

PRAISE AND PRAXIS: DOXOLOGY AS THE CONTEXT FOR KINGDOM MINISTRY¹

David G. Barker

1. Introduction

Paul J. Achtemeier writes:²

“Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!” sang the psalmist, and that joyful admonition pervades the religious consciousness of the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments alike. Whether for the victory of God over the Egyptians or for the glory of the risen Christ, God was to be praised in song. Whether in the pain of the Babylonian exile or the degradation of Roman persecution, God was to be praised in song. Whether in the quiet solitude of individual devotion or in the joyous clamour of public worship, God was to be praised in song. Such is the heritage of those who seek to understand and interpret the biblical faith in a time when songs of praise to God are equally appropriate.

In light of the pragmatics of our ecclesiastical culture, the burgeoning dominance of the “how to’s” of ministry, the never-ending models of success paraded before us, the demands for theological answers to life’s pains and dilemmas from an anthropocentric society, as well as the intriguing contemporary evangelical emphasis on various forms and expressions of corporate worship, we must be reminded that as we seek to advance the kingdom of God, *the praise and glory of God must pervade our values, motivations, methodologies, enactments, and assessments.*

Doxology is the foundational context for all of kingdom life and ministry. Fundamentally, the purpose of this essay is to issue a call, a call to return to the foundational notion that the praise and glory of God must be at the very heart of kingdom faith and praxis. The word that must become the essence of our beings as kingdom citizens is the word “doxology,” or, as the Hebrew songsters would say, “hallelujah.”

2. The form of the Hymn of Praise as instructive for doxological expression

The simplicity of the form of the hymn of praise reflects its prominence in the biblical community of faith.³ It begins with a *call to praise*. Whether God’s people, or the whole world (*cf.* Ps 96:1) are the recipients of the call, the creation, the redeemed, and the unredeemed are reminded of their

obligation to refer all of life back to the Creator.

This call is then grounded in *reasons or causes for praise*. These reasons usually reflect both the majesty and transcendence of God as well as his care, concern, and love for his creation. God is a God of grandeur and grace, and God's people are never to weary of reminding themselves of these realities.

Finally, the praise psalm concludes with *a final ringing cry*, "Hallelu-jah," reminding the worshipper that the last word of faith is one of doxology.⁴ As Patrick Miller states:⁵

In the hymns of Israel the most elemental structure of the Old Testament faith is set forth. So in the praises of this people the foundation stones of both theology and piety in the Judeo-Christian tradition are laid down. In what was said we learn of the one we call Lord. In the way it was said—both in shape and tone—we are given a model for our own response to God.

Psalm 113 is a classic composition of such a hymn.⁶ The psalm begins with a three-fold crescendo:

Hallelu, Yah.
Hallelu, O servants of Yahweh.
Hallelu, the name of Yahweh (v.1).⁷

In this introductory call we hear who is to be praised, who is to praise (elsewhere the psalmists declare, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!" [Ps 107:2]), and what is to be praised, namely the name that resonates to the kingdom community of loyalty, faithfulness, mercy and grace. The call continues with an appeal:

May the name of Yahweh be blessed (approved, applauded).

And notice:

At all times:	Both now and forevermore.
In all places:	From the rising of the sun to its going down.
Yahweh's name is to be praised (v.2-3).	

The whole earth is God's rightful choir. It is fascinating to observe that latent in a praise psalm such as this is the notion of the redemptive mandate. Doxology is to evoke, as well as climax, mission.

With the call issued, the community is confronted with the reasons or causes for praise. The songster first takes us to the majesty and transcendence of God. He writes:

Exalted over the **דַּמְנָאשִׁם** [גוֹיִם] is Yahweh,
Over the heavens is his glory (v.4).

In a beautiful climactic parallelism, the psalmist moves us from the reality of God's transcendence over the nations of the earth to the fact of his transcendence over the heavens themselves.

Structurally and rhetorically central to the whole psalm is the pivotal question of the next verse:

Who is like Yahweh, our God,
The one who sits enthroned on high (v.5)?

He is incomparable. He is exalted and enthroned above all.

Who must humble himself to see
Into the heavens and into the earth (v.6).

As high as the heavens are above us, so they are below him. What is infinite to us cannot circumscribe our glorious God.

