MICHAELMAS, ISSUE 49, VOLUME XIII, #2

Open Table?

Liturgy Canada

Inside this issue:

Should Being Baptized be a Pre-Requisite for Receiving Communion? 1

Editorial *by Steve Harnadek* 2

Relation of Baptism and Eucharist 5

Supporting our Troops: A Response to Paul Bosch *by John Hill* 10

Why I Won't Be Attending Remembrance Day Services *by Simon Davis* 13

Website Highlight messychurch.org.uk 15

Notice of Annual General Meeting 15

Should Being Baptized be a Pre–Requisite for Receiving Communion?

Notes Towards a Renewed Theology of the Relationship between the Two Dominical Sacraments

by Yme Woensdregt

What this is not:

- this is not about non–Christians being welcomed to the table
- this is not about a feel–good, fuzzy everyone can come and eat
- this is not about making "hospitality" the key to everything the Christian Church does in worship
- this is not about capitulating to contemporary society's penchant towards instant gratification, as if to make Eucharist as easy as possible so that no one's feelings might be hurt if they are excluded from the Table.

What this is:

- this is an attempt to rethink the relationship between the two Dominical sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist in the light of contemporary understandings and theologies
- this attempt is intended to include those who are seeking to walk in the way of Jesus, but who have not yet been baptized

- this attempt is not to exclude traditional understandings and theologies. It is an attempt to put a new understanding side by side with tradition

Underlying Presuppositions

- theology is not a static set of understandings which are always true in every age and every place
- theology, in order to be a vital, living thing, must be always open to re–thinking and re–configurations
- the time in which we live (as every time in which we have lived) is a new time, and requires new formulations of the Christian faith

We are in the midst of a vast upheaval in the life of the church (cf *The Great Emergence*, Phyllis Tickle).

This time is akin to the other times of great upheaval identified by Tickle (Leo the Great, the Great Schism, the Reformation).

continued on page 3

Editorial

Steve Harnadek

There we sat, some of the members of the Executive of Liturgy Canada, around a large table at our meeting in April of this year in picturesque Stratford, Ontario, when the topic of publishing an issue of Liturgy Canada to address the debate around "Open Table" was raised.

One by one, many of us shared how this issue had already impacted our lives, our ministries, and our congregations. Before too long, we realized that we were a microcosm of the debate itself!

Some of us allowed those not baptized to receive Holy Communion as they journeyed to baptism. This was the case especially when children were involved who had been receiving Communion up to that point (sometimes because their not being baptized was not known by the clergy!). Others encouraged the unbaptized to refrain from receiving Communion until after their baptism.

All of us acknowledged there were potential pastoral pitfalls in all these approaches and that we have to navigate these baptismal waters very carefully and skilfully. This can be very stressful for those of us called to be pastors over a Christian community, and for those who are its members.

Ours was a healthy debate that April day, rooted in our loving relationship with, and deep respect for, one another. It is the hope of Liturgy Canada, not to conclusively end this debate by announcing the "right" answer (as if we could!), but to help foster the same kind of respectful dialogue amongst our members, to further benefit the Church of God.

This debate raises questions like:

– What is "covenant" and "covenant meal"?

– What is the place of baptism in the Church?

– What is "Eucharistic hospitality"?

…. among others!

I suspect that the following articles by Yme Woensdregt and John Hill will help further stir the debate and I thank them both for their thoughtful insights.

Steve Harnadek
Chair, Liturgy Canada

Two of Our Stories

Atticus is a bright and lively 3-year-old, who regularly and enthusiastically attends St. James' Church with his ACW President grandmother. His parents, who are not church-goers, are pleased to have him attend with Grandma, but are not comfortable having him baptized at this point in his life, preferring that he "make his own decision when he is older". Sundays, Atticus races up to the communion rail and extends two chubby hands to receive the bread, delighted to be participating in the Eucharistic meal with the rest of his Christian community. We fully expect that Atticus will himself ask to be baptized before too long. Until then, he will continue to receive the Body of Christ at Christ's table.

They came one Sunday, those 2 sisters, having slept over at a parishioners' home for their daughter's birthday party. They were about 10-12 years of age at the time, and to our delight, they loved the whole Church experience. My parishioners continued to pick the girls up and bring them, where they stood among the other faithful and received Communion.

Months later their parents began to join the girls for worship. On the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, after we had renewed our baptismal vows, one of the parents said "Oh! Our girls have never been baptized."

I don't know why it never occurred to me to ask if they had been baptized, when I had asked others before and have done so since, but for some reason it slipped my mind with these girls.

Since it was winter-time, with Lent approaching, our parish catechist and I developed a "youth-friendly" Catechumenate for the girls (with their friends as Sponsors). We also decided, rightly or wrongly, that the girls would rejoin the assembly when the rest of the children and youth did, and continue to receive Communion with their friends, as we prepared for their baptism at the Easter Vigil.

Happily these girls and their parents continue to be active members in our worshipping community.

continued from page 1

Hence, this time requires in a particularly acute way a rethinking of the life of the church.

The fact of upheaval also leads to the inescapable conclusion that this is a time of transition, which means that any theology developed will also be provisional, a way of seeking a new way forward.

We are in a time which may fairly be described as post–literate, in which people have begun to think once again in visual, iconic (e.g. the use of "icons" in computer, marketing and other fields of endeavour) and communal ways. This represents a marked change from Enlightenment epistemologies.

