

The turning over of traditional tables

By [Thom Turner](#)

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Speaking to a professor at Liberty University, Frederica Mathewes-Green was surprised to find out that the professor and some of the young people at Liberty were going to a Celtic liturgical service at a local Baptist church ([link](#); relevant conversation starts at the 28:50 mark). The professor related that the baby-boomers wanted the contemporary worship—with guitars and drums—while the young people of the church were willing to go to the 7:30am service on Sunday morning for a traditional Celtic service. Even more, these young Baptists were asking for intercession and litany.

Recently, in the 50th issue of [RELEVANT](#), many of the [faith trends](#) the magazine summarized in coverage of their publishing history dealt with a return to liturgy, ancient-future worship and spiritual disciplines. There has been a huge surge in liturgical interest among young people like myself that Christian media has really picked up on.

The Gen-Xers and Baby Boomers see this as a “trend.” It’s something that young people are into, like Arcade Fire, Invisible Children, social justice or Tom’s Shoes. In part, it’s seen as “cool” or “hip.” They see a return to liturgy as a turning over of traditional evangelical or low-church Protestant tables. It’s a way to stick it to the man or not be part of the *status quo*.

I do agree that this liturgical, ancient-future worship movement is a turning over of traditional tables. But, this turning over of tables is not a spilling over of a century’s worth of low-church Protestantism as the table is flipped over. Instead, this movement is a return to the center. It’s a journey back home. It’s a realization that almost 2,000 years of vibrant Christian worship had been totally eclipsed and stuck in closets or the histories found in dusty theological books.

This movement of my generation is a turning over of traditional tables: but we're not flipping them over and sticking it to our parent's and grandparent's generation. We're righting the tables. We're dusting them off and putting the chairs back under it.

Liturgy isn't cool. It holds no cultural currency or hipster value. Liturgy isn't valuable. It's old enough to be in the public domain, which means you can't make any money off of it. Liturgy isn't special. It's not something that is canonical or God breathed.

Instead, let me say that liturgy is true and peculiar. It is the oral tradition of a peculiar people that, while changing over several hundred years, has been solely focused on instilling spiritual disciplines and practices in a worshipping people of God so that they can be God's mission and see his kingdom come. Is there no greater reason than that to right the table?

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