- Chapter 6 - Conclusion

Hooker's Address

Hooker, the ecclesial ethicist

When one reads Richard Hooker as an ecclesial ethicist, an unexpectedly *liberal* impression surfaces. But this liberality is more congenial to Edmund Burke than to Thomas Paine,[610] and addresses a stunning rebuke to Enlightenment liberals who sit on both sides of the aisle in contemporary Western society. When we penetrate the fog surrounding Hooker's reputation, we discover his humanist commitment to a world governed by a natural law that is contingently given and at best probabilistically known. We discover he derives from both theological anthropology and the doctrine of election a strong sense of human equality under God, and describes the Church as the mystical visible society in which the elite and common are equals in their fellowship with God. We discover his challenge to those who fail to appreciate the good already embodied in their inherited practices and social structures. And we discover his deep skepticism of ethical reasoning which justifies either the sanctification or repeal of those practices and structures on the basis of appeals to timeless absolutes. As the fog dissipates, we see that Hooker's famous three-legged stool of Scripture, reason, and tradition is not what we thought, and neither contemporary "liberal accommodationism" nor "postliberal traditionalism"[611] can claim Hooker as an apostle of their ideologies.

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610. Burke echoes Hooker to the extent that he sees received institutions as contingently given signs and tokens of the good, or, as Burke put it, as "prescriptive." Yuval Levin distinguishes Burke's and Paine's liberalism in his *The Great Debate: Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and the Birth of Right and Left*. Burke's "conservative liberalism" sought to assure liberality through "the gradual accumulation of practices and institutions of freedom and order," whereas Paine justified violence (e.g., the French Revolution) if necessary to re-set society to an ordering revealed through reflection on our natural origins. Yuval Levin, *The Great Debate: Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and the Birth of Right and Left*, Kindle ed. (Basic Books, 2013-12-03).

611. Miroslav Volf, "When Gospel and Culture Intersect: Notes on the Nature of Christian Difference," in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, ed. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies, (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 233.

That conclusion signals the new direction to which I turn in this final chapter. I have shown in the preceding chapters that Hooker is fruitfully read as an ecclesial ethicist. But the hope of this study has not been merely to answer the question, "who is Richard Hooker?" Rather, my ultimate destination has been to answer the question, "who is Richard Hooker *for us*? In particular, what does he teach us about how the mind of Christ is formed in community? I have tried to read Hooker bifocally - through the lens of *his* context, but always with a second context in focus - that of the particular contemporary questions we seek to answer.[612] So far, the emphasis has been on his context in order to listen to what he said and meant. In this chapter, however, I'd like to shift into a different tone and focus in order to gesture toward how the Hookerian account can fruitfully inform our contemporary discourse.

We've now appropriated Hooker, and he sits comfortably at the table with us, recognizable as an ecclesial ethicist. Overhearing our discourse which is dominated by deontological claims, he leans toward us, reminding us that the eternal law cannot be fulfilled unless we engage things as they actually are in their particularity. In this chapter, I will respond to his address by performing what he bids us to do - to shift our focus from the general to the particular. At this point, it is right and proper to attend to that second focus and reflect upon who Hooker is for the parish, for our ethical discourse, and for our hopes for a global communion. If we are listening to Hooker, that will necessarily entail locating questions in their narrative situation, which I will achieve through the methods of a thought experiment and two case studies in ecclesiology. Before making that focal shift, however, I will first recapitulate what we've learned so far.

How the mind of Christ is formed in community

This study began with a complex thesis, and in the preceding chapters I have sought to open up methodically Hooker's argument that Christ acts on his church through a complex interaction of community and practices to generate the identity,

612. Rorty, "The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres," 247.

diversity, and virtue of his body.

In chapter one, I suggested that Hooker may be helpful to our contemporary discourse because he, like us, lived in an context in which the most divisive questions turned on the underlying question of how we know what we know. Like ours, the Elizabethan epistemological answers to that underlying question were in a state of flux. I suggested there are important resonances between his defense of Elizabethan liturgical practices and the emphases of contemporary ecclesial ethicists. I proposed that, by examining these resonances and reading Hooker as an ecclesial ethicist, we can learn much about how the mind of Christ is formed in communities.

In chapter two, I uncovered Hooker's rhetorical strategy, given his aim of defending the Elizabethan Settlement against an array of interlocutors which included Ramist realists claiming objective access to the good through privileged illumination by the Holy Spirit. I showed that Hooker defended ecclesial and civil laws by demonstrating their derivation from the eternal law, and that Hooker described an anthropology which limits human access to the good to that which is possible given an empiricist, rather than rationalist, psychology. Reflection on this psychology led me to suggest that, for Hooker, all human knowing is derived from the phenomological, and therefore, apart from divine revelation, the good is at best probablistically and contingently known.

Chapter three revealed that Hooker's treatise was a particularly fitting unmasking of English presbyterian ideology and a compelling refutation of Ramist realism as an ethical framework. Perhaps most importantly, I argued that ethical appeals to timeless absolutes are problematic given the doctrine of election. This leads to Hooker's 'special equity' rule of ethical discernment: generalizations of the natural law inherently leave out information that must be considered if one is to conform to the demands of the eternal law in a particular situation.

In chapter four, I built upon the ontological and anthropological account, examining Hooker's account of our participation in Christ. Given Hookerian

emphasis on the alterity of God and our empiricist psychology, participation is best described as fellowship. The key move was a non-substantialist description of the real presence using the grammar of *personhood* borrowed from Wilfrid Sellars. By distinguishing between that which is known in the spaces of causes and reasons, I argued that the Spirit establishes a personal knowing of Jesus in the logical space of reasons that leads ultimately to the personal relationship with Jesus that is true fellowship.

In chapter five, I built upon this description of the personal fellowship the Spirit creates by demonstrating how ecclesial practices provide the context of our address and response to Jesus Christ which constitutes our personal knowing of him. Through sacramental practices, Christ's history becomes our history, we discover ourselves addressed by him in our narrative location, and we discover ourselves transformed by his action upon us. We recognize him as our supreme exemplar. This, in turn, provides the ground of mimetic virtue. Christ himself tutors his church, teaching us to imitate his dispositions, to take the right things for granted, and to pursue the good for the good's sake.

We have seen that the content of the mind of Christ - the '*what* is known?' question - consists of both objective and subjective knowledge. *All* humans encounter Christ in our narrative situatedness as Creator and Governor through our encounter with the enfleshed Son, Jesus Christ, within the created order, and *some* recognize Christ as Reconciler. The objective content of the knowledge revealed in the encounter with Christ is not a set of propositions about natural law but is Jesus Christ himself, and this knowledge is first and foremost of a personal and life-changing historical relation to Jesus Christ as Creator and Reconciler, a personal relation through which all are summoned to a new common life in Jesus Christ, sharing in the vocation of Israel to be a light to all the nations.

We have seen as well that the mind of Christ that is formed in community does not consist merely of objective knowledge about Christ, but consists of justifying and

sanctifying dispositions shared by the community. Formation is not an event but a lifelong process. The description of the process by which such formation happens turns out to be complex. The *who*, for example, is part of the *how*: the community is the one formed and is also a means by which the Spirit forms. Conversely, the *how* is part of the *who*: we recognize the community being formed by observation of persons and groups who perform practices by which they are simultaneously set apart and transformed. This transformation caused by the Spirit renders possible a personal relation in which disciples are mentored by Christ himself, having been enpowered to see him as the ultimate exemplar. By steps and degrees, disciples learn to take the right things for granted, and, imitating him, learn to improvise in their ethical actions so that they carry on in the same way as Christ. Christ tutors his Church himself so that their actions announce the eschatological reality of the New Jerusalem.

To suggest that the matter of virtue is complex is to engage in controversy, however. Many are quick to insist that the matter is simple.[613] Some suggest that virtue

613. Virtue is not complex for those who identify virtue as obedience to perspicuous divine commands and who deny the possibility of a eudaemonistic ethics. I refer here to those whom Herdt describes as holding a hyper-Augustinian view, an approach to ethics arising from "a demand for a kind of freedom and thus a kind of disinterestedness that Augustine himself would not have found intelligible" (105). Herdt traces this view to late medieval voluntarism, noting that its demand for "an utter break with eudaimonism" (105) displaced the desire to participate in the rationality of God, replacing it with the quest for the selfless love of God manifested by *a pure obedience* utterly stripped of "intrinsic meaning for the agent" (106). *Obedience*, not participation, is key, evidence of "a free but finite will bending to a free and infinite will" (106). Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*. But if one maintains that it is not possible for humans to participate in God's rationality because of our finitude, then our *telos* will likely be conceived in terms of union with God. Such union is obedience, where obedience denotes compliance with universal rules (obedience is not the cause but the form or mark of such union). Sin is a great threat to the community because our relation to God is described in voluntaristic terms. The community's status before God may be described as contingent upon conformance to axioms about divinely mandated behaviors. Participation in Christ, if at all possible, tends to be described much more in Stoic language about suffering because participation in God's rationality is impossible philosophically. In my view, Ephraim Radner presupposes this identification of virtue with deontological obedience in his recent *Brutal Unity*. Ephraim Radner, *A Brutal Unity: The Spiritual Politics of the Christian Church* (Baylor University Press, 2012-10-15). In contrast with the hyper-Augustinian view, the Hookerian account embraces the irony motif of Hauerwas and Wells. Irony is, for Wells, a "genre of eschatology." It is the "contrast between how things appear and how they are…." "An eschatological perspective is intensely ironic. It truly transforms fate into destiny." Wells is critical of "Christian realists" who describe faithfulness in terms of adapting to the 'givens' that "prevail in the contemporary world," such that the ethical task is to "adjudicat[e] between competing 'givens.' Wells contrasts this with an ethics that sees "the only 'given' is the Church's narrative: all else is potentially 'gift.'"Wells, "How the Church Performs Jesus' Story," 174, 212. Rather than describing suffering in the grammar of *ironic* participation in the superabundance of God, those whom Herdt describes as hyper-

is simply a matter of doing God's will, and doing God's will is simply a matter of obeying God's law, which is itself perspicuously identifiable in either Scripture, dogma, or the tenets of secular humanism. Some assume virtue to be identical to obedience to universal axioms mined from tradition, from Scripture, or via cool, detached Enlightenment 'reason.' Or, as Luther's harsh criticisms of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Erasmus evince, a focus on virtue often provokes anxieties about Pelagianism.[614] To suggest that the formation of the mind of Christ in community is more complex is therefore to engage in controversy.

