



Liturgy as a Way of Life (The Church and Postmodern Culture): Embodying the Arts in Christian Worship

Bruce Ellis Benson

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Improvising as Living Works of Art

"This packs a lot of punch for a short book. Yet the tone is gracious, cautious, and often conversational. It signals a new 'turn' in worship studies: a concern for a theologically rich and culturally alert engagement with the arts in congregational worship. It deserves a wide readership and will doubtless provoke a whole series of fruitful improvisations."

--**Jeremy Begbie**, Thomas A. Langford Research Professor of Theology, Duke University

"Jazz music--so creative and free, so grounded and disciplined--provides a vivid and illuminating metaphor for reflecting on the internal dynamics of faithful and fruitful Christian lives and worship practices. This book pushes readers beyond any initial superficial appeal of this analogy to explore how it might radically convert our perceptions about the shape, tone, and sheer beauty of Christian discipleship."

--**John D. Witvliet**, director, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary

"Bruce Ellis Benson's refreshing book critiques common ideas about art and liturgy that often limit our access to them. Drawing on a wide range of philosophy and theology as well as his own experiences as a musician, Benson engagingly argues that our lives are inescapably artistic and liturgical. He proposes that all art and worship are characterized by improvisation, which responds to what has come before but changes and adds to it. *Liturgy as a Way of Life* embodies such improvisation as Benson builds on and weaves together ideas from the past and present to create a dynamic, helpful way to see, to know, and to be."

--**Ted Prescott**, emeritus professor of art, Messiah College

"'Call and response' and 'improvisation' are only two of the many ideas Benson fleshes out in this book. I appreciate these two especially because our culture has so misunderstood the terms 'liturgy' and 'creativity' (which is God's alone). We need a philosopher to set us right."

--**Marva J. Dawn**, author of *Reaching Out without Dumbing Down, A Royal "Waste" of Time, and How Shall We Worship?*

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