-Abstract-

How do practices contribute to the formation of the mind of Christ in community such that the community truly becomes the body of Christ?" This dissertation demonstrates that Christ acts on his Church through a complex interaction of community and practices to generate the identity, diversity, and virtue of his body. This is a controversial claim because many hold that the matter of virtue rightly consists of adherence to cherished foundations like Scripture and tradition accompanied by calls to obedience. Nonetheless, this study seeks to identify resources to help the Church imagine a virtue ethics appropriate to a 21st century communion ecclesiology. It does so by reading Richard Hooker as an ecclesial ethicist.

Examining Hooker's accounts of Scripture, participation, and liturgical practices, the dissertation develops a Hookerian account that extends the ecclesial ethics of Stanley Hauerwas and Sam Wells on both ends. On the front end, it derives from first principles an account of how humans come to see themselves as part of the theodrama in which improvisation is required. On the back end, it grounds improvisation in a theory of mimetic virtue. Along the way it shows how a largely Barthian Christology coheres with a positive account of sacramental practices and that a Hauerwasian emphasis on practices is not sectarian. Hooker's repudiation of appeals to timeless absolutes in ethical reasoning and his demonstration that the self-ordering of the Church is phronetic action means that contemporary "liberal accommodationism" and "postliberal traditionalism" can no longer coopt Hooker to justify their ideologies.

How the Mind of Christ is Formed in Community

The Ecclesial Ethics of Richard Hooker

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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-Abbreviations & Bibliographic Notes-

In what follows, unless otherwise indicated, quotations from Hooker are taken from the Folger Library edition of Hooker's works, which I take to be the current Hooker canon. I have modernized orthography and punctuation for the sake of uniformity and intelligibility.

With few exceptions, I have used the Turabian notes-bibliography style. Accordingly, for Kindle books, I have included both the Kindle location and fixed coordinates such as a section title, chapter, paragraph or other number.

Citations *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie* follow a dual reference system which includes the divisions used in John Keble's 19th century edition. When citing quotations, I provide an abbreviated form of the book title, period, Hooker's book number, period, Hooker's chapter number, period, and then Keble's section number. After a semi-colon, I provide a more precise reference using the Folger's volume number, colon, page number, period, and line number(s). For example: *Laws*.V.56.1; 2:234.31-235.3 refers to the book entitled Laws, Hooker's fifth volume, Hooker's 56th chapter and Keble's first section. The quote is be more precisely designated as Folger's second volume, page 234, beginning at line 31 and concluding at line 3 on page 235.

When cited, the title of each of Hooker's works appears in the following abbreviated form:

Learned Discourse	*A Learned Discourse of Justification, Works, and How the Foundation of Faith is Overthrown*
Laws	*Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity*
Pride	*A Learned Sermon of the Nature of Pride*
Dublin	*Dublin Fragments*
Jude	*The First Sermon on Part of St. Jude*
FLE	*The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*

Other Abbreviations

CD	Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*
ST	Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae*

Citations of *Church Dogmatics* follow the standard convention of listing the Volume and Part-Volume. However, for the convenience of those accessing *CD* online as I do, I've followed the additional convention of listing the Paragraph and Sub-Section followed by the page number. For example: CD II/2 §33.1.184.

-Statement of Copyright-

-Acknowledgements-

I shall always remember the sermon my former professor, Jo Bailey Wells, preached at my ordination at which she challenged me with the metaphor of a hippo. Let Augustine of Hippo be your guide in this, she said. Aim always to contribute to the Church as both a scholar and a priest. Jo once told me that doing a PhD thesis was the loneliest work you will ever do, and she was right. I am accordingly grateful for her charge, remembered multiple times since, which has encouraged me to persevere through the long days, weeks, and months of writing.

I give thanks for the mentoring and inspiration of my former professor, Sam Wells, who took time from his work as a London vicar to discuss my treatment of his and Stanley Hauerwas' work. I owe a similar debt to Bishop Graham Kings. Both Sam and Graham encouraged this project through their scholar-priest examples and through significant practical support.

They say that when the student is ready, a teacher will appear, and that's what I've discovered in my relationships with my two outstanding advisors, Mark McIntosh and Chris Insole. What a gift it is to receive a reading list tailored to your interests, and to have professors willing and able to respond with patient and rich answers to your questions. I am profoundly aware that I have been sculpted by their pedagogical art, by their willingness to walk alongside me as I chased every rabbit that caught my fancy, and by their wisdom and patience in guiding me towards the discovery of the manuscript's final shape. I am so very grateful to be their student.

I owe a debt of gratitude to four scholars whose patient tutoring via correspondence shaped my thinking about this project in important ways. Torrance Kirby and David Neeland provided electronic copies of their own work, which I otherwise might not have encountered, in order to help me comprehend key parts of Hooker's thought. They and Egil Grislis patiently tutored me on Hooker from the historian's perspective, clarifying for me concepts that proved important in this project. Similarly, Jennifer Herdt graciously shared her work in order to teach me by example the method of rational reconstruction I have pursued here.

I'd be remiss if I did not offer thanks to my congregation at St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Rochester, NY, for allowing their priest the time and space to pursue this inquiry and for providing a concrete context from which arose its most significant questions. I am so richly blessed to be their pastor.

My learning has been enriched immeasurably by my friend and colleague of many years, Derek Woodard-Lehman. Derek tutored me informally as we carpooled together every day for three years while pursuing our MDiv degrees at the Duke Divinity School, and that relationship has continued as doctoral students. Derek had provided nuance especially in his area of research, Karl Barth, and thought alongside me through many of the philosophical questions that appear in this manuscript. More importantly, our long distance online companionship - manifested in discussions of the theological questions of the day - made the long road of doctoral research a joy.

Finally, I give thanks to my wife, Claudia Uffman, for forgoing so much so that I might climb this mountain. This project would not have been possible without her emotional and practical support. My days with Hooker are now indelibly connected in my mind with her chocolate-chip-lunch-box bars. Thanks be to God.

Feast of St. Matthew, 2014

Rochester, NY

- Chapter 1 -
Introduction

Prelude: The Mind of Christ in Community

The birth of an inquiry

The seed of this study was a New Testament course I took many years ago on the use of *mimesis* in Paul's corpus. As one destined for the priesthood, the course left an indelible impression on me of how mimesis was central to Paul's evangelistic method. Two concepts especially imprinted on me.

