



Political Worship (Oxford Studies in Theological Ethics)

Bernd Wannewetsch

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How does Christian ethics begin? This pioneering study explores the grammar of the Christian life as it is embodied and learned in worship as the formative experience of the "fellow citizens of God's people." The book presents the first in-depth theological investigation of the phenomenon of 'political worship' by exposing the political nature of worship and the worship dimension of politics.

In a careful analysis of biblical and traditional conceptions of worship, Wannenwetsch demonstrates how the genuine political character of worship neutralizes attempts to politicize or de-politicize it. In the imprinting of the experience of divine reconciliation on the Christian body, worship challenges the deepest antagonisms of political theory and practice: antagonisms of "private and public," "freedom and necessity," and "action and contemplation."

Further questions discussed include the conditions of true consensus, forgiveness as a political virtue, the accountability of political rhetoric and self-justification, how "reversible role-taking" can avoid losing the otherness of the other, and how the rhetoric of "responsibility" can be saved from hubris or depression. Particular practices or dimensions of worship (confession, preaching, praising, intercession, observance of holy days) are examined and their heuristic and formative potentials explored in relation to these topics. A special feature of the study is a strong ecumenical and international focus.

The book brings into conversation a variety of traditions (including Lutheran, Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox) and contemporary voices. An original contribution to Christian ethics, the book addresses systematic and practical theology as well as political theory, while indicating the essential interplay of these disciplines.

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