted of the congregation rising and moving around the

sanctuary greeting each other. At one small church, it consisted of the congregants moving around the sanctuary and lasted five to six minutes making the sanctuary festive and noisy. At large membership churches, worshippers would be asked to sign and pass along the pad to others on the pew. Whatever a congregation's preference, logistical considerations prohibit moving around and greeting one another during services attended by large numbers of people. Still during none of the large membership churches services I observed was an attempt made to counteract the constraints imposed by size, e.g., by asking congregants to greet and/or shake hands with those seated near them.

Prayer Requests. Evidence of the lack of separation between the minister and congregation in small membership congregations was observed in the inclusion of personalized prayer requests. Small membership congregations may verbalize their prayer requests during the service prior to the pastoral prayer, i.e., the minister asks the congregation if there are any prayer requests and they stand up and make them. Later during the pastoral prayer specific reference typically would be made to the individuals for whom prayer requests were made. (I recorded a list of prayer requests after each service had ended. Typically they were for people who were ill. Two of the less traditional were: wishing people luck in a job interview and hoping that a lost dog would return.)

At large membership churches, bulletins directed people to write prayer requests on cards held in containers on the backs of pews and deposit them in an offering plate. During the services I observed at these churches no mention was ever made of any personal prayer requests during the services and I never observed anyone writing one.

#### Boundary Generation

Distinctive boundaries were observed between the minister and congregation in the more formal worship services. The establishment of boundaries appeared through the hierarchal delegation of responsibilities, the selection of music, the degree of reliance on sophisticated sound systems, and the style of garb.

Division of Labor. Greater formality is in part a product of a division of labor which separates the minister from the congregation with a layer of other officiants. Senior ministers delegated responsibilities in the service to associate ministers. In the large churches senior ministers typically only gave the sermon; while the responsive readings, scripture lessons, call to worship, and pastoral prayers were assigned to the associate minister. In medium and small churches ministers performed the whole worship service and were often the only clergy present.

Music. The musical selections were more open to change in less formal churches. Some ministers and choir directors at small and medium membership churches changed the hymns

printed in the bulletin or added additional hymns. No large membership congregations altered the hymn selection or added hymns.

Such changes in the musical program also illustrate flexibility in the division of labor. At a medium membership congregation, the choir director announced to the congregation that she was going to change the invitational hymn to "He Touched Me" because of its relevance to the scripture lesson. At the same church, the congregation sang an unscheduled "Happy Birthday" during the middle of the service.

In another medium membership church, after the final hymn ended, one minister asked the congregation to sing "How Great Thou Art." As the congregation was singing that hymn the minister said, "I have never done this before, but I feel a premonition from God that someone in the congregation needs to be healed, someone needed to come forward and have me lay my hands on them." The minister deviated from the script for his role and the traditional division of labor between the minister and choir director. This division of labor also was breached during the singing of the first hymn near the end of the first stanza at another medium membership church, when the minister stopped the congregation and admonished the congregants for "not singing (Standing on the Promises) like we really meant it." The minister said, "I have wanted to do this before, but didn't

want to disrupt the songleader." Such examples illustrate both more flexible divisions of labor and more responsiveness to a congregation's immediate behavior or needs.

Sound System. The separation of the minister from operating the sound system is indicative of formality in a worship service. The more affluent large membership churches used expensive sophisticated systems operated by a person other than the senior minister. The staffing of large membership churches allows the senior minister to be free of the more mundane aspects of the service (i.e., adjusting volume levels, turning on equipment, and setting up microphones). Small membership churches were without voice amplification systems or had ones which were inexpensive and antiquated. The sound system may represent a technological innovation which permits more people to hear better, but also encourages congregants to behave like an audience.

Dress. The garb of the minister may further separate the minister from the congregation. Ministers in the large churches wore academic gowns. The ministerial robe in the large membership churches presumably symbolized the authority and educational attainment of the minister while clearly delineating the separateness of the minister from the congregation. At the smaller membership churches, most of the male ministers wore dark suits whether to accommodate

the congregations' preferences, to reflect their perceptions of appropriateness or practical considerations. (One minister at a small membership church said he could not afford a robe.)

How members of the congregation as well as ministers are attired is an indication of formality. When people are dressed more formally, they typically behave differently than when dressed casually. In the largest and most affluent churches congregants dressed more formally. A coat and tie seemed to be expected for men, while in the smaller more rural services men rarely wore ties unless they were elderly. Women's dress exhibited a wider range of variation.

#### Minister's Characteristics and Behavior

Overall, less formal worship services were conducted by ministers who had less education and in small membership congregations. From the interviews I learned the ministers at the small membership churches were generally less educated (less likely to have a college education or seminary degree) than the ministers at the large membership churches. Their patterns of speech appeared less sophisticated. Many of the ministers in the small membership congregations had thick Eastern Tennessee accents that were difficult to follow for an observer not from the rural areas of the county.

Ministers varied in how much freedom they apparently

perceived they had to alter the length of the worship service. Congregants, like students in a class displayed interest in programs being completed when expected. Most ministers appeared to make an effort to conclude the service in an hour. More than a few times, I noticed ministers look at their wristwatches to see if their sermon was going to cause the service to be over an hour long. In all churches observed, if the service lasted longer than an hour, members of the congregation became visibly restless. Congregants would look at their watches, shift in their seats, close their hymnals, gather their Sunday School materials, and start to put on coats, scarves, and gloves. At the small membership churches ministers were more likely to have a service that lasted more than one hour.

To summarize this analysis I will review the least formal of the services I observed at a small membership church. It was the longest service (an hour and forty minutes) I observed and it started ten minutes late. Announcements were made by the choir and congregation. The lay leader appeared unorganized and did not have any planned announcements to make, instead relying on the congregation to make the announcements. Also recognition of birthdays and anniversaries and special music was included in the service.

#### Declining Membership Churches

I sampled churches for participant observation on the

basis of membership size (and ability to locate the church) and as noted above membership appeared to be associated with degree of formality. One interesting set of churches once would have been classified in the large membership category, but at the time of my study were medium sized ones moving toward becoming small churches.

Substantial declines in membership in some congregations apparently have resulted from the changing demographic composition of areas of Knox County. As more and more people move away from the central city into the suburban areas, most of the churches in the downtown area have declined in membership, which is apparent at their worship services. (One large membership church, which apparently draws participants from more affluent, outlying areas of the county is an exception to the declining membership and attendance visible in other center of the city UMC churches.)