The first concept is that of "the mind of Christ." Paul speaks both of our being baptized "in Christ" and also of Christ being in us. "Christ in us" became for me a phrase denoting what Paul meant when he called Christians to be of "one mind." Over time that phrase evolved into "the mind of Christ." I understand "the mind of Christ" to be the community's sharing of an inner disposition in tune with the rationality of God. When Paul calls the Church at Corinth to be of one mind, he intends for them to be one body, drawn by the Holy Spirit into an encounter with Christ the Reconciler to whom they respond with the recognition of a political identity given in and for him. That political identity is shared by the elite and the common multitude, creating their unity while sustaining their diversity. This shared unity in diversity, manifest in a common Pentecostal grammar, constitutes the *koinonia* through which Christ is reconciling the world. Throughout this inquiry, I denote that unity and disposition with the phrase "the mind of Christ."

The second concept that impressed me in my study of mimesis in Paul was that Paul himself understood that it takes time to form the mind of Christ in Christian community. In Galatians 4.19, Paul uses the imagery of childbirth to characterize his relationship with the Galatians: "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you...." The community birthed by Christ through Paul's work must remain in connection with Paul until it reaches the maturation point signified by birth. Imitation of one already formed in Christ is the

crucial factor. Formation of the mind of Christ in community takes time, and requires both apprenticeship and immersion.

If the seeds of this study were planted during my study of Paul, they were fertilized by the angst of a broken Church. In the last decade, my own ecclesial location, The Episcopal Church, suffered a tragic schism as we wrestled with how evolving Western sexual norms might inform our self-ordering. Relations with our sister Anglican provinces in Asia and Africa either soured or manifested broken communion as we committed legislatively to the path of ordaining partnered gay bishops and blessing same-sex marriages. And, most recently, ecumenical progress between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic church chilled as the Church of England embraced the commitment to ordain female bishops. Fractured communion led me to ponder the factors that make that shared political identity, that *koinonia*, such a fleeting dream.

The painful reality of broken communion led to this inquiry regarding how the mind of Christ is formed in community: how might it be true that different approaches to ethical reasoning might fund a politics of opposition rather than the politics of reconciliation? Or, rather, to express it in the terms of my inquiry, what is the connection between our Christian truth claims and the generation of communities who embody the mind of Christ? Since the hope is to cooperate with Spirit's sustenance of the mind of Christ, Christology seems a reasonable starting point, but any inquiry into the formation of the mind of Christ in communities is at the same time a question of ecclesiology, for ecclesiology is about the embodiment of Christology. My question became "how do the practices of the Church lead to communities of virtue that denote the triune God?"

The fire of Sabah

My interest in the practices of the Church is not merely driven by the hope for reconciled communities of virtue. As a priest in The Episcopal Church, my intuition was that practices ought to be the key to reigniting the Gospel fire in a denomination

that lost more than 350,000 baptized members between 2003 and 2012.[1] But my personal experience is that close attention to liturgical practices does not predictably correlate with that fire. I observed moribund parishes which set the highest standard in terms of the rigor of their compliance to liturgical standards but which manifested neither a clear sense of mission nor an evangelistic impulse.[2] Indeed, an influential study found that "formal liturgy" "and regular use of 'kneeling'" were correlated with "a *negative* effect on growth."[3] I wanted to understand why ecclesial practices sometimes generate Gospel heat, but in other cases block the wind that sustains the fire.

I discovered that fire in Sabah. An independent study on planting the missional church led me to the Anglican Diocese of Sabah in Western Malaysia, where a mentor sent me with the promise that there I would experience the Church as it is described in the Acts of the Apostles. As I approached St. Patrick's Anglican Church for the first time on a hot summer day, I was amazed to witness the baptism of thirty-one adults and children. The parish membership grew in six years (1992-1998) from 841 to 2,109, and now numbers more than 3,000, with over five hundred trained lay leaders leading more than three hundred cell groups in weekly mid-week gatherings. Sunday attendance includes five congregations worshiping in Malay, Chinese, and English vernaculars. As my mentor promised, I witnessed something extraordinary in Sabah. There one finds a diocese enflamed with a palpable pentecostal tongue.

What's the difference between the moribund but rigorously liturgical American parish and the Gospel flame I witnessed in Sabah? Clearly, many factors contribute to church growth, and my purpose here is not to examine them. What interests me, however, is the church's own account of her growth. Church leaders point to their cell

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1. "Baptized Members By Province and Diocese 2002-2012," http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sites/default/files/baptized_members_by_province_and_diocese_2002_-_2012.pdf (accessed June 30, 2014).
2. The most predictive attribute of a growing congregation is having "a clear mission and purpose." "Growing congregations are clear about why they exist and what they should be doing." C. Kirk Hadaway, *Facts on Episcopal Church Growth: A New Look At the Dynamics of Growth and Decline in Episcopal Parishes and Missions Based on the Faith Communities Today 2005 (Fact 2005) National Survey of 4,100 Congregations*, Research-Based Perspectives for Building Vital Faith Communities (The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and Faith Communities Today, 2005), 18.
3. Ibid., 17. Emphasis original.

groups as the key factor. They've organized their parish in groups which meet weekly to practice the practices of the Church, just as a baseball team practices the practices of a champion. From the time a child is eighteen months old, every gathering begins and ends with worship. That's every gathering - whether its apparent purpose is work, play, or simply sharing the blessings of community. Parish life consists primarily of worship in a variety of simple forms, and mostly in the home and workplace. Worship, and not merely liturgy, is the daily work of the people. Such focus generates clarity of mission. At St. Patrick's, the palpable content that permeates the air is the electricity animating a society of souls whose relationship to one another is constituted by three thousand communally-mediated personal relationships with Jesus Christ.

I share this reflection upon my Malaysian experience to name an impulse that shaped this study. In Sabah, I began to suspect that it is insufficient merely to point to Scripture, the creeds, and the prayer book and expect the mind of Christ to be formed in the communities who curate the wisdom they contain. Those texts prescribe cherished means by which communities gravitate towards the good. But they don't tell us how to move a local community's norms to the good they demarcate, and they don't give an account of how the Holy Spirit works in local communities to sustain them by inviting their particular responses to the phenomena of their lives. It is the local norming - the rich variety of our responses in history to first principles - that makes the church much more than a moribund skeleton mouthing prescribed texts, and instead a breathing, adapting, and loving organism, the mystical, living body of Christ. My question became, "How do the practices of the Church generate that pentecostal tongue? How do practices contribute to the formation of the mind of Christ in community such that the community truly becomes the body of Christ?"