But in case we are left a little cold with all these thoughts of majesty and grandeur, the psalmist moves us to a second reason for his call to the doxological life. He now describes the intimacy, care, and concern God has for his children. With thoughts of the pain and burden of Hannah, the psalmist develops his second reason around her song in 1 Sa 2,⁶ and he proclaims:

He raises the poor from the dust
And from the ash heap he lifts the needy,
In order to seat them with princes
With the princes of his people.
He settles the barren woman in her home
As a joyful mother of children (v.7-9a).

God is worthy to be praised because he cares for a lowly Hebrew woman who wanted to have a baby.

As we reflect on the history of the use of this psalm, we are pointed to Mary and her Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55), and the praiseworthy intimacy of God's redemptive encounter with a lowly Galilean girl, and ultimately, mankind. The balance of praise and pain is an ongoing tension. As Miller states, "So often our faith seems dour. But when that is the case, the good news has not reached us, 'Don't be afraid. I am with you.'"⁹

With that, by an enveloping structure, we return and linger at the opening word and pervading theme of faith:

Hallelujah, praise the Lord.

Praise was a necessary condition of life to the pious Hebrew. In a very real sense, it was death not to praise.

3. The pervasiveness of doxology in the life of biblical faith

Throughout Scripture we hear doxology. From the pronouncements of the benediction “And God saw that it was good” in the opening creation hymn of Genesis, to the repeated hallelujahs of angels, multitudes, elders and living creatures in John’s apocalypse, the spirit of Scripture is praise, adoration, and joy.¹⁰ And in the Psalter, whether in lament, thanksgiving, pilgrimage, or enthronement, the inevitable concluding spirit is doxological.

Listen to these words of the single lament song in Pss 42 and 43:

As the deer pants for streams of water
So my soul pants for you, O God (42:1).

My tears have been my food day and night (42:3a).

I say to God, my Rock,
“Why have you forgotten me?”
Why must I go about mourning,
oppressed by the enemy.
My bones suffer mortal agony
as my foes taunt me (42:9-10; 43:2b).

Placed beautifully and deliberately at the very centre of the song are the words of proclamation:

By day Yahweh directs his love,
At night his song is with me—
A prayer to the God of my life (42:8).

And three times, as a concluding refrain to each of the three stanzas, the Psalmist cries:

Why are you cast down, O my soul?
Why are you so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
For I will yet praise him,
My Saviour and my God (42:5,11; 43:5).

In pain and heartbreak, God had not abandoned his child. He calls upon his children to lament, and through that lament he leads them to praise.¹¹

We cannot help but reflect on the cry of lament from Ps 22 heard from Jesus, “My God, my God; why have you forsaken me?” Yet the invoked psalm ends in a glorious hymn of praise (v.22-31):

I will declare your name to my brothers;
In the congregation I will praise you.
You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you descendants of Jacob, honour him!
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! (v.22-23)

We also can hear the resounding doxology in Paul’s commentary on this passage and event:

And being found in appearance as a man
He humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow
in heaven and on the earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord
to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:8-11).¹²

And upon concluding his reflections and discourses on the great doctrines of redemption in the book of Romans, Paul bursts out:

O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.
How unsearchable are his judgments
and his paths beyond tracing out!
Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counsellor?
Who has ever given to God that God should repay him?
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen (Rom 11:33-36).

Thus we see that the expressions of kingdom faith are patently rooted in doxology. The people of faith regularly and inevitably reflect the “transformation of an existence taken up into the praise of God.”¹³

This *must* speak to the contemporary expression of kingdom life and ministry. We clearly hear and echo the plea of Geoffrey Wainwright that “greater prominence be given to the dimension of doxology in the doing of theology.”¹⁴ But beyond that, it must impact our worldview, and the ethical and practical dimensions of the present kingdom of God on earth.

4. *The significance of doxology in kingdom life and ministry*

Our discussion now moves to the notions of effects and consequences. How does doxology impact kingdom life and ministry? The following thoughts are submitted for consideration.¹⁵

a. To express doxology is to reorient the very foundations of how life and ministry are perceived.