Hooker's address to us

The Hookerian account unsettles us because it takes seriously the claim that, "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord."[615] Taking seriously such a claim as an ethical proposition challenges the ideologies with which we seek to obtain or maintain power. Hooker redirects our attention to a particular kind of liberality - the kind that blossoms only in the soil of freedom that just is governance by Christ, *the eternal law*.

Hooker addresses liberal accommodationism regarding the authority of reason in justifying its claims. Reason is not a cool, detached ratiocination, capable of putting the universe under its microscope. Rather, reason connotes participation in the rationality of God which, for human agents, means being ruled by the eternal law expressed in creation which is comprehended exclusively via the light of reason. Whether encountered in the form of divine or natural law, the eternal law, which is Christ himself, is always *subject*, acting upon all created beings, drawing them toward

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Augustinian describe suffering in terms of the acceptance of fate that constitutes union with God, rather than participation in God.

614. For treatment of Luther's criticisms of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Erasmus, see Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe*, ed.:427 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980); Janz, *Luther and Late Medieval Thomism: A Study in Theological Anthropology*; Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*. Jennifer Herdt traces what she calls the hyper-Augustinian concerns about an emphasis on virtue and its vulnerability to Pelagianism.

615. "The Church's One Foundation" (No 545) in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989.)

fulfillment of their *telos*. For Hooker, there is simply no such thing as a human agent who is liberated by reason, capable of distance from her objects of study, and flourishing in self-rule.

Reason, for Hooker, *always entails rule by the eternal law* which is Christ himself. So when Hooker speaks of the authority of reason in ethical discernment, he never denotes a capacity for moral judgment severable from the person of Jesus Christ.[616] Hooker would object today to ethical proposals justified by appeals to the authority of reason but which contradict the dispositions of Jesus Christ.[617] Such proposals, Hooker would tell us, are, by definition, *irrational*.

Similarly, Hooker addresses both postliberal traditionalism and contemporary biblicism[618] regarding how we know what we know. Human reason connotes participation in the rationality of God, but that participation is *fellowship* created by

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616. Hooker would therefore heartily agree with John Howard Yoder's address to liberal accommodationism as expressed in his *Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture*. Yoder, responding to the 20th century phenomenon of appeals to the Holy Spirit in such a way that the Spirit is merely the religious garb in which we dress our cool, detached ratiocination, reminded H. Richard Niebuhr that the Holy Spirit is never severable from the person of Jesus Christ: "[The] intention of the post-Nicene doctrine of the Trinity was precisely not that through Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, differing revelations come to us. The entire point of the debate around the nature of the Trinity was the concern of the Church to say just the opposite; namely, that in the Incarnation and in the continuing life of the Church under the Spirit there is but one God." John Howard Yoder, Glen Stassen, and D.M. Yeager, *Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture*, ed. Glen Stassen (Abingdon Press, 1995-06), 62.

617. E.g., proposals involving eugenics. In a message posted to his Twitter account on August 20, 2014, atheist Richard Dawkins made the following proposal: "I think abortion is right if the woman wants an abortion. Down syndrome is one very good, and extremely common reason, to want it." He went on to propose that aborting children diagnosed with Down's syndrome manifests the good. I imagine Hooker would be appalled by the proposition, and observe that, by definition, such reasoning is *irrational* because reason can not justify such a proposal without contradicting Christ. Christ reveals the divine disposition to create, and not, destroy life, and also that the divine love is most abundantly found enveloping those marginalized by human societies. The Hookerian point is that to be rational, a proposal cannot contradict Christ's dispositions. Richard Dawkins, Twitter post, August 20, 2014 (3:55 p.m.), accessed September 5, 2014, http://twitter.com/richarddawkins.

618. Biblicism is Barth's word, and I invoke Barth's distinction here between biblical and biblicist. Barth, *CD*, 4/1 §60.1.368. For an example of postliberal traditionalism, see Philip Turner's appeal to Hooker in opposing The Episcopal Church's decision to ordain Anglicanism's first openly gay bishop. Philip Turner, "Episcopal Authority Within a Communion of Churches," in *The Fate of Communion: The Agony of Anglicanism and the Future of a Global Church,* ed. Ephraim Radner and Philip Turner, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), Section 'Authority and the Three-Legged Stool or, Perhaps Better, the Four-Legged Bench'. Contemporary biblicism denotes the geneaological descendents or Ramist Realism, as described in chapter three. In my view, Albert Mohler, R.C. Sproul, and J.I. Packer exemplify contemporary biblicism in this sense.

Christ eternally in the covenant of grace and recognized and received by the human agent as a result of the Spirit's irruption into time. Participation as fellowship means that Christ, the eternal law, is always *wholly other* even when 'as one' with those who participate in him. And that means we have no innate access to the divine Mind, no way of bypassing the risk of human subjectivity, no way of hearing the divine Word except as it is communicated through and to an imperfect, corruptible, natural form. And therefore there is no point at which we can avoid probabilistic error, no ahistorical absolute to which we can refer that will relieve us of responsibility for our *historical* hearing, no foundation upon which we can rest that will deliver us from our finite need for this fellowship through which Jesus himself tutors us. Our traditions can never be more than our communal *approximations* of the good. The eternal law is expressed *in* them, but is *always other* than them.

Our endoxa, therefore, are signs and tokens of the good, like rocks marking the location of a well. The rocks have enormous weight, but they can never say more to each generation than "this is where we've discovered the fountain of life in the past." To live - to know the good, each generation actually has to go past the rock and enter the well to drink themselves from the living water. Precisely because Christ re-creates and blesses anew as he justifies in each and every encounter, ethical appeals to timeless absolutes must not shut down the conversation as we seek to name the coordinates of the good. As Rowan Williams put it:

> Hooker's world is one shaped by a maker's intention; and that intention is unmistakeably the diffusion of bliss in a world of history and difference, a world therefore of argument and interpretation, even, we could say, of that intellectual charity which takes trouble with the recalcitrant stranger in order to make him or her a partner in discourse.[619]

Character, not decisions

Recognition of the dynamic nature of reality enables us to complete the metaphor preliminarily sketched in the introduction of this study (see "The Christian life

619. Williams, "Forward," xxv-xxvi.

according to Richard Hooker: a preliminary sketch" on page 80). There I described Hooker's view of human life using the metaphor of a journey to the summit of the highest mountain, where union with Christ at the summit is our destiny. Ethics have to do with how to move toward the summit safely from wherever we find ourselves on the mountain. Ethical questions have to do with our next steps toward the summit. I anticipated there (chapter two) the conclusion that is now in full view. The right path to the summit is inherently local, contingently known, and particular to our coordinates at our moment in time. Now we understand that this is due to an ontological problem: our path to the summit can not be universally known in advance precisely because of Christ's justifying acts of re-creation (see page 115).

I asked then, "how do we find our way to the summit given the fog through which we see only dimly?" In particular, given the fog and the great distance, how do we hear and recognize Christ's voice? How do we rightly navigate? We can now answer that navigation is possible because Christ is really present to us in our practices. Christ creates a personal relationship with us through the Spirit and addresses us in our particularity. Through mimesis, Christ shapes us along our journey, equipping us and guiding us out of the brambles into which we wander, away from precipices, and through our periods of wilderness wandering. We find our way to the summit that is our destiny by improvising in response to Christ's voice which addresses us, justifying and re-creating us in each encounter by steps and degrees.

The statement that there are no universal rules upon which to ground our ethics ought not be understood as an assertion that there is nothing we can say in advance about right actions. To the contrary, there is much indeed that can be said. The first thing is simply to invoke all that has been said regarding the role of one's community in shaping its members. The community's endoxa, communicated didactically and through mimesis, provide the images of the world as we assume it to be. Hauerwas and Wells call them convictions. They "become assumptions, habits, and even reflexes through years of practiced use. It is these skills, rather than moments of rational

decision, that will frame Christian life."[620]

Endoxa can not determine in advance what our right actions must be but they do shape how we perceive the phenomena we encounter. Moreover, community norms draw attention to actions most likely to constitute a prudential response. The Christian agent is not left to invent the good from scratch. As Wells notes, "Improvisation is not about being clever or original, but about being so trained in one's tradition that one trusts that the obvious is the appropriate."[621] There are no universal rules but there are contingent, provisionally-known, and providentially-given signs and tokens by which the community has marked the coordinates of the good. Just as the apprentice plumber is not sent without thermodynamic principles and mimetic experience to guide him, so, too, the apprentice Christian is not sent without endoxa and mimetic experience to guide her.

For this reason, the focus of Christian ethics is properly on the cultivation of character. This is a controversial claim for those immersed in cultures whose canons presuppose a universal ethics, such as the United States, whose founding document begins with a claim about the "inalienable rights" of "all men."[622] As Wells and Quash note, "if one were to sum up universal ethics in one word, that word would probably be "decision."[623] Similarly, "if one were to sum up subversive ethics in one word, that word would probably be "power."[624] Finally, "if one were to sum up ecclesial ethics in one word, that would would be "character."[625] Ecclesial ethicists, like Hooker and Aquinas before them, recognize that the proper focus of Christian ethics is not on right actions or right outcomes, but on cultivating the character of the individuals who constitute the society of souls - on virtue. In short, the focus of Christian ethics should be on cooperating with the Spirit's formation of the mind of Christ in

620. Wells, "How the Church Performs Jesus' Story," 215.
621. Ibid., 230.
622. The American Declaration of Independence names as its first "self-evident truth" the claim that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights...."
623. Wells and Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 113.
624. Ibid., 114.
625. Ibid.

community.