Sacramental actions may be easily re–visioned in visual, iconic and communal ways, which will necessarily lead to a change in understanding of the meanings of the sacraments.

Necessarily, new ways of visioning and articulating will lead to new ways of understanding.

Some have argued that the post–Christendom era in which we live is similar to the situation faced by the early church, in which the theology of baptism developed which required that only those who had been baptized could participate in the meal of the community. They go on to argue that this similarity therefore indicates that we should move to a more strict/rigid enforcement of the requirement of baptism before permitting participation in Eucharist.

Being post–Christendom, however, indicates that there will be a significant difference between this era and any time before emperor Constantine.

We can't go back to pre–Christendom, with the understandings of that era. The memory of Christendom will always be with us, and cannot be ignored or denied.

There will, thus, be no simple correspondence between the theology needed in this age and those which were operative in the pre–Constantinian era.

Baptismal Theology:

Traditional theology of baptism as an initiation into the Christian community, non–repeatable, which emphasizes both the grace of God through Jesus Christ, and the human appropriation of that divine grace

Baptism makes one a full member of the community of Christ, with full access to the "benefits" given to members of the church — i.e. participation in the life of the church, which includes the ability to receive Eucharist.

In those churches which practice paedobaptism, there is an unspoken understanding that initiation also includes taking up the responsibilities of membership in the community of disciples — but this is often with the understanding that taking up those responsibilities happens in age–appropriate ways (i.e. the older one is, the more responsibilities one is expected to take up).

Up until very recently, confirmation was widely understood to have been a necessary pre–condition for receiving Eucharist; it was seen as the moment in which young people took up their responsibilities as full members of the church.

continued...

We can't go back to pre-Christendom, with the understandings of that era. The memory of Christendom will always be with us, and cannot be ignored or denied.

continued from page 3

Eucharistic Theology:

Traditional theology of participation in the Eucharist as being limited to those who have been baptized, as a regular nourishment for the life of faith

One needs to have made a commitment to Christ in baptism in order to participate in the meal of remembrance and nourishment. Eucharist was the family meal (i.e. for members of the family), membership being accomplished in baptism.

Towards a More Dynamic Relationship between Baptism and Eucharist

Is this understanding of the relationship between Baptism and Eucharist the only possible understanding?

It is entirely possible to suggest that since baptism is a once–for–all, non–repeatable initiation into the community of Christ, one needs all the nourishment one can get within that community in order to be baptized. Nourishment, in this case, means everything that the community does to nurture its members — worship, education (understood more as formation), community events, participation in Eucharist as a formative sacrament.

In the past, the church's position has been that baptism was primary in making disciples. Once baptized, members of the community were fully included.

In the present, it is possible to re–think and re–articulate this so that neither sacrament is primary, but that both sacraments are effective in making disciples.

Exegetical considerations

Meal theology is found in all gospels, but primarily in Luke, in which Jesus ate widely and unapologetically with outsiders and those considered to be unworthy, without denying that his presence brought a moment / event of decision into consciousness.

The Emmaus meal becomes paradigmatic. Some have argued that it is possible to presume that Jesus' disciples had been baptized. It is equally possible to presume that they were not. In any case, in the Emmaus story, it was not Bible Study, nor exegesis, nor actual experience, nor a time of being with Jesus which enabled the "ah-hah" moment of recognizing the risen Christ. It was precisely in the meal where that happened.

Group Theory

Actually, this research comes from "game theory", but is applied to groups without hesitation in any number of sociological studies and analyses.

"Bounded Set" groups and "Centre Set" groups:
Bounded set groups are marked by clear boundaries: who's in and who's out. The groups are identified clearly by these boundaries, and outsiders are, by definition, outside the bounds.

Centre set groups have more permeable boundaries, and are marked by where the individuals locate themselves in relationship to the centre. They may be moving towards the centre, away from the centre, or static in relation to the centre. In any case, the individuals (regardless of their status) are members of the group.

Traditional theologies have posed the church as a bounded set group. A contemporary theology will want to

continued...

"Which approach best encapsulates the teaching of Jesus?"

Yme Woensdregt is an Anglican priest serving the parish of Cranbrook BC. Although he has been an Anglican for the last decade, most of his ministry has been in the Presbyterian Church. His current fascination is with how we might incarnate a more forward-looking approach to Christian faith within a liturgy which, being bound in books, necessarily looks backwards.

continued from page 4

explore the possibility of envisioning the church as a centre set group. Phyllis Tickle in *The Great Emergence*, discusses this in terms of a simple formula.

Bounded set groups articulate their *raison d'être* in terms of a "believe—behave—belong" cycle. That is, to be part of the group, you must first believe in the principles and priorities of the group; then you must behave as the group's members behave. Only then will you belong.

Centre set groups change that cycle to "belong—behave—believe".

Which approach best encapsulates the message of Jesus?

The Relation of Baptism and Eucharist

by John W. B. Hill

Our Changing Experience of Sacraments:

Christendom is dead or dying, and our experience of sacraments is changing as a result. Being a member of a church is no longer a requirement for respectability in our society. Baptism, which used to be every citizen's entitlement, is no longer automatically sought for newborns, for the norm of infant baptism was a creature of Christendom. In the future, newcomers to church services frequently will be unbaptized. As a result, our churches face some new questions: How do we welcome such visitors, encourage their exploration of the way of faith, and introduce them to Jesus Christ? In the absence of any other effective means of commending the Christian faith, how can our liturgy be effective in evangelization?

