CHAPTER 6

Liturgy

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In contrast to the prevailing modern tendency to identify the political meaning of the church primarily or exclusively in respect of its relationship to the state or the influence it seeks to bring to bear on civil society, this essay explores the political nature of the church as a *politeia* in its own right (Wannenwetsch 2003). The church as a political entity finds its constitutive and restitutive act in worship, which is the central praxis of the "fellow citizens of the saints" (Eph. 2: 19). Though the political relevance of worship has oftentimes been over-shadowed by other accounts of both worship and politics, it was an essential feature of the original self-understanding of the church from the New Testament on and has re-emerged throughout the history of Christian theology.

Historically and conceptually, the revolutionary novelty that the political worship of the church as *politeia* in its own right has brought about in the world of politics can be seen in its challenge to the reign of political antinomies such as public/private, freedom/necessity, and *vita activa/vita contemplativa*. To the extent those antinomies prevail in various guises, the critical capacity of the Christian political experience of worship will always remain relevant.

In order to understand the conceptual implications of "political worship," a twofold rediscovery is needed: on the one hand of the political dimension in liturgy, and on the other of the liturgical dimension of politics. The first section of this essay describes the historical and conceptual novelty of the Christian understanding of politics, as it was inherent in its liturgy. The second and third sections seek to provide a narrative account of the main threats to the political character of the worshipping church, of the struggle to formulate and refor-mulate this character in changing historical circumstances, and of exemplars of its rediscovery. Concluding remarks address the inherent liturgical character of politics where, according to Rom. 13, those in authority are known as God's "deacons," ordained to serve the people *eis to agathon*: toward the common good.

The Political Nature of Worship

Christ as political deity

The political nature of Christian worship has been recognized from the first, not least by those who opposed it (Horsley 1997). This recognition lies at the heart of the charge of "atheism" that was leveled at the primitive Christian commu-nities. While the Romans knew Christianity to be a religious movement, they still regarded Christians as atheists because they did not partake in the public cult of the state gods, thereby undermining the unity and stability of the *res publica*. Hence Christian "atheism" was seen as not a religious but a political vice. Though Christians typically refuted the charge of being a politically destabiliz-ing community by pointing to their own custom of praying for the welfare of the city and its rulers, they could hardly deny that the Romans were right on one essential point: The Christ whom they worshipped could never be like one of the many household gods (*penates*) of private religious devotion.

As Christians worshipped Christ as *cosmokrator*, ruler of the whole universe, they could not count on the tolerance which the Romans generally offered in matters of private religiosity. Thus a conflict would inevitably arise over the public claim of competing *political* deities. The Christians' refusal to participate in the emperor cult was not merely the result of their abhorrence at treating any human being as a god, but sprang from their worship of their own God on whom they knew depended not only their own salvation but also the welfare of the city.

The new language of the household-polis of God

By refusing to shelter in the protection of private devotion, Christian worship could not but challenge and finally overcome this separation of political life and private existence (Wannenwetsch 1997). This overcoming of separation would become true for both forms in which that separation was inherited from antiq-uity: its exclusivist separation of free male and wealthy citizens from the debased and unpolitical members of the household; and its inclusivist separation of the life of the citizen into two distinct spheres or "lives," the political life (*bios poli-tikos*) and the theoretical or contemplative life (*bios theoretikos*). If Paul admon-ishes the congregation to live their present lives as citizens worthy of the Gospel (Phil 1: 27), the verb *politeuomai* suggests one overriding existence or *bios* for the Christian which interlocks the political and contemplative lives, citizenship and worship. As it is expressed in Eph. 2: 19: "You are no longer strangers, but members of God's household and co-citizens of the saints."

In strong contrast to the radical distinction by which the Greco-Roman world had separated these spheres, the "new humanity" (Eph. 4: 13) of the church of Jews and gentiles significantly employs both the language of the household and that of the *polis*, establishing a kind of "political household" or "household *polis*."