I informally interviewed older church members at downtown churches who told me the decline began in the mid 1950s and 1960s as people moved away to newer, more expensive housing or fled changing neighborhoods. According to my informants, Sunday morning services that once regularly drew 600 to 700 people now draw only about 130. At one of these churches, a man said he was 54 and was considered one of the "youngsters" in the church, for the average of the membership is over 65 years of age. These

declining membership churches exhibited levels of formality similar to large membership churches.

Not only are churches, such as these, losing members due to populations shifts, but also the churches are not adding new members from the communities in which they are located. The racial composition of the downtown or center city has changed over the past 30 years. For example, the community surrounding the church mentioned above once was a predominantly white community that has become a predominantly African-American community. (The churches I observed for my research were either white or African-American. There were no racially mixed congregations.)

The downtown churches (excluding the one church growing in membership) have created a plan of integration to add members of the community to their congregations. A member of one of them said the church was trying to become a "community-based church." Yet, the only African American in the congregation was the pastor's wife. If the plan is not successful, some ministers suggested the declining churches will probably cease to exist as United Methodist Churches as their members die or they become predominantly African American churches. The flexibility characteristic of the frontier Methodist church was not apparent in these formal declining membership churches.

#### Church Architecture

Participating in the worship services provided the

opportunity to examine church architecture and to see whether it appeared to be linked to differences in worship services. Variation primarily appeared in the chancel area.

Liturgists argue the pulpit-centered chancel (with a pulpit center front) is intended to encourage focus on the minister's sermon (Hickman 1991). The current UMC liturgy does not focus on the sermon. The majority of churches I observed had a divided chancel with the pulpit on one side of the chancel, and usually a lectern or baptismal font on the other side. All former EUB churches I visited (5), as well as some of the older Methodist church buildings (2), were pulpit-centered. (The former EUB churches I visited were constructed between the early 1900s and the early 1960s and the two older Methodist churches were built during the mid 1920s.) Services at the pulpit-centered churches typically focused on the sermon. In part this relationship may reflect the traditional EUB emphasis on the sermon; yet, due to the limited number of pulpit-centered churches not formerly affiliated with the EUB church I could not disentangle the effects of church architecture on sermons from those of church history.

The baptismal structures varied very little. Regardless of the chancel structure all the churches except one had a baptismal font for sprinkling in approximately the same location. One former EUB church has a baptistry used to immerse the candidate located above the choir. The

possible meaning of having a baptistry is discussed in the next chapter.

The presence of communion cup holders on the back of pews is associated with the practice of passing trays of cups through congregations. The same former EUB church with the baptistry had cup holders on the backs of the pews to place the cups after taking communion. Further, the minister indicated they continued the practice of passing the communion plates. The minister said the congregants called the taking of communion in the pews "EUB style." Communion was not offered at any of the worship services I attended, so I do not know if other congregations without cupholders continued the practice of passing plates.

#### Summary

The worship services varied in degree of formality particularly during three components of the services: announcements, Ritual of Friendship, and prayer requests. Formality in the worship services was exemplified by a clear division of labor separating the minister from others (other ministers, choir directors, and members of the congregation); a separation which was reinforced by use of clerical garb and technological equipment (e.g., sound systems). (Language usage examined in the next chapter analyzing the bulletins also may make a service more or less formal.)

Services at large membership churches tended to exhibit

more formality, while in the smaller churches I observed more informality. At small churches, local pastors, ministers without college degrees or seminary training were found. The ministers' lesser education may support more informality, or ministers may be responding to their congregations' perceived preferences of informality. Also, in the smaller churches people may behave differently (informally) because of the personal contact facilitated by smaller size. The people know who the church members are; the churches are tied to the community in which they are located. (The large churches appear to draw members from a larger geographic area.)

## CHAPTER VI

### CONTENT ANALYSIS OF WEEKLY BULLETINS

The concept of liturgical adherence guides the analysis of weekly bulletins, although other characteristics of them also are examined. First, the contents of specific bulletins are compared with the order of worship in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) to establish liturgical adherence. Second, for churches with pastoral changes bulletins from before and after the changes are compared. Third, the physical characteristics of the bulletins are compared, i.e., variation in the quality of paper, the number of pages, and the art work or graphics on the front cover of the bulletin.

#### Bulletin Sample

Two sets of weekly bulletins were obtained in response to letters mailed to the minister of each church in Knox County. The primary focus of this analysis are the 61 bulletins I received from Sunday, May 15, 1994. Fifty-three bulletins were sent in response to my letter, and eight more were collected from churches I visited during the Sunday worship service that summer. To try to establish whether there is ministerial influence on liturgy, a second set of bulletins was requested from the same churches after the Annual Conference had made pastoral changes.

According to John Rice, a United Methodist liturgist, the order of worship printed in the bulletin provides a notation for the service. At the beginning of my research project Rice stated that the bulletin is a shadow of the service and the service may not necessarily happen that way (personal communication, March 14, 1994). Based on my observations of services examined in chapter five, the bulletin is a reasonable representation of the service.

Only two churches included acts of worship that were not included in the printed bulletin. For example, at one a member of the choir walked out of the choir loft and provided special music during the Proclamation and Response between the Act of Pardon and the Peace. (Acts of pardon forgive congregants for the sins they acknowledge during prayers of confession. The Peace is an ancient religious greeting of one another with a sign or the exchange of a word of blessing, e.g., "The peace of God be with you" (Waltz 1991; Willimon 1986).)

#### Comparison of Bulletins

##### Relative Adherence

Adherence to the Bulletin. In addition to formality, another sensitizing concept which emerged from interviews with ministers was relative adherence. Adherence was judged by comparing a church's bulletin to the order of worship as listed in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) by using three criteria: presence of additions, omission of components, and

variation in order. These criteria were developed from an initial review of bulletins.

Unlike the frontier Methodist church, UMC services are guided by bulletins. One empirical question was whether the bulletins are treated as rigid scripts for services or if ministers or congregations deviate from them.