Fundamentally, to express doxology is to “abandon self-groundedness.”¹⁶ Life without praise of God is inevitably to live life as turned in on itself. It is to move ineluctably in the direction of self-invention and autonomy.¹⁷ This, in turn, leads to the perception that power, status, and wealth are evidences of success and blessing. And this, in turn, leads to abuse and manipulation to accomplish goals perceived to be worthwhile. Thus we find ourselves confronted with what is the very antithesis of Jesus’ words in Mark 10 when faced with the request for the power positions in the kingdom, “This is how the Gentiles think, but it is *not* to be so with you” (cf. Mk 10:41-42). As Miller states:¹⁸

Doxology is profoundly subversive, undercutting all human structures and every human being as pretenders for ultimacy or absolute devotion. This happens first of all with regard to the possible pretensions we make for our own selves. Praise places us totally outside ourselves.

Doxology recognizes that life and ministry are a gift, and are to be regularly referred back to its Giver. In a world and church that insists that we live and work to accomplish *things*, that we must somehow justify our existence by means of attaining *goals* and demonstrating *capabilities*, “doxology frees us to do nothing but give glory to God.”¹⁹

Thus kingdom ministry is a call to be a “world-maker” in contrast to functioning solely in the realms of what might be called the “therapeutic” or the “managerial.”²⁰ Not only do we reorient our own lives through doxology, but we call on the people of God to do the same with their lives.

With this fundamental notion in place, the power model of management evaporates, the success syndrome withers, and the Christlike spirit of servanthood, sacrifice and suffering (Phil 2:5-11) begins to seep into the intricacies of our motivations, values, and sense of ministry and mission.

b. To express doxology is to express an apologetic about life and reality.

Doxology is “relentlessly polemical.”²¹ When we affirm our praise to God, we also dismiss other gods as illegitimate and irrelevant. As we gather each Sunday to celebrate the resurrection, we proclaim to the world an impossibility

that has become God's possibility.²² Such is God's power and freedom. This God is the God of our choice.

In Psalm 100, after the call to praise is announced, the Old Testament community proclaims to each other and to all within earshot:

Know that Yahweh, *he* is God.

It is *he* who made us, and we are *his*.

We are *his* people and the sheep of *his* pasture (v.3)

[emphasis mine].

To praise is essentially the public expression of covenant loyalty. As in the life and times of ancient Israel, so today, God's people face competing claimants for loyalty. The call to doxology has been and always will be made in a context of choices. Thus, while doxology celebrates and embraces, it also excludes and denies.

This in turn has three very foundational effects and implications. First, celebration in our corporate gatherings provides the essential expression of exclusive loyalty and love. Jesus' call to love the Lord our God with all our heart (*i.e.*, reject all other claimants) is fundamentally and foundationally affirmed in doxology. Further, celebration of who and what God is must be the basis for our prophetic and pastoral calls for the evidence of loyalty and love reflected in the moral and ethical life, as well as the "works of service" (Eph 4:12) that we are so desperate to see in kingdom advancement. All too often, in churches that boldly proclaim the centrality of the Scriptures, the "preliminaries" of music and testimony are parts of the service to "get through" so we can get to the "preaching of the Word." Even more serious is the casual and secondary way we treat the ordinances, the two most powerful polemical expressions of covenant loyalty and love to Christ and his kingdom.

Second, celebration in our corporate gatherings provides the essential foundation for effective evangelism. As we affirm, embrace, exclude, and deny, we implement the mandate of the Great Commission. Joy is not something that can stay contained. It inevitably breaks out. Is it not true that as we spontaneously praise what we value, we also ask others to do the same?²³ From the expression of worship, thankfulness, and praise within the four walls of the corporate assembly, we penetrate the community and society with the message of freedom and redemption so wonderfully celebrated in music, testimony, re-enactment, rehearsal, proclamation and remembrance.²⁴

Finally, whenever the believing community assembles and praises, it anticipates the ultimate reality—in the end, all that is in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, all that has life and breath, everything that is, will be to the praise of the Lord. Miller makes the insightful observation that when Ps 150 closes the Psalter with a call for everything to praise the Lord, it is more than a literary ending. It is an anticipation of the praise of God that will ultimately

be creation-wide. To praise anticipates the end to which everything is moving.²⁵ To praise involves the true spirit of the eschatological community called the church.

c. Doxology must inform all theological reflection.