For the ancient world it was taken for granted that man received "besides his private life a sort of second life, his *bios politikos*. Therefore every citizen belonged to two orders of existence marked by a sharp distinction in his life between what is his own (*idion*) and what is communal (*koinon*)" (Arendt 1958: 24). It was precisely these two Greek keywords, representing the contrast between two orders of being, that we find being taken up in the New Testament in a completely different way: "The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own [*idion*], but they had everything in common [*koina*]" (Acts 4: 32).

As a corporate action, worship includes in full participation all the representatives of the debased household: women, slaves, children, artisans, and so on – a reconciliation of hitherto unreconciled groups and realms of social life. In Gal. 3: 26ff. Paul lists in pairs the deepest antagonisms of the religious, civil, and sexual life that are to be overcome in the new community of the church. Yet Paul is not implying the negation of all differences (women do not cease being women, nor men being men), except one crucial difference: the political division. These differences, each in its own right representing the public/private antinomy, do not count any more when it comes to the citizenship of God's city.

In this way a new concept of political identity crystallized – an identity maintained and safeguarded not through exclusivity and exclusion but through full participation of all those who were once "noncitizens," strangers and resident aliens (*paroikoi*). Yet this Christian concept of citizenship was not based on the idea of "rights," defining or widening the boundaries of a social entity by expanding access; rather, it is focused on actual participation in political action: Each citizen is conceived as having a ministry in the church's central public event. "When you come together," Paul declares with the Christian worship assembly in view, "*each one* has something: a psalm, a teaching, a tongue, an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification" (1 Cor. 14: 26). The New Testament *ekklesia* certainly had its special office-holders, but their ministries, even over against the congregation, are always viewed as serving the ministries of "the multitude of believers," and do not marginalize these ministries, let alone replace them.

As Aristotle had emphasized, there cannot be a political animal, a *zoon politikon*, without office holding. In this way the practice of *leitourgia* as the work of all the people (the church preferring this term for their worship activity rather than *orgia*, another Greek term for religious activity that was used in a more private sense and especially for mystery cults) can be said to have marked the establishment of a new form of public sphere.

The public character of worship

The historical roots of Christian worship are found in two different sources: the public worship of the Jewish synagogue, and the celebration in private homes of the Lord's Supper. While these two forms of liturgical celebration – the *synaxis* (following the model of the synagogue, comprising reading, sermon, and prayer) and the Eucharist – first existed independently of each other, from the fourth century onward they are regularly linked together in a single service. In order to understand the public character of Christian worship, we must note that it did not draw its character only from public synagogual worship. Though the Eucharist was certainly seen as the "intimate" encounter of baptized believers with their Lord, it was not understood to be a private matter that would have to acquire a public form. This must be said in refutation of the influential idea of a development "From a Private to a Public Worship" put forward by Dom Gregory Dix in his seminal study *The Shape of the Liturgy* (1945: 304ff.). *Contra* Dix, the public character of Christian worship is evident upon examination of several aspects of the primitive Christian communities.

First, certain functions of state sovereignty were claimed for the church's own public life. In 1 Cor. 6: 1–7 Paul demands that civil disputes, if they cannot be avoided, should not be settled by pagan courts but should be laid before internal congregational tribunals. This arbitration was entrusted to a Christian *synhedrin* composed of presbyters and chaired by the bishop. In the light of the admonition in the Sermon on the Mount to be reconciled with one's adversary before offering a sacrifice (Matt. 5: 23) – an injunction already taken up in the instructions about the eucharistic celebration in the *Didache* (14: 2) – the Syrian *Didascalia of the Apostles* required these arbitration tribunals to be held at the beginning of the week, in order to allow enough time for matters to be settled before the Sunday Eucharist (Dix 1945: 106).

Second, the public character of worship is further indicated by the distinction made between different forms of assembly in the Christian congregations themselves. *Ekklesia* means the formal assembly of the (whole) congregation, its *synaxis* or *eucharistia*. Beside this formal assembly, there was another kind of meeting, the *syneleusis*, for the purpose of instruction, for mutual edification, or for the celebration of the *agape*, as love meal (Dix 1945: 20f.). This form of assembly, which was geared rather to private peer groups in the congregation, had a religious character but not a liturgical one, since the *public* exercise of the ministry (including specifically ordained persons) was absent. These different levels were strictly differentiated, at latest from the time of Justin; and in Ignatius we find urgent admonitions not to misunderstand these private meetings for edification as a substitute for participation in public worship (Ignatius, *Epistle to Magnesius* 7, 1).