Meanwhile, the Liturgical Movement has slowly been transforming our experience of membership in the Church, primarily by restoring a more participatory celebration of the Eucharist as the norm for the Sunday service. Medieval Christians experienced a membership status in the church that was little more than that of perpetual 'penitents'. By the late middle ages, most of the baptized did not regularly share in Communion because they considered themselves unworthy. Today we are recovering a sense of membership as incorporation into Christ: the Church *is* what the Church *feeds upon*.

These developments together constitute a conundrum for the Church: if the unbaptized 'come to church' wanting to explore the way of faith, expecting to fit in and do the 'done thing', should they be barred from sharing communion? After all, as followers of Jesus Christ, our identity is primarily defined not by a set of required beliefs or customs but by Christ himself. The Church is defined not by its boundaries but by its Centre. We do not wish to set up barriers that would hinder anyone from *turning* to Christ. Belief can grow through belonging. Why then should we insist on Baptism first when someone desires to share in the Eucharist, the supreme sign of Christ in our midst? Further, it has been pointed out that the tradition of the Eucharist goes back not just to the Last Supper but to Jesus' practice of welcoming all without restriction to share with him at table. "This man welcomes sinners, and eats with them," they said.[1] Why focus on the death of Christ, reminding people of the crude atonement theories

continued...

Both Baptism and Eucharist find the centre of their meaning in the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

continued from page 5

Once we recognize the centrality of his cross and resurrection in the transformation of human consciousness, we are compelled to remember him at Table as he asked us to, join in his resistance to evil, and trust as he did in God's promised reign of *shalom*.

promoted by fundamentalists? After all, those inclusive meals with outsiders were possibly Jesus' most powerful signs of the promised Kingdom of God, making real for people the unconditional love of God.

But both Baptism and Eucharist find the centre of their meaning in the cross and resurrection of Jesus. It is not enough to ask whether the Eucharist owes more to the inclusive meal practices of Jesus than to the Last Supper. We need to go deeper and ask whether we are drawn to the Eucharist primarily because we (in contrast to the first disciples) have such a natural affinity for Jesus' progressive social outlook, or whether we (*like* the first disciples) have found ourselves transformed by the spectacle of his rejection and the mystery of his vindication. Once we recognize the centrality of his cross and resurrection in the transformation of human consciousness, we are compelled to remember him at Table as he asked us to, join in his resistance to evil, and trust as he did in God's promised reign of *shalom*. Through his death and rising we are formed into a sacramental people, the living sign that God is reconciling the world to himself through Christ.

One of the legacies of Christendom was the reduction of faith to 'believing what the Church teaches'. As long as this notion continues, Baptism will indeed constitute for many a barrier to following Jesus. But the baptismal creed has its origins in a declaration of *trust* in the God revealed in the story of Jesus and in the Spirit of the holy fellowship. If the creed is misconstrued as a list of religious doctrines to be accepted, we may be tempted to forget that Baptism is the *sacrament* of turning to Christ, as the Acts of Apostles makes clear.[2]

Beneath the conundrum described above lies the problematic assumption that the liturgy may be the principal (or only) instrument of evangelization in our day. If we care only for the reconciliation of churchgoers and behave as if Christ is Lord only for an hour on Sunday, we have abandoned the Gospel. We need to rethink the nature of evangelization and develop a vision for doing it. Part of that vision is bound to be something like a catechumenal ministry; but that is a large topic than the one addressed here.

The Inclusive/Divisive Nature of the Gospel

Exclusivity in religion is one of the evils that Jesus challenged; he welcomed outcasts and sinners, inviting them to join him at table. This is an essential aspect of his mission in which we share. Welcoming the excluded into God's kingdom turns out to be the easy part, however; persuading the excluders to welcome them as well is much harder, as Jesus discovered. In fact, he seems to have possessed an acute awareness that that the realm of the sacred is maintained by excluding the 'unholy' - that religion has a demonic side which needs to be exposed. Yet, instead of turning against his opponents, Jesus insisted he must go to Jerusalem to appeal to the religious establishment and face its wrath. This initiative was bound to be resisted both by the self-righteous insiders and by their embittered victims.

Jesus came to 'gather into one the children of God'[3] ; yet his impact was to divide.[4] "This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light…"[5]. This division reached a climax at the point when all were divided against *him* — a moment of

continued…

continued from page 6

true exclusion. Ironically, his rejection was also the moment of overwhelming *inclusion* for almost everyone else; even his disciples disappeared into the hostile crowd. Jesus himself became the supreme outcast who summons us to follow him.[6] He was thrust into the place we most feared ourselves, the place of alienation; he accepted it willingly and transformed it into a place of freedom and new creation.

Thus the death and rising of Jesus is the moment of truth when I either stand among those who resist him, or I stand among his converted resisters who now confess, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."[7] The crucifixion of the Messiah reveals not only God's mercy toward sinners but the sin which puts us in need of such mercy. The evil revealed by the cross is not primarily the uncharitable behaviour of our daily lives but the self-justifying social consensus by which we resist God's gracious will for the world.[8] As my eyes are opened by the revealing spectacle of the cross, I see that my whole world is judged by it, and my very being comes to a dead-end. Thereafter, the only future open to me is the new being offered to me by the risen Lord who holds out bloodied hands in forgiveness and peace.