Wainwright observes that “to mention the praise of God as the theologian’s motivation runs the risk of provoking dissent from colleagues anxious for academic neutrality.”²⁶ He correctly observes, however, that scholars who want to simply describe the Christian faith had better call themselves historians, and those who are simply interested in a search for the truth had better call themselves philosophers.²⁷ Theological reflection is not, nor is it intended to be, value free. It remains “faith seeking understanding.” All too often the task of theology has been to merely define and systematize revelation *about* God—but by its very nature revelation that invites participation and celebration.²⁸

This symbiotic relationship of theology and doxology takes on the following dimensions. First, theology has the task of facilitating intelligent worship. While I would suggest that the primary task of the church is establishing and perpetuating community,²⁹ it is a community primarily occupied with worship. Theology provides a service of articulating the foci of worship—God, creation, grace, fellowship, redemption, mission.

Second, the task of doing theology must be couched in doxology. As noted earlier, the task of theology is not merely descriptive or epistemological. Only doxology gives appropriate value to the axioms of doctrine (Rom 1:18-32; 2 Cor 2:14).

Third, theology critiques worship. It reflects on the canonical documents of Scripture, and brings the expressions of worship to the bar.³⁰ However, in this critique, the theologian must always remember the mystery of the divine. Faith is always open-ended, and theology always has a “doxological edge.”³¹

d. To express doxology is bring a notion of history and heritage to our understanding of kingdom life.

As Bruggemann states, we live in a “memoryless society.” He observes, “Our positivistic, computer-like culture wants to be ‘history-less’ and ‘without memory.’”³² Doxology forces us to rehearse and re-enact the past. We bring to mind the ancient and recent histories of God’s faithfulness, goodness and loyalty.

We can reflect on the community thanksgiving structured as a hymn in Ps 136. After the call in verses 1-3, the psalmist takes the celebrating community through recital:

a recital of *the mighty acts of creation* (v. 4-9):

who by his understanding made the heavens...
who spread out the earth upon the waters;

a recital of *the glorious redemption from Egypt* (v. 10-15):
to him who struck down the first born of Egypt...
and brought Israel out from among them;

a recital of *his faithfulness in the wilderness* (v. 16):
to him who led his people through the desert...

a recital of *the victorious conquest of Canaan* (v.17-22):
who struck down great kings...
and killed mighty kings...
Sihon...Og...
and gave their land as an inheritance!..

Such a celebratory recital has in turn three significant implications.³³ First, it puts life in perspective. It affirms that life is a gift, not an achievement. It affirms grace and creates humility. Second, it offers a source for assessment. As we establish continuity through memory and doxology, we see the past by which we can evaluate the present and orient the future. Third, it creates a sense of accountability. Our culture and church wants to be free to create an absolute out of the present. To do this leaves us free from reminders that there is an heritage to faith. While all too often the forms and expressions of the past are *not* worthy of perpetuation, the mighty acts of God in the midst of his people of the past are important reference points of heritage and of hope for the present and future. We are brought by doxology from autonomy to continuity and responsibility.

e. Doxology brings an ethical dimension to the practice of ministry.

The notion of the praise and glory of God has profound ethical implications. If there is not a positive correspondence between praise and praxis, we must raise the obvious question of sincerity and integrity.³⁴ Prominent in the message of the prophets was the confrontation of worship in an insincere ethical context.³⁵ Micah proclaims:

With what shall I come before Yahweh
And bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings
With calves a year old?

He has shown you, O man, what is good.
And what does Yahweh require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy

And to walk humbly with your God (6:6,8).

Yahweh announces through Amos that he rejects their celebration festivals;

I hate, I despise your religious feasts
I cannot stand your assemblies.

he rejects their worship sacrifices;

Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them.
Though you bring choice fellowship offerings
I will have no regard for them.

he rejects their songs of praise;

Away with the noise of your songs!
I will not listen to the music of your harps.

And what is the requirement?

Let justice roll on like a river,
Righteousness like an ever flowing stream (5:21-24).

In an ecclesiastical world decimated by an “integrity crisis,”³⁶ we must return to foundations —the glory of God. It is doxology that brings into focus the ethical demands for integrity, appropriate methodologies, and Christian relationships. The glory of God must impact the “how” as well as the “what” in kingdom advancement.

f. To express doxology brings order to a world dominated by curse and chaos.