Third, the church's gathering in households of wealthier members (which continued until the fourth century, when the basilica would accommodate public character of Christian worship) could provoke significant misunderstandings in regard to the public character of Christian worship (Wannenwetsch 1997: 160ff.). There are already echoes of such misunderstanding among the primitive Christian communities, especially when the patrons who hosted the assembly in their houses were tempted to conflate the authority they held as patrons with genuine ecclesial authority. Paul's charges against the Corinthians that they were spoiling the Lord's Supper by treating some members of the congregation according to their

(low) worldly status by withholding (more expensive) food from them which was reserved for the higher-status "clients" of the patron (1 Cor. 11: 22) reflects the temptation of patrons to overturn the new public dimension of the Christian worship in favor of standards arising from the logic of the household. Considering this early tension in which the public character of worship was threatened by tendencies to subsume it under private paradigms, scholarly misunderstandings such as Dix's should occasion little surprise. Yet they overlook the theological originality of the public claim in Christian liturgy.

Threats, Losses, Struggles

Ironically – and in contrast to the modern reading of the development – it was exactly Christianity's rise to political power which partially but not completely obscured this nascent theological clarity about the inherent political nature of the church as a worshipping community. We must, of course, avoid the pitfall of presenting a narrative of decline from relatively healthy primitive Christian communities to the compromised church of the Christendom era. In each era, there were *genuine* threats and losses as well as struggle and reforming spirit. Any analysis will have to identify the *shifting* temptations and *diverging* threats as they came about for the church in different situations and times.

If the public nature of the liturgy was first threatened by the power of the private paradigm, it now had to face the threat of being absorbed by the claim of another public, the public of the state, which was becoming increasingly aware of the blessings of the church. Whereas the political character of the church was first confused with a household religion, now it was its role as a civil religion that was prone to causing confusion. This development (which was, in fact, a struggle) must be examined first internally and then externally.

Threats from within: The loss of the offertory

Internally, the political form of the church was eclipsed as the multifold ministry that had characterized the Christian assembly during the first four centuries was increasingly absorbed by the rise of the monarchical episcopate. This was modeled on secular hierarchical authority and gradually took over most of the hitherto indispensable liturgy of the people, such as the offertory or the prayers of intercession. As the distinction between clergy and laity emerged, based on the differentiation between the active ("saying mass") and passive ("attending mass"), the political form of the church underwent a serious eclipse.

This unfortunate tendency was expressed and accelerated by the withering of the offertory – a liturgical event in which the political nature of the congregation was especially visible, as it comprised a subtle interaction of the whole body with a particular stress on the participation of the laity. Dix summarizes its theological significance:

Each communicant from the bishop to the newly confirmed gave *himself* under the forms of bread and wine to God, as God gives Himself to them under the same forms. In the united oblations of all her members the Body of Christ, the church, gave herself to *become* the Body of Christ, the sacrament, in order that receiving again the symbol of herself now transformed and hallowed, she might be truly that which by nature she is, the Body of Christ, and each of her members members of Christ. In this self-giving the order of laity no less than that of the deacons or the high-priestly celebrant had its own indispensable function in the vital act of the Body. The layman brought the sacrifice of himself, of which he is the priest. The deacon, the "servant" of the whole body, "presented" all together in the Person of Christ . . . The high-priest, the bishop "offered" all together, for he alone can speak for the whole Body. In Christ, as His Body, the church is "accepted" by God "in the Beloved". Its sacrifice of itself is taken up into His sacrifice of Himself. (Dix 1945: 117)

The political point of the offertory lies in the strange way in which emphases on individual contribution and communal offering interlock. On the one hand, it was all-important that every individual believer would bring forward his or her own oblation (offering). This implied a certain eucharistic "egalitarianism" which was not only the result of the equality of reception (all share in the same gift) but was already indicated by a particular equality of action: so, for example, the have-nots of the papal school of orphans in Rome were not hidden away but brought the water that was to be mingled with the wine, while the bishop would not only offer all oblations on behalf of the whole body but also had to bring his own personal offering.