Methodology

The concerns of this study

My quest to understand the formative power of ecclesial practices led me to Richard Hooker. I turned to Hooker as I recognized that many of the tensions in the

contemporary Church are not about doctrine, but about how we should order our common life such that it manifests the good. We are most often divided on the question of how we recognize the good. If we by some chance agree on the good, we then stumble over the next question, which is how to move from our current location towards the good we want to manifest. Differently weighted values like justice and charity lead us to different conclusions about the path to the good in the occasions when we agree on its content. Similarly, the intellectual disputes of Hooker's context were, for the most part, not over differences in doctrinal content, but rather over practical questions about the self-ordering of the national church. Can a female serve as governor of the local church? Does God require governance of the Church by bishops? Hooker recognized that such disputes arise from differences in our understanding of how we know what we know. Hooker can illuminate our understanding of how ecclesial practices form us because he answered the question of how we know what we know by developing from first principles a robust defense of ecclesial practices.

Precisely because the fragments of the contemporary Church are so often divided by the question of how we know what we know, the concern of this study is to identify resources to help the Church imagine a communion ecclesiology appropriate to 21st century dynamics. It does so by examining the response of Richard Hooker to challenges to the Church arising, like ours, from a pivotal change in the Western social imaginary.[4] Richard Hooker is especially interesting because he shares many of the emphases of contemporary ecclesial ethicists,[5] including a substantial deployment of Aristotle, an emphasis on the centrality of Jesus, and a high valuation of the tradition and practices of the Church.[6]

I seek to answer the question, "how is the mind of Christ formed in community?" My thesis, in brief, is that Christ acts on his church through a complex interaction of

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4. The social imaginary is "the way that we collectively imagine, ever pre-theoretically, our social life." Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Belknap Press, 2007), 146.
5. I deploy the category, "ecclesial ethicists," as a technical term throughout this study. I specify its meaning below. See page 14.
6. Samuel Wells, *Christian Ethics: An Introductory Reader*, 1 ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010-05-10), 154-155.

community and practices to generate the reconciled political identity, diversity, and virtue of his body.

It would seem that this is an obvious thesis. But to suggest that the matter of virtue is complex is to engage in controversy. It is just this complexity that Hooker's interlocutors denied, and that is often denied in our time through our affinity for universal ethics that ground moral reasoning in competing foundations in the hope of determining outcomes once and for all. To suggest that the formation of the mind of Christ in community is more complex than referral to another's preferred foundation is to engage in controversy.

It seems warranted, therefore, to unpack my simple thesis here in order to illuminate the complexity involved in forming the mind of Christ in community. Accordingly, the more detailed thesis that shaped this study is that Christ the Creator, encountered historically and actually, blesses our common life by evoking our creative response to grace with conditioned forms of law, *scientia*, and social structures. These historically encountered forms are the contingent, provisionally-known, and yet reliable signs and tokens of goodness which create the context in which the Spirit draws us to recognize and respond to our relation to Christ the Reconciler, grasping and transforming both the "common multitude" and the elite, generating through common worship and sacramental practices the political identity, diversity, and virtue of the visible mystical body of Christ through which God is reconciling the world.

In other words, there are no shortcuts. Enduring communion manifests the good. We cannot define the good in advance. To obtain the good, we have to cultivate virtue. We cultivate virtue by being the Church. We become the Church when Christ himself tutors us in the pentecostal tongue. It is that simple. It is that complex.

The Wellsian typology

By examining Hooker's defense of the relationship between ecclesial practices and virtue, theology can better imagine and talk about an ecclesiology appropriate to the challenges of our time. In the conclusion of this study, I will demonstrate why this is

so by applying the Hookerian ethics developed in this study to a contemporarily divisive issue - the ordination of women as bishops.

The route to this constructive destination will include a secondary effort to extend the proposal of Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells regarding the connection between the Church's worship and its ethics. In my view, Hauerwas and Wells helpfully point to the *fruits* of that connection: attention to the practices of the Church shapes the way Christians describe our world and thereby transforms the way we think and act. One of my constructive aims is to extend their work by describing *how* that happens. How does the Holy Spirit work through ecclesial practices to generate the passion and virtue of the Body of Christ? Listening to Hooker will teach us much about the inner-working of this connection between practices and virtue, but he only takes us part of the way to our destination. When Hooker is silent or vague about this connection, I will turn to Hauerwas and Wells to probe more deeply.

I will deploy a Wellsian typology as my fundamental framework for reading Hooker. Throughout this inquiry I assume the typology of ethics provided by Wells and Ben Quash, and I see this inquiry as a work within the domain of what they describe as 'ecclesial ethics.' Their other two categories are "universal" and "subversive" ethics. Wells describes their typology in his *Christian Ethics: An Introductory Reader*:

> Universal ethics - whether grounded in right intentions, right actions, right outcomes, or right relationships - tends to focus on the moment of decision as the central question in ethics.... Subversive ethics redescribes that moment and that decision by pointing out the power relationships and unspoken assumptions hidden within the decision and (in some cases) the whole construction of the need for and nature of the decision." Ecclesial ethics share many of the criticisms of universalists made by subversive ethicists, especially in emphasizing that it is "the particular information, which universal ethics shuns, that makes ethics comprehensible." Ecclesial ethicists focus not on decisions, but on people, based on a new Aristotelianism, insisting that good decisions are made by people of good character, and good character arises from particular practices, habits, and descriptions of reality that help disciples respond to God and one another.[7]

According to Wells' typology, "the constructive dimension of ecclesial ethics" is not on "moments of decision" but "the description and the evaluation of" "other

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7. Ibid.

significant issues."[8] In chapter three, I will describe one set of Hooker's interlocutors, the Ramist realists, who, by my reading, sought to develop the slogan, "*sola scriptura,*" into a technology productive of right decisions. In contrast, Hooker's constructive account in *Laws* is centered on the defense of ecclesial practices as the crucial means by which virtue is formed. Like contemporary ecclesial ethicists, his vision for the Church of England is predicated on the claim that the most fruitful focus of ethics is on the cultivation of virtue and not on the exhaustive definition of right actions in advance. As my argument unfolds, it will become clear that Hooker also emphasizes the other key themes characteristic of ecclesial ethicists:

> 1) "the reassertion of confidence in those institutions - notably the church - that survive but which are shorn (or losing sight) of the practices that give their continued existence meaning;"[9]
>
> 2) a concern that ahistorical approaches to discernment lead to "inadequate description[s] of the ethical situation if the circumstances, commitments, and characters of those most closely involved are not taken into account;"[10]
>
> 3) an account of virtue "recovered from Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas" which foregrounds "the notions of practice (a cooperative activity that defines excellence or human ends), telos (the final purpose of life), and tradition (which requires virtues to be sustained;"[11]
>
> 4) a stress on the priority of habit formation as a crucial means by which the Spirit "shape[s] the imagination of persons by so training them in community... within a tradition that they learn to take the right things for granted and thus at the moment of decision act apparently effortlessly without anxiety or dismay;"[12] and, finally,
>
> 5) a Scriptural hermeneutic which reads Scripture not as a catalogue of universal axioms but as the grand drama of which all humans are a part, and which thereby communicates the dispositions constitutive of Christian identity.[13]

The noteworthy aspects of Hooker's thought I wish to appropriate accordingly have to do with his own defense of the ecclesial practices of the Elizabethan Church. Throughout this study, I will read Hooker as an ecclesial ethicist, using Wells' typology as a framework which invites attention to the emphases above, and thereby serves as a handy guide to excavation of core principles. I will then use the harvested core principles to develop a thick account of his treatment of ecclesial practices.

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8. Ibid., 155.
9. Ibid., 155-156.
10. Ibid., 162.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 163.
13. Ibid.

Inductive and Historical

In reading Hooker as an ecclesial ethicist, I understand myself to be faithfully re-describing Hooker's thought in such a way that I can appropriate it for my constructive project. I take this method to be consistent with what Hauerwas commends in his *Working with Words: On Learning to Speak Christian*:

> For it is my conviction that the work of the theologian is word work, or, as John Howard Yoder would have it, the task of theology is "working with words in the light of faith." Accordingly, Yoder describes the approach he takes in *Preface to Theology* as inductive and historical—that is, he invites his students (and readers) to watch Christians at work doing theology to see what they can learn from those who have tried to do theology in the past.[14]

With my fundamental framework of reading Hooker as an ecclesial ethicist in view, I intend to read Hooker's "ideas in their historical and social contexts, sensitive to what [he] could have meant by what [he] said, but not to stop at that, since in the end what I care about is making up my own mind about various things."[15] In this study, the "various things" are contemporary questions about the role of ecclesial practices. Accordingly, my interest is in what Hooker might say to us were he to sit at the table as a participant in our contemporary discourse.

Some questions that concern historians will therefore be less significant in my project. For example, Hooker scholars have long debated the provenance of Hooker's thought. To what extent is Hooker influenced directly by Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas and other ancient and Reformation era thinkers? For my purposes, questions of provenance are less fruitful. Because of my method, I can be agnostic about the question of whether Hooker gets his Aristotelianism directly from the philosopher, from Aquinas, or from his tutor, John Rainold. Similarly, I will sidestep debates about whether Hooker's Christian Platonism comes to him directly from Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, or is mediated through Aquinas. Rather than immerse myself in questions of provenance, my method allows me to assert that Hooker deploys recognizable tenets of what some describe as Platonism, Aristotelianism, Augustinianism, and Thomism at different points in his argument, and to move on to

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14. Stanley Hauerwas, *Working With Words: On Learning to Speak Christian*, Kindle ed. (Wipf & Stock Pub, 2011-02-16), Kindle location 95, Preface, para 5.
15. Jennifer A. Herdt, "Email Message to Author," (November 30, 2012).

consider how those careful deployments serve his constructive and rhetorical purposes.

That said, I understand my method to be, with Yoder and Hooker himself, "inductive and historical."[16] First, I will attend closely to Hooker's historical and social contexts and to his actual words, with the aim of reading Hooker for Hooker's sake. That is, I will let Hooker speak for himself, naming occasionally what I take to be incorrect interpretations and proposing interpretations that I believe to be more faithful to his meaning. Second, I will pivot clearly towards my constructive purpose either by appropriating his thought with or without qualification or by extrapolating from his texts and contexts to what he might say were he to know what we know and were he to face the challenges we presently face. In other words, ultimately I hope to harvest commitments that a contemporary Hooker would be justified in accepting today based upon the available evidence - 'Hookerian' commitments derived through extension of the logic of his texts that we ourselves are justified in holding today.

This two-step method is most evident in my treatment of Hooker's account of sacramental practices. In chapters four and five, I exegete Hooker's account of our fellowship with God and demonstrate how such fellowship is particularly intense in the sacraments. In both chapters, I pivot to my constructive purpose by bringing Hooker into conversation with contemporary thinkers who enable me to clarify ambiguities in, correct, or extend Hooker such that we are justified in appropriating Hookerian concepts in our contemporary discourse. This method enables me to explain how Hooker's account of fellowship with God connects with a Hookerian account of mimetic virtue.

Most of this study consists of watching Hooker at work so that we can learn from him. My focus is on the present, however, and my methodological purpose is to place a Hookerian voice at the table in conversation with contemporary ecclesial ethicists. My aim is to read Hooker as an ecclesial ethicist in a way that will provide a constructive result for our contemporary challenges. With that aim in view,

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16. Hauerwas, *Working With Words*.

throughout this study, I will hold Hooker explicitly or implicitly in conversation with the work of ecclesial ethicists whose focus in recent years has been on how virtue is formed through the practices of the Church. The two most prominent of these are Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells. I will say more about them shortly.

Qualifications

My constructive goals entail some necessary limitations on this inquiry's utility for others. They also entail the probability that some of my assumptions and arguments will be problematic or controversial within the domain of Hooker scholarship. While I will not try to anticipate all of these limitations and potential areas of controversy, I do wish to acknowledge the limited and potentially problematic nature of my method and claims about Hooker while maintaining that these limitations and the possibility of controversy in some of my claims about Hooker do not impede the inquiry's explanatory and theological power in the particular way I intend to deploy Hooker. That is, I believe that, in spite of these limitations and potential problems, Hooker, as appropriated in this study, can speak powerfully and fruitfully to contemporary ethics on the question of how virtue is formed by practices and other means.