By listening closely to Hooker as he reasoned from first principles to a defense of the ecclesial practices of the Elizabethan Church, we've seen why this is so. That conclusion does not arise from a skeptical observation that we can never agree on right actions and outcomes, though that may be so. And it does not arise merely from the epistemological conclusion that humans lack innate knowledge of the good, though I believe that is so. And it does not arise merely from the recognition that appeals to timeless absolutes too often justify our violence, though I believe that is so, also. Rather, the conclusion that the right focus of Christian ethics is on the cultivation of character arises from the recognition that our knowledge of God is determined by God's continuing act of election which itself constitutes the cosmos. We cannot exhaustively prescribe the good because reality is not fixed materially but dynamic. The right focus of Christian ethics is on character precisely because of Christ's justifying acts of re-creation. Character, in the Hookerian account, is the art of creating the good for the sake of the good. The person of high character, because of her personal relationship with Christ, knows his dispositions, desires the good she therefore recognizes in her own narrative context, and acts with 'special equity' in order to conform to the eternal law. The ecclesial ethicists are right: the focus of Christian ethics is properly on cooperating with the Spirit's formation of the mind of Christ in community.

The virtue of practices

The focus on character leads ecclesial ethicists to an emphasis on practices. Critics have complained that ecclesial ethicists fail to ground their claims about practices in the Church's historic confessions about God and creation, that they tend to identify the Church with its social practices, that they inappropriately identify truth with the practices of a particular community, and that their logic leads to an irresponsible sectarianism. In this study, I've shown that the Hookerian account,

which similarly connects character to the Church's practices, is in fact derived from the doctrine of the Trinity and thoroughly grounded in Scripture.[626] Hooker takes care to emphasize the otherness of the Trinity and begins his argument with the extraordinary superabundance of the triune God. Moreover, I've emphasized that the Hookerian account exhibits a high pneumatology, for the Spirit generates the personal relationships with Christ that cause the common confession that constitutes the Church. I defended the Hookerian emphasis on the visible Church, for, from a practical perspective, we must assume that *all* members are elect, and that our use of categories like godly and ungodly are premature because time is not yet fulfilled. Moreover, I argued that charges of excessive immanentism and sectarianism miss the mark. The Hookerian account does not suggest that practices *constitute* the cognitive and practical commitments of a community, but rather that, in its practices, a community's commitments are manifest. By pointing to the practices of actual communities, ecclesial ethicsts are not claiming that such communities have privileged access to the truth. Rather, recognizing the role of exemplars in tutoring the Church, ecclesial ethicists point to the practices of actual communities as exemplary of what the Church's judgments and practical commitments *ought to be*, given the logic of the Church's generative linguistic commitments.

This recapitulation of what we've learned returns me to where I began this chapter. Given these things, I'd like to reflect upon who Hooker is for the parish, for our ethical discourse, and for our hopes that the Church's universal's fragments will be reconciled. I have three suggestions.

626. See "The eternal law" on page 45 for Hooker's derivation of the eternal law from the Trinity, "Human participation in the Trinity" on page 125 for how the Spirit generates fellowship with Christ, and "Mimetic virtue" on page 186 for the connection between our fellowship with Christ and the cultivation of virtue.

The mind of Christ in the local parish

My first suggestion pertains to parish leadership. As a parish priest, it seems to me that the Hookerian account has much to say that helps us understand how parish leaders can contribute to or impede the Church's mission. My suggestion is actually a set of practical commitments that seems warranted by the findings of this study regarding how the mind of Christ is formed in community. Before describing those commitments, however, I first need to introduce the elements of a Hookerian Christian pedagogy.

Central to Hooker's virtue ethics is the premise that virtuous actions are performed by virtuous people. Since virtuous actions follow rationally from cognitive and pragmatic commitments about objects and principles, it is important that we recall that such conclusions flow with consistency from persons comprehending in a thick way those objects and principles. In other words, such actions flow from persons with *habits of thought* corresponding to an accurate comprehension of and prudential responses within their field of encounter.

As we have seen, Hooker seems to presuppose much of Aquinas' Aristotle-inspired theory about how such practical wisdom is formed within individuals. His claim that humans begin as open books (see "The most genuine communion" on page 147), his mockery of the Ramist realists,[627] his deployment of the Aristotelian methods of phenomena, endoxon, and dialectic as well as the Aristotelian virtues of *episteme* and *phronesis* (see "Episteme and Phronesis" on page 72) led Hooker, like Aquinas, to describe the Christian life as a journey towards knowledge of God. I argue that we can fruitfully thicken the Hookerian account, therefore, by recalling briefly the pedagogical premises that, though undeveloped in his corpus, Hooker presupposed.

Aquinas describes two stages along the path to non-sacred *scientia*. In the first stage, one takes note of certain effects and inquires about their causes. Such causes

627. *Laws*.1.6.4; 1:76.9-20.

"are often hidden, and can only be discovered through more accessible effects."[628] Discovery of such causes involves demonstrations in which the cause and effect relationship between objects is shown. Once such causes are understood, a learner proceeds to the second stage characterized by "a sort of cognitive re-structuring, so that his belief that something is a cause itself becomes the cause of (in the sense of epistemic ground of or reason for) his belief that something else is the effect."[629] This re-structuring in our mind involves a "re-arrangement in our doxastic structure, so that the causes, which were formerly less familiar, become more familiar and better known; and the effects, formerly better known, come to be believed on the grounds of our belief in the cause."[630]

This then is a Thomist description of the path to *scientiae* in general. We master the principles of a subject matter, relying upon the "cognitive potencies which [we] have by nature," "grasp[ing] the quiddities of [objects] by [our] intellect and ... reason[ing] discursively from premises to conclusions."[631] In pursuit of *scientia*, "we must submit ourselves to the training and guidance of masters within a field so that we may acquire the needed habits and realize fully our cognitive potentiality."[632]

For both Thomas and the Zagzebski theory of divine motivation I've synthesized into the Hookerian account, the practice of apprenticeship is necessary, for one seeking to attain *scientia* "must submit himself to a teacher, and accept on the teacher's authority instruction about and guidance in the acquisition of habits necessary to become adept in the craft."[633] The master to whom we submit then walks alongside us as we receive the doxastic re-structurings required and as we begin to perceive in new ways the causes and effects of our world, such that our habits of

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628. Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith*, Kindle location 660, Chap 1, sect 1.7, para 16.
629. Ibid., Kindle location 660, Chap 1, sect 1.7, para 17.
630. Ibid.
631. Ibid., Kindle location 757, chap. 2, sec 2.1, para 8. Hooker, as we have seen, denied that humans innately grasp the quiddities of objects. That distinction suggests that Hooker would have placed even greater priority on mentoring relationships in which a trusted master communicates endoxa.
632. Ibid., Kindle location 712, chap. 1, sec 1.8, para. 3.
633. Ibid.

thought produce accurate recognition of Christian concepts and puzzles and prudential actions in response to them. As I developed in chapter five (see "Mimesis" on page 187), the path to discipleship goes through *mimesis*.

The Hookerian account clarifies that the mind of Christ is formed in community by Christ himself. Christ tutors the society the Spirit gathers by establishing personal relationships with Christ through which Christ's dispositions are revealed and inscribed in the endoxa of the community for which Christ is Lord. On the basis of the foregoing, I suggest that the pedagogy that best cooperates with the Spirit's action in creating disciples is characterized by three forms of learning. First, trusted mentors, themselves tutored by Christ, didactically instruct an inquirer in the first principles - the generative cognitive commitments of the linguistic community that is the Church. Second, mentors accompany the inquirer along the road to Emmaus, walking alongside them as their eyes are opened and they begin to develop new practical commitments - new ways of being that reflect their new recognition that the world has been redeemed by Christ. Third, mentors create opportunities for immersion experiences in which the new pilgrim walks alone in this new world she's perceived, practicing the new skills developed solo, and then reflecting upon her experience with the mentor.

These three elements of the Hookerian Christian pedagogy don't necessarily occur in the order in which I've described them. It may be the unexpected immersion in the Christian life while on a mission trip or serving food with a friend which awakens the student. Or it may be that learning the skill of knitting with Christian friends generates questions for which the first principles are the answers. But all three are necessary to an effective Christian pedagogy for children, youth, and adults. When all three are not part of the steady diet of all age groups, the Church becomes malnourished.

With this pedagogical focus in view, I can now explain my first suggestion. In my introduction (see "The fire of Sabah" on page 9), I confessed that one of the

motivations for this study was a professional curiosity about why, if sacramental practices matter as much as ecclesial ehticists claim, I observe parishes which adhere rigorously to liturgical standards but which manifest neither a clear sense of mission nor an evangelistic impulse. Attendance trends, participation metrics, and the evident lack of energy led me to describe them as moribund. I contrasted such experiences with the pentecostal fire I observed in similarly Anglican parishes in Sabah, Malaysia. I wondered why it is that we observe parishes with similar commitments to ecclesial practices but nearly opposite trajectories in terms of apparent missional effectiveness. Though there are too many variables to isolate here to justify assertions about the causes of the differences, I believe this study has uncovered some factors that may help to explain the differences.

To illustrate the set of practical commitments I wish to commend in the parish, I'd like to imagine three different ecclesial settings, all of which share the same denominational liturgical standard, and all of which are historically part of my personal experience. I recognize that such a thought experiment is unusual in a PhD dissertation (though perhaps more common in a ThD thesis). As a parish priest, it is evident to me that the Hookerian account has important implications for liturgical praxis, homiletics, biblical hermeneutics, and catechesis. It therefore impacts how ministers equip the saints in the art of ethical discernment. Since Hooker's treatise concerns particular views of these things and defends practices performed specifically in parochial settings, I would be remiss if I did not point to these implications by way of illustrative examples. By critiquing illustrative settings, my intent is to perform the phronetic discrimination that Hooker teaches us. To that end, I've summarized these illustrations in Table I.[634] I will describe these settings first and then critique them based on the Hookerian account of how the mind of Christ is formed in community.