All these oblations were seen as representing the lives of the believers in their material complexity, presented to God in order to be taken up by him, to be connected to Christ's sacrifice and transformed into the new life of his body. "There you are on the altar," says St. Augustine in his Sermons on the Eucharist, "there you are in the chalice" (Sermon 229). This "you" was meant to represent the congregation both individually and communally. Everyone needed to be literally present in the elements though his or her own participation in the "offering" of the very goods on the altar. This emphasis on individual presence and participation is particularly obvious in such rites as the "naming" of all communicants between the bringing of the oblations and the offertory prayer, as it was held in the Spanish church, or in the prayer "post nomina" (Dix 1945: 496f.).

It was precisely this stress on individual representation which was to be drawn into the dramatic experience of the offertory and transformed. When the offerings were consecrated, the elements were no longer a series of individual contributions but had been mingled to become an indissoluble *corpus permixtum*. The small portions of wine that the individuals had brought forward would be poured together in the big silver pots whence the eucharistic element was taken to the chalice. Thus the eucharistic elements, consisting of an irreducible composite of expensive and cheap wine (and bread), given by poor and wealthy parishioners, represented the congregation as a whole. The purity of taste is sacrificed for the sake of the theological point of a communal representation of the

congregation, with all its members and all aspects of their lives: success and failure, conflict and reconciliation, exclusion and inclusion, and so on. "To the Eucharist we bring not raw materials, nor even the cultivated wheat and grape, but bread and wine, manufactures, bearing upon them all the processes, and the sin, of commercial production" (Robinson 1963: 35).

These pointers may suffice to indicate the nature of the loss when, in the course of most liturgical developments, in both East and West, beginning in the fourth century, the practice of the offertory either faded away or shrunk down to a pale gesture, thereby not only impoverishing the rich eucharistic practice of the ancient church but also eclipsing the implicit political theology inherent in it.

Threats from outside: Civil religion and the idea of two powers

Corresponding to this threat from within was the pressure on the genuine political character of the liturgy from outside. The second threat arose when the alleged "wider" public of the state sought increasingly to absorb the church's liturgy into a civil liturgy by employing the liturgical action of the church to celebrate political events or figures.

The early position in which two distinguished publics, church and state, each had its respective claim shifted within the Christianized state toward the presumption that there was "one coherent public sphere." Any remaining sense of duality coalesced into the concept of two "powers." From the Constantinian era on, theological accounts of politics would typically focus on how authority must be divided between the powers, church and state, implicitly validating the notion that politics is essentially about proper power distribution. This practical anticipation of a view that was theoretically formulated much later (most prominently by Max Weber) resulted, in turn, in concepts of power that would render worship – apart from its civil-religious function – politically irrelevant.

The church might on one side be seen as a purely (and merely) spiritual power, which was located from the outset beyond the political; this view is often associated with Augustine's great apology *De Civitate Dei*. Yet Augustine attributed a crucial role to worship in that he understood devotional love as socially generative: "two loves make two cities" (*De Civitate Dei* 14. 28). Furthermore, his analysis of the political catastrophe of the Empire started from the diagnosis that the claim of the Empire was undermined by its false worship. If the one and true God does not receive his due, the core principle of Roman law *suum cuique* is not done justice (19. 20); therefore the very notion of a *res publica* – where each receives his fair due – is not warranted, and the pretentious nature of the *pax Romana* is exposed as being upheld only by its very opposite: force.

As clearly as Augustine stressed worship as a test case for the political pretentiousness of the Empire, he did not, however, draw out this same logic for the positive conjunction between true worship and true politics. While he saw the possibility for the heavenly city to make use of the relative peace that the earthly city provides, he did not, apart from envisaging some pastoral corrections, sys-

tematically explore the ways in which "seeking the best of the city" (Jer. 29) might mean allowing the genuine peace that the heavenly city enjoys to fertilize secular polities.

