Note to Readers

In my count, this issue of Doxology represents either its third or fourth “incarnation”—Doxology 4.0 perhaps. What had been a means for communicating occasional papers and the annual retreat presentations became a juried journal focused on liturgical scholarship, with particular attention to cultivating the work of emerging scholars. These latter concerns continue in this incarnation. What has changed is the means by which it is delivered to you, our readers. Our goals in making this change are several: to provide a more cost-effective and timely form in which to produce the journal, to give the journal more visibility in an increasingly online world, and to make the journal more accessible to a broader community of readers and scholars. (The journal is now free to anyone who wishes to subscribe by registering.) There are still some unresolved questions—the possibility of a print-on-demand option, what libraries need to best access the journal, and who will assume editorial leadership; these questions will be worked out in the years ahead. What has not changed, however, is the quality of material presented here. Nor, at least for now, has the overall format changed. What you see on the page should look familiar to you.

So, having found your way to this new version of Doxology, what will you find within it? Ruth Duck’s essay on liturgies of reconciliation leads off this issue. She presented a version of this at the 2010 OSL retreat; it reflects work forthcoming in a textbook on Christian worship. Duck helps us think about what reconciliation is and is not, how we ritualize it with congregations, and how we extend our understanding of reconciliation beyond the interpersonal.

Kyle Tau develops a conversation about the relationship between the sacramental life and ethics, here through a critical conversation with German theologian Bernd Wannenwetsch’s book Political Worship. Through this conversation, Tau begins an exploration of the role of human agency in responding to and participating in God’s saving acts as they find expression in Christian liturgy. Timothy Gaines also leads us into a conversation between sacramental theology and Christian ethics, with a particular focus on the Trinitarian theology of British theologian Colin Gunton. Gaines invites us to consider how a more robust Trinitarian theology can contribute to binding up the “fragmented body of late modern society.”

Hwarang Moon takes up a question that will be familiar to many Doxology readers—the place of children in eucharistic celebrations. While
many North American mainline protestants are now likely to respond “but of course they are welcome at the Lord’s table”, the same is not true of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches in South Korea, which is where Moon locates his discussion. Rather than simply assume a positive response, he explores the Reformed church’s historical resistance to such participation by children, then develops a case for how children benefit from welcome and participation at the table.

Mark Stamm’s article explores what, to some, will seem an odd question: Should and can we give thanks in a liturgical context for baseball? As he notes, his proposal is not without its difficulties. Nevertheless, he helps us think about a theology of play and playfulness as well as how such a theology can contribute to a fuller understanding of God’s vision for the world. Perhaps the larger question he presses is “What can we pray for?”

What should we pray for, and what is the consequence of our prayer? These are the questions that confront us each time we undertake the work of God known as common prayer. Yet, they are too easily set aside by other concerns about musical and liturgical style, exciting worship, and church attendance. Perhaps more sustained attention to questions about the consequence of our prayer will give us some perspective on these other, more popular, concerns.

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