I have already hinted at one such limitation. Because I rely on Elizabethan and Renaissance scholars and Hooker biographers to color Hooker's local context, historians themselves will find little here *regarding his context* that is not already well-known in Hooker scholarship, though I do believe my study may generate some interesting questions that are worthy of further historical exploration. One example of this potential for further contextual investigation is the extent to which Hooker's rhetoric in *Laws* was influenced by his reactions to the rise of Ramism at Cambridge. In addition, my account of Hooker's rhetorical moves in order to appropriate a Thomist account of mimetic virtue within a Reformation context may suggest interesting avenues for historians to explore.

I anticipate that some may have a methodological concern. I am not, like the historian, seeking a 'best reading' of Hooker. Rather, I am reading Hooker through the lens of a contemporary typology. Historians may charge, therefore, that my

reading of Hooker as an ecclesial ethicist is anachronistic. I agree. It is intentionally so. With Rorty, I respond that "such enterprises in commensuration are, of course, anachronistic. But if they are conducted in full knowledge of their anachronism, they are unobjectionable."[17] My method is inductive, seeking to discover Hooker not for the purpose of reforming Hooker but in order to bring his method and principles to bear on contemporary problems. That is, I do not claim that Hooker was unjustified in holding certain viewpoints based on a premise that we occupy an allegedly superior contemporary vantagepoint, but rather, after attending carefully to his actual words, I consider whether we ourselves are justified in describing things in the same way today. In addition, I do not ask Hooker to embrace "a premise he never formulated" or to offer an opinion "on a topic he never considered."[18]

I hope this study poses a potent theological and philosophical challenge to those who presuppose a universal "ethics for everybody."[19] My inquiry is self-consciously a work in ecclesial ethics, and so I begin with the premise that the conversation I wish to nourish with Hooker's insights is a limited conversation of the Church and about the Church. I expect that my account of Hooker's thinking about the natural law will be provocative for universal ethicists who read Hooker as supporting their views.

One category of universal ethics directly engaged in this study is biblicism. In chapter three I draw a contrast between Hookerian ethics and what I dub 'Ramist realism, demonstrating how Hooker rebutted the claims of his Ramus-inspired colleagues that were based on appeals to timeless absolutes. Hooker's arguments would likely discomfit contemporary biblicists who share characteristics with the Ramist Puritans of the Elizabethan era.

Similarly, I engage in this study those who seek an ethical foundation in the dogma of a magisterium or in a timeless, immutable understanding of natural law or human nature. In my view, Hooker's description of the natural law as contingent,

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17. Richard Rorty, "The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres," in *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers (Philosophical Papers (Cambridge)) (Volume 3),* (Cambridge University Press, 1998-03-13), 251.
18. Ibid., 252.
19. Samuel Wells and Ben Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics,* 1 ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010-03-02), 113.

dialectically-known, and often mutable mitigates against ethical judgments grounded in the premise of an immutable natural law.

There are, however, those within the domain of ecclesial ethics with whom I see this project in conversation. This conversation is, for the most part, only implied within the study itself. I want to acknowledge such implicit engagement here with just a few remarks regarding my intentions.

In conversation with Protestant theologians seeking an account of virtue that does not require a eudaemonism based on "substance" metaphysics or an infusion of grace, my project suggests that the way to such an account may be through Hooker.[20] The Hookerian account which emerges in this study unites Hooker's Reformed eudaemonism, a description of the real presence based on Wilfred Sellars' account of personhood, and Wells' improvisational ethics. Its hallmarks are the virtue of *phronesis* and the method of dialectic, both grounded in a Barthian Christology. As a Reformed account of mimetic virtue, my hope is that it may point the way to a Barthian account of virtue.

En route to my destination, this study responds to the suggestions of Hauerwas and Wells, who, in their *Christian Ethics*, suggest constructively that the Eucharist is "a corporate practice for discerning the good."[21] In chapter five, I summarize criticism of their emphasis on the priority of practices in nurturing the virtue of the community. I answer criticism of ecclesial ethicists by deriving from first principles an explanation for the role of practices in formation of the mind of Christ in community. In particular, I respond to charges that an emphasis on practices is excessively immanentist and potentially sectarian. My study qualifies and justifies ecclesial ethicists' emphasis on sacramental practices.

One luminary whose voice appears throughout this study is Karl Barth, many of whose arguments, in my view, Hooker anticipated. As a contemporary voice in the

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20. For example, this seems to me the trajectory implied by Derek Woodard-Lehman's ground-breaking dissertation on Karl Barth. Derek Woodard-Lehman, "Freedom and Authority - the Ethics of Revelation in Karl Barth" (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2014).
21. Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells, *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, Second ed., Blackwell Companions to Religion (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 9.

Reformed stream of which Hooker was a part, Barth provides clarity and depth in matters that Hooker sometimes addressed only peripherally. My selective deployment of Barth ought not suggest that this is a Barthian account. That is not my intent. Indeed, I do not claim that Barth would approve of the account offered here, particularly as it pertains to sacramental practices. That said, those who worry about the christological implications of Barth's doctrine of reconciliation will likely find cause for concern in my critique of Hooker, for my own reading of Hooker is no doubt influenced by my immersion in Barth's Christology.

Some of my assumptions and presentations of Hooker's context will no doubt rankle historians in ways that are trivial with respect to my arguments. For example, some historians have begun to question whether terms such as "Lutheran," "Calvinist," and "Reformed," can be used meaningfully in a description of late sixteenth century Protestantism. Their point is that such terms evolved slowly both in their usage and meaning, and it is anachronistic to project monolithic meanings onto those terms from our historical position. I take their point, but I nonetheless use the term "Reformed" repeatedly in my descriptions of Hooker's context precisely because he himself used it, and because my interpretation does not rely on a historically precise understanding of what he meant in his usage of that term.