Church A's senior minister is a master of the liturgy. He strives to be orthodox in his teaching. Orthodoxy in his case denotes teaching within the boundaries of "the

634. See Table I, "Illustrative examples of ministerial leadership," on page 224.

tradition" which, by his account, excludes doctrinal 'innovations' from Luther and all Protestants. Of my three examples, he emphasizes the liturgical practices which Hooker defends more than any other, rigorously following the classical Anglican spirituality consisting of weekly Eucharist, daily office, and daily devotion, and complementing these with medieval Catholic practices such as the Benediction and the Angelus. His piety reflects an understanding of the real presence as explained in terms of transubstantiation, and his sacerdotal self-understanding is that his role is to *administer* the means of grace, and, primarily, to *distribute* the grace which is objectively given in the sacramental elements. The sacrament *is* the medicine of Christ, he teaches, and his task is to dispense that salvific medicine. Preaching is subordinate to this task. He understands preaching to be a practice which complements the Eucharist, and so each week he prepares brief reflections from assigned Gospel lessons which he interprets through the lens of the Eucharist.

Church B's senior minister is a master of evangelistic preaching and she, too, strives to be orthodox in her teaching. Orthodoxy denotes for her continuity with an ongoing dramatic "hermeneutical frame of reference" that her seminary professors taught her to name the *regula fidei*.[635] Her sacramental ministry consists exclusively of baptism and Eucharist. She leads two distinctive services, one which might be called traditional, featuring organ music, and the other which might be called non-traditional to the extent that it is less formal in its style and language and incorporates a wide range of musical styles. In lieu of daily office, she reads Scripture and theological texts daily, and each morning prays extemporaneously, following loosely a skeletal structure including thanksgiving, adoration, confession, and petition. Her understanding of the real presence is closest to Hooker's, and so, through the example of her own joyful demeanor, she strives to lead the congregation to a communal yet subjective encounter with the real presence. Preaching is primary, and she understands the Eucharist to be the altar call at which her preaching aims. She preaches eighteen-

635. Paul M. Blowers, "The *Regula Fidei* and the Narrative Character of Early Christian Faith," *Pro Ecclesia* VI, no. 2 (1997), 202.

minute sermons from Old and New Testaments using a narrative form which seeks to help the hearer locate himself within the story.

Church C's senior minister is a gifted preacher who also strives to be orthodox in his teaching, which denotes for him an interpretive framework for Scripture which is recognizably in the genealogical line of what I've described as Ramist realism. His sacramental ministry consists strictly of private baptism when folks request it, and his congregation is not accustomed to the Eucharist, which reflects his neo- Zwinglian view that the rite is an antiquated memorial which is interesting but non-essential to creating a thriving flock. Worship is non-sacramental but vibrant, featuring a talented instrumental band, outstanding singing in which the congregation joins, and reaches its apogee in the sermon. He preaches topically, drawing topics from the news, and showing how the wisdom of Jesus and the commands of Scripture are relevant to our common life and anchor us ethically. There are no altar calls. Instead, he measures his success in terms of the numbers of folks who respond to his preaching by attending services and by flowing out into the community in missional action, feeding the poor, healing the sick, and preaching liberation to the oppressed.

We can anticipate how the Hookerian account would critique these ministerial profiles by simply recalling a primary learning of this study: that, for Hooker, there is no direct intermediary between the shepherd and his flock. Christ tutors his flock directly. And he does that through personal relationships through which Jesus addresses the disciple. All other heteronomous influences, including creeds, confessions, systematic theologies, and human mentors, serve as signs and tokens, leading the thirsty to the well. But the inquirer must drink ultimately from the living water in terms of experiencing Christ's personal address. In terms of forming the mind in Christ, the key is the cultivation of a historical personal relationship between the inquirer and Christ in which the inquirer experiences herself as addressed directly and authoritatively in her narrative situatedness. The Hookerian account views ministerial methods which cultivate such a personal relationship positively.

	Minister A	**Minister B**	**Minister B**
Hermeneutic	Orthodoxy denotes teaching within the boundaries of "the tradition" which by his account excludes doctrinal innovations from Luther and later	Orthodoxoy denotes continuity with the *regula fidei*, understood as a dramatic framework.	Derivative of Ramist realism
Sacramental practices	Classical Anglican spirituality consisting of weekly Eucharist, daily office, and daily devotion, and complementing these with medieval Catholic practices.	Limited to baptism and Eucharist.	Consists strictly of private baptism when folks request it. No Eucharist.
Real presence	Piety includes sets of micro-rituals based on transubstantiation. Grace is objectively given in the sacramental elements, and clergy task is to administer that salvific medicine.	Like Hooker's. Strives to lead the congregation to a communal yet subjective encounter with the real presence.	Neo- Zwinglian view. Rite is an antiquated memorial which is interesting but non-essential to creating a vibrant flock.
Non-sacramental practices	Limited to daily office	Skeletal structure to prayer life including thanksgiving, adoration, confession, and petition.	Missional action such as feeding the poor, healing the sick, and preaching liberation to the oppressed.
Preaching	Subordinate to Eucharist. Preaches 10-minutes reflections largely interpreting the Eucharist	Preaching is primary. Preaches 18-25 minute sermons using a narrative approach which seeks to help the hearer locate himself within the story.	Worship is non-sacramental but vibrant. Reaches its apogee in simple, "relevant" 10-minute sermons, which clarify what duty demands.

Table 1: Illustrative examples of ministerial leadership

From this, we can anticipate that the Hookerian account criticizes the hermeneutics of ministers A and C to the extent that they teach that the histories of discernment by recent and current communities are in some sense irrelevant to our knowledge of the good. As we saw in chapter three, Hooker strongly resists the notion of an ahistorical Christ who speaks to us timelessly rather than within our own history. In particular, the Hookerian account resists orthodoxies that exclude particular eras (such as everything since the Reformation) or which reduce Scripture to universal axioms (such as in Ramist realism). Hooker would likely commend Minister B, who reads Scripture in concert with the whole Church and understands scriptural reading as dialectical participation within a narrative.

Turning to the pedogical role of practices, the Hookerian account challenges both Ministers B and C, and asks further questions about Minister A's practices. The notions of private baptism and a church that does not gather in Eucharist receive harsh rebukes, for Hooker sees these as communal acts with formal significance. Baptism is a public communal act wherein the community acknowledges its faith in Christ's promise that the Spirit has caused the baptisand to experience - or that the baptisand will experience - the doxastic restructuring that signals recognition of Christ as Lord, which is to recognize Christ's authority as the supreme exemplar worthy of imitation. Similarly the Eucharist formally makes visible the mystical body of Christ. Such visibility is itself a means of grace through which the Spirit gathers the elect, for the visible body is the primary heteronomous structure through which the Word speaks. To Minister B, the Hookerian account would commend a host of additional sacramental practices which, while distinct from the two ordained sacraments themselves, similarly mediate the Word in a particularly authoritative way. Hooker himself thus defends confirmation, ordination, holy matrimony, the reconciliation of a penitent, the commemoration of the saints, and the anointing of the sick. Hooker would likely applaud Minister A's rich array of classical spiritual practices. The Benediction and Angelus might raise a Hookerian brow, but a Hooker seated at a contemporary table would listen patiently and carefully to learn more from

the minister about how those practices manifest the good. In particular, in their actual execution, how well do they communicate Christ's dispositions?

Much would depend on the ministers' accounts of the real presence. As we saw in chapter four, Hooker directly criticizes the sacramental views of both Ministers A and C. He dismisses C's view as misguided, for Christ is freely and sovereignly present in the Church's sacramental practices.[636] Yet, *pace* Minister A, the objective presence of Christ in the Eucharist is assured not by a transubstantiation of the elements but by the promises of God in the covenant of grace. For Hooker, Christ transsubstantiates *those who sup with him*. The important thing in the current example, however, is not the metaphysics that serve as our handmaiden in thinking about the real presence, but the recognition that the real presence is a *personal* and *historical* presence, an irruption of the eternal into time. The minister who understands the real presence in terms of transubstantiation is vulnerable (but not inevitably prone) to the error of reducing the real presence to materiality, as though the wafers themselves are salvific pills, and thereby pedagogically impeding the cultivation of a *personal* relationship in which the risen Christ speaks authoritatively into the life of the one who communes *with* him.

The Hookerian account would commend all three of our ministers for the non-sacramental practices that are already habitual, while urging them to learn from the practices of the other two. The important thing is that the practices be coherent responses to our experience of being addressed by Christ, and therefore that they be justifiably seen as imitative of his dispositions. Missional action, extemporaneous prayer, and formal prayer in the name of the Lord are signs and tokens of grace; they are historically coherent responses to the experience of being addressed by Christ. Hooker would urge each of the ministers to pursue a full and variegated menu of such practices.

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636. Barth and Hooker diverge here. Barth worries that the claim that Christ is objectively present in sacramental practices "might impinge upon God's freedom and sovereignty in the bestowal of grace and salvation." In my view, Barth is rightly concerned but goes too far. Part of the genius of the Hookerian account is that it maintains God's freedom and sovereignty. Neder, *Participation in Christ*, 83.

Perhaps the most important word from Hooker to parish leaders has to do with the art of preaching. When the aim of preaching is to cooperate with the Spirit in forming the mind of Christ in the congregation - which it often is - the best methods would be those which invite the hearer to locate themselves as characters within the theodrama, and which draw hearers (so situated) into an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ such that his dispositions are given focus. This is hardly novel in terms of preaching theory,[637] but the Hookerian account provides the theological justification of such narrative and dramatic methods.

Therefore, Hooker would ask sharp questions of Minister C. The very question of whether Christ the eternal law is "relevant" would be nonsensical to Hooker, for to be human is to participate in Christ's rationality, and the question of relevance presupposes a realistic option of irrationality. Similarly, Hooker would be deeply critical of preaching that effectively presents Jesus as though he was a first century Moses dictating timeless absolutes, or that presents Jesus as an Enlightenment sage dispensing timeless wisdom which *may* be relevant to 21st century persons. The same questions, perhaps less pointedly, would be addressed to Minister A. Is preaching given sufficient time, and does the method of preaching present Jesus' multi-dimensional personhood such that his nature is revealed narratively? Or is that hard work left undone in favor of a reflection that simply re-describes - perhaps in poetic terms - the preacher's favorite theory of atonement? If preaching does not reveal Jesus' descriptions of and responses to the world he encountered and thereby reveal his cognitive and pragmatic commitments, then it offers insufficient support for the cultivation of mimetic virtue.

