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Editorial

The issues of ecological responsibility have been prominent in global consciousness for at least a decade now, and national governments are reviewing policies on sustainable development and attempting to balance industry regulation with economic growth, while individuals embrace “green” living in many small and large decisions, from growing organic vegetables to choosing hybrid cars.

In this issue, we are delighted to be able to present Denis Edwards’ paper from the Academy’s 2007 conference, in which he highlights the potential for our eucharistic theology to shape our approaches to ecological responsibility. Michael Clyne’s conference paper, “On the relation between Language and Religion – some exploratory issues”, can be downloaded from the “forums” area of the AAL website: www.liturgy.org.au.

We also pay tribute here to The Rev’d Dr David H Tripp, a liturgical scholar of the Methodist Church, who died in the USA late last year.

As always, I look forward to receiving your contributions for future issues of *AJL*.

Inari Thiel
Logan City

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***Eucharist and Ecology:
keeping memorial of creation***

Denis Edwards

Every day there are further reports and predictions about global climate change. While scientific experts disagree about details, there is a broad consensus that that it is occurring and that on all available models it will get far worse. It seems clear that human use of fossil fuels is a major cause. A little reflection on the disappearance of the glaciers that are the sources for great rivers, or on the way that even a small rise in sea levels will impact on the low-lying rice fields of Asia, suggests that climate change may be the most important issue facing the human community of the 21st century. It is interconnected with all other ecological issues, such as the need to do all we can to safeguard the biodiversity of our planet and to maintain the integrity of wetlands, rivers, lakes and seas. Ecological issues are deeply intertwined with and cannot be separated from issues of global justice and peace.

The danger is that the size and complexity of the ecological issues we face can lead to a feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness. I am convinced that the Christian gospel of hope has something fundamental to offer here. In a common statement in 2002, Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew offered a hope-filled challenge to this generation:

It is not too late. God's world has incredible healing powers. Within a single generation we could steer the earth towards our children's future. Let that generation start now, with God's help and blessing.¹

This is the kind of leadership needed from church authorities in our time. In another statement, John Paul II has said that we human beings have failed God in devastating forests, waterways, habitats and the atmosphere of our planet, but this makes it all the more important for us to build up the sense that the human community of this generation is called to an "*ecological conversion*."² Such an ecological conversion involves a new way of seeing, thinking, feeling and acting. It seems clear that, for Christians of this generation, this conversion will need to be a central dimension of their life of faith. It seems obvious too that their central act as a Christian community, the celebration of Eucharist, will need to be a source for and an expression of their ongoing ecological conversion. This line of thought raises important questions: Are there authentic and intrinsic links between the Eucharist and the way we think, feel and act with regard to the natural world? Are there ways in which our eucharistic celebrations can better enable the ecological conversion that John Paul II has advocated? How is Eucharist related to ecological action and life-styles?

I will attempt a partial response to these questions by reflecting first on the fundamental sign of the Eucharist, the giving and receiving of

¹ *Joint Declaration on Articulating a Code of Environmental Ethics*, June 10, 2002. In *Origins* 32: No 6 (June 20, 2002), 81-4, at 84.

² Pope John Paul II, *General Audience Address*, January 17, 2001. In *L'Osservatore Romano* 4 (January 24, 2001), 11.

fruits of the Earth at a shared table. Then I will explore the eucharistic *anamnesis* as a memorial of creation as well as redemption. This will lead to a consideration of the Eastern theme of the Eucharist as the “lifting up” of creation to God. Finally, I will reflect on the Eucharist as an invocation of the eschatological Spirit, who brings us into a trinitarian Communion that embraces the whole creation.

The Eucharistic Symbols: Fruits of the Earth at a Shared Table

In a recent article, David Power describes the central sign of the Eucharist as “the communion of the diverse members of the church in the elements of bread and wine, around a common table, sharing in the things of earth.”³ His focus is on what it means in terms of commitment to justice that Christ gives himself to the church in this way. The question I am exploring is similar and related: What does it mean in terms of ecological conversion that Christ gives himself to us at a common table in bread and wine, fruits of the Earth and work of human hands?