Some ministers elected to deviate from the bulletin. During my first observation at one large membership church, the minister did not read the entire scripture lesson as printed in the bulletin. Greetings, a responsive "Good Morning," and announcements were made after the opening hymn. (According to the UMC liturgical template, the announcements and welcoming precede the opening hymn.) During my second visit to the church, the minister read more scripture than the bulletin stated. And, the second hymn was sung sitting down while the bulletin had the congregation singing the hymn standing up. Also, the welcoming of visitors was made after the second hymn. And, a time of prayers and concerns occurred after the call to worship. These components of the service were conducted but not mentioned in the bulletin. Greetings, announcements, welcoming of visitors, and a time for prayers and concerns were not mentioned in the bulletin. Apparently, this minister perceived his role permitted him discretion to deviate from both the order of worship and the printed bulletin.

From my observations at this church, most congregants did not read along with the minister in their personal bibles or pew bibles as the scripture lesson was read. Congregants showed no reaction when parts of the scripture lesson were omitted or added. For a congregant to recognize that the minister has omitted or added part of the scripture lesson, the congregant must notice what scripture lesson was designated to be read in the bulletin. Apparently the minister correctly perceived that following the bulletin exactly was not important to them. I observed a similar lack of attention at services at other churches.

Omissions of listed worship acts occurred at two other churches. The responsive reading, pastoral prayer, and the Lord's Prayer were listed in the bulletin, but skipped by the minister at one large membership church. At one medium membership church the minister did not read the Old Testament Lesson, he only read the New Testament Lesson. Again the members of the congregations seemed to display no reactions.

In the overwhelming majority of the services observed the bulletin accurately represented the service. Thus, I concluded the bulletin could be examined as a reasonable representation of most worship services.

Adherence to UMC liturgy. One of the large membership churches located in West Knoxville varied less from the liturgy in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) than other

churches. Specifically, it was one of the few churches to present the offering after the sermon. The offering is one of the changes from the previous order of worship which placed it prior to the sermon. (Most of the United Methodist churches in Knox County place the offering prior to the sermon in accord with the 1966 hymnal.) The order of worship from the large membership church was:

1. The Gathering of Celebration  
The Welcome and Announcements  
The Prelude  
The Bringing in the Light of Christ  
The Call to Worship  
The Hymn of Praise  
The Affirmation of Faith  
The Act of Praise

The Welcome of Visitors and Guest  
Registration

2. The Call to Prayer  
The Congregational Concerns  
The Morning Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer

3. The Proclamation of the Word  
The Biblical Reading  
The Anthem  
The Sermon

4. The Response to the Word  
The Hymn of Response  
The Roll of Friendship  
The Offertory Invitation  
The Offertory

5. The Going Forth  
The Benediction  
The Postlude

At the other extreme, one worship service that deviated more than other churches from the prescribed order of worship in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989), was a small

membership church in East Knoxville. It placed the Gloria Patri at the end of the worship service. (The Gloria Patri is a response often sung in unison by the congregation.) Their service began with a Prelude, but ended with the Gloria Patri unlike most others which end with a Postlude.

Prelude  
Welcome and Announcements  
Call to Worship  
Affirmation of Faith  
Opening Hymn  
Silent Meditation and Pastoral Prayer  
Our Lord's Prayer  
Hymn of Praise  
Offering  
Doxology  
Message  
Closing Hymn  
Benediction  
Gloria Patri

The minister at this church may have sought more congregational involvement than the dismissal with blessing allows. The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) has the Gloria Patri at the beginning of the service prior to the scripture lesson. Most churches followed it and placed the Gloria Patri at the beginning of the service. Also, the majority of the worship services I observed that began with a Prelude ended with a Postlude.

#### Formality

Use of Latin (or other classical languages) or more complex wording is a way to express formality. The elaborate language used in some worship services links formality to the concept of liturgical adherence. The more

formal worship services used the names of the acts of worship found in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) which are more complex.

Bulletins that identified acts of worship with elaborate and detailed names suggested more formality. Less formal bulletins simply designated acts of worship as "Announcements," "Prayers," "Hymns," or "Scripture."

The most formal language was in a large membership downtown church which used the elaborate names for components of the service used in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989). During the procession of the Light and Word, an Organ Voluntary was played. (Most bulletins called the Organ Voluntary a Prelude.) Another example of formality was designating time for Celebrations and Concerns consisting of announcements, hospitalizations, and deaths within the congregation. Most bulletins simply called the event "Announcements." And, the words of the Offertory Solo were printed in the bulletin in Latin, "Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine."

1. Entrance

The Procession of the Light and Word  
Organ Voluntary  
Processional Hymn  
Call to Worship  
Collect  
Celebrations and Concerns  
Morning Prayer  
Anthem

2. Proclamation and Praise

Old Testament Lesson  
Hymn

Meditation  
Hymn  
New Testament Lesson  
Sermon  
Presentation of Offerings  
Offertory Solo  
Doxology

3. Thanksgiving  
Prayer of Thanksgiving  
The Lord's Prayer  
Invitation to Discipleship

4. Sending Forth  
Hymn  
Going Forth  
Organ Voluntary

Variations in levels of formality were visible in how bulletins referred to prayers and hymns. One of the more informal services portrayed in a bulletin from a small membership congregation referred to the Pastoral and Lord's Prayer as simply "Prayers." In contrast the church with the most formal printed service used the designations Morning Prayer and a Prayer of Thanksgiving. And, the small membership church referred to the hymns in its bulletin simply as "Hymns," while the large membership church's first hymn was called a processional hymn. In the smaller churches the choirs did not walk in they were seated before the service began.

Language usage may support or generate formality in a church with a highly educated clergy and membership. A small membership church which refers to the Scripture Lesson as "Scripture" and the Invitation to Discipleship is called "Invitation" is using language that is more accessible and

informal. A more formal worship service would include Old Testament Lessons, New Testament Lessons, and an Invitation to Discipleship.

Prelude  
Call to Worship  
Hymn  
Announcements  
Childrens' (sic) Sermon  
Prayers  
Offering and Doxology  
Hymn  
Anthem  
Scripture  
Sermon  
Invitation  
Hymn  
Benediction  
Postlude

Finally, Children's Sermons were included in some churches' worship services. Most of the small and medium sized churches included a Children's Sermon near the middle of the worship service. The large membership church with the greatest liturgical adherence and most formality, did not include a Children's Sermon in the worship service. (Children do not attend services with adults in most of the large membership churches. Large membership churches have the wealth and numbers to send the children elsewhere when the worship service begins.)