637. E.g., Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot, Expanded Edition: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form*, Exp Sub ed. (Westminster John Knox Press, 2000-12-01); Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching, Second Edition*, 2 ed. (Westminster John Knox Press, 2005-10-20); Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching*, Anniversary ed. (Abingdon Press, 2010-05-01). Narrative preaching which presents the dispositions of Jesus in a personal form is a core characteristic of African-American preaching.

The Mind of Christ in Ethical Discourse

My second suggestion concerns ethical reasoning about the self-ordering of the church. As Wells and Quash observe in describing the perspective of ecclesial ethicists, "it is precisely the particular information which universal ethics shuns, that makes ethics comprehensible."[638] My suggestion is that ecclesial ethicists' critique of universal claims can be fruitfully re-stated to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate justifications in our discourse about the self-ordering of the church.

Universal ethical claims are usually accompanied by ahistorical justifications, but election to life in Christ is always election to life within a narrative location, and so our ethical reasoning should always take account of our actual and historical particularities. To put this in Hookerian terms: universal axioms are always general, but in order to generalize human experience, the best a universal axiom can be is an *approximation* of the natural law. Sin and creaturely finitude mean that there will always be a gap between our generalities and the engaged way that Christ is God-with-us in our narrative situatedness. Justifications of our claims regarding the self-ordering of communities are properly historical, not ahistorical. They take account of the "circumstances, commitments, and characters of those most closely involved."[639] We can therefore restate the ecclesial ethicists' critique as follows: "Ethical appeals to timeless absolutes result in 'inadequate descriptions.' Proper ethical justifications relate Christ's dispositions, as revealed in the theodrama, to the circumstances of actual communities, and they imagine how Christ might nourish those communities here and now."

This circumscription of the range of appropriate justifications helps us to anticipate what I will show below - that irreconcilable positions concerning the self-ordering of the Church often feature inappropriate appeals to timeless absolutes on both sides of the debate. On both sides, the parties assume uncritically that proper

638. Wells and Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 192.
639. Ibid.

ethical reasoning entails mining universal axioms from Scripture and tradition - or other sources - in order to conquer opposition in an dispute over what 'God commands.'

But the parties ask the wrong question. Proper ethical reasoning does not merely ask "what does God command?" as in deontological reasoning, precisely because Jesus is not properly reduced to a first-century Moses issuing divine commands.[640] That's the error of the Ramist realists. Jesus is properly recognized as much more than Moses. He is the the embodiment of the triune God's decision to be eternally God-with-us; Jesus is the embodied and risen Christ who summons us to live in fellowship with him. Because we recognize God's self-determination is to be-with-us and sustain us, scriptural reasoning about the church's self-ordering asks, "what ought to be the practical commitments of our community today in order "to receive [the] superabundant gifts of God from every possible source?"[641]

The distinction I am advocating is best seen with an example. In what follows, I will consider briefly how universal and subversive ethics have debated the question of women's ordination to the episcopate within two related communities within the Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church and the Church of England.[642] My purpose simply is to illustrate that appeals to timeless absolutes are characteristic of both universal and subversive ethical approaches. I will not attempt to offer a comprehensive description of the long and many-dimensioned debate. Fortunately, the House of Bishops of the Church of England has already done that with their *Women Bishops in the Church of England? A Report of the House of Bishops' Working Party on Women in the Episcopate*.[643]

The Church of England's debates over the consecration of women bishops

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640. I am indebted to Sam Wells for this contrast between Jesus and Moses and the propensity of universal ethicists to confuse the two.
641. Wells, *God's Companions*, 36.
642. The Episcopal Church consecrated its first female bishop in 1989, and the Church of England approved plans to begin consecrating female bishops on July 14, 2014.
643. *Women Bishops in the Church of England? A Report of the House of Bishops' Working Party on Women in the Episcopate, ed. Michael Roffen (London: Church House Publishing, 2004).*

generally gravitated towards a small cluster of New Testament texts: 1 Corinthians 11.12-16, 14.34-38, 1 Timothy 2.11-15, Ephesians 5.21 and Galatians 3.27-28. At stake, opponents argue, is the notion of *headship*.

For example, David Lickess voiced the common claim by opponents that 21st century consecration of women bishops is prohibited scripturally, because:

> ... there are clear NT markers that women are not to have authority in the Church to exercise headship (1 Tim 2.12), & there's no record of any women doing so in the Early Church, or of one having a sacramental or episcopal ministry.[644]

Roger Beckwith similarly argued that Paul's epistles prohibit female headship in the congregation:

> According to the testimony of St Paul in First Corinthians 11 and 14 and First Timothy 2, headship in the congregation, as in the home, should be exercised by a member or members of the male sex. He declares male headship to be [a] creation ordinance, which was reinforced at the fall, and still obtains after the coming of Christ. The offices of presbyter and bishop are offices of headship, as their very titles, meaning 'senior man' and 'overseer', indicate.[645]

These two examples are characteristic of the claims of opponents of women's ordination who argue on the basis of scriptural authority. The two examples are distinct, however. The first appeal is to a golden era. Lickess, like many opponents, presupposes that the practice of "the Early Church" is normative for all subsequent ages with respect to the vocational possibilities of women. Beckwith would certainly agree, but he grounds his appeal not in apostolic practice but in eternity. For him, male headship is a primordial, indeed, pre-social absolute. The very cosmos itself presupposes male headship, and since governance of bishops entails headship, female bishops are an impossibility.

Geoffrey Kirk argues, in contrast with but towards the same objective of these conservative evangelical arguments, that it is an exegetical mistake to identify headship (*keyphale)* with authority. Instead, headship can be understood only in terms of Christ's precedence as "Head of Table:"

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644. *Ibid., 139.*
645. Ibid., 153.

> [Christ's] headship of the Church, moreover, is related to headship within the Church and within the domestic church (the Christian family) in a way that only can be described as meta-analogical: the submission of wives to husbands (Ephesians 5:22-3) and the wearing of head-coverings by women (1 Corinthians 11.3-10ff.) are not merely expressions, but outworkings of this ultimate headship which devolves upon the Son as the offspring of the Father.[646]

Arguing that the Lord's Supper is a Passover meal, and that, because Passover is a rite in which "the [male] *paterfamilias* hands down the history of salvation to the youngest [male] present," Kirk proposes that "... the bishop who presides at [the Eucharist] does so as the image of the Father. The bishop is the bridegroom of his local church and the *paterfamilias* who heads its eucharistic table."[647] Because in ancient celebration of the Passover rite, the *paterfamilias* was male, Kirk argues that, through analogy, the head who presides at the Eucharist must be male:

> That authority in the Church ('headship') is directly related to table presidency at the Pascha of the New Israel, and that all this is related to the manner in which the paterfamilias, in home and Eucharist, is the icon of Christ (Ephesians 5:23-32) should be apparent to every unprejudiced reader.[648]

Notice that Kirk does not argue here that male headship is eternally normative for *all* human social orderings, and he does not argue that governance by a female is prohibited on the basis of apostolic practice. Rather, his argument is analogical: we know that women cannot be bishops because bishops preside at the Eucharist and women cannot preside at the Eucharist. We know this, he argues, because the Eucharist was in the moment of its institution a Passover meal, and only males could preside at the Passover meal in the first century. Since women could not preside at the Passover meal, women cannot preside at the Eucharist, and, if women cannot preside at the Eucharist, then women cannot be bishops.

Kirk's argument is derivative of Roman Catholic reasoning. Aidan Nichols, describing pontifical illuminations by Paul VI and John Paul II, similarly argues on the

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646. Geoffrey Kirk, "Fatherhood, Headship, and Tradition," in *Consecrated Women? Women Bishops - a Catholic and Evangelical Response,* ed. Jonathan Baker, (Canterbury Press, 2013-05-08), 171. Emphasis added.
647. Ibid., 172.
648. Ibid., 172-173.

basis of "the nuptial theological symbolics"[649] that "the notion of the bishop as paternally generative bridegroom for the particular church takes on enhanced importance in the context of the celebration of the Eucharist."[650] The bishop, per Nichols, is the "sacrament of the Bridegroom" who "exercise[s} the Father's paternity through Christ in the Holy Spirit...."[651] We know that a bishop must be male, therefore, because "the sacramentality of the ministerial priest in this prior "Christoform' configuration requires the natural resemblance of his gender to Christ the bridegroom."[652]

Whereas Lickess and Beckwith appeal to putative norms of either primordial or apostolic golden eras, Kirk and Nichols combine an appeal to a golden era (the era of Jesus' earthly ministry) with a purportedly controlling analogy that similarly produces a timeless absolute of male headship.

On the opposite side of the argument, proponents seemingly take for granted the premise that the self-ordering of a Pauline apostolic community is necessarily binding upon the contemporary Church. Their rebuttal therefore does not deny that premise but rather engages, like Travers and Whitgift in the Elizabethan era, over whose exegesis correctly interprets the controlling texts. Hence, Paula Gooder, for example, argues that "the Ephesians passage [Eph. 5:23-32] is about internal domestic relationships not about Church order."[653] Similarly, the stakes in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 are not as suggested by opponents of women's ordination: "Women are not forbidden from engaging fully in the public profession of worship but are encouraged to do so in appropriate clothing. The point seems not to be subordination of one to the other but gender differentiation."[654]

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649. Aidan Nichols, "The Bishop as Bridegroom of His Church: A Roman Catholic Contribution," in *Consecrated Women? Women Bishops - a Catholic and Evangelical Response,* ed. Jonathan Baker, (Canterbury Press, 2013-05-08), 161.
650. Ibid., 162.
651. Ibid., 163.
652. Ibid.
653. *Women Bishops?, 162.*
654. Ibid., 163.