Emphasizing the categorical difference of the two powers as they operate in the heavenly and earthly city, in correspondence to the two loves (of self or God) or modes of worship in which these entities are engaged, Augustine and the Augustinian tradition of political theology assumed that the duality of the two societies could not be overcome this side of eternity. In turn, other traditions, especially associated with the Germanic kingdoms that replaced the Empire in the West, stressed the oneness of the "Christian society" and located the different powers as operating within this unitive framework. As Pope Gelasius I famously remarked at the beginning of the sixth century, "Two there are by which the world is ruled as princes" (see for this section O'Donovan 1996: 193ff).

While the two powers could be assumed to be mutually supportive, the oneness of a Christian society comprised of state and church would offer plenty of opportunities for the *agon* of both powers seeking to domesticate one another. One way of evading the unfortunate sight of a sheer power play between spiritual and worldly authority was the search for a careful equilibrium of both. This could be approached by claiming the two powers to be so utterly different that the one could hardly get in the other's way, drawing, as Gelasius and numerous others did, on the Old Testament duality of king and priest.

Yet the very emphasis on difference, increasingly understood as difference not in task but in structure – the one relying on force and conquest, the other on the power of the word alone – could give rise to another competition. While Gregory VII concluded from the superiority of justice as a "spiritual thing" papal supremacy over the worldly authority, which was to be enforced by ecclesiastical administrative and jurisdictional authority in its own right, the imperialist theologians of the fourteenth century such as Marsilius of Padua inferred from the same basic insight that the church must completely abstain from all associations with nonspiritual power and leave even its own administration to the worldly authority. Whichever interpretation one is inclined to follow, both converge in the assumption that the political power of the church as the capacity to domesticate or at least influence worldly authority is to be seen to be resting outside the worship of the church.

To be sure, there was in all these models a way in which worship could assume a politically relevant role, as for example in the infamous incident when, at the end of the fourth century, Bishop Ambrose of Milan used the excommunication of the Christian Emperor Theodosius I to urge public repentance of his excessively cruel retaliatory action against the city of Thessalonica. Yet it remains less than clear what caused the emperor's repentance. Was it the experience of worship itself, with its imprint of moderation and mercy, which drew out his action? Or was it the pedagogical function of the excommunication within the power-play between "The Two"?

Even if we hesitate to buy the radical alternative that is suggested by this question, it seems fair to say that as a result of the shifting focus from two publics or

societies to two powers or modes of authority, political ethics was by and large reserved for those in power. Rulers could be challenged not to contradict the thrust of the Gospel in their exercise of authority, but the masses would hardly come in as addressees of a political ethics. Their political role tended to be reduced to that of mere subjects rather than citizens.

Rediscoveries

Having characterized the history of the political worship as a complex story of threats, struggles, and losses, we turn now to recount several rediscoveries. As representatives of these hopeful moments in the Christian political tradition, I present two somewhat detailed examples, one from the Reformation period, the other from our own time.

Luther's political theology revisited: The eucharistic restitution of the political animal

Among other things, the Reformation offered an occasion for the rediscovery of the political thrust of the practices and teaching of the primitive and patristic church. It is often overlooked that the emphasis on the universal priesthood of believers also entailed the rediscovery of their universal citizenship. This can be demonstrated in Luther's contribution, though this requires us to approach his political theology at an angle not usually taken. Instead of focusing directly on his doctrine of the Two Kingdoms or his account of the political use of the law, we may more fruitfully come at his political thought via the notion of vocation as associated with his doctrine of the three estates and his early eucharistic teaching (Wannenwetsch 2002).

The idea of political vocation had traditionally been reserved for rulers, not only in the legitimating sense of divine investiture, but also in the sense, typified by Charlemagne and Charles the Bold, that rulers understood their authority as a calling to mirror the merciful way of divine rule and to prepare the way for God's kingdom. But in Reformation thought, and especially in Luther's theology, political vocation was to embrace a greater circle than emperor and princes. His doctrine of three estates implied, strictly speaking, that *every* Christian has a vocation not only for religion, but also for economics and politics. For Luther, man is not only *animal sociale* as in Aquinas, but in fact a *zoon politikon*, a political animal, and this for theological reasons.