#### Liturgical Adherence in the EUB church

The analysis of liturgical adherence is resumed as the bulletins at the former EUB churches are compared to The United Methodist Hymnal (1989). A lesser degree of liturgical adherence in the worship services of the former

EUB churches was immediately apparent. The orders of worship in the former EUB churches omitted forms of structured congregational participation, such as responsive readings, psalters, or creeds. One small membership church had one more hymn than The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) proscribes, for a total of five, while most churches in Knox County only have three or sometimes the designated four.

And, three of the five former EUB churches I visited did not use The United Methodist Hymnal (1989). One former EUB church uses the hymnal, Best Loved Songs and Hymns (1961) because the congregation can only read shaped notes according to its pastor; another uses an ecumenical hymnal, Hymns for the Family of God (1976). The third uses The Book of Hymns (1979). In one of the two which uses the current hymnal, the old EUB hymnal, Service and Worship Hymnal (1964), remains in almost every pew.

#### Ministerial Change and Liturgical Change

If the minister of the church changed prior to the second mailing on January 29, 1995, I compared the bulletins for the two services. Of the 70 United Methodist Churches in Knox County, nine churches changed ministers. (The churches that changed ministers were of all sizes.) Three of these churches returned both bulletins. Three churches did not submit either bulletin.

Comparison of the bulletins at one medium membership church did reveal considerable changes. Under the new

minister at this medium membership church the bulletin included acts of worship that were not in the May 15, 1994 order of worship: a Call to Worship, a Benediction, and a Choral Response to the Benediction. By the minister adding acts of worship that were not included in the previous order of worship, the bulletin adhered more closely to The United Methodist Hymnal (1989).

Under the new minister at the large membership church the bulletin had the offering and Lord's prayer prior to the sermon. The previous order of worship had the offering immediately after the sermon and the Lord's prayer prior to the invitation to discipleship. Comparing the bulletins at the small membership church revealed almost no liturgical change.

#### Physical Characteristics of Bulletins

The bulletins are documents with physical characteristics and are symbolic representations of a worship service. Their physical characteristics are described and related to size of congregation. Considerable variation existed among the bulletins in the quality of paper used to print the order of worship. Two large membership churches printed the order of worship on heavy paper (one yellow, another gray). The bulletin of a small membership congregation in North Knoxville is printed on orange paper. A couple of small membership congregations distributed what appeared to be xerox copies. One bulletin

sent to me appeared to be an original the minister created for me.

Churches with large memberships use their bulletins to communicate information about their many activities. The bulletins typically were one sheet of paper folded in half, except those from the large membership churches. A large membership church in West Knoxville whose bulletin is usually five or six pages long includes inserts. The inserts allowed people to make reservations for upcoming events and served as advertisements for programs and special functions. The largest and heaviest bulletin was at a large membership congregation in downtown Knoxville.

Most large to medium membership churches used ink drawings or the art work of a publishing company on their covers. The art work on fifteen bulletin front covers was the same. The churches were using the same religious publishing company, for printed on the back of all these bulletins is "Word Alive." Most of the bulletins using the same front cover were medium sized churches. Two other medium membership congregations with the same artwork had "Cokesbury New Images" printed on the back cover specifying Cokesbury religious publishing company was their service.

Churches with smaller congregations and budgets had inexpensive covers. For example, a small membership church near the center of the city had a drawing of the church by a member of the church. Ten others contained costs by simply

having a black and white picture of the church on the front cover. (A minister that presides over a three point charge had black and white pictures of the churches on the front cover of the bulletin used at all three services.) Four additional churches apparently limited costs by using only the "Cross and Flame" symbol of the United Methodist Church on the front cover of the bulletin.

In sum, large membership churches tended to have bulletins printed on heavier paper, lacked typographical errors, and inserts contained other information. In contrast, one small membership church, included a weekly countdown of how many shopping days were left until Christmas in its May bulletin. Anniversaries and birthdays are announced in another small membership church's order of worship.

Congregation size is related to bulletin characteristics because both are correlated with church budgets. Current operating expenses were calculated using the statistical tables in the back of the 1994 Holston Annual Conference Journal. For each church I added the current expenses for programs to other current operating expenses. At the close of 1993, a large membership church downtown had the highest current operating budget of any church in Knox County, over \$500,000. Another large membership church had current operating expenses that were slightly under \$500,000. These church bulletins lacked

typographical errors and were printed on high quality paper.

In contrast, one small membership church had current operating expenses of about \$5,000. The church had incorrect punctuation and misspelled words in its bulletin and order of worship. Another small membership church with a simple bulletin had current operating expenses between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

One other characteristic was noted. When I examined the hymns listed in the bulletins, small membership churches were more likely to use hymns that exclusively employed masculine language. Hymns traditionally have used such language, but as I reviewed the bulletins I saw only a limited number of churches used hymns with masculine references in their titles. For example, a medium sized membership church's invitational hymn was "Where He Leads Me." "Blessed is the Man" and "He Keeps Me Singing" were hymns included in a small membership church's order of worship. The hymnals varied among churches as noted in chapter five. The current UMC hymnals used at large membership churches did not include the hymns sung at the small and medium membership churches. The hymns in it have more inclusive language. The smaller churches' usage of older hymnals meant they were singing more traditional hymns, and as a consequence ones more likely to use exclusively masculine references.

## Summary

Following the order of worship in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) is used as a working definition of liturgical adherence. The bulletins provide reasonably accurate information on adherence to UMC liturgy, because most services followed the printed bulletin.

The analysis of the bulletins revealed variation in liturgical adherence among churches related to the size of the church (small, medium, and large). Some small congregations reportedly were reluctant to engage in acts of worship that preceded the sermon. The pastor at one small membership church told me the congregants did not enthusiastically participate in the responsive readings, mumbled unison prayers, and acted bored with the reading of creeds. He wanted to include more liturgy (responsive readings, creeds, and psalters) in the service than the congregation desired. He perceived "(this) congregation would probably be better off with a local pastor than a seminary trained pastor" supporting the tendency noted for small membership churches not to have seminary trained ministers.

The large membership churches were the only churches that placed the offering after the sermon. I suspect the higher level of educational attainment of the ministers at large membership churches which use The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) is linked to the greater degree of liturgical

adherence. Perhaps because of the connection to the larger United Methodist Church, the larger membership congregations are more likely to adhere to the prescribed order of worship in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989). Due to the influence of local traditions, the smaller membership churches may feel less connected to the larger United Methodist Church.