Similarly, Trevor Hart argues not about whether apostolic practice is normative for contemporary practice, but whether the opponents' describe apostolic practice correctly:

> In fact we know the opposite is true. In Romans 16, for example, Paul refers to women holding the offices of deacon (Phoebe in verse 1), 'fellow worker' in Paul's ministry of the gospel (Priscilla in verse 3) and, strikingly, apostle (Junia in verse 7); and in 1 Corinthians 11 itself he alludes to women praying and prophesying in church, roles which, as one writer puts it, 'made them far more prominent and equal to men than they would have been in Judaism in this period'
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> . . . Clearly, then, Paul did not think women unsuited to roles of responsible and authoritative ministry within the church, and any interpretation of 1 Cor 14.33-35 and 1 Tim 2.11-14 must reckon fully with this fact and be consistent with it.[655]

In the foregoing, we see examples, from both sides of the debate, of justifications based on appeals to precedent, either understood to be the golden era of the apostolic generation or human origins. But universal ethicists are not alone in appealing to claims about human origins as a way of rendering their arguments unassailable. Subversive ethicists do the same. This subversive perspective pervades the 1970's debates over women's ordination that took place in the United States within the Episcopal Church. The distinction, however, is that subversive ethicists often ground their arguments not in claims about timelessly-ordained ecclesial practices but in claims about timeless *natural values*.

In the Episcopal Church debates over women's ordination to the priesthood, we see the reasoning of Enlightenment liberalism. If we reason our way back to human origins, detaching humankind from all the developments and constructed social relations that cloud our judgment, we can discover what authentic humanity is. And it turns out that authentic, pre-social humanity manifests certain values that have been lost in time and must be recovered. Notice that this is quite different than an appeal to putative norms found in the primordial stories of Genesis. Though the logic is similar, the source of authority is not Scripture, but Enlightenment conclusions about human origins. In the illustration to which I turn from The Episcopal Church's

655. Ibid., 164.

discourse, the timeless value requiring recovery is *equality*. The historic result of the discourse was the irregular (non-canonical) ordination of eleven women by retired bishops which was followed by crisis and schism within the The Episcopal Church.

Carter Heyward, one of the first women ordained, explained, "Whereas prayer book revision is a matter of taste, women's ordination is a matter of justice."[656] The tacit assumption underlying Heyward's description of the ordination of women in terms of *justice* is that we know what is *just* by looking at humanity in its natural, pre-historic state. Her argument exemplifies Enlightenment liberalism's presupposition that we have the capacity to peer into our pre-history to determine what is natural and thereby to identify our "natural rights."[657] When reason recognizes that humanity's pre-historic state is one of gender equality, then any deviation from gender equality can be described as a matter of justice and inalienable *rights*, and restoring justice can be construed as an urgent concern that justifies revolution, and not just reform, of the existing social ordering. Revolution is not only warranted but perhaps necessary because only power can overturn the unjust power relations entrenched by the status quo. Summarizing the rationale given for the irregular but valid ordination of eleven women to the priesthood in 1974, Pamela Darling observes that, "restoring equality between men and women as symbolized in the priesthood was a greater good than traditional church discipline."[658] The timeless value of equality justified revolutionary action:

> They discovered that they could step outside the system and survive, and the possibility of changing the system by deliberately breaking its rules became thinkable. This was a generation

656. Pamela W. Darling, *New Wine: The Story of Women Transforming Leadership and Power in the Episcopal Church*, ed. NewWine (Cowley Publications, 1994-08), 123.

657. Compare Thomas Paine. "What does Paine see when he looks past history to our natural beginnings? The very method of searching after the natural human condition in this way suggests to Paine one inescapable fact about man first and foremost: At his origin, man is an individual. And because he has no social relations to start with, he is burdened by no social distinctions and therefore is equal to all other men. Social hierarchies have no natural foundation….To imagine that we are unchanged since the beginning of time is to believe that the means of human generation and the procession of generations through time tell us nothing of great importance about human life. That is, social relations and distinctions built up over generations have no inherent authority." Levin, *The Great Debate*, 45.

658. Darling, *New Wine: The Story of Women Transforming Leadership and Power in the Episcopal Church*, 129-130.

> well acquainted with the civil disobedience tactics of both the civil rights and antiwar movements, actions widely viewed as justifiable means to bring about change within an unwieldy or resistant system. When the duly constituted authorities of the institutional church, in the form of both the General Convention and subsequently their individual dioceses and bishops, refused to do what the activists believed was right, some felt justified in proceeding without authorization.[659]

As I noted above, my interest and intent is not to catalogue exhaustively the arguments of opponents and proponents of women's ordination to the episcopate. My concern is simply to illustrate that both sides often justify their positions on the basis of appeals to timeless absolutes. They offer other justifications, of course, which do not rely on such appeals.[660] To the extent that their proposals rely on appeals to timeless absolutes, however, their arguments are vulnerable to the Hookerian critique outlined in chapter three.

As we have seen, Hooker denies the indefeasibility of the judgments of all eras:

> The glory of God and the good of his Church was the thing which the apostles aimed at, and therefore ought to be the mark whereat we also level. But seeing those rites and orders may be at one time more, which at another are less available unto that purpose, what reason is there in these things to urge the state of one only age as a pattern for all to follow?[661]

We saw in chapter three that, while teaching us to place a high value on *endoxa*, Hooker also urges an allergy to generalizations based on appeals to timeless absolutes. Such generalizations fail to fulfill the natural law because they fail to follow Christ's pattern of 'special equity.' Jesus neither feeds nor judges *in general*. Rather, Christ justifies by meeting all thirsty Samaritan women and men at the well and gives us in *our particular narrative situatedness* the precise form of living water we need to live (John 4:1-42). Therefore, Hooker asks, "Are we bound while the world standeth to put nothing in practice but only that which was the very first?"[662]

We saw that, in his treatment of the Church Fathers, Hooker listens carefully to the authority of every generation, for all are part of the transtemporal discourse

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659. Ibid., 131.
660. For example, opponents offer the *pragmatic* argument that consecration of women bishops will damage ecumenical relations with the Roman Catholic and other churches.
661. *Laws*.IV.2.3; I.278.15-21.
662. *Laws*.IV.2.3; I.278.15-21.

created by the Spirit. Hooker concludes, "*Our end ought always to be the same*, our ways and means thereunto not so."[663] Moreover, we saw that the Hookerian account's prescription is that our ethical reasoning should be informed by the superabundance of God's love as reflected in the extraordinary diversity in both nature and in the Church itself:

> A more dutiful and religious way for us were to admire the wisdom of God, which shineth in the *beautiful variety* of things, but most in the manifold and yet *harmonious dissimilitude* of those ways, whereby his Church upon earth is guided from age to age, throughout all generations of men.[664]

The Hookerian account would therefore potentially result in different conclusions about women's ordination in different generations. Stephen Sykes is probably correct in suggesting that Hooker would not have argued for women's ordination in 1595, but that the logic of his ethics left open the possibility of a future generation making that choice.[665] Hookerian ethics would place a high value on the long tradition of the male-only priesthood without seeing that self-ordering as immutably prescriptive for all generations. Consideration of historical precedent is important and interesting, but such precedent does not compel those who follow. The question of self-ordering, for Hooker, cannot merely be "what does God command?" - which presupposes comprehensive knowledge of what God contingently wills - but rather, "how do we in our generation best manifest the good, as we have come to know it, in our life with God?" With the ecclesial ethicists, the Hookerian account would engage in the debates over women's ordination with the question, ""what ought to be the practical commitments of our community today in order "to receive [the] superabundant gifts of God from every possible source?"[666]

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663. *Laws*.IV.2.3; I.278.14.15
664. *Laws*.III.11.8; I.253.15-20. Emphasis added.
665. *Women Bishops?, 169-171.*
666. Wells, God's Companions. Wells, *God's Companions*, 36..

The mind of Christ in the Church universal

My third suggestion concerns the implications of the Hookerian account for ecumenical relations. Again, the Church of England's debates over women's ordination bring into view the possibility of restoration and reconciliation of the Church's fragments. Some opponents of women's ordination argued that:

> Ordaining women as bishops would lead the Church of England to differ from those provinces within the Anglican Communion who do not have women bishops and would further damage ecumenical relationships with those churches, such as the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, in which... the ordination of women is not accepted.[667]

This worry that a decision to create female bishops would affect ecumenical relations seems to have been pragmatic. Within three days of the decision, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby wrote the Church of England's ecumenical partners with this concern in view, noting that "we are also aware that our other ecumenical partners may find this a further difficulty on the journey towards full communion."[668]

The concern that such a decision might harm ecumenical relations seemingly arises from an assumption that ethical reasoning about the self-ordering of a local church properly sorts such decisions into the categories of necessity and adiaphora. My suggestion is that the possibility of reconciliation would be heightened if contemporary leaders recognized, with Hooker, that the categories of necessity and adiaphora insufficiently describe the ethical task of ecclesial self-ordering. Questions of self-ordering are matters of action and not matters of knowledge. As such, they are the subject matter of phronesis. They concern the creation of the good for the sake of the good.[669] My suggestion is that ecumenical relations would be less fraught if leaders recognized that decisions about self-ordering are *phronetic* and not *epistemic* matters. To develop this suggestion, I will draw upon an account of an actual ecumenical breach, and then explain how the Hookerian account might inform our approach to

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667. *Women Bishops?, 134.*
668. Justin Welby, "Archbishop Writes to Ecumenical Partners About Women Bishops," http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5371/archbishop-writes-to-ecumenical-partners-about-women-bishops (accessed July 17, 2014).
669. See "Episteme and Phronesis" on page 72.

ecumenical relations.