We live in a world on the edge of insanity:³⁷ a world that values power despite abuse, greed, and inhumanity; a world that values status and its symbols instead of compassion, sacrifice and servanthood; a world that evaluates success in terms of size, wealth, and domination; a world that sees the innocent victimized and the wicked prosper. But doxology acknowledges who God is and who we really are, and the glorious fact of grace—in Christ there is redemption. Suddenly, our worldview is rooted in thankfulness.

So many of our modern sermons concentrate on the pains, needs, abuses, and evils of humanity. Then we are exhorted with admonitions for increased faith or moralistic improvement. Elizabeth Achtemeier compares this approach with the biblical lament psalms and identifies one significant difference—the lament inevitably ends with a hymn of praise. She notes

that the psalmists “were well aware that their true rescue could only come from God, and they assured their listening congregations, by means of public testimony [doxology], that God had indeed so saved them.” She writes, “In short, they did what every preacher is required to do—they proclaimed the good news of God’s saving deed and word. The modern pulpit sorely needs to follow their example, and we therefore need to inquire how that can be done.”³⁸ As ministers of the kingdom, the call is to point our world and church to the glory of God, and boldly proclaim the rest and comfort that is found there in a world dominated by curse and chaos.

5. Conclusion

Wainwright observes that “the world is not an easy place to live doxologically.”³⁹ Kingdom life and ministry does not readily yield its praise to God. But, in spite of the struggle, we must be called back to the foundational scriptural truth captured in the *Westminster Catechism*, “The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” The first and last word of the Christian faith is a doxological word —“Hallelujah!”

¹The following essay is an adaptation of a graduation address given at Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, May 16, 1992.

²Paul J. Achtemeier, “Editorial,” *Interpretation* 39 (January 1985), 3.

³Elizabeth Achtemeier, “The Use of Hymnic Elements in Preaching,” *Interpretation* 39 (January 1985), 51-54, and Patrick D. Miller, “In Praise and Thanksgiving,” *Theology Today* 45 (July 1988), 180-181, both develop the form of the hymn of praise as a significant consideration in the contemporary expression of doxology.

⁴The literature on the structure of praise psalms, as well as other categories of psalms, is extensive. A sampling includes Bernhard W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983); John H. Hayes, *Understanding the Psalms* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1976); Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting The Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); Sigmund Mowinkel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Claus Westermann, *The Psalms: Structure, Content, and Message*, trans. R. D. Gehrke (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1980); *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, trans. K. R. Crim and R. N. Soulen (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981); *The Living Psalms*, trans. J. R. Porter (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989).

⁵*Interpreting the Psalms*, p.64.

⁶Among the many, two excellent exegetical, theological, and expository presentations on Psalm 113 are Peter C. Craigie, “Psalm 113,” *Interpretation* 39 (January 1985), 70-74, and George J. Zemek, “Grandeur and Grace:

God's Transcendence and Immanence in Psalm 113," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 1 (Fall 1990): 129-148.

⁷The text of Psalm 113 is my translation. The Scripture citations throughout the rest of this article are taken from *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984).

⁸I have assumed the priority of the Samuel text to the psalm. This is supported by Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, in the *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1975), p.402, and Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in Frank E. Gaebelien, ed., *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), p.715, among others. The date and provenance of both texts are under discussion, and the matter is far from settled. The fact that there is a relationship between the texts seems clear. For further study see Leslie K. Allen, *Psalms 101-150* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983), p.100; F. Crüsemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), p.135; H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen* (Ausgabe: Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978) 951; J. T. Willis, "The Song of Hannah and Psalm 113," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 35 (1973), 139-154.

⁹"In Praise and Thanksgiving," p.181.

¹⁰Practicalities of space prohibit the citation and discussion of all the doxological passages of Scripture. A sampling of other texts includes: "The Song of Moses and the People" (Exod 15:1-21); "The Song of Moses" (Deut 32:1-43); "The Song of Hannah" (1 Sam 2:1-10); "David's Song of Praise" (2 Sam 22:1-51); "David's Song of Thanks" (1 Chron 16:8-36 [cf. Pss 96:1-13; 105:1-15; 106:1,46-48]); a song of praise in response to the revelation of the Servant (Isa 42:10-17); a praise and prayer of Isaiah (63:7-19); Jeremiah's doxology in lament (Jer 20:13); Daniel's "Hymn of Praise" in response to the revelation of the dream (Dan 2:20-23); Mary's "Magnificat" (Luke 1:46-55); Paul's citation of doxologies to support his Jew/Gentile inclusiveness (Rom 15:9,11 [cf. 2 Sam 22:50; Ps 117:11]) and Paul's opening doxologies in his epistles (e.g. 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3-14); Peter's opening doxology (1 Peter 1:3-9).