Substantial variations in the order of worship were related to whether a church was a former EUB church. For example, most of the former EUB churches did not use The United Methodist Hymnal (1989).

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Sociologists recognize the importance of rituals in social life. But liturgies are infrequently the subject of empirical investigation, even within the sociology of religion. Empirical examination of liturgical practices should further understanding of the extent to which congregations and local church histories may influence them.

This project reviewed the development of the United Methodist Church and its liturgy and then examined liturgical practices in the United Methodist Churches in one locale, Knox County. The nature and extent of variation in worship services was explored in multiple ways. Interviews with ministers, worship service observations, and content analysis of weekly bulletins provided information about the relative importance of ministerial versus congregational preference; the relationship between membership size (and church budget) and types of ministers assigned, and the relationship between membership size and the preferences and characteristics of members. The sensitizing concepts of formality and relative adherence which emerged from interviews with ministers guided the analysis.

In this chapter conclusions are drawn about the minister's role in shaping the presentation of liturgy, and

the importance of church size. Some additional information from interviews of female ministers is presented. Observations from a large membership church are also provided to demonstrate the use of the concepts of formality and liturgical adherence. The chapter concludes with limitations of the study and implications for future research.

### The Minister's Influence

One reason the study initially was proposed was to learn how ministers' beliefs shape their churches' liturgy. Liturgists argue ministers function as leaders of congregations. Potentially, they may modify liturgy for many reasons, e.g., to accommodate their own belief structures or to make liturgy more meaningful to their congregations. The interview findings suggest ministers of United Methodist Churches do not believe they have or should have substantial personal influence on their church's worship service. I tried to identify the extent of ministerial influence by comparing worship service bulletins from the same churches before and after they experienced change in ministerial leadership. Too few cases were obtained to draw conclusions.

Based on the interview data, ministers are not modifying the liturgy to fit their beliefs or preferences, but instead are reacting to their congregants perceived liturgical likes or dislikes. All of the ministers

interviewed thought worship services should be adapted to suit a particular congregation suggesting this position may be held by many contemporary United Methodist ministers. This position was expounded in a book recommended by one of the ministers, authored by another United Methodist minister, William Willimon. Willimon (1989:25) articulates the congregational preference argument and chastises ministers to not "pigeonhole" their congregations into "preconceived" liturgies without considering the abilities and traditions of their congregations.

Congregational preference may lead to some difficulties. Several ministers described "a Baptist influence in the congregation" influencing the liturgy. For example, the minister at one church perceived that what influenced his congregation the most was the Southern Baptist denomination. He estimated that about forty-five percent of his congregation were former Southern Baptists. Some ministers referred to members in their congregation as "BaptaMethodists" or "MethoBaptists." Congregations with a strong Southern Baptist influence were perceived to be reluctant to participate in the UMC liturgy as laid out in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989).

A worship committee which reviews church liturgical practices existed in some of the large membership churches. Yet, when I was interviewing ministers about possible influences on the worship service, none of the ministers

referred to their worship committee.

These interviews raised questions about the role of UMC liturgy: If local congregations adapt to expectations shaped by members' previous religious experiences or other background characteristics, is it a "normal process" of adaptation or a harbinger of larger scale change? This study cannot answer that question, although most adjustments did not appear to address fundamental aspects of the liturgy and in the context of the history of change in the United Methodist Church appear to be part of a long term pattern of adaptation.

#### Influence of Local Church History

Former EUB churches tended to retain some EUB traditions. For example, most former EUB churches did not use The United Methodist Hymnal (1989), and instead relied on hymnals which could be classified as more traditional, such as Hymns for the Family of God (1976) or The Broadman Hymnal (1940). And, the worship services in former EUB churches that I attended had less congregational participation (e.g., responsive readings, psalters, and creeds) than other United Methodist Church services I attended. Formal and informal interviews with ministers revealed former EUB church members apparently were reluctant to adhere to the liturgy of The United Methodist Church. Some of their unwillingness was rooted in their opposition to the merger and some simply in their preference for

familiar practices.

#### Sex of the Minister

In the process of acquiring information about liturgical practices, I found the sex of the minister shaped experiences with congregations. The women interviewed believed they had somewhat different experiences from the men. Some of the women reported they faced initial resistance from their congregations because they were women trying to enter a traditionally male dominated occupation.

Women often were presented with reminders that their gender could become an issue. For example, a minister at a medium membership congregation had a joint worship service every year with a nearby Southern Baptist church, but rumors circulated that she would not be welcome in the pulpit of a Southern Baptist church. She also related that ten years prior to her appointment at this church, the district superintendent asked the congregation if they would accept a woman as their new pastor. The congregation reportedly responded that they would not accept a woman as pastor.

#### Formality and Church Size

Within Knox County, churches varied widely in size and financial position. Those larger in size could afford more than one minister and other staff, thus generating a more elaborate division of labor in performing the worship service at large churches. Associate ministers supervised the preparatory activities. The senior ministers almost

always took responsibility for the sermon, presumably reflecting the relative importance assigned to it compared to the preparatory activities.

A set of characteristics were conceptualized as representing formality. These characteristics were: the division of labor--separation of choir and congregation, and associate ministers being assigned preparatory activities, the use of clerical garb by the minister, the staffing of the sound system by someone else other than the senior minister, the lack of congregational participation during the announcements, and the use of Latin or more complex wording.

Size was associated with formality. Smaller churches tended to be more informal and larger churches tended to be more formal.

#### Liturgical Adherence

Liturgical adherence, another concept developed during the research process refers to variation in how closely a local church adheres to a worship service template distributed by a central church organization. In this research focus was on adherence to the order of worship provided in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989). Large churches adhered more closely to the liturgical template than smaller churches based on comparison of church bulletins with the UMC liturgy and observation. The large membership churches were the only churches that placed the

offering after the sermon. The large membership congregations are more likely to adhere the order of worship in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989).

The concepts of formality and liturgical adherence are demonstrated through examination of worship services at a large membership church in the area.

#### Observations at a Large Membership Church

Based on repeated observations of a large membership United Methodist Church in the area, I compared summaries of services with the bulletins given for the services and the liturgy as described in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989). The observations and analysis are organized according to the four parts of the "Basic Pattern." The church's worship services are more formal and exhibit greater liturgical adherence than other Knox County UMC churches.