In 1963, Anglican delegates gathered in Toronto for a landmark meeting known as the Third Anglican Congress. It was a time of great hope for the Anglican Communion. Kennedy reigned in Camelot, the remaining colonies of the former British Empire were well on their way to nationhood, the Second Vatican Council was in session, and the time seemed ripe to embrace a new vision for the Anglican Communion: "Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ" (MRI). MRI envisioned a future in which a radical ecclesiology would replace colonial relationships rooted in Western hegemony. As Ian Douglas notes, MRI celebrated the commitment of constituent members of the communion to "interdependence, mutual responsibility," and to relations characterized by "equality and partnership between all Anglicans."[670]

The sunny hope of 1963 constrasts starkly with the urgent call in 2004 for Anglican churches throughout the world to walk together in *synodality*.[671] The bonds of affection binding Anglican provinces into a global communion were tragically broken, and the Lambeth Commission's call was an effort to name a way forward. The fruit of their efforts, a work in ecclesiology named *The Windsor Report (TWR)*, was born amidst the shattered post-colonial dreams of mutual responsibility and interdependence celebrated at the 1963 Anglican Congress. The chairman of the Lambeth Commission, Archbishop Robin Eames, explained:

> The decision by the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church (USA) to give consent to the election of bishop Gene Robinson to the Diocese of New Hampshire, the authorising by a diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada of a public Rite of Blessing for same sex unions and the involvement in other provinces by bishops without the consent or approval of the incumbent bishop to perform episcopal functions have uncovered major divisions throughout the Anglican Communion. There has been talk of crisis, schism and realignment. Voices and declarations have portrayed a Communion in crisis.[672]

According to the authors of *The Windsor Report*, "crisis, schism, and realignment"

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670. Ian T Douglas, "The Exigency of Times and Occasions: Power and Identity in the Anglican Communion Today," in *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism : The Anglican Communion in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Ian Douglas, T. and Pui-lan Kwok, (New York: Church Publishing, 2001), 27-28.
671. *Windsor Report 2004: Lambeth Commission on Communion (Windsor Report) (London: Anglican Communion Office, 2004), 32.*
672. Ibid., 4.

once again were the fruit of unilateral decisions by the North American churches regarding their own self-ordering. In this case, the self-ordering concerned the vocational and marital possibilities of gay persons.

The Windsor Report's authors partially explain the crisis by deploying the Reformation concepts of necessity and adiaphora. They correctly point out the concept of adiaphora was:

> ... invoked and developed by the early English Reformers, particularly in their claim that, in matters of eucharistic theology, specific interpretations (transubstantiation was particularly in mind) were not to be insisted upon as 'necessary to be believed', and that a wider range of interpretations was to be allowed.[673]

It is important to notice that the distinction between necessity and adiaphora, as Hooker was at pains to remind his interlocutors, mostly concerned matters of knowledge, the subject matter of the virtue of *episteme*. The concept, adiaphora, properly concerns the domain of cognitive commitments. I qualify this claim, however, because there is a point at which *episteme* and *phronesis* converge. In what follows, I will touch briefly on this qualification. I name this qualification in passing because, for the most part, we can ignore the qualification because questions about the self-ordering of the Church are outside of this convergence.

My qualification is to concede that there is a point at which matters of knowledge and action intersect. The distinction between matters of faith and matters of action breaks down when pressed in the soteriological direction. There are some practical actions which are universally demanded of Jesus' disciples and thus are not appropriately categorized as local, particular, and contingent. Hooker himself names ecclesial laws requiring the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist as immutable and non-contingent. As we saw in chapter four, they are so because those actions are ordained by Christ. They are 'necessary to salvation' to the extent that Christ uses them instrumentally to convey his real presence. For Hooker, they are part of the divine law prescribed in both Scripture and human law:

> Some things in such sort are allowed that they be also required as necessary unto salvation, by way of direct, immediate, and proper necessity final, so that without performance of them we

673. Ibid., 38.

> cannot by ordinary course be saved, nor by any means excluded from life observing them. In actions of this kind our chiefest direction is from Scripture, for nature is no sufficient teacher what we should do that we may attain unto life everlasting.[674]

In other words, Christology complicates the *episteme/phronesis* distinction at a certain point. Christ's election generates a universal ethical demand requiring an act which cannot be distinguished as either a matter of faith or action. The universal ethical demand is for a personal *knowing*. The action *is* the knowing. But once we get beyond this intersection of knowing and doing that Hooker names the supernatural path in Christ, the distinction becomes more helpful. For the means by which we manifest our acceptance of our redemption, except for the special categories we've mentioned, are of a *phronetic* character. That's where the local, particular, and contingent nature of endoxa arises, and therefore where the distinction is helpful.

With that qualification, I return to my assertion that the necessity/adiaphora commitment properly pertains to cognitive commitments and not to the pragmatic commitments by which we respond to our election in Christ. As Aristotle taught, a cognitive commitment is *necessary* if it can be demonstrated that "it cannot be otherwise."[675] Adiaphora is the category of cognitive commitments - matters of knowledge - which *can* be otherwise. The English Reformers' deployment of adiaphora to describe beliefs about how Christ is really present in the Eucharist was a claim that it is impossible to demonstrate that "it cannot be otherwise" than transubstantiation theory proposes. Necessity and adiaphora properly are categories concerned with *cognitive* commitments and are unhelpful in negotiationg practical commitments.

Unfortunately, *The Windsor Report*'s authors confuse matters of knowledge and matters of action. They apply the Protestant categories of necessity and adiaphora to matters of action, also. They name Romans 14.1-15.13 and 1 Corinthians 8-10 as "the classical biblical statements [of the concept of adiaphora]:"

> There, in different though related contexts, Paul insists that such matters as food and drink (eating meat and drinking wine, or abstaining from doing so; eating meat that had been

674. *Laws*.II.8.3; I.187.30-188.4
675. See note 194 on page 75 for more on the distinction between *episteme* and *phronesis*.

> offered to idols, or refusing to do so), are matters of private conviction over which Christians who take different positions ought not to judge one another.[676]

But, of course, these are matters of action, not knowledge. These are *practical* commitments and not cognitive commitments. They are the subject matter of the virtue of *phronesis* because "that which can be done is capable of being otherwise."[677] Indeed, Paul himself speaks of these actions in the grammar of *phronesis* - performing the good for the sake of the good. *The Windsor Report*'s authors read the 16th century concept of adiaphora into the text.

The authors apply the categories of necessity and adiaphora to matters of action in order to make the claim that there are some behaviors which scandalize and thereby threaten a community with disintegration:

> Paul is quite clear that there are several matters – obvious examples being incest (1 Corinthians 5) and lawsuits between Christians before non-Christian courts (1 Corinthians 6) – in which there is no question of saying "some Christians think this, other Christians think that, and you must learn to live with the difference". On the contrary: Paul insists that some types of behaviour are incompatible with inheriting God's coming kingdom, and must not therefore be tolerated within the Church.[678]

While the authors are correct in asserting that, for Paul, certain types of behavior are incoherent and must not be tolerated within Christian community, one need not confuse matters of knowledge and matters of action in order to circumscribe Christian behavior. Rather than inappropiately applying the epistemological concepts of necessity and adiaphora to matters of action, the Hookerian account describes the ethical behaviors mentioned - incest and lawsuits between Christians - and other sinful actions as privations of the good.

To clarify why conflating matters of knowledge (*episteme*) and matters of action (*phronesis*) is significant ecumenically, I will demonstrate briefly how Hooker maintains this distinction without sacrificing the Church's prophetic "No" to incoherent and intolerable behavior. To do that, I'll recall Hooker's description of sin.

Eschatology drives our Hookerian account of sin. If human destiny is to "proceed

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676. Ibid.
677. See note 194 on page 75.
678. Ibid., 39.

in the knowledge of truth and grow in the exercise of virtue,"[679] then sin is a detour along the way to that destiny.[680] Just as knowledge of the good is an act of reason, "there was never sin committed wherein a less good was not preferred before a greater, and that willfully."[681] Our "natural thirst for knowledge"[682] is frustrated by ignorance, for the good we seek "hath evidence enough for itself, if reason were diligent to search it out."[683] But communal "neglect" of the good causes "a show of that which is not," and we choose that which is "less good."[684] Sometimes, in our choices, we are deceived by Satan; "sometimes the hastiness of our wills prevent[ ] the more considerate advice of sound reason," and "sometimes the very custom of evil make[s] the heart obdurate against whatsoever instructions to the contrary."[685] "Lewd and wicked custom" is particularly problematic, for it "smother[s} the light of natural understanding" such that, over time, "men will not bend their wits to examine whether things wherewith they have been accustomed be good or evil."[686] Long entrenched evil custom within the community, therefore, is the reason that, though "the greatest part of the law moral being so easy for all men to know... so many thousands of men notwithstanding have been ignorant even of principal moral duties, not imagining the breach of them to be sin."[687] Sin, for Hooker, is willfully and irrationally choosing a lesser good.

Hooker maintains the capacity to name behaviors as unacceptable without resorting to the binary construction of necessity and adiaphora and without confusing knowledge with action. Sin *in a general sense* can be described in binary form in terms of obedience/disobedience to God's desire that we act rationally and thereby participate in the divine rationality. Sin in a *phenomenological* sense, however, cannot be described

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679. *Laws*.I.5.3; I.73.32-74.1
680. Lake notes that "compared to the views of other protestants, Hooker's vision of sin as a species of ignorance, a sort of intellectual laziness, seemed almost benign." Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans*, 150.
681. *Laws*.I.7.7; I.80.24-29.
682. *Laws*.I.7.7; I.81.16.
683. *Laws*.I.7.6; I.80.24-29
684. *Laws*.I.7.7; I.80.5, 24-29.
685. *Laws*.I.7.7; I.81.1-2, 4-5.
686. *Laws* I.8.11; I.91.30-34.
687. *Laws*.I.8.11; I. 91.25-29.

sufficiently with a simple Ramist binary. Phenomenologically, sin, for Hooker, is always a matter of willfully preferring "a less good... before a greater."[688] Actions such as incest and lawsuits between Christians are irrational in that they diverge from the path of a Christian's and a Christian community's proper becoming. Or, to frame this using the grammar of the preceding chapter: sinful actions reflect incoherent practical commitments given the cognitive commitments that generate the most basic linguistic practice of the Church - the Eucharist. When we see the redeemed world rightly, we move rationally in thanksgiving towards the good. Sin is blindness and therefore cognitive failure for Hooker.[689]

From this phenomenological description of sin in terms of our irrational failure to perform the good for the sake of the good, we can see that it is insufficient and reductive to categorize practical actions using the epistemological categories of necessity and adiaphora. Either we accept Christ's particular Word to us in our narrative situation or not, but *a spectrum of concrete responses are possible*, ranging from the performance of the greatest good to its irrational opposite. Rather than reducing our possible responses to the necessity/adiaphora binary, it is more fruitful to describe the range of possible responses as Hooker did: eschatologically, in terms of our proper becoming. To what extent do we recognize the *fullness* of the good expressed in this practical action? To what extent does this action manifest the good's privation?

