

Introduction

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In the past decades, important contributions have been offered to rethink the connection between Christian ethics and liturgy.¹ In the wake of liturgical movements and ecumenical convergences between traditions throughout the twentieth century,² several *liturgists* put forward the interconnectedness of prayer, belief and morality. Through prayer and worship, believers are formed over time in the deep affections that mark the Christian life (Don E. Saliers).³ *Systematic theologians* showed remarkable interest in the relation between liturgy, theology and morality. Karl Barth had already expounded the Christian moral life through a clause-by-clause analysis of the Lord's prayer.⁴ More recently, representatives of Radical Orthodoxy considered that Christ is present through the text of the Word, the sacrament, and in the liturgical practice of the Church in which we participate, and that this is the way to understand the world.⁵ The Church does not have a particular ethic because the Church is itself ethic. Similarly, Christian *ethicists* like Stanley Hauerwas, Samuel Wells,⁶

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- 1 This development can be traced back to 1979. See Don E. Saliers, "Liturgy and Ethics: Some New Beginnings," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 7/2 (1979), 173–189, and Paul Ramsey, "Liturgy and Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 7/2 (1979), 139–171. This special issue of *JRE* also contains contributions by liturgists Ron Green and Martin Yaffe. In fact, the interest in 'liturgy and ethics' of scholars in liturgical theology or liturgics, especially from Roman Catholic perspective and with a focus on social justice, precedes that of those in the discipline of ethics. See for an overview Mark Searle, "Liturgy and Social Ethics: An Annotated Bibliography," *Studia Liturgica* 21 (1991), 220–235.
 - 2 See, e.g., World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)*.
 - 3 See, e.g., Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Divine Glory* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994); E. Byron Anderson and Bruce T. Morrill (eds), *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch Before God*, Essays in Honor of Don E. Saliers (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998).
 - 4 Karl Barth, *Das christliche Leben*, Gesamtausgabe 7, Hgg. Hans A. Drewes, Eberhard Jüngel, Hinrich Stoevesandt, Anton Drewes (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1999³).
 - 5 See, e.g., John Milbank, Graham Ward and Catherine Pickstock (eds), *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London: Routledge, 1999).
 - 6 Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells (eds), *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, Second edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011). Former important works of Wells are *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2004) and *God's Companions: Reimagining Christian Ethics* (Malden: Blackwell, 2006). Hauerwas' considerations of the

and many others⁷ have challenged conventional approaches to ethics as an autonomous discipline, arguing that it is Christian worship that shapes the moral life of Christians, making them part of a community of character. Liturgy is not just enriched by ethical explorations and vice versa. Liturgy becomes the locus *par excellence* of the theological ethicist's work. A complete alteration of Christian ethics may take place through the exploration of the liturgy.

Whereas the relation between liturgy and ethics has often been conceived as external and causal, all these contributions emphasize the internal and conceptual relation between the two. As in the Early Church, liturgy is itself an act of discipleship, and as such it shapes the moral life. How we pray and worship is intrinsically linked to how we believe and how we live, and vice versa: *lex orandi—lex credendi—lex vivendi*. Christians can only understand their life properly in light of the liturgy, where the Christian life is both formed and expressed, and more or less put in opposition to the 'cultural liturgies' of a secular world.⁸

During the eleventh biannual international conference of the International Reformed Theological Institute (IRTI), held from June 25 till 28, 2015 at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, USA, these dimensions in current theological reflection were explored and discussed against the backdrop of Reformed theological conceptions of liturgy, ethics and doctrine. This volume contains a significant part of the papers presented at the conference in their elaborated and extended form. Some other essays are added that have not been presented

intrinsic relation between liturgy and ethics can be traced back to *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983). Close to Hau-erwas are William Willimon, *The Service of God: How Worship and Ethics are Related* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983) and Harmon L. Smith, *Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Liturgy and the Moral Life* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1995).

- 7 Prime examples are Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Oliver O'Donovan, *Liturgy and Ethics* (Bramcote: Gove Books 1993); Bernd Wannewetsch, *Gottesdienst als Lebensform: Ethik für Christenbürger* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1997), trans. as *Political Worship*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Brian Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God: On the Place of Christian Ethics in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). Another remarkable contribution is the collection of Oswald Bayer and Alan M. Suggate (eds), *Worship and Ethics: Lutherans and Anglicans in Dialogue* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), based on a series of German-British theological consultations.
- 8 The term 'cultural liturgies' stems from James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, Cultural Liturgies, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009) and *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*, Cultural Liturgies, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).