"Firstly, the Bible speaks of and teaches about the works of God without any doubt; these are divided into three hierarchies: economics, politics and church" (*oeconomia, politia, ecclesia*: WA TR 5, 218, 14ff.). In conceiving these estates as "fellow-creatures" of humankind ("*concreatae sint*", WA 40 III, 222, 35f.), Luther made clear that they were elementary and paradigmatic forms of social life appropriate to creaturely existence from the beginning.

Neither did Luther conceive of *politia, oeconomia* and *ecclesia* as "pure forms" existing *prior* to humankind, into which men and women must be squeezed to fit, nor as mere functions of cultural history *subsequent* to the creation of man, as arbitrary developments at man's disposal. Although not *media salutis* or means of salvation, for the Reformer, *politia, oeconomia* and *ecclesia* are "holy" in that they are instituted by God and sanctified through his word. *They are like the elements as they are understood in sacramental theology*: "natural material" created by God and entrusted to humankind, yet after the fall constantly in danger of being misread (Bayer 1998). Therefore the word has to fill them (*"accedit verbum ad elementum . . ."*) and explicitly qualify them as "holy" (" . . . *et fit sacramentum*"). Thus, as Luther held out against various forms of religiously motivated "desertion" of those orders: Political and economic life is a divine vocation, a matter of *faith that is exercised in love within these divinely assigned spheres of social life* (Augsburg Confession 16: "*in talibus ordinationibus exercere caritatem*").

As his notion of vocation is rooted in the account of elementary forms of life as sanctifying powers in accordance with the logic of sacramental "elements," we should not be surprised to find Luther outlining a *eucharistic political theology*. In his treatise on the Eucharist from 1519, "Concerning the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and the Brotherhoods" (WA 2, 742–58), Luther makes clear that celebrating the Eucharist is nothing less than a political act in which the communicants actualize and suffer the citizenship that has been bestowed on them by baptism.

> The significance or purpose of this sacrament is the fellowship of all saints . . . because Christ and all the saints are one holy body, just as the inhabitants of a city are one community and body, each citizen being a member of the other and a member of the entire city. All the saints, therefore, are members of Christ and of the Church, which is a spiritual and eternal city of God.

Luther proceeds to explain the inner logic of this citizenship by the means of a communication of goods:

> This fellowship is of such a nature that all the spiritual possessions of Christ and his saints are imparted and communicated to him who receives this sacrament. Again, all his sufferings and sins are communicated to them . . . like in a city where every citizen shares with all the others the name, honour, freedom, trade, customs, usages, help, support, protection and the like, of that city, and on the other hand shares all the danger of fire and flood, enemies and death, losses, imposts and the like. (Luther 1943: 10f.)

In order to capture the political character of relationships among Christians as a sacramental body, Luther employs the Christological logic of the *communicatio idiomatum*, which originally expresses the intimate relation of the two natures of Christ. In a similarly intimate way, political worship *simultaneously* relates the believers to God and to their fellow citizens.

Though interpreters have often missed this complexity of Luther's political theology, it is noteworthy that the one contemporary theologian who has given perhaps the most powerful stimulus for a rediscovery of the political nature of the church based in its practice of worship implicitly draws on Luther's sacramental theology.

John H. Yoder: Ecclesial model practices for the world

John Howard Yoder (1994: 365ff.) distinguishes three fundamental ways in which the worship of the church can relate to ethics and politics: a sacramentalist account (typical for Roman Catholicism), a symbolist approach (as represented by Zwingli), and a sacramental logic (as Luther developed it).

These possibilities mirror the positions formulated during the controversies in sacramental theology in the Reformation period. The symbolist logic assumes the concrete material practice of worship to be a mere pointer toward the higher reality of the unification between human soul and Christ, which happens in heaven. Hence it typically lends itself to an idealist view of ethics, which interprets the worship practice in terms of an "imperative" to put into practice what is ideally signified there. Accordingly, the community of believers is primarily in view as the addressee of a moral appeal.

