



Q & A



Worship by Faith Alone

Thomas Cranmer, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Reformation of Liturgy

February 28, 2023 | \$35, 270 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0522-4

Zac Hicks (DMin, Knox Theological Seminary) is pastor of Church of the Cross in Birmingham, Alabama, adjunct lecturer in music and worship at Samford University, and author of *The Worship Pastor: A Call to Ministry for Worship Leaders and Teams*.

Thomas Cranmer's Theology of Worship

What led to your interest in Thomas Cranmer and now sharing about his theology of worship?

Zac Hicks: Twenty years ago, as a young worship leader, I began asking the question of what “gospel-centered” worship looks like. If the gospel—the good news that Jesus came to do what we could never do for ourselves—really is the central engine of Christian faith from the cradle to the grave, what does it mean for worship to be centered on that word? How does worship that takes cues from the gospel contribute to our formation as followers of Jesus Christ? Many years into my own journey of asking and seeking answers to these questions, I ran into sixteenth-century reformer Thomas Cranmer. I discovered in his architecture of the *Book of Common Prayer* that he was asking—and answering—those same questions. Along the way, studying Cranmer’s work came with a surprise: modern Protestants, and especially Anglicans who draw most directly from Cranmer’s heritage, are largely unaware of what Cranmer was up to when it came to his apparent gospel-centrality in his work with the Prayer Book. This all lit a fire inside me to re-offer Cranmer’s vision back to Anglicanism in particular but also to the broader Protestant discussion of what it means to be “gospel-centered” in our worship content and practices.

What is your main thesis in *Worship by Faith Alone*?

Hicks: Thomas Cranmer’s life and theology was so impacted by his understanding of justification by faith alone that it affected every liturgical decision he made when he redacted and compiled received liturgies to create the *Book of Common Prayer*. My thesis is that justification *sola fide*, as a grammar of the gospel, served as the primary “filter” for all Cranmer’s liturgical redaction and architecture, and as we observe Cranmer at work employing that filter, we have an exemplary model for what it means to be “gospel-centered” in our worship today.

What do you hope your book contributes to the study of Cranmer and liturgical theology?

Hicks:

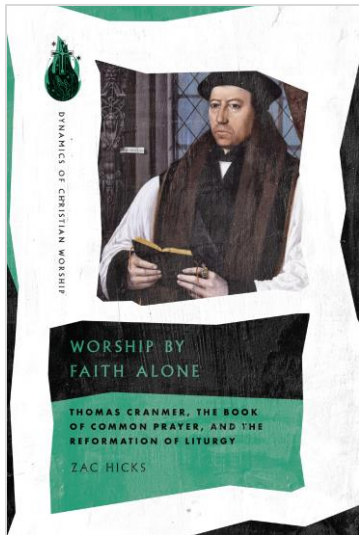
- It will challenge the predominant view still propagated by Anglicanism, especially in its liturgics, that the vision of the Church of England is a via media between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.
- It will add considerable evidence to the idea that Cranmer’s theology and liturgical outlook lay firmly in the Protestant tradition, somewhere in between the Lutheran and Reformed Reformation.
- It offers an original answer to the half-century old question that sits atop the relatively recent academic discipline of liturgical theology—a question first posed by Alexander Schmemmann, the grandfather of the movement: What is Christian liturgy’s deep ordo, or fundamental structure? I offer that Cranmer would answer this question as “the gospel of Jesus Christ.” No one, to date, has made this observation or proffered this theory, especially because liturgical theology is much more the domain of Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic reflection and far less the domain of uniquely Protestant reflection. Cranmer offers a uniquely Protestant answer to this ongoing ecumenical question that may be the central question of the enterprise of modern liturgical theology.



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DETAILS



Worship by Faith Alone

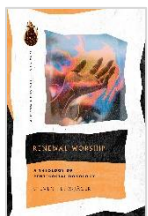
Thomas Cranmer, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Reformation of Liturgy

February 28, 2023 | \$35, 270 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0522-4

What does “gospel-centered” worship look like for today’s church? Scholar, worship leader, and songwriter Zac Hicks contends that this idea can be found in Thomas Cranmer’s theology of worship, which was shaped by the Protestant principle of justification by faith alone and reflected in his 1552 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Dynamics of Christian Worship

Worship of the triune God stands at the heart of the Christian life, so understanding the many dynamics of Christian worship—including prayer, reading the Bible, preaching, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, music, visual art, architecture, and more—is both a perennial and crucial issue for the church. With that in mind, the Dynamics of Christian Worship (DCW) series seeks to enable Christians to grow in their understanding of the many aspects of Christian worship.



Renewal Worship: A Theology of Pentecostal Doxology by Steven Félix-Jäger
September 6, 2022 | \$32, 248 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0014-4

Theologian Steven Félix-Jäger offers a theology of renewal worship, including its biblical foundations, how its global nature is expressed in particular localities, and how charismatic worship shapes the community of faith. With this guidance, the whole church might better understand what it means to pray, “Come, Holy Spirit!”



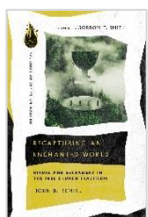
Sermons That Sing: Music and the Practice of Preaching by Noel A. Snyder
August 17, 2021 | \$30, 200 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4933-8

Preaching and music are both regular elements of Christian worship, yet they often don’t interact or inform each other in meaningful ways. Theologian, pastor, and musician Noel A. Snyder considers how preaching that seeks to engage hearts and minds might be helpfully informed by musical theory—so that preachers might craft sermons that sing.



Worship and the World to Come: Exploring Christian Hope in Contemporary Worship by Glenn Packiam
July 28, 2020 | \$35, 216 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4931-4

How is our Christian hope both expressed and experienced in contemporary worship? In this Dynamics of Christian Worship volume, pastor, theologian, and songwriter Glenn Packiam explores what Christians sing about when they sing about hope and what kind of hope they experience when they worship together.



Recapturing an Enchanted World: Ritual and Sacrament in the Free Church Tradition by John D. Rempel
January 28, 2020 | \$30, 240 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4929-1

While the Free Churches rightly sought to cleanse the church of the abuses of sacramentalism, in that process they also set aside some of the church’s historic practices and theology. In response to this liturgically thin space, Mennonite theologian and minister John D. Rempel considers the role of the sacraments and ritual within the Free Church tradition, helping us perceive the sacramental nature of our faith and worship.



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