The Entrance begins with the gathering. From my observations during the gathering, the period before the eleven o'clock service is noisy despite the ideal that it be a period of transition. Young children are running up and down the center and side aisles as families sit down in the pews. Parents talk about upcoming soccer games or occupational interests. The Methodist liturgist Hickman (1989) notes that "informal greetings, conversation, and fellowship should have some appropriate place in the gathering...and (it) should not be discouraged."

As the organist chimes the bells marking the hour, the

senior minister in clerical garb proceeds at right angles from behind the choir to the front of the sanctuary. Apparently to reduce distance from the congregation, he either stands in the aisle of the first pew or moves up the aisle to the third or fourth row of pews if no one is occupying these rows to begin his salutations and announcements. He opens with a formal "Good Morning," and the congregation responds back in unison with "Good Morning."

The greetings and announcements are followed by the ritual of friendship. When I attended, he consistently said the same thing, "I am delighted to see each of you here, especially those who might have come here as visitors. Let me call your attention to the plan of activities located on the back of the bulletin so that you might plan your activities accordingly." The congregation is asked to sign the ritual of friendship located at the end of the pew and then he makes announcements about the events in the upcoming week. During the period I observed services, the minister began a new procedure, he issued an open invitation to the congregation to make any other announcements that needed to be made. (I never observed a member of the congregation standing up and making an announcement.)

The minister told the congregation that he makes his announcements and greetings to visitors at the beginning of the order of worship because, as he said, it "puts these

matters behind us enabling us to focus on the reason we gathered here, to give glory to God and to worship Him in spirit and in truth." The flow of the worship service presumably is not interrupted with mundane and secular matters. This placement adheres to the printed liturgy in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989).

During the voluntary, a pair of altar girls or boys walk down the center aisle and around the altar railing to light the candles and then walk off the chancel to sit in the pews. At the conclusion of the voluntary, the associate minister begins the call to worship and the congregation responds with the responses printed in the bulletin. As prescribed in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) at this point in the service, "responsive acts between leader and people declare that the Lord is present and empowers our worship."

The call to worship precedes the opening hymn. The invocation (the prayer for illumination), is given by the associate minister, after the opening hymn. A psalm or litany then follows the invocation. The Gloria Patri is sung by the whole congregation and concludes the Entrance.

The Old Testament Lesson is read by the associate minister followed by an anthem. The anthem is provided by the choir or the choir director, although occasionally, there is a guest soloist. A psalm is occasionally spoken after the first reading. The Epistle Lesson is read by the

associate minister and followed by a hymn. The Gospel Lesson, read by the associate minister or senior minister, and a hymn or anthem precede the sermon. All of this is in accord with The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) which states that the "Scripture readings may be interspersed with a psalm or hymn."

The senior minister typically gives the sermon. The prayer of confession, silent confession and reflection follow the sermon. On occasion, an affirmation of faith directly follows the sermon. Liturgist Hickman (1989) notes that "this is a most fitting time (immediately after the sermon) for a creed or affirmation of faith."

The affirmation of faith, the pastoral prayer, the Lord's Prayer, the offertory, and the presentation of tithes and offerings all serve as a response to the Proclamation of the Word. As prescribed in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989) but not the earlier hymnal, the offering is placed as "a response to the Word rather than preliminary to the Word" (Hickman 1989).

The Sending Forth concludes the service. One or two stanzas of the final hymn are followed by the dismissal with blessing. After the final hymn is sung, the senior minister and the associate minister move to the front of the sanctuary and face the congregation. The senior minister announces to the congregation "that before you leave to (sic) turn and greet those around you whether they are

visitors or a member of the church that you may not know." The voluntary is played as the ministers proceed down the center aisle and the congregation disperses.

At this church, a pastoral division of labor existed whereby the associate minister was delegated most of the responsibilities (e.g., responsive readings, scripture lessons, call to worship) prior to the sermon. The pastoral division of labor, the lack of congregational participation during the announcements, and the garb of the minister in this large membership congregation were indicative of worship services with greater formality. Also typical of other large membership congregations was the lack of variation from the order of worship in The United Methodist Hymnal (1989).

#### Limitations of the Data

The interview respondents and services for observation were selected through a systematic sampling process thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Generalizability depends on the representativeness of the cluster and the extent to which the systematic sample can be considered random. In addition, the number of interviews was small. If more interviews could have been conducted using other sampling procedures, there would be more confidence that perceptions and attitudes the ministers expressed are representative of the views of other United Methodist ministers. My study only included research on the

United Methodist Church, research on other religious denominations would have proved valuable (e.g., Southern Baptist denomination).

United Methodism within Knox County has been shaped by historical and cultural influences that other regions of the country may not possess. Two of these influences deserve specific notice. First, churches within Knox County had a tendency to form around families. For example, a minister at a medium membership church in South Knoxville told me "three clans make up the church." Second, the split in 1844 (discussed in the chapter on church history) still is reflected in the churches in Knox County. Unlike the churches in other counties in Eastern Tennessee, the Northern and Southern churches in Knox County never merged. Thus, the Northern and Southern churches in Knox County maintain separate historical and cultural traditions. These influences may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Other types of data potentially could provide greater insight into why large churches exhibited greater liturgical adherence. For example, information about who shaped the current liturgy might indicate whether the liturgy was designed to reflect the preferences of representatives of large churches more so than the preferences of representatives of smaller churches. Also, additional interviews of members of small membership churches about their perceptions of their churches' relationship to the UMC

might provide information about why these congregations exhibited less adherence to UMC liturgy. Finally, repeated observations of services at small membership churches would have allowed me to ascertain whether the seemingly less formal activities of participants were unstructured or ritualized.