The Catholic alternative of sacramentalism assumes, on the contrary, that the liturgical ritual will constitute the new reality by virtue of its right exercise alone (*ex opere operato*); the participation and reception of the community is not seen as an essential feature for this reality to come into being. Hence the inclination to a "realist position" that does not need to employ a political ethics. In contrast to these alternatives, sacramental logic, as Yoder sees it, takes the reality of the *communio* in personal terms as the thing itself. The ethical or political reality is not envisioned as being detached from the material conditions and social fabric of the worshipping community. Rather, the eucharistic communion "is" a social ethics; it forms a political society.

Operating within this (albeit unacknowledged) Lutheran framework, Yoder wants to go a step further and address the question which the Augustinian tradition has largely left unanswered: How does the church as primal political entity impact on other political societies and the state? How can the renewal of politics be fertilized through the renewal of the political self-awareness of the church? Yet the best way to approach these questions seems to be via another question: Which language and metaphorical imagination is best equipped to express this relation most adequately?

Modes of Relating Worship and Politics

Among those who are aware of the political dimension of the worshipping church, we can discern three main models: Those who stress the church as polit-

ical antitype or counter-society (from Augustine to John Milbank), those who characterize it as an ideal type providing the state with social principles (William Temple and the mainstream liberal Protestant tradition), and those who see it as a paradigm (Karl Barth, Stanley Hauerwas) or model (John H. Yoder).

While the antitype view is right to insist on the question of the truth of politics instead of its mere functionality, distinguishing between true and false kinds of political action rather than between mere "spheres" of it, it does not seem to be interested in whether "counter-politics" can also become "encounter-politics", that is, to allow for the church's politics to "rub off" on the secular city. While the ideal-type account has positively adopted this latter question, it typically disregards the actual concreteness of the church's own practices in favor of a universalizing strategy offering principles that are derived from abstracts such as "sacramentality" rather than drawing out the conceptual implications of the sacramental practices themselves (Wannenwetsch 1996: 270–8).

Within the paradigm/model approach, there is a recognition that political worship is meant neither to merely mirror existing political structures and procedures nor to provide them with a religious rationale, but rather represents the unique politics of God. In being sensitive to the truth in the antitype approach, the paradigmatic logic envisions worship to have more than a negatively "illuminating" impact on secular politics as a simplified reading of Hauerwas' claim would seem to suggest that the church's worship merely makes the world aware that it is the world (Hauerwas 1995: 250).

As a paradigm, the church's positively illuminating impact is more visible at the conceptual level, in providing the secular polity with *another* way of conceiving "power," "authority," "community," "decision-making," "exclusion/inclusion," etc. It does not tell the secular rulers how to enact those concepts in a methodical way, but it sets alarm bells ringing if a policy falls foul of the limits set by the paradigm.

In this vein, Karl Barth speaks of "analogical capacities and needs" that political organizations have and that the church has to answer by giving "directions" drawn from its own core practices. As the state exists unknowingly as a "correspondence and analogue to the Kingdom" (Barth 1954: 32), the church's central political task is that of "reminding" the state. This task of reminding entails the faithful exercise of those practices that may serve the state as "examples of analogies and corollaries of that Kingdom of God." In presenting an "incomplete" list of ecclesial practices with corresponding political concepts such as "baptism and equality," "diversity of charismata and separation of powers," "body of Christ and responsibility," "serving and ruling," Barth emphasizes the complex ways in which "translations and transitions from the one sphere to the other will always be open to discussion . . . [and] will only be more or less obvious and never subject to absolute proof" (p. 42).

Yoder, following in Barth's footsteps though disregarding the intentional methodological restraint in the paradigmatic approach, wants to take it a step further by speaking of the "model" character that the core practices of the

church could and should assume for political structures and procedures. He presents a list of five "civil imperatives" which he draws from the primitive Christian worship: egalitarianism as implied by baptism into one body, socialism as implied in the Eucharist, forgiveness, the open meeting, and the universality of giftedness (Yoder 1997: 33).