If I identify with Christ but refuse to recognize the responsibility I share for his death ("I would never have cried 'crucify' if I had been there"[9]), I simply repeat the deluded self-righteousness which condemned him in the first place; and I join the company of those who blame the Jews—or the Romans—for killing Christ. Thus, when we promote inclusivity by suppressing the offense of the cross we betray him all over again. It is precisely the offense of the cross that confronts us in both Baptism and Eucharist: we submit to being "crucified with Christ" as we descend into the water[10]; we "proclaim his death until he comes" as we eat his body and drink his blood.[11] Thus participating in the Eucharist while failing to acknowledge its central meaning makes us "answerable for the body and blood of the Lord".[12] We may compare this unwitting participation in his blood with the unwitting cooperation in the Holocaust by those who chose not to know where the distinction between Aryan blood and Jewish blood would lead. The appeal to blood as a symbol should alert us to the deadly serious nature of what is symbolized.

There *is* therefore an unavoidable exclusivity in the celebration of the sacraments: it is the *self*-exclusion of those who refuse to come to terms with the cross of Christ, who choose to avoid this crisis.[13] For this reason, our administration of the sacraments must entail guiding people *through* this crisis, not helping them avoid it. This would presumably be one of our primary objectives in restoring a catechumenal ministry.

The Grammar of the Sacraments

There has been a serious commodification and fragmentation of the sacramental order of the church in our time; we have tried to adapt to a culture of spiritual tourism. Many people think of Baptism and Eucharist as stand-alone experiences of grace.

We tend to ignore both the *difference* between these two sacraments and their *shared meaning*. Baptism and Eucharist are neither different kinds of grace to choose between nor gifts of grace for different moments in the life-cycle. Both sacraments are *encounters with the Paschal Mystery*.

The primary *difference* between Baptism and Eucharist is that Baptism is a once-for-all event in one's life, while Eucharist is a constantly repeated event.

continued...

Thus the death and rising of Jesus is the moment of truth when I either stand among those who resist him, or I stand among his converted resisters who now confess, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

Baptism is initiatory, Eucharist is sustaining.

continued from page 7

Baptism is initiatory, Eucharist is sustaining. Baptism is the defining moment in one's life, incorporation into a new sacramental identity and vocation for the sake of the world, from which there is no turning back; Eucharist is the sacramental living out of this priestly vocation as we reenact the truth decisively acknowledged in Baptism.[14]

It is sometimes objected that the first disciples had probably not received Christian Baptism, though they certainly continued Jesus' table fellowship. That misses the point: they had unquestionably begun to face up to the meaning of Christ's death and rising. Theirs was the unique privilege and terror of experiencing directly the baptism of fire about which Jesus had forewarned them[15], a catastrophe they were able to come to terms with primarily because they had been taught to remember it in a particular way.[16] Although Jesus had always insisted on welcoming outsiders to his table, the passion narratives imply that only the twelve were invited to the Last Supper; they were being prepared to form the nucleus of a new fellowship that would never forget this historic crisis symbolized by bread and cup.[17]

Without some decisive coming-to-terms with the implications of Christ's death and rising, sampling Holy Communion is symbolically equivalent to ducking the horrific and healing revelation of the cross — what St Paul calls "failing to discern the body" (the body crucified, the body offered as food, the body nourished by that food). For St Paul, it is Baptism that makes us members of Christ's body[18]; it is Baptism, therefore, that enables us to 'discern the body' so that we can eat Christ's body in a worthy way.[19]

It is conceivable that an unbaptized person's first experience of Holy Communion might bear the initiatory meaning traditionally found in Baptism — that is, a decisive coming to-terms with the revelation of the cross; but then a subsequent Baptism would *not* have this meaning. Communion before Baptism implicitly displaces Baptism in its traditional sense. Encouraging such a practice would compel us to find some new purpose for Baptism—or else discard it. (It has often been observed that in churches such as those of the Baptist tradition which have replaced this traditional understanding of Baptism as incorporation-into-the-sacramental life with the idea of Baptism as ratification-of-belief, many members never bother to seek Baptism at all.)

There is therefore a shape to our practice of the sacraments, a sacramental 'grammar', by which the life of discipleship is symbolically articulated: turning to Christ, then cleaving to Christ. Words without grammar constitute sound without meaning. If we eradicate our sacramental syntax, we will end up mindlessly redefining the sacraments according to the religious fashions of the day.

The Challenge We Face

Reiterating such sacramental basics will doubtless come as a surprise to many contemporary Christians, for our instincts about such matters have been so shaped by our history. Although we cannot return to some earlier golden age, we need to acknowledge the ways in which the meaning of discipleship was undermined by the medieval world-view that relegated the un-ordained to second-class membership, and by our subsequent accommodation to Enlightenment prejudice.

Medieval Christians were marked by a baptism (as infants) that was thought to signify merely the remission of

continued...

continued from page 8

inherited culpability. (Inherited culpability was a misunderstanding of original sin, occasioned by a misunderstanding of baptism—caused in turn by the adoption of emergency Baptism of infants as the norm of Baptism). We do not need to be forgiven for inherited culpability; but we do need to be delivered from original sin —that self-justifying social consensus by which we resist God's gracious will for the world, a phenomenon that the state of Christendom certainly did not eradicate!