Hooker's context

As Diarmaid MacCulloch reminds us in his essay surveying Hooker's reputation, Hooker's legacy "is not as straightforward as it has sometimes been portrayed."[22] Peter Lake famously described him as the inventor of Anglicanism in his 1988 study,[23] while ever since the nineteenth-century it has been a commonplace to credit Hooker with the doctrine of an Anglican *via media* "between the extremes of Roman Catholicism and continental Protestant Reform."[24] MacCulloch shows that there has been since

22. Diarmaid MacCulloch, "Richard Hooker's Reputation," in *A Companion to Richard Hooker*, ed. W.J. Torrance Kirby, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Brill Academic Publishers, 2008), 564.
23. Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought From Whitgift to Hooker* (London; Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 230.
24. W.J. Torrance Kirby, "Introduction," in *A Companion to Richard Hooker*, ed. W.J. Torrance Kirby, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Brill Academic Publishers, 2008), xxix.

the decade of his death the tendency to portray Hooker as the preeminent defender of whatever agendas suited the competing parties within what came to be known as Anglicanism. The difficulty in locating Hooker historically arises from the parties' habit of appropriating Hooker's prestige to their own cause:

> Thus Hooker entered the eighteenth century a moderate Whig, a Lockean Whig, a moderate Tory, a ceremonialist parson, and a Non-juring defender of the Church's apostolic government. By now indeed anyone in English politics who wanted a name to command instant respect or who wanted to score a debating point for their cause was ready to quote Hooker: even Socinians and Deists tried it on.[25]

MacCulloch attributes the association of Hooker with an Anglican *via media* to the Oxford Movement. John Keble published a scholarly edition of his *Works*, and the Tractarians "excavated [Hooker] for discussion of the *via media*, a concept by then give canonical status in the Anglican writings of John Henry Newman,"[26] even though Hooker's view of justification "was the very reverse of Mr. Newman's."[27] As MacCulloch notes, "in late Victorian England, Anglo-Catholics rather than Evangelicals wrote Anglican church history."[28] As a result, until the late twentieth-century, Anglican historiography was largely determined by the lens of nineteenth-century ecclesiastical conflict, and Newman's notion that Hooker charted a middle way between Rome and Geneva remains pervasive at both the scholarly and popular levels.

The interpretative practice of mining Hooker in the abstract and compartmentalizing his thought dominated Hooker scholarship until the early twentieth century, when it became fashionable to locate Hooker in the domain of medieval scholasticism and to emphasize his debts to Thomas Aquinas.[29] Without challenging the identification of Hooker with Thomist thought, Arthur McGrade (1960s) and Cargill Thompson (1980), theorized that Hooker's theology and politics are coherent if and only if Hooker is read primarily as a polemicist immersed in the

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25. MacCulloch, "Richard Hooker's Reputation," 600.
26. Ibid., 609.
27. Henry Fish, *Jesuitism Traced in the Movements of the Oxford Tractarians* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1842). in MacCulloch, "Richard Hooker's Reputation," 608.
28. Ibid., 609.
29. W.J. Torrance Kirby, "From 'Generall Meditations' to 'Particular Decisions': The Augustinian Coherence of Richard Hooker's Political Theology," in *Sovereignty and Law in the Middle Ages and Renaissance,* ed. Robert Sturges, Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 44.

ecclesiastical controversies of the Elizabethan period who subordinated his logic to whatever was demanded by his polemics.[30] McGrade and Thompson helpfully focused interpretation of Hooker on his Elizabethan context, and a large number of studies in the past thirty years have helped to clarify this context.

Hooker studies have benefitted significantly in recent decades by widespread interest in sixteenth-century England generally and the Henrician and Elizabethan churches specifically. Studies by Diarmaid MacCulloch, Christopher Haigh, Patrick Collinson and others have suggested that the notions of monolithic continental and English Reformations, of a monolithic Elizabethan culture, and of a monolithic English Puritanism, are unsustainable.[31] In Hooker's time, there were significant differences among schools and individuals within those schools with regard to the key doctrinal and ecclesiastical questions of the day.[32] Evaluation of Hooker is therefore more complex than it was thought in previous generations. Puritans, it turns out, can no longer be dismissed as lacking in intellectual substance. Similarly, the description of Hooker as an apologist for the Elizabethan Settlement requires considerable nuance; most recent studies portray him as a creative interpreter who is properly recognized as mostly an apologist but also as a critic of established doctrines and structures.[33]

This focus on his Elizabethan context drew much needed attention to Hooker's apologetic intent. Whom was he trying to persuade? Since the publication of the Folger Edition of Hooker's works (completed in 1990), studies by Peter Lake,Torrance Kirby, and a host of Hooker scholars have shown the significant difficulty in sustaining the premise of an Anglican *via media* between Rome and

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30. Ibid., 45-46.
31. Referring to the entrenched portrait of Hooker and the *via media*, Patrick Collinson deplores "the damaging mistake of writing the history of that Church in the anachronistically dichotomous terms of an Anglicanism not yet conceived and an alien Puritanism not yet clearly disowned." Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants : The Church in English Society, 1559-1625*, vol. 1979 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), ix. See also Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603, Second Edition (British History in Perspective)* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).; Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society Under the Tudors* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1993).; Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
32. Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans*, 8-10.
33. Philip Secor, "In Search of Richard Hooker," in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies)*, ed. Arthur Stephen McGrade, (Mrts, 1997).

Geneva.[34]

Indeed, perhaps the most intriguing question in current Hooker studies involves his relation to mainstream reformed orthodoxy. An increasing number of scholars now locate Hooker in substantial continuity with the magisterial reformers and suggest that the Thomist influence is more nuanced than previously thought.[35] In this view, Hooker's apologetic intent is to persuade moderate Puritans that the Elizabeth Settlement is consistent with reformed orthodoxy and that the claims arising from the presbyterian crisis are consistent not with reformed orthodoxy but rather with the doctrines of the radical reformers.

In this view, the presenting cause for Hooker's treatise was an intramural theopolitical struggle between Geneva-inspired English protestants advocating presbyterian reforms and doctrinally similar Prayer Book protestants[36] advocating conformity with the Elizabethan Settlement. Both factions considered themselves reformed; the presbyterian advocates were relatively more influenced by Geneva and Calvin, while the conformists were relatively more influenced by Zurich and Vermigli.[37] The two groups had competed for leadership of England's Reformed