In *The Eucharistic Mystery* Power suggests that the symbolic act of Eucharist can be considered at four levels of significance: 1. as bread and wine shared at a common table; 2. as related to social, economic and cultural realities; 3. as celebrated by a community of mutual service that overcomes social distinctions; 4. as proclaiming and representing Christ’s saving death and abiding presence. He insists

³ David N. Power, “Eucharistic Justice,” *Theological Studies* 67 (December 2006), 856-79, at 860.

that nothing of the meaning of the first level, the innate meaning of food and drink, is abolished in accommodating the deepest meaning of representing Christ.⁴ An ecological theology of the Eucharist can begin at this first level, asking: How does partaking in bread and wine at a common table express our relationship to the community of life on Earth?

Xavier Léon-Dufour offers some helpful reflections on the meaning of bread and wine for the biblical world. Bread stands for basic food, the food that enables survival, the food that no one can be without.⁵ It is used as a metaphor for food in general (Amos 4:6; Mark 3:20, 11:5; 15:17). As the food which sustains and nourishes life, it is always seen as the gift of the Creator. It is a sign of God's constant care and presence (Ex 23:25; Ps 78:20; 132:15; 146:7; Matt 6:11). As the gift of God, bread is meant to be shared, above all with the hungry (Is 58:7; Ez 18:7).

Because bread is the necessary food of everyday life, it can also become the sign of God's promise. For the people of the Exodus, wheat is the first among the crops of the promised land (Deut 8:8; 11:14). Bread becomes a symbol of the eschatological banquet (Ps 78:23-25; Rev 2:17). This is why in Luke we find the man sitting with Jesus at table exclaiming in response to the words of Jesus:

⁴ David N. Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 294-6.

⁵ Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread: The Witness of the New Testament* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 58-59. In the next few paragraphs I am following Léon-Dufour.

“Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” (Luke 14:15) The bread of the Eucharist is always ordinary bread, the bread of daily life, but precisely as such it is the bread of the kingdom.

It is important to note, that the bread of biblical faith is not an individualistic portion, but the one loaf that is broken and shared. It is the one loaf of Paul: “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:17). It is the bread broken in chapter 9 of the *Didache*: “As this broken bread was scattered over the mountains, and when brought together became one, so may your church be brought together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.”⁶

If bread represents everyday nourishment and sustenance, wine represents the God-given abundance of life. It is associated with life (Sir 31:27), friendship (Sir 9:10), love (Cant 1:2; 4:10), joy (Eccl 10:19; Zech 10:7) and music (Sir 32:6; 40:20; Is 5:12). While wine can express the divine wrath (Ps 60:5; Rev 16:19), it normally represents the generous bounty of the gifts of creation that come from the hand of God. It is a sign of heavenly joy (Am 9:14; Hos 2:24; Jer 31:12). It is a drink of festival, a drink to “cheer peoples’ hearts” (Ps 104:15).

Wine is a sign of blessing, a sign of the abundance of creation and the blessing of God. In the accounts of the last supper, Jesus speaks of

⁶ R.C.D. Jasper and G.J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 3rd ed. (New York: Pueblo, 1987), 23.

the “fruit of the vine” that he will not drink again until he will drink it new with his community in the Reign of God (Mark 14:25; Matt 26:29; Luke 22:18). It is to be noted that the word used to describe what Jesus takes up and prays over is not “wine,” but the “cup.” In First Corinthians, for example, Paul writes:

In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.” For as often as eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes (1 Cor 11: 25-26).

The word “cup” has its own special resonance. It recalls the communal sharing of the various cups of a Jewish festive meal. It reminds us of the way the metaphor of the cup functions in the psalms. In response to God’s bounty, the psalmist gives thanks: “I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord (Psalm 116:13). There is the “overflowing cup” provided at the table of the Shepherd (Psalm 23:6). At the deepest level, the true cup for the faithful people of the covenant is nothing else but the God of Israel: “my chosen portion and my cup” (Psalm 16:5).