Yet one wonders whether Yoder's zeal to claim a higher political relevance for those practices as "models" makes him slip back into the common tendency of functionalizing religious practice as a source for political vision and action. For example, he states in regard to the imperative to sharing he sees as inherent in the Eucharist: "To make such sharing seem natural, it helps to have gone through an exodus or a Pentecost together, but neither the substance nor the pertinence of the vision is dependent on a particular faith" (Yoder 1997: 32).

This seems to overlook a crucial feature of the eucharistic celebration. Though the Eucharist is, of course, in a sense "about sharing," it is as much a critique of our civil ideas of "sharing" as a resource for it. If sharing is to follow the rules that are incorporated in eucharistic communion, then it can no longer be accompanied by or fueled by the rhetoric of sacrifice and the air of generous condescension, for we cannot claim to own what we eat, though it is completely ours. (Christ gives himself as *totus Christus*, but only *in usu*.) So in any case of sharing, we do not bow down to others by granting them access to our property; rather, we share together *in* the goods that God has provided for us.

Likewise: Must baptismal egalitarianism not become a *skandalon* for other forms of egalitarianism, if the differences that are overcome for the "fellow citizens of God's people" are precisely political and economic? In focusing on overcoming differences in political and economic positions, baptismal egalitarianism is free to affirm and celebrate differences which other forms of egalitarianism cannot, such as between male and female, differing cultures, individual charismata, etc.

Yoder seems to want more and ends up with less. Claiming a *model* character for ecclesial practices, the direct line that is drawn from "civil imperatives" backwards to those practices buys too readily into the idea of translatability from one language into another without loss: "What the New Testament believers were doing in these several practices . . . can be spoken of in social process terms easily translated into nonreligious terms" (Yoder 1994: 364). This seems to assume that while we know the content and political necessity of a concept of "equality," all we lack is a more stable fundament to ground this imperative or a more effective motivation to strive for its realization.

Any functional request for a "model" lacks exactly the conceptual curiosity which is all important for the church if it is to closely "listen" to the political meaning which its own liturgical practice bears. My own suggestion of a more appropriate language of marking the impact of worship on secular politics employs the metaphorical imagination in which liturgical experience spills over in a complex and manifold way (Wannenwetsch 1997: 275–338).

Conclusion

When we take seriously Paul's "ministerial" characterization of those in power as "God's liturgists" and "God's deacons (to serve you) towards the good" (Rom. 13: 4, 6), worldly authorities must be reminded of what they actually, yet perhaps unknowingly, are. The church owes this remembrance not only to Christian statesmen but also to every ruler and actually to all who are in a state of power at various levels of social life (such as parents) and therefore bearers of political responsibility.

It is not, however, a marginal question whether these de facto "liturgists" or "deacons" know their "business" from experience. It makes a crucial difference when the actors in their political roles understand themselves in liturgical terms or, to name alternatives to this view, as agents of the general will, or as representing God on earth, or as political jobholders, or as managers, etc. If they want to live up to their calling to be "God's liturgists and deacons," they will be well advised to learn what it means to experience a true liturgy and to be served by a genuine deacon.

In this perspective the worship of the church, which provides a sabbatical interruption of the politics of the world by immersing people over and over again into the panesthetical vision of the politics of God, may well be regarded as something like an elementary school for those who bear political responsibility. This political *diakonia*, as important as this service to the world is, does however *not constitute* either the inner rationale or the core of the church's political worship. Its rationale lies solely in the praised lordship of Christ, who happens to rule not an original horde of individual believers but a body of fellow-citizens.

Yet the rediscovery of the primary political nature of the church as it is rooted in worship (liturgy as politics) calls forth a renewed apprehension of political *diakonia* (politics as liturgy). The latter does not constitute another field or type of action but must be seen a mere extension of the practice of "seeking the welfare of the city" that, as the intercessions among other worship practices show, is already part and parcel of the liturgy.

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PART II
Political Theologies: Survey