In the Enlightenment era our western churches largely retreated into a religious ghetto that made Christian faith irrelevant to daily life; sacraments came to be valued for their other-worldly promise or for the 'religious experience' they could convey. Piety became individualized, and the sacraments ceased to be a means of forming us into Christ's body, becoming instead whatever consumer religion wanted them to be. Today we find ourselves lacking any clear sense of sacramental identity and oblivious to the symbolic grammar which articulates that identity.

We are not always conscious of the shape or grammar of traditional sacramental practice, of course, nor need we be; we live our faith by *practising* this meaning, not by parsing it. Indeed, we often *do* lose sight of the critical nature of the Paschal Mystery celebrated in these sacraments, and then our faith is too easily co-opted by "the rulers of this age"[20]. That is why we must not subvert our symbolic language; indeed, we depend on these symbols — and their syntax — to serve as our corporate memory. Perhaps the very controversy which these observations attempt to engage will lead us to a renewed awareness of the paschal, eschatological, and ecclesiological meaning of the sacraments, an awareness we began to recover in the Liturgical Movement.

For most of us, Baptism predated any conscious coming to terms with the implications of Christ's death and rising; nevertheless, that *is* what Baptism signifies. Sacraments celebrate both the grace of God and our response to that grace. Mystagogy, the slow process through which we are awakened to the meaning of the rituals we celebrate, is a normal and essential aspect of the sacramental life, as St Paul implies: "Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"[21] We live therefore with a tension between our response that is at best partial and emergent, and God's grace which is complete and unfailing. Even though "we have died with Christ" in Baptism[22], St Paul still urges us to "put to death the deeds of the body".[23] Our failure to acknowledge this tension has led to practices of Baptism that make little attempt to correlate the sacrament of turning to Christ with any actual turning. Indiscriminate infant Baptism is only the most extreme expression of this failure, a failure that we are only now beginning to address.

It is inevitable that unbaptized visitors will, on occasion, receive Holy Communion with us in ignorance, just because of the way Communion is available in our celebrations. This in itself does not undermine the church's sacramental grammar, nor does it spiritually endanger the visitors. Rather, it is the explicit *invitation* to the unbaptized to share in Communion that undermines the meaning of the sacraments. Baptism

continued...

…we often *do* lose sight of the critical nature of the Paschal Mystery celebrated in these sacraments, and then our faith is too easily co-opted by "the rulers of this age". That is why we must not subvert our symbolic language…to serve as our corporate memory.

continued from page 9

before Communion is the norm in Christian tradition for good theological and pastoral reasons; there may be justifiable pastoral exceptions to the norm, but these must not be allowed to erode or replace the norm.

Footnotes

[1] Luke 15.2

[2] Acts 2.37-42, 8.35-36, 9.18-19, 10.44-48, etc.

[3] John 11.52.

[4] Matthew 10.34; Luke 12.51; John 7.43; 9.16; 10.19.

[5] John 3.19f; cf Luke 11.34f.

[6] Hebrews 13.12f.

[7] Galatians 2.20.

[8] John 15.18ff, 16.8ff.

[9] cf Matthew 23.29 - 36.

[10] Romans 6.3-6.

[11] 1 Corinthians 11.26.

[12] 1 Corinthians 11.27.

[13] Compare this to the self-exclusion from forgiveness of those who refuse to forgive: Matthew 6.12; 18.21-35.

[14] 1 Peter 2.4-10

[15] Luke 12.49-50.

[16] 1 Corinthians 11.23-25.

[17] cf Luke 22.14-16.

[18] 1 Corinthians 12.12-13.

[19] 1 Corinthians 11.27-29. (Note that Paul is not concerned with the worthiness of these people to participate but whether their celebration is worthy of the Lord.)

[20] 1 Corinthians 2.8

[21] Romans 6.3. The question assumes that some of us have not yet realized this.

[22] Romans 6.8

[23] Romans 8.13, cf Colossians 3.3-5. The same tension may be found in 2 Corinthians 5.18-20—God has "reconciled us to himself through Christ...So...we entreat you, be reconciled to God."

Canon John Hill is a presbyter of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto and the Interfaith Officer for the diocese. The focus of his work over many years has been clarifying and strengthening the ritual practices of the Christian Church in a time when the role of the Church in our society is rapidly changing.

Supporting Our Troops: a Response to Paul Bosch

John W. B. Hill

This article is in response to the article by Paul Bosch that was the lead article in our Remembrance Day issue 2009.

"…warfare defaces…the Image of God…in those who are killed…and equally in those who do the killing."

In his brilliant and revealing study, 'On Killing', the American professor of Military Science Dave Grossman provides ample support for Paul Bosch's claim that "warfare defaces . . . the Image of God . . . in those who are killed . . . and equally in those who do the killing." Grossman also warns us about the ways in which the war machine is infecting the consciousness of a generation through its sophisticated training technologies that inevitably migrate into consumer culture.[1] Now, more than ever, Christians have a responsibility to remember the evils of war and bear witness to the One who exposes this madness.

And yet, as Paul Bosch reminds us, our Remembrance Day traditions often turn out to be partisan symbols of acquiescence to the necessity for war and violence as a solution to human conflict. Remembrance Day does not need to be a celebration of violence, and it would be a despicably callous society that failed to remember the immense suffering and destruction of the wars of the twentieth century, or failed to acknowledge its share of responsibility for these evils. Yet we live in a culture that apparently accepts violent story-endings as the norm, and Remembrance Day ceremonies often seem to be infected by this cultural bias.