The one loaf and the one cup shared at the eucharistic table are gifts of God’s good creation that both sustain life and make community. The sharing of the loaf and the cup is always an event grounded in the Earth and its fruits. It is this sharing of the fruits of the Earth that becomes the memorial event of Christ’s self-giving. The world of crops and vineyards, of sunshine and rain, of Earth’s bounty and its many forms of life, are represented in the loaf and the cup and are

forever linked to Christ as the signs through which he bestows himself. Alexander Schmemmann writes:

That is why it is not “simply” bread that lies on the *diskos*. On it all of God’s creation is presented, manifested in Christ as the new creation, the fulfilment of the glory of God. And it is not “simply” people who are gathered in this assembly, but the new humanity, recreated in the “ineffable glory” of its Creator.⁷

Eating and drinking bread and wine together remind us of our grounding in the whole interconnected pattern of fleshly life, of hunger and thirst, nourishment and refreshment. The bread we share brings to mind the grain sown by farmers, the cycles of ploughing, sowing and reaping, and families that depend on the land and what it yields, and the fruitfulness and generous bounty of the Earth. We are led to remember those who bake bread, and the lovely smell of bread rising. The wine calls to mind fruitful vineyards set in rolling hills, the celebrations of vintage, the skill of wine-making, the pleasures of smell and taste, drinks shared, and the joy of memorable moments of celebration.

David Power writes: “It is important that a community of Christian people receive food from a common and blessed loaf made from the soil of their land and from the toil of its inhabitants, and from a cup radiant indeed with the sun but pressed out by tired feet.”⁸ While the pressing of grapes by tired feet may be metaphorical, Power’s focus on the local community is fundamental for an ecological theology of

⁷ Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1988), 118.

⁸ Power, “Eucharistic Justice,” 867.

Eucharist. To break bread in the Eucharist is always a local event, an event of a local church. It represents not only the local people, but the land that forms and nourishes them. Wherever possible, the bread of the Eucharist should be made locally from grain grown locally, and the wine, radiant with sunshine, should come from local vineyards, representing the fruits of the land in the place and all human work that grows, creates, builds, supports and heals.

Bread and wine present challenges to Christians gathered for the Eucharist. They raise questions about the ecological, economic and political realities they represent. The way we grow and process our food and drink can come at an unbearable cost to other human beings and to other creatures of our planet. Ruthless land-clearing, irrigation and fishing practices, lack of commitment to biodiversity and neglect of the rights of animals can cause terrible suffering. The bread and wine of the Eucharist call us to be mindful of those who suffer economic exploitation and ecological devastation. They call us to solidarity with those whose lands are already being flooded and with those who depend on rice produced in low-lying areas for their daily “bread.”

Participating at a common table set with bread and wine calls us to thanksgiving and to conversion. The bread and wine lead us to praise and thanksgiving for the daily gift of food and for the joy of God’s abundant blessings in creation. This is already by its nature the beginning of an ecological conversion, a turning towards a love for

our planet and all its creatures as the gift of God. When the name of Christ is invoked over the bread and wine, the liberating and creative Spirit leads us towards a new way of feeling, living and acting as responsible inhabitant of a global community of life.

The *Anamnesis* of Creation and Redemption

It matters a great deal for an ecological theology that what is commemorated in the Eucharist involves both creation and redemption. Louis Bouyer has pointed out how that what is commemorated in both Jewish and Christian prayers of thanksgiving involves the whole action of the one God who creates and saves. *Anamnesis* embraces all that God has done for us in a single view.⁹ It embraces not only what God has already done but the promise of God that all things will be transformed in Christ. In this section I use the word *anamnesis* or commemoration to refer to the whole eucharistic prayer, rather than simply to the prayer that follows the narrative of the last supper.¹⁰ I will point to examples from the tradition where the *anamnesis* of creation is made explicit, with the intention of suggesting that the eucharistic prayer is intrinsically a memorial of creation and that this has ecological significance.

Since the time of Gregory Dix and his 1945 classic *The Shape of the Liturgy*, there has been discussion of his proposal that, at the end of his final meal with his disciples, Jesus would naturally have used the tripartite Jewish prayer of blessing over a cup of wine, the *birkat ha-*

⁹ Louis Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 116, 130.