#### Implications for Further Research

Further research on mainline Protestant liturgical practices needs to explore the strong Southern Baptist influence throughout the South and Southeast regions of the country. Because the growth of the more evangelical churches does not seem to be subsiding, future study of liturgy should consider the influence of the evangelical church.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

### UNITED METHODIST CONGREGATIONS

#### SMALL MEMBERSHIP CONGREGATIONS

(Defined as having 110 members or less)

| <u>United Methodist Church</u> | <u>Members*</u> | <u>Pastor's Salary</u> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. Holston Chapel              | 74              | \$6,281                |
| 2. Bethel (Kodak)              | 52              | \$6,912                |
| 3. Huckleberry Springs         | 38              | \$5,916                |
| 4. Riverdale                   | 45              | \$6,384                |
| 5. Hopewell                    | 49              | \$4,353                |
| 6. Piney Grove (EUB)           | 48              | \$7,920                |
| 7. Lynnwood (EUB)              | 65              | \$3,600                |
| 8. Marble City (EUB)           | 77              | \$6,656                |
| 9. Martin Chapel               | 91              | \$5,564                |
| 10. Virginia Avenue            | 90              | \$8,930                |
| 11. Zion                       | 78              | \$4,300                |
| 12. Bell's Campground          | 46              | \$5,739                |
| 13. Grisby Chapel              | 53              | \$5,678                |
| 14. Heiskell                   | 52              | \$9,600                |
| 15. Pellissippi Community      | 65              | \$10,534               |
| 16. Dutch Valley               | 26              | Not Reported           |
| 17. Mt. Zion                   | 42              | \$4,200                |
| 18. Bethel (Knoxville)         | 49              | \$4,204                |
| 19. Solway                     | 45              | \$11,367               |
| 20. Hendron's Chapel           | 108             | \$9,634                |
| 21. West View                  | 106             | \$17,373               |

\*as of 12/93

**MEDIUM MEMBERSHIP CONGREGATIONS**  
(Defined as having between 111-499 members)

| <u>United Methodist Church</u> | <u>Members*</u> | <u>Pastor's Salary</u> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 22. Bethel (Amherst) (EUB)     | 314             | \$20,316               |
| 23. Beulah                     | 145             | \$23,149               |
| 24. Bookwalter (EUB)           | 484             | \$30,600               |
| 25. Christ                     | 470             | \$24,420               |
| 26. Clapp's Chapel             | 357             | \$31,452               |
| 27. Colonial Heights           | 466             | \$26,349               |
| 28. Dante                      | 117             | \$21,849               |
| 29. Ebenezer                   | 493             | \$26,536               |
| 30. Bethlehem (EUB)            | 176             | \$13,135               |
| 31. Fairview (EUB)             | 134             | \$14,020               |
| 32. Hillcrest                  | 308             | \$25,305               |
| 33. Asbury                     | 209             | \$18,352               |
| 34. Kodak                      | 373             | \$20,199               |
| 35. Mascot                     | 141             | \$15,386               |
| 36. Pleasant Hill              | 116             | \$17,342               |
| 37. Sand Branch (EUB)          | 257             | \$25,000               |
| 38. Trentville                 | 199             | \$23,261               |
| 39. Inskip                     | 287             | \$23,318               |
| 40. Emerald Avenue             | 338             | \$26,966               |
| 41. Lincoln Park               | 221             | \$23,159               |
| 42. Oakwood                    | 211             | \$14,288               |
| 43. Lennon-Seney               | 310             | \$26,951               |
| 44. Macedonia                  | 392             | \$26,947               |
| 45. Magnolia Avenue            | 240             | \$22,090               |
| 46. Norwood                    | 293             | \$26,958               |
| 47. Rutherford Memorial        | 219             | \$26,500               |
| 48. St. Andrews                | 195             | \$21,831               |
| 49. St. Luke's                 | 385             | \$28,560               |
| 50. St. Mark                   | 313             | \$38,250               |
| 51. St. Paul (East)            | 223             | \$22,600               |
| 52. St. Paul (Fountain City)   | 435             | \$31,000               |
| 53. Vestal                     | 360             | \$25,000               |
| 54. Lonsdale                   | 221             | \$23,149               |
| 55. First Farragut             | 407             | \$26,166               |
| 56. Strawberry Plains          | 205             | \$23,149               |
| 57. Mountain View              | 203             | \$32,968               |

\*as of 12/93

**LARGE MEMBERSHIP CONGREGATIONS**  
(Defined as having 500+ members)

| <u>United Methodist Church</u> | <u>Members*</u> | <u>Pastor's Salary</u> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 58. Bearden                    | 666             | \$47,509               |
| 59. Central                    | 668             | \$38,000               |
| 60. Church Street              | 2,602           | \$52,275               |
| 61. Cokesbury                  | 1,912           | \$48,966               |
| 62. Fountain City              | 1,710           | \$55,800               |
| 63. First                      | 516             | \$46,000               |
| 64. Second                     | 1,097           | \$31,034               |
| 65. Middlebrook                | 1,072           | \$39,464               |
| 66. Powell                     | 613             | \$31,952               |
| 67. Trinity                    | 759             | \$41,496               |
| 68. Washington Pike            | 797             | \$45,125               |
| 69. Concord                    | 1,999           | \$49,220               |
| 70. Beaver Ridge               | 650             | \$38,685               |

\*as of 12/93

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

I am doing a study about how Methodist ministers view the liturgy. Also I am interested in reading any materials you might recommend that would help me better understand the liturgy and different views of it.

#### BACKGROUND:

1. Were you brought up as a Methodist? (If yes, what Methodist church was it? If no, what was your early religious training?)
2. When did you decide to pursue the ministry? At approximately what age did you enter the ministry? Was there a day you can remember when you decided to join the ministry or did your decision occur over a period of time?
3. Where did you go to theological school? Why did you select that school? Do you think your training at that school has been a primary influence on how you view the liturgy?
4. After you left the seminary, where did you go? Did those experiences modify your views of the liturgy?

#### CURRENT SITUATION:

5. Could you tell me about the process that led to your assignment in the Knoxville area? When a minister, such as yourself, arrives in a community how much freedom is there to modify the practices of the previous minister?
6. Do you think worship services should be modified to suit a particular congregation?
7. In the research I have done so far I have learned that churches have a pastor/parish relations committee which may be consulted when ministerial appointments are being made. What does the committee do? What are its major responsibilities? How are people selected to be on the committee?

8. How much of a factor does the previous historical tradition of the church play in influencing the order of worship? If the previous history of the church does make a difference, in what ways does it make a difference?

9. Could you tell me about the symbolic function of the minister in the worship service? I have read liturgists (Hovda 1990:171-72) who have described the function of ministers as instruments of the congregation. That is, the minister is the voice, hands, arms, and feet of the assembly enabling it to serve as one body in Christ. Is this your perception? If not, then what do you see as the ministers function in the worship service?

10. Do you wear liturgical vestments? What are the vestments symbolic of? What do you think they mean to the congregation?

