

Siobhan Garrigan and Todd E. Johnson, eds. *Common Worship in Theological Education*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010. 212 pages. \$23.

*Common Worship in Theological Education* is an edited volume of ten essays reflecting the diverse practices of seminaries with regard to the role of chapel worship in theological education. The essays draw on specific contexts and experiences to indicate different ways in which chapel practices are vital resources for the tasks of spiritual formation, theological reflection and integration. The writers perceive a widespread marginalization of chapel worship in the context of theological education (9). The volume provides a range of historical and contemporary realities associated with chapel worship. These include mandatory or voluntary participation, theological, denominational, political and liturgical diversity, as well as pedagogical emphases, and the lived expression of the theological disciplines.

One notion that has deep historical roots is that of worship as the sign that points to divine presence and activity which is both the content and starting point of all the theological disciplines. As such, theological education begins with a community called together to offer common worship for the glory of God. From this perspective, worship offers both the content and context of catechesis, or the signs and words that are needed for theological reflection. As this volume indicates, the contemporary landscape may reflect worship as *ora et labora*, prayer and study, embodied belief, as well as the point of balance and integration of personal and corporate faith dimensions of one's devotional and vocational life. In the context of theological education, chapel worship may reflect the ecclesial or political commitments, or theological and liturgical impulses that pull towards orthodoxy, on the one hand, and the vision of academic freedom that invites critical engagement and creative designs on the other hand.

Given the spectrum of ecclesial, theological, or liturgical commitments, chapel worship within some communities is an intentionally designated resource for spiritual or liturgical formation resulting from a carefully constructed liturgical apprenticeship (92). Yet, even such a resource faces the challenge of not only providing worship and formation for the community, but also a creative arena for new liturgical ideas and forms. In other contexts, chapel worship has served rather consistently as a laboratory where cultural innovations can be researched and engaged theologically to produce new rituals, lyrics, liturgies or practices for the seminary and the larger faith community. Such a safe space to plan requires strong institutional commitment to chapel worship that is theologically grounded, executed, and evaluated within the parameters of clearly articulated liturgical goals.

Creativity and innovation lead to questions and reflection on one's own ecclesial preferences or traditions. Indeed, faithfulness to a tradition will also be in tension with the call for ecumenical openness and hospitality. One writer highlights the potential of music to "traverse barriers, labels, and categories" that divide artists and theologians, or impede unity across ecclesial traditions (63). The artistic and theological dimensions of music not only enable formation of future religious leaders, but also invite commitment to a repertoire of songs that are historical and contemporary, representative of ecumenical, theological or liturgical movements and the rich diversity of music across cultures. In other chapel worship contexts, creativity is driven by an even greater commitment to individualism and independence, as well as pragmatism and innovation that seek what works well without the limitations of ecclesial parameters or liturgical traditions.

In this volume, there is no claim that chapel worship is an indispensable ingredient of theological education, especially as one considers the current dynamics of part-time or commuting students, on-line curricula, ecumenical, or multi-religious contexts. Indeed, the

articles provide theological institutions with the tools to begin a critical conversation pertaining to chapel worship that takes seriously how theological and pedagogical decisions are negotiated around theologies, political commitments, power, privilege and access.

One will find common agreement among the writers in this volume that chapel worship through its language or symbols can provide useful content for theological engagement, as well as opportunities for pastoral reflection and sensitivity, and biblical understandings. Finally, chapel worship presents a safe context for research and creativity, a nurturing space for students to explore critical dimensions of their own spiritual formation, their relationships to particular traditions or denominations, and their ecumenical or multi-religious commitments. An engagement of both content and context becomes an even more critical theological task when worship leads towards increased awareness of the diversity across ecclesial, theological, political, racial/ethnic, gender, class and social location.

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