Recognition that Christian ethics is about our *phronetic* response to the grace of God helps us to see that questions about our ecclesial self-ordering are not properly framed in terms of necessity and adiaphora. They are, rather, the subject matter of *phronesis*, the virtue of creating the good for the good's sake. The goal of mimetic virtue is not the replicable *production* of events in which God's law is obeyed, but rather the *performance* of the good for its own sake, which constitutes exemplary obedience. The distinction is crucial "because action and making are different kinds of

688. *Laws*.I.7.7; I.80.25-26.
689. See note 124 on page 53.

things.... For while making has an end other than itself, action cannot; for good action itself is its end."[690] Like a poem or a song or the dramatic arts, the goal of phronetic action is the good itself, "and that which can be done is capable of being otherwise."[691] *"Sundry actions may be equally consonant unto the general axioms of the Scripture"*[692] precisely because of the superabundance of the good.

The authors of *The Windsor Report* claim that the Anglican crisis of 2004 arose in part because of a dispute over whether certain actions were properly categorized as necessity or adiaphora. North American churches thought "that the questions they were deciding were things upon which Christians might have legitimate difference, while large numbers of other Anglicans around the world did not regard them in this way.[693] This diagnosis also underlies the aforementioned 2014 concern that the consecration of women bishops by the Church of England will harm its ecumenical relations. But questions of whether women or gay persons can become bishops, or whether a church must have bishops at all, are questions of ecclesial self-ordering. They are matters of *phronesis*, not *episteme*. Liberated from the false dichotomy of necessity and adiaphora, charity recognizes that many ways are consonant and makes space for the other.

Ecumenical relations harden when leaders exhibit puzzlement by confusing *episteme* and *phronesis*. The possibility of reconciliation between ecumenical counterparts would be heightened if leaders recognized that decisions about self-ordering are *phronetic* and not *epistemic* matters. It is more ecumenically fruitful to do as Hooker did: to describe the range of possible self-orderings in terms of the Church's eschatological becoming. Given our eschatological orientation, to what extent do we recognize the *fullness* of the good expressed in a practical decision to order the local church in a certain way? To what extent does this action manifest the

690. Aristotle, *Complete Works Vol 2*, EN.1140a.24 - 1140b.12.
691. Ibid.
692. *Laws*.III.2.1; I: 207.29-208.9. Emphasis added. In context, Hooker is explaining why the Genevan discipline is not the only self-ordering a church can embrace and remain a church. "Sundry actions are equally consonant...."
693. *Windsor Report, 21.*

good's privation? And, drawing upon the discussion of women's ordination above, given the witness of our ecumenical counterparts, how ought the practical commitments of our community today evolve in order "to receive [the] superabundant gifts of God from every possible source?"[694] Is there good already in our midst that our practical commitments exclude?

The Eucharist is the Church's most basic linguistic practice. As such, the Eucharist generates certain practical commitments - certain ought-to-be judgments about our relations with other Christians and their communities. These include the practical commitments to preserve all Christian's "place at God's table," to "sit at table with one another," to "recognize the sacramental and moral discipline and order required" to maintain sacramental bread-sharing, and to "share in the practices of this special act of sharing in Christ's body...."[695] As Wells and Quash note, "this is a hierarchical and sequential series designed to sustain unity."[696] The binary grammar of necessity and adiaphora can drive us to a binary description of our unity as well: either we are in, or out, of communion with our ecumenical counterparts. But recognizing that the self-ordering of the church is phronetic action helps us also to see that some self-orderings manifest the fullness of the good more than others, but only those oriented towards the privation of the good could conceivably *necessitate* "the severing of communion."[697] "Sundry actions may be equally consonant...."[698]

Recognition that "sundry actions may be equally consonant," precisely because of the superabundance of the good, means that our unity in and with Christ is not based on, caused, or constituted by our being of one accord in matters of action. Geneva can be Geneva, Zurich can be Zurich, Rome can be Rome, and England can be England. Unison in our self-ordering is not the formal cause of unity. Rather, the reverse is true - Christian community is solely dependent upon "our shared commitment to and

694. Wells, *God's Companions*, 36.
695. Wells and Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 306.
696. Ibid.
697. Ibid.
698. *Laws*.III.2.1; I: 207.29-208.9

promise to be with the risen Jesus"[699] - a commitment caused by Christ's Spirit. This shared commitment is created and sustained through the personal relationship with the transcendent unity, even in tension and dissonance, that is our mutual indwelling in Christ through which the Spirit cultivates the faith, hope, and charity which makes authentic communion possible. The recognition that all ethics are phronetic is prior to and sustained by the concrete unity which cherishes God-given diversity.

Hookerian ethics therefore helps the church to imagine a robust communion ecclesiology in which diverse societies of souls, blessed with an abundance of richly variegated gifts, outlooks, and dispositions, are given the space of freedom and welcomed within a global communion which is ever striving towards "polyphonous concord[700]" in matters of faith and action, such that they coherently speak the common Pentecostal grammar which constitutes the visible mystical body of Christ through which Christ is reconciling the world. Such speech joins the symphony[701] through which the Word of God is heard and through which the love of God is manifest.

Richard Hooker's Reputation, Revisited

As I noted in my introduction, Richard Hooker's reputation has evolved in the four hundred years since his death. It is a commonplace within Anglican discourse to hear Hooker's name invoked to justify proposals that seek to negotiate 'a middle way' between entrenched positions. In my experience, those present often have no idea or have long sense forgotten what those entrenched positions were, but they nod affirmatively, for everyone knows that Hooker taught the Church to seek the *via media* in order to keep our ecclesial factions under one big tent. If asked, some present could confidently explain that Hooker sought the middle way between Geneva and Rome,

699. Rowan Williams, "Incarnation and the Renewal of Community," in *On Christian Theology (Challenges in Contemporary Theology)*, (Wiley, 1999), 237.
700. Balthasar, *Truth is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism*, 7-10.
701. Ibid.

and for that reason, the Anglicanism Hooker envisioned became the perfect tradition for couples seeking to compromise between twenty-first century Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

Of course, as MacCulloch reminds us,[702] Hooker neither sought a middle way between Geneva and Rome nor suggested that seeking the middle way is the prudential way of a pilgrim Church. The myth of Hooker's middle way, of course, is a Tractarian fiction, deployed by Newman and his colleagues to justify their nineteenth century platform. The commonplace, in this case, is universally-known nonsense. My study discovered no cause to challenge the current consensus of Hooker scholars: Hooker did not aim for a middle ground between Geneva and Rome, but instead engaged most of his career in an intramural theopolitical struggle between Geneva-inspired English protestants advocating presbyterian reforms and Zurich-inspired English protestants advocating conformity with the Elizabethan Settlement. To this, I've added the proposal that Hooker's treatise seems perfectly designed as a repudiation of the Ramist realism arising at Cambridge at the time Hooker published *Laws*.

It is also a commonplace to hear Hooker's name invoked to justify practical proposals for the Church on the basis of the three pillars of Scripture, reason, and tradition. We've seen, however, that these are not standalone silos of authority from which one chooses as needed to advance one's projects. Rather, they are interrelated categories of dialectically constructed endoxa which store a community's deductions about the eternal law based on its life with Christ the Creator, Governor, and Reconciler. Because the eternal law *is* Jesus Christ, those endoxa are derived from the Word and inseverable from the Word. It is impossible that either Scripture, reason, or tradition rightly contradict Jesus Christ. Whether we appeal to Scripture, tradition, or reason, it is impossible that we avoid Christ's pressure upon us, guiding us to act as necessary to close the gap between our enshrined generalizations about the eternal law

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702. MacCulloch, "Richard Hooker's Reputation,"

and its particular demands in the moment of our encounter with our neighbor. Therefore, contemporary "liberal accommodationism" and "postliberal traditionalism"[703] can no longer coopt Hooker to justify their ideologies. There is no avoiding the living Word with which Christ addresses us.

Which returns us to the question of Hooker's reputation. When I began this project, I noted Hooker's similarities to contemporary ecclesial ethicists and decided to use 'ecclesial ethicist' as a heuristic device with which to interrogate Hooker. Along the way, the device gave way to description: I discovered that Hooker *is* an ecclesial ethicist. During a time of great flux in his culture's premises about how we know what we know, Hooker identified serious flaws in the foundation underlying certain positions of his Elizabethan colleagues - both opponents and allies. He preserved an account of virtue evocative of Aristotle, emphasized the centrality of Jesus, and placed a high valuation on the tradition and practices of the Church as the most reliable, dialectically-identified signs and tokens of the good. And he did all of this within an Elizabethan Reformed grammar that already evinced skepticism toward a "substantialist form of ancient metaphysics as applied to the problem of an ontology of the person."[704] His achievement is extraordinary.

So who is Hooker *for us*?

As I have shown in this study, it is with good reason that scholars throughout the ages have noticed Hooker's significant debts to Aquinas. He quoted, alluded to, or borrowed from Thomas extensively, and his accounts of the eternal law and of the Christian life as a journey of sanctification are recognizably Thomist in character. We've seen, however, that we understate his genius if we simply note his resonances with Aquinas. For, in a hyper-Augustinian era, Hooker achieved a great synthesis. He described a vision of the Church that unites a *Reformed* description of the alterity of God and fellowship with Jesus Christ with an account of mimetic virtue. The

703. Volf, "When Gospel and Culture Intersect," 33.
704. McCormack, "Karl Barth's Historicized Christology: Just How "chalcedonian" is it?," Kindle location 2602, Sect 2, para 8.

Reformed quality of his catholicism is decisive. If Hooker is "the English Thomas," he is also the "Anglican Barth."

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