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34. As McGrade notes, the "Anglican *via media* must indeed be understood as a *via*, a "way" among powerful and competing alternatives, a path on which 'strenuous exertion, adaptation, and improvisation' are constantly required, not as the one right place to be for all eternity." Arthur Stephen McGrade, "Forward," in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies),* ed. Arthur Stephen McGrade, (Mrts, 1997), xv.. For full treatments of the difficulty in sustaining Newman's idea of a middle way between Rome and Geneva, see Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans*. and Kirby, "Introduction to a Companion to Richard Hooker,"
35. Kirby, "From 'Generall Meditations' to 'Particular Decisions': The Augustinian Coherence of Richard Hooker's Political Theology," 44-48.
36. These descriptions are borrowed from A.G. Dickens account of the divisions among the Marian exiles, in which he contrasts the Geneva Puritans and the Prayer Book Puritans. A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation [2nd Edition]* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989).
37. Kirby has demonstrated the profound influence of Zurich through Vermigli and Bullinger in several journal articles. See W.J. Torrance Kirby, "The Civil Magistrate and the 'Cura Religionis': Heinrich Bullinger's Prophetical Office and the English Reformation," in *Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575),* ed. Emidio Campi and Peter Opitz, Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformations-geschichte (Zurich: Theologische Verlag Zurich, 2007).; W.J. Torrance Kirby, "Peter Martyr Vermigli's Epistle to the Princess Elizabeth on Her Accession (1558): A Panegyric and Some Pointed Advice," *Perichoresis* 5.2, (2007): 3-21.; W.J. Torrance Kirby, "The Charge of Religion Belongeth Unto Princes:' Peter Martyr Vermigli on the Unity of Civil and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 94, (2003): 161-175.; W.J. Torrance Kirby, "From Florence to Zurich Via Strasbourg and Oxford: The International Career of Peter Martyr Vermigli (1542-1562)," in *Bewegung Und Beharrung: Aspekte Des Reformierten Protestantismus 1520-1650. Feschrift Für Emidio Campi,* (Leiden and Boston: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2009).

caucus since the reign of Mary.

Rather than merely recycling the conformist polemics of the previous two decades and engaging English presbyterians in a series of interpretative skirmishes over specific Scriptural passages, Hooker attacked those advocating presbyterian reforms on three fronts. First, he showed how their proposed reforms belied an insufficient commitment to reformed christological and pneumatological dogma. Second, he challenged as inconsistent with reformed dogma their soteriological account of how grace functions in the economy of redemption. Finally, he refuted the theological premises of their presbyterian polity by showing that the reformed theopolitical emphasis on the hypostatic union leads to an ecclesiological vision of a visible, mystical Body of Christ under the earthly jurisdiction of a civil head served by bishops. In short, Hooker's account of how Christian community is constructed is grounded thoroughly in the reflections of the magisterial reformers on the salient theological issues of the Reformation, and he used cherished principles of the magisterial reformers to reject Geneva protestant demands for a presbyterian polity.

This emerging school of historiography, locating Hooker in substantial continuity with the magisterial reformers as he engages moderate Puritans polemically, figures prominently as the background of my study. Because my primary method is to read Hooker as an ecclesial ethicist, Hooker's texts are foregrounded. This historiography is significant in this study to the extent that it informs my exegesis of Hooker's texts.

In addition, throughout this inquiry I presuppose that Hooker and his *Laws* are rightly situated within a frame in which Hooker engages his interlocutors - consisting of both opponents and allies - with an account of how we know what we know that acknowledges a shared history and tradition and competes for heirship to their common predecessors on the basis of his distinctive answers to that question. I build upon Lake's suggestion that a key set of Hooker's interlocutors were moderate Puritans, many of whom were influenced by the introduction of Ramist method at Cambridge in the late Elizabethan period. In chapter three, I will propose that Hooker's ethics can be seen in sharp relief when compared to this contemporaneous

teaching by his colleagues. In the historical perspective stipulated here, Hooker's ethics challenged the premises of this group of colleagues, which included both conformists and presbyterians, offering a distinctive answer to the question of how we rightly discern the good.[38]

Nomenclature

(1) The Elizabethan context

Hooker scholars exhibit a variety of ways of categorizing the various players in the Elizabethan debates. Kirby, for example, uses the term "Disciplinarian" to denote those English divines who advocated a polity based on Geneva's example. I've adopted Peter Lake's categories in this study in order to differentiate between groups who exhibited widespread agreement on doctrine but differed in their assessments of the practical implications of doctrine, especially in the areas of liturgy and governance.

Following Lake, 'presbyterian' denotes those "who can be shown to have espoused or defended the presbyterian platform of church government."[39] "Conformist' denotes those "who chose to make a polemical fuss about the issues of church government and ceremonial conformity and who sought to stigmatize as puritans those less enthusiastic about such issues than themselves."[40] Finally,

> "The term 'puritan' is used to refer to a a broader span of opinion, encompassing those advanced protestants who regarded themselves as the 'godly', a minority of genuinely true believers in an otherwise lukewarm or corrupt mass. It is therefore used as a term of degree, or relative religious zeal rather than as a clear-cut party label. Thus, while all presbyterians were puritans, not all puritans were presbyterians."[41]

I recognize that 'puritan' is a contested category, but use it here as a convenient way of denoting the bulk of Hooker's colleagues, whether conformist or presbyterian.

Similarly, I recognize that "Reformed" is a contested category, to the extent that

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38. I am not concerned here with whether Hooker self-consciously constructed *Laws* in response to this group of interlocutors. I leave that argument to the historians. It will become clear, however, as a by-product of my inquiry, that *Laws* - whether intentionally or not - provides a withering assault on the assumptions underlying the Ramist teachings of his Cambridge colleagues.
39. Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans*, 7.
40. Ibid., 8.
41. Ibid., 7-8.

historians debate whether the term had yet developed widespread usage by the 1590's. I use it here as I perceive Hooker used it - as a convenient way of denoting the shared beliefs and loose affinities of Protestant churches influenced especially by the distinctive streams of Geneva (Calvin) and Zurich (Bullinger).

(2) 'Empiricist' and 'the phenomenal'

In my rendering, Hooker posits a fundamentally empiricist epistemology in which all human knowing is derived from the phenomenal. By 'empiricist' I denote a very rich conception of 'the empirical' including both causes (material and efficient) and reasons (what Aristotle described as formal and final causation).

Given this rich conception of the empirical, 'the phenomenal' is that which appears to ordinary human perception and reason in the spaces of causes and reasons. This includes the special category of revelation, which transcends human reason but is nonetheless encountered as phenomena perceived using the same human psychology. Either I am historically correct in this rendering, or this is a point of reparative reasoning in which my Hookerian account diverges intentionally from the historical Hooker in service of my objective of appropriating and adapting Hooker for contemporary ethics.