¹¹Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, p.259-280, discusses the role of lament in the normative expressions of OT biblical faith. Miller advances Westermann's discussion with introduction of the concept of a "continuum" of supplication and praise upon which Israel's faith is "worked out and articulated" (*Interpreting the Psalms*, p.65).

¹²Miller, "In Praise and Thanksgiving," p.184-185 was helpful in making this connection.

¹³Daniel W. Hardy and David F. Ford, *Jubilate: Theology in Praise* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984), p.25. A helpful study on the use of the psalms in the church from a historical perspective is John Alexander Lamb, *The Psalms in Christian Worship* (London: The Faith Press, 1962). Also see Hughes Oliphant Old, "The Psalms of Praise in the

Worship of The New Testament Church,” *Interpretation* 39 (January 1985), 20-33.

¹⁴“In Praise of God,” *Worship* 53 (November 1979), 496.

¹⁵I am indebted to Walter Bruggemann, “Psalm 100,” *Interpretation* 39 (January 1985), 65-69; Miller, “In Praise and Thanksgiving,” p.185-188; and Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); *idem*, “The Praise of God in the Theological Reflection of the Church,” *Interpretation* 39 (January 1985), 41-45, for the structure and ideas in this section of the essay.

¹⁶Bruggemann, “Psalm 100,” p.65.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Miller, “In Praise and Thanksgiving,” p.187.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰These terms and concepts come from an insightful book by Walter Bruggemann, *Israel's Praise: Doxology against Idolatry and Ideology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), p.x.

²¹Miller, “In Praise and Thanksgiving,” p.187.

²²*Ibid.*

²³C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Geoffrey Bles, Ltd., 1958), p.94-95, has some helpful remarks here.

²⁴Miller observes that “the praise of God is the most prominent and extended formulation of the *universal* and *conversionary* dimension of the theology of the Old Testament.” He does distance himself, however, from the notion of a “proselytizing to bring individuals into the visible community of Israel” per the NT church (*Interpreting the Psalms*, p.68).

²⁵Miller, “In Praise and Thanksgiving,” p.186; see also *Interpreting the Psalms*, p.67.

²⁶“Theological Reflection,” p.42.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p.42-43.

²⁸For an extensive treatment of this notion see Wainwright, *Doxology*, p.8-10, 251-283. He also makes a brief note in his “The Praise of God,” p.34. His supporting footnote there is to Maria-Judith Krahe, “‘Psalmen, Hymnen und Leier, wie der Geist sie eingibt’: Doxologie als Ursprung und Ziel aller Theologie,” in H. Becker and R. Kaczynski, eds., *Liturgie und Dichtung: ein interdisziplinäres Kompendium II* (Sankt Ottilien: EOS-Verlag, 1983), p.921-57.

²⁹This idea has been cogently argued by Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: Early House Churches in their Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980). A study of the terms **קהל** and **ἐκκλησία**, as well as the metaphors of body and building used by Paul, support his conclusions.

³⁰See Wainwright, “In Praise of God,” p.510 for an elaboration of this concept.

³¹Wainwright, “Theological Reflection,” p.43-45.

³²“Psalm 100,” p.68.

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴Wainwright, *Doxology*, p.399.

³⁵Mowinkel suggests that while the psalms have practically all the prophets’ conceptions of God, they lack “the ethical passion which characterizes the Yahweh of the prophets” (*The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, p.105). I would suggest that the texts of the psalms were never intended to articulate ethical values, but the prophets pick up on the practice of worship and doxology in an inconsistent ethical context. Thus doxology does speak to ethics.

³⁶This phrase has been popularized by Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Integrity Crisis* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988). Philip Yancy, *I Was Just Wondering* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989) has some thought-provoking essays on this topic.

³⁷Bruggemann, “Psalm 100,” p.69.

³⁸“The Use of Hymnic Elements,” p.50-51.

³⁹*Doxology*, p.425.

David G. Barker is Academic Dean and Professor of Old Testament at London Baptist Seminary, London, Ontario. He holds the M.Div., Th.M., and Th.D. degrees from Grace Theological Seminary.