11. What role does the layout of the sanctuary play in modifying ritual? How does the architectural plan influence worship? Does the architecture of the sanctuary create any limitations?

## APPENDIX C

### Statement of Informed Consent:

The purpose of this study is an examination of how ministers present church liturgy and why differences may exist. A denomination presents its leaders with a template to use in worship services, for example, in The United Methodist Church "The Basic Pattern of Worship."

I am going to look at three perspectives of Methodist ministers. First, I will investigate the ministers' personal beliefs about the order of worship. Second, I will ask ministers' their perceptions of church liturgy and those of their congregation in following the liturgy. Third, I will examine the way the minister as a religious professional views the liturgy, more importantly their beliefs learned in theological school.

I want to gain a greater understanding of the minister's views of the worship service. I will do this in two ways: first, through the collection of church bulletins and second, through interviews. Audiotapes of the interviews will allow me to review a complete and accurate record of the interview.

Your identity will be kept confidential. Only the principal investigator and the co-principal investigator will have access to the interview record - data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. Any reference to individual comments in the interview will be disguised to protect your identity. Consent forms will be kept for a period of three years, after which they will be destroyed. Audiotapes will be erased upon transcription.

If you have any questions about the nature of the study, please feel free to discuss them with Trey Bower, Department of Sociology, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (546-0329) or Dr. Suzanne Kurth, Department of Sociology, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (974-4311).

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this project.

\* \* \* \* \*

I, the undersigned, understand the purpose of the study for which I am volunteering. I recognize that my participation in the study is voluntary, and I may refuse to participate. Also, I may withdraw at any time during the interview without penalty or prejudice. If I withdraw, any information pertaining to the interview will be destroyed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

December 7, 1994

The Reverend Jane Smith  
Apple Grove United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 157  
Knoxville, TN 37916

Dear Reverend Smith:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. For my Master's thesis I am studying variation in the liturgy of United Methodist Churches in Knox County and would appreciate talking to you about it.

For my thesis, I have reviewed information about liturgy in general and United Methodist liturgy in particular to deepen the understanding I have formed as a member of the United Methodist Church. To get a sense of the variation in this area, I sent an initial letter to each United Methodist Church in Knox County asking for a church bulletin last May. (I plan to request another bulletin in January to obtain further information.) I have also talked with a few United Methodist ministers about their views of the liturgy.

I need your assistance for the next step in my research--interviewing local ministers about the liturgy and related issues. I will call you in a few days after you have received this letter to ask if you would be willing to participate in the interview part of my study. The interview should last no more than one hour and will be scheduled at your convenience.

My research project is dependent; it is not sponsored by the United Methodist Church or any of its agencies. The information I gather will be presented in statistical of summary form, so that no individual could be identified. My goals in pursuing this research are to fulfill the research component of my Master's program and to contribute to the sociological literature.

I hope you will be interested in participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Trey Bower  
Department of Sociology  
University of Tennessee  
Knoxville, TN 37996-0490

## APPENDIX E

May 11, 1994

The Reverend Jane Smith  
Apple Grove United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 157  
Knoxville, TN 37916

Dear Reverend Smith:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. For my Master's thesis I am planning on studying variation in the liturgy of Methodist churches. As a preliminary step, I have talked with a few Methodist ministers and reviewed information about Methodist liturgy to deepen the understanding I have formed as a member of the United Methodist Church.

I need your assistance for the next step in my research -- collecting a bulletin from each United Methodist Church in the Knoxville area. I would appreciate it if you would send me a copy of your church's bulletin for Sunday, May 15, 1994. I have enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope for your convenience.

I know that some Knox County Methodist churches will have pastoral changes as a result of the Holston Annual Conference in June. I would like to have copies of the bulletins before any changes occur.

My research project is independent; it is not sponsored by the United Methodist Church or any of its agencies. The information I gather will be presented in summary or statistical form, so that no individual could be identified. My goals in pursuing this research are to fulfill the research component of my Master's program and to contribute to the sociological literature.

Receiving a copy of your church bulletin for May 15 will help me in my research. I greatly appreciate your assistance.

Sincerely,

Trey Bower  
Department of Sociology  
University of Tennessee  
Knoxville, TN 37996-0490  
December 7, 1994

## APPENDIX F

January 25, 1995

The Reverend Jane Smith  
Apple Grove United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 157  
Knoxville, TN 37916

Dear Reverend Smith:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. For my Master's thesis I am studying variation in the liturgy of United Methodist Churches in Knox County.

For my thesis, I have reviewed information about liturgy in general and United Methodist liturgy in particular to deepen the understanding I have formed as a member of the United Methodist Church. I sent an initial letter to each United Methodist Church in Knox County asking for a church bulletin for Sunday, May 15, 1994.

To obtain further information about variation in the liturgy at different times of the year and in different congregations, I want to collect another bulletin from each United Methodist Church in Knox County. I would appreciate it if you would send me a copy of your church's bulletin for Sunday, January 29, 1995. I have enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope for your convenience.

My research is independent; it is not sponsored by the United Methodist Church or any of its agencies. The information I gather will be presented in statistical or summary form, so that no individual could be identified. My goals in pursuing this research are to fulfill the research component of my Master's program and to contribute to the sociological literature.

Receiving a copy of your church bulletin for January 29, 1995, will help me in my research. I greatly appreciate your assistance.

Sincerely,

Trey Bower  
Department of Sociology  
University of Tennessee  
Knoxville, TN 37996-0490

### VITA

Walter Haupt Bower III was born in Hartford, Connecticut on July 4, 1969. He attended elementary school in Trumbull, Connecticut and graduated from The Webb School of Knoxville in Knoxville, Tennessee in April, 1988. In August of 1988, he entered Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi and in May of 1992 he graduated cum laude receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a minor in Psychology. In August of 1992, he entered The Graduate School at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In June of 1994, he was employed by the Social Science Research Institute as a social researcher. In January of 1995, he was employed by the Department of Sociology as a graduate teaching associate. In August of 1996, he was employed by Roane State Community College as an Adjunct Faculty member. In August of 1997, he was employed by Carson-Newman College as a part-time faculty member.

The author is a member of the Southern Sociological Society, Alpha Kappa Delta, Sigma Lambda, Phi Eta Sigma, Omicron Delta Kappa, and Eta Sigma Phi.