Today, however, we face new challenges. What are we to make of the 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine recently defined by the United Nations? How can global policing be effective in protecting potential victims of violence and oppression without a willingness to use force? What use was the monitoring of genocide in

continued...

continued from page 10

Rwanda without military intervention? Wasn't our involvement in Afghanistan an attempt to prevent that nation from becoming the tool of *al-Quaeda*, and to facilitate the emergence of a more humane regime (even if some of our parliamentarians thought it was really about retribution for Afghan support of terrorism[2])?

I believe we must learn to distinguish between the use of disciplined force to restrain evil on the one hand, and the vengeful reaction to evil that generates a mirror-image of the evil on the other. It has long been recognized that the *lex talionis*—an eye for an eye—was originally an attempt to set a limit on revenge; yet revenge is not a calculation of the intellect but a passion of the heart which *lex talionis* fails to address. That is doubtless why Jesus warned his followers about getting sucked into the spiral of retaliatory violence. "If your enemy strikes you on one cheek, offer him the other as well." Every effort to restrain evil will fail unless we have learned to restrain ourselves first. Our track record at this has not been good; police and 'peace-keeping' forces often fall prey to the lure of retaliation. Even restraint may not be recognized as such, and only prove to be a further provocation. And in war, the obsession with winning can be counted on to obliterate any consciousness of the critical issues that Augustine proposed as criteria for a 'just war'.

So how shall we pray for our armed forces who accept, on our behalf, the responsibility to protect? Is not Remembrance Day a prime opportunity to rise to this challenge?

In this matter, too, I agree with Bosch: I plan to stay away from any service of worship on or near November 11 at which Remembrance Day will be observed. My reason is this: ceremonies honouring fallen warriors, when conducted in a liturgical context, are bound to imply some sort of sacralisation of their deaths. We honour them for making 'the supreme sacrifice'.[3]

Originally, sacrifice meant killing someone (or something) for the sacred good of the community. But the gospel story of the killing of Jesus for the good of the people[4] has exposed the atrocity of that kind of sacrifice—the slaughter of an innocent man who was trying to promote the peace of his people. It is this horrific injustice that has inspired us to look for ways to make peace that don't involve scapegoating the vulnerable.

And yet, of course, Christians continue to use the word sacrifice. St Paul makes absolutely clear that Jesus has given the word a new meaning when he asks us to "present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice…"[5] The irony in this appeal is that I am not to make a sacrifice by killing someone (or something) else, nor is the sacrifice supposed to end up dead. It is *my own* life that I am to sacrifice, *while still alive*—a 'living sacrifice'. This is the new meaning of the word which the gospel story has created.

Doubtless some soldiers go into battle fully aware of the sacrifice (in this new sense) that they are making, but many do not. They are often young, unemployed people, still confident in their immortality, who are being taken advantage of by society and its military establishment. (Remember Michael Moore, in Fahrenheit 451, asking US Senators why *their* sons were not in Iraq.)

Then, as these young soldiers begin to be slaughtered, the society which has

continued...

Every effort to restrain evil will fail unless we have learned to restrain ourselves first.

continued from page 11

taken advantage of them begins to use the language of sacrifice, with the meaning of the word conveniently blurred. Did the slain offer their own lives as a sacrifice? Or are we merely justifying our decision to send them to their deaths by appealing to some sacred cause—freedom or democracy? If so, we have reverted to the old pre-Christian sense of the word. When Christian ritual celebrates fallen warriors for making 'the supreme sacrifice', it implicitly gives their deaths the aura of the sacred, usually as a way of disguising the travesty of their slaughter. Worse still, ritual remembrance of war, complete with flags, regimentals, and bugle calls, appears to sanctify the practice of matching violence with violence.[6] I believe it is no accident that our authorized service books, Anglican and Lutheran, make no provision for Remembrance Day ceremonies.[7]

Yet we must pray for our troops, those who act in our place, for good or ill. Sometimes the operation they are engaged in may be just—though that is almost inconceivable in war, as Bosch points out. But when our forces are engaged in 'peace-keeping', or in a UN mission to defuse civil strife, or in a campaign to assist another state in resisting extremists and establishing a humane civil order, we must pray that those who wield such force in our name will know self-restraint as they seek to restrain others. Perhaps that is what we beg for in the Lord's Prayer: "Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil." Certainly we pray, deliver us from violence, and our armed forces from senseless destruction. But more than that. We pray, deliver us from repaying evil for evil; deliver us from *becoming* the evil we seek to restrain.

…we must pray that those who wield such force in our name will know self-restraint as they seek to restrain others.

And, of course, we will pray for those who hate us, as Jesus taught us to do.[8]

Footnotes

[1] Lt Col Dave Grossman, *On Killing*, New York 2009; Section VIII, Killing in America: What Are We Doing to Our Children?

Footnotes

[1] Lt Col Dave Grossman, *On Killing*, New York 2009; Section VIII, Killing in America: What Are We Doing to Our Children?

[2] Gordon O'Connor, Minister of Defence, told an Edmonton crowd (Ottawa Citizen, 21 January 2007) that Canadian forces were in Afghanistan because "we will not allow Canadians to be killed without retribution" (referring to Canadians killed in the attacks of 9/11). He later added, "I don't think the former Liberal government would have committed us to Afghanistan if there had not been Canadians killed."

[3] The Latin word 'sacrificum' from which our word is derived comes from the word *'sacer'* (sacred) and *'facere'* (to make).