(3) Universal theological claims vs universal ethics

Throughout this study, I distinguish between between universal ethical claims and God's universal command that all created things exist in loving relation to Christ the Creator. I will claim in the next chapter that Hooker himself makes this distinction and that it plays an important role in his account of virtue. I perceive this distinction to be consistent with, though pressing upon, the typology of Wells and Quash,[42] and that, in so pressing, I am following a similar move made by Hauerwas.[43] Implicit here

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42. Wells recognizes this distinction. In introducing his typology of ethics with excerpts from Barth's doctrine of God, Wells notes that, "…. It becomes clear that, though the command of God is universal, the ability to respond to that command is limited to "those who are elected in Jesus Christ to be covenant-partners with God."Wells and Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics*.; Wells, *An Introductory Reader*, 100.

43. Stanley Hauerwas similarly diffentiates between God's universal command and the ecclesial reception of that command with his universal claim that the cross and resurrection denote the "grain of the universe": "…. the witness of Christians across time would not have been

is the distinction between God's universal address to humankind and the subset of humans who have noetic access to that address. In the Hookerian grammar I develop in this study, only those who come to know Christ as Reconciler have noetic access to Christ's universal command.[44]

In contrast, in Wells' typology, the universal ethicist presupposes that Christian ethics are "ethics for everybody."[45] We shall see that, for Hooker, such a claim is problematic to the extent it funds efforts to ground ethical arguments in a pre-historical or ahistorical foundation, whether by categorizing Roman dogma as supernatural law or by viewing Scripture as a catalogue of timeless universal axioms.

Roadmap

My inquiry proceeds in five chapter-length moves following this introduction. This study builds from chapter to chapter, so it will be most fruitful to engage it in the order presented.

Chapter two, "Reading Richard Hooker as an Ecclesial Ethicist," is foundational. I use Wells' typology to guide excavation of Hooker's sub-surface commitments which lead to his conclusions about the role of ecclesial practices in nurturing the virtue of the British people. Of particular importance are theological and rhetorical moves which enable him to re-describe a recognizably Thomist account of mimetic virtue

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possible if God had not vindicated Christ's sacrifice on the cross through resurrection and ascension. On the basis of such witnesses, Christians can rightly claim that to bear the cross is not a confession peculiar to them; rather their lives reveal the "grain of the universe."Stanley Hauerwas, *With the Grain of the Universe : The Church's Witness and Natural Theology : The Gifford Lectures Delivered At the University of ST. Andrews in 2001*, Kindle ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2001), 224.

44. Humans are "by nature sons of Adam," but God's "saving efficacy… bringeth forth a special offspring among men containing them to whom God hath given the gracious and amiable name of sons." These sons of God are "progeny… by spiritual and heavenly birth" of Christ, "the second Adam." This "life as all other gifts and benefits groweth originally from the Father and commeth not to us but by the Son, nor by the Son to any of us in particular but through the Spirit." *Richard Hooker, The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker: Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity, Preface Books I-Iv, and V (Two Volumes), Library edition ed. (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977-01-01).* All citations to Hooker's works will follow the standard dual reference system which includes the divisions used in John Keble's 19th century edition. When citing quotations, I provide an abbreviated form of the book title, period, Hooker's book number, period, Hooker's chapter number, period, and then Keble's section number. After a semi-colon, I provide a more precise reference using the Folger's volume number, colon, page number, period, and line number(s). *Laws*.V.56.6; 2:237.29; V.56.6; 2:237.25-28; V.56.6; 2.238.1-3; V.56.7; 2:238.12-15.

45. Wells and Quash, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, 113.

within the grammar of the Elizabethan Church. We'll see that Hooker adapts the Thomist concept of eternal law to frame his claims about how we know what we know. He posits an empiricist psychology which generates knowledge through inductive reasoning in response to encounters with phenomena in the natural, Scriptural, and spiritual domains. This leads him to a recognizably Aristotelian account of how we recognize the good.

In chapter three, I contrast the Hookerian ethics developed in the preceding chapters with ethical perspectives that arise from universal perspectives. A key move is to recognize that there are no timeless absolutes to be discovered in dogma or Scripture upon which ethics can be grounded. The only foundation is Jesus Christ himself. One's narrative location is the proper focus of ethical reasoning because the general can only approximate the natural law, for our general prescriptions inevitably exclude information that comformity with the natural law demands.

Given this foundation, in chapter four I ask, "if all human knowledge of the good is *a posteriori*, how do we ever gain assurance of the rightness of our knowledge beyond the inherent weaknesses of our probabilistic reasoning?" Hooker answers by pointing to our participation in Christ through his real presence in our lives. For Hooker and us, the fundamental question is, "how is Christ really present to us?." On my account, Hooker offers an ontology in which Christ is locally, diachronically, and synchronically present in the individual human heart, irrupting into temporality in order to establish relationships of fellowship with the elect. Christ meets us in our particularity, establishing our rational recognition of a shared history, such that we are justified in our claims about him.

In chapter five, drawing upon the proposal of Stanley Hauerwas and Sam Wells regarding the role of liturgy in forming virtue in the community, I explore the role of ecclesial practices in nurturing and sustaining such sanctifying relationships. The Spirit uses the most ordinary phenomena of nature - like rainbows, the tactile feel of oil, the smell and taste of wine and bread, the cleansing experience of water - to sustain us in our journey, leading us over time toward a thick knowledge of the

Messiah's dispositions. Through practices - both sacramental and non-sacramental, Jesus' history becomes our history, we discover ourselves addressed by him in our particularity, and we discover ourselves transformed by his action upon us. 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 and also in the same way as citizens of the eschatological New Jerusalem.

All of the foregoing constitute elements of what I will describe, with a nod to Sam Wells' *Improvisation*,[46] as a Hookerian christodramatic ethics. But how is a christodramatic ethics significant? How does it help us to imagine an ordering of the Church that is relevant in our time?

I conclude with a case study, examining a recent dispute in the Anglican Communion regarding women's ordination, to demonstrate how the Hookerian ecclesial ethics developed in this study might shape the debate and avoid fracture of the bonds of affection between opposing sides. Such a possibility is ecumenically significant. By holding together community, individuality, and an understanding of how Christ is really present to us in our communal practices, a Hookerian ethics helps us to imagine a communion ecclesiology appropriate to the challenges of our time.

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46. Samuel Wells, *Improvisation : The Drama of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2004).