¹⁰ See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 90, note 20.

mazon. Liturgical scholars have attempted to trace a trajectory from the *birkat ha-mazon* to the earliest extant Christian eucharistic prayers, such as the *Didache*, the liturgy called *Addai and Mari* and the *Apostolic Tradition* and beyond them into the later tradition. More recently this approach has been challenged. For one thing, the earliest manuscript available for the *birkat ha-mazon* is the tenth century *Siddur Rav Saadya Gaon*. We cannot be sure what form of prayer Jesus would have used at meals and historians are not confident that there is any one clear line of liturgical development. As Paul Bradshaw says, we now “know much less about the liturgical practices of the first three centuries of Christianity than we once thought we did.”¹¹ The picture is one of diversity rather than of one uniform pattern.

Of course, Louis Bouyer had long ago insisted on the significance for Christian liturgy of synagogue prayers and the wider context of Jewish prayers of praise even as he focused on meal *berakah*.¹² More recently, Cesare Girauda has argued that the background for Christian Eucharist needs to be located in the broader *todah* (proclamatory prayers of praise) tradition of Jewish prayer.¹³ Maxwell Johnson has pointed to the variety of possible sources that include the meal practices of the Greco-Roman symposium, the annual Passover meal,

¹¹ Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*. Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), x.

¹² Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968).

¹³ Cesare Girauda, *La struttura letteraria della preghiera eucaristica: Saggio sulla genesi letteraria di una forma* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981).

and the whole variety of diverse Jewish prayer forms, including the *birkat ha-mazon*, oral forms of which would have existed from an early stage.¹⁴ He insists that it cannot be assumed that early Christian eucharistic practice followed any one pattern or structure.

My purpose here is not to enter into this discussion but, having noted the complexity of the historical issues, to bring into focus the way early Christian eucharistic prayers remember, praise and thank God for creation as well as for redemption. I begin with the *birhat ha-mazon*, not only because an early form of it may have influenced Christian eucharistic practice, but also because it faithfully represents the broader Jewish prayer and faith that certainly did influence Christian liturgy. This prayer, said over the cup of wine at the end of the meal, has a tripartite structure: it involves first a blessing of God for creation, then a thanksgiving for the gift of the land, followed by intercession for the people of God. The blessing for creation reads:

Blessing of him who nourishes

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, for you nourish us and the whole world with your goodness, grace, kindness and mercy.

Blessed are you, Lord, for you nourish the universe.¹⁵

One of the things to notice about this prayer is that its focus is not on a primordial act of God in the beginning, and not on the creation accounts of Genesis, but on God's continuous and faithful nourishment of human beings and of the whole universe of creatures.

¹⁴ Maxwell E. Johnson, "The Apostolic Tradition," in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, edited Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 32-75, at 44-7.

¹⁵ Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers*, 10.

This nourishing role of God can be understood, I believe, in relation to what we now call *creatio continua*, the action by which God enables the whole universe and all its creatures to exist, to act and to evolve. The word “nourish” brings the action of God very close. It suggests the kind of creation theology found in Psalm 104, praise for the God who sustains and provides for each creature, breathing into each the breath of life. It suggests that the food and drink on the table are the gift of the Creator who continually creates and sustains all things.

The *Didache* is the earliest known example of a Christian church order. It seems to have its origin in Syria, perhaps in the second half of the first century. In chapter 10 we find a series of three prayers that parallel the *birkat-ha-mazon*: a prayer of blessing for God’s holy name, a prayer that after recalling God’s creation of all things, including food and drink, gives thanks for the nourishment given to us in Christ, and a prayer of intercession for the church that ends in a doxology. The first two prayers are these:

And after you have had your fill, give thanks thus:

We give thanks to you, holy Father, for your holy Name which you have enshrined in our hearts, and for the knowledge of the faith and immortality which you have made known through your child Jesus; glory to you for evermore.

You, almighty Master, created all things for the sake of your Name, and gave food and drink to humankind for their enjoyment, that they might give you thanks; but to us you have granted spiritual food and drink and eternal life through your child Jesus. Above all we give you thanks because you are mighty; glory to you for evermore. Amen.¹⁶

¹⁶ Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers*, 23 (slightly adapted).