[4] As Caiaphas said, "it is better…to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed."
(John 11.50)

[5] Romans 12.1

[6] Sam Keen, in his classic study, *Faces of the Enemy*, (San Francisco, 1986) comments, "the name 'God' must no longer be used as the sanctifier of carnage. Theology should deny the body politic its easy conscience. The notion that nations have a cosmic destiny and may therefore sanctify the use of violence is too dangerous an idea to continue to entertain. A truly secular state, which must bear responsibility for its policies and justify them in secular terms, is far less dangerous an idea to continue to entertain. A truly secular state, which must bear responsibility for its policies and justify them in secular terms is far less dangerous than a messianic state."

[7] A popular guide to the Anglican Book of Alternative Services recommends that 'Remembrance Sunday' be celebrated "with Remembrance reflected in the Prayers of the People and the hymns…"

[8] Luke 6.27

Why I Won't Be Attending Remembrance Day Services

by Simon Davis

Like Paul Bosch and John Hill (who have commented on this issue for *Liturgy Canada* before me), I will not be attending any Remembrance Day ceremonies this November 11th. "Remembrance Day ceremonies often seem to be infected by a culture that apparently accepts violent story-endings as a norm," observes Hill. I fully agree that the current norm of Remembrance Day ceremonies undoubtedly offer a glorification of violence rather than a call for peace. I must disagree, however, with Hill's imperative to distinguish between "the use of disciplined force to restrain evil" and a "vengeful reaction to evil that generates a mirror image of evil on the other" as the guiding dichotomy for praying for our troops.

The words of Jesus undermine the presuppositions of this dichotomy – namely that some violence is just and some is not. Hill himself agrees with Bosch that the idea of just violence is "almost inconceivable in war." The inclusion of the qualifier leaves the door open for so-called "just" violence in a way that Jesus does not. Hill claims that "every effort to restrain evil will fail unless we have learned to restrain ourselves first." However, Christ's instruction to turn the other cheek removes a Christian's "right" to retaliate against evil with violence regardless of how self-restrained we are.

Our error is in thinking about fighting evil in two polar opposites of inflicting violence and having violence inflicted on us. When Jesus teaches to turn the other cheek, go the extra mile and to offer your cloak (literally "undergarment") when sued for your coat, He is not advocating passivity but rather offering a way to defeat evil that does not include violence. His own death on the cross is the epitome of this.

While the earliest Christians understood Christian discipleship as incompatible with military service (even the peace-keeping kind), Christians for the most part have changed our thinking to the degree where we glorify rather than abhor violence through our tacit and active support of war from blessing munitions to holding Remembrance Day services that are not provided in our liturgical books.

While Christians are not asked to ignore the realities of the horrors of war and the need to make sense of tragedy, we are asked by our Saviour to "love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us." (Matthew 5:44) I personally believe that it is extremely difficult – indeed impossible – to claim to be actively loving someone while shooting them and we must remember that Christians throughout history have become martyrs in acts of resisting evil by laying down their lives by refusing to take up arms.

Pacifism in this sense is not passive – quite the opposite. But as Marilyn Malton rightly pointed out, "our congregations may well include individuals whose tendencies range from bellicose to pacifist." How can we uphold an approach to war and violence that is faithful to Christ's words in the Sermon on the Mount through our liturgy, remembrance and prayer for our troops?

While this question has no easy answer, we would do well to remember that despite local custom, our liturgical books do not make room in the year for a Remembrance Day service of any kind, but celebrating St Martin of Tours near November 11th

continued...

This article is in response to the article by Paul Bosch that was the lead article in our Remembrance Day issue 2009.

Christians for the most part have changed our thinking to the degree where we glorify rather than abhor violence through our tacit and active support of war...

...continued from page 13

could be a perfect place to remember the faith of a “conscientious objector” as Paul Bosch puts it.

While we know we will continue to endure the “assaults of our enemies,” Anglicans are led to pray “that we, surely trusting in thy defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

My prayer is that through trusting in Jesus’ third way, we can not be driven to react with violence out of fear. I also pray for our troops deployed around the world and for our enemies. I ask God to keep them safe. Amen.

Simon Davis is an MDiv student at Wycliffe College in Toronto where he studies with his wife Ashley. In addition to his Anglican heritage, Simon is an elder at The Meeting House in downtown Toronto.

Via Media

Looking for an adult education resource? You might want to look at Via Media. It is a resource produced by Every Voice Network (EVN), a national ministry dedicated to the growth of the Episcopal Church (USA). It presents the basic tenets of Christianity from an Anglican approach to scripture, traditions, and reason, and leads the participants to a broader view of the journey of faith and the role the church can play in society. This is an eight-week program, all on one DVD.

How does it work?

Over a period of eight weeks, a group gathers together to learn about Christianity within a community. Using a combination of learning styles, which include video, written materials, small group discussions, and large group forums, participants encounter the basic principles of Christianity through the Anglican approach of Scripture, traditions, and reason. Participants are encouraged to ask questions, and to explore their own questions through conversation in community.

Based around a meal, the process engages participants with a short, professionally-produced video. This leads to small group conversations that encourage participants to develop language and confidence in sharing their faith with others. The program concludes with a short, thematic closing liturgy drawn from classical and contemporary Anglican sources.

The weekly sessions are:

- ·Session One - via media: An Anglican Way of Being Christian
- ·Session Two - God and Creation: The Abundance of God's Goodness
- ·Session Three - God in Jesus: An Incarnational Faith
- ·Session Four - God the Holy Spirit: Breath of New Life
- ·Session Five - The Bible: The Word of God for the People of God
- ·Session Six - Sin: Roadblocks to Abundant Life
- ·Session Seven - Thy Kingdom Come: The Promise of Christian Hope
- Session Eight – So What? An all-day retreat focussing on Baptism and Eucharist

The website is: http://www.everyvoice.net/viamedia/

Notice of General Meeting—November 30, 2010

Please join us for Liturgy Canada our Annual General Meeting on Thursday, November 30th from noon to 1.30 pm at the Church of St Francis of Assisi, Mississauga. The Church is the Meadowvale Town Centre campus off Winston Churchill Boulevard between Battleford and Aquitaine. http://stfrancisaofm.org/

Please RSVP to elizabeth.jane.nelson@gmail.com so we can order food.

Website Highlights www.messychurch.org.uk

Fresh ideas for building a Christ-centred community

Growing out of the *Fresh Expressions* movement, **Messy Church** is one church's attempt to be church for families who might want to meet Jesus, belong to their local church and bring their children up as Christians, but can't cope with traditional Sunday morning services.

Keep in Touch!

We are happy to send upon request 3 copies of the most recent Liturgy Canada issue to any parish! Email us at litcan@liturgy.ca to ask for yours. Stimulate a conversation!

Every time we send out an issue, we get several back marked "Return to Sender". **Have you moved?** We don't want to lose track of you, so please send any updated information to litcan@liturgy.ca.

Is there a website you think others should know about? Email Liturgy Canada at litcan@liturgy.ca

Send us an email with your email address. We promise that it will not be sold or used for any purpose other than tracking Liturgy Canada membership.

Liturgy Canada ISSN: 1493-6529
Michaelmas 2010 Issue 49, Volume XIII, #2

Executive
Stephen Harnadek, *Chair*
Elizabeth Nelson, *Secretary & General Editor*
Lynn Mitchell, *Business Manager*
Steven Mackison, *Treasurer*

Members
Paul Bosch, Sharyn Hall,
Mark Harris, John W.B. Hill, John Hodgins,
Ken Hull, Debbie-Lou Ludolph, Dean Mercer,
Peter Wall, John Wilton (Ontario);
David Fletcher (Nova Scotia);
Christian Schreiner (Quebec);
Marion Jenkins (Manitoba);
Yme Woensdregt (British Columbia)

Joachim Fricker, *Episcopal Advisor*

Liturgy Canada is a society of women and men committed to the ongoing renewal of the Church in worship and mission. Our ministry is to provide resources on our liturgical life which focus the debate, inform our practice and evaluate our experience.

We always welcome comments about our articles or what is happening in your parish. If you have been touched, stimulated, informed, angered, inspired, confused or otherwise affected by this issue, we would love to help you share your work with others. Your responses are most welcome!

Send to *Liturgy Canada,*
6 Hamilton Street, Stratford, ON N5A 7P4
OR by e-mail to:
litcan@liturgy.ca

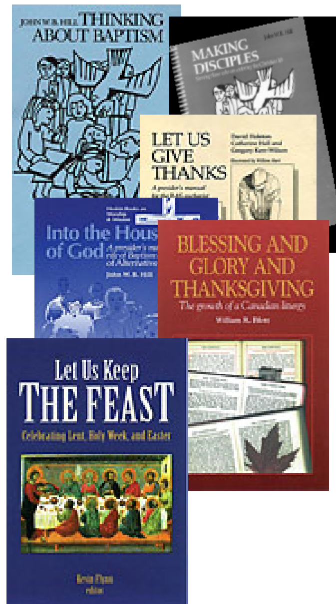
Join online @ www.liturgy.ca and pay by PayPal or send a cheque payable to Liturgy Canada to our Business Manager,
the Rev'd Lynn Mitchell:
Liturgy Canada
6 Hamilton Street
Stratford, Ontario
N5A 7P4
litcan@liturgy.ca

Membership Fees
$33 for 4 issues
$55 for 8 issues
$77 for 12 issues

Additional donations to support the continuing work of Liturgy Canada are always appreciated.

Published by Liturgy Canada

in co-operation with the Anglican Book Centre



Members may buy these publications directly from us at a 20% discount.

Thinking About Baptism
by John W. B. Hill
A booklet designed to acquaint parents and sponsors with the Church's renewed theology of infant baptism. $2.50 *(no discount)*

Making Disciples
by John W. B. Hill
The theology, rites and practicalities of the catechumenate. $16.95
Members—$13.55

Let Us Give Thanks
by David Holeton, Catherine Hall and Greg Kerr-Wilson
A presider's manual for the Eucharist the *Book of Alternative Services*. $14.95
Members—$11.95

Into the Household of God
by John W. B. Hill
A presider's manual for Baptism in the *Book of Alternative Services*. $8.50
Members—$7.00

Blessing and Glory and Thanksgiving
by William Blott
The story of the creation of the Canadian *Book of Common Prayer 1962*.
$16.95 Members—$13.50

Let Us Keep the Feast
Kevin Flynn, Editor
A 'how-to' resource, based on the *Book of Alternative Services* Holy Week liturgies,
to help Holy Week worship in parish churches come alive. $16.95
Members—$13.50