As David Power notes, the first prayer echoes the Jewish theology of the divine Name, a theology closely linked to creation. The glory of the Name is made manifest in creation as well as in God's saving acts.¹⁷ In the second prayer, the link between creation and the divine name is made explicit: God is praised for creating all things for the sake of the Name. The prayer moves from God giving food and drink for human enjoyment to become a thanksgiving for the nourishment of eternal life given to us in Jesus.

Also from East Syria is the eucharistic prayer that goes by the name of *Addai and Mari*. It offers praise to God for creation and thanksgiving for the work of redemption and then continues with a prayer for the church that includes an invocation over the bread and wine. In its present form there is an *epiclesis* of the Spirit, but as the earliest manuscripts we have date from as late as the tenth century, there are doubts about its original form. Like the *Didache*, this prayer is based upon a Syriac theology of the name of God, as its opening makes clear:

Worthy of glory from every mouth and thanksgiving from every tongue is the adorable and glorious name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. He created the world through his grace and its inhabitants in his compassion; he saved men through his mercy, and gave great grace to mortals.¹⁸

The prayer continues by joining in praise with all the angels "who glorify your name," and then leads into the Sanctus. There is a lovely

¹⁷ Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 84.

¹⁸ Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers*, 41.

balance in this opening prayer between on the one hand, God's creation of the world and its inhabitants out of compassion and, on the other, God's salvation and grace given to us out of divine mercy.

Justin Martyr provides important descriptions of early Christian worship in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, written in Ephesus about 135, and his *First Apology*, written in Rome about 150. In the *Apology* he offers an account of baptism that culminates in Eucharist and an outline of a normal Sunday celebration. In the *Dialogue with Trypho* he makes it clear that the eucharistic prayer is not only a memorial of the passion, but also a thanksgiving for creation:

The offering of fine flour ... which was handed down to be offered for those who were cleansed of leprosy, was a type of the bread of thanksgiving, which our Lord Jesus Christ handed down to us to do for a remembrance of the suffering which he suffered for those who are cleansed in their souls from all wickedness of human beings, so that we might give thanks to God, both for creating the world with all things that are in it for the sake of humanity, and for freeing us from the evil in which we were born, and for accomplishing a complete destruction of the principalities and powers through him who suffered according to his will.¹⁹

Three elements are united in Justin's notion of the Eucharist as a memorial of the cross: it is a thanksgiving for creation, for redemption from sin, and for cosmic redemption. The other possible source of information about eucharistic practice in Rome is the *Apostolic Tradition*, often ascribed to Hippolytus of Rome (c.170- c.236), but much is unclear both about its original form and the extent to which it represents the usage of the Roman church. This prayer moves from a

¹⁹ Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers*, 27 (slightly adapted).

thanksgiving for creation, which is very brief, and for the redemptive work of Christ, which is more extensive, to intercession. The thanksgiving for creation appears in this form:

We render thanks to you, O God, through your beloved child Jesus Christ, whom in the last times you sent to us as a saviour and redeemer and angel of your will; who is your inseparable Word, through whom you made all things, and in whom you were well pleased.²⁰

The Word of creation is identified with the Word of redemption. David Power points to the similarity with the thought of Irenaeus, who battled Gnostic dualism by affirming the one mediation of the Word through whom God creates and redeems all things. For Irenaeus, the offering of bread and wine with thanksgiving and the invocation of the name of Christ shows that the work of creation and its restoration are central to Christian redemption. Power points out that there is an echo of this kind of creation theology in the blessing of fruit, cheese, olives and oil that the *Apostolic Tradition* inserts at the end of the eucharistic prayer.²¹ Irenaeus sees the Eucharist as confirming the incarnation, the goodness of creation and the resurrection of the flesh: “Our manner of thinking is conformed to the Eucharist, and Eucharist conforms to our manner of thinking.”²² The Eucharist expresses gratitude for creation, in the offering of the fruits of the earth, as well as for God’s work of redemption and it does this

²⁰ Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers*, 35.

²¹ Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 93.

²² *Adversus Haereses* IV, 18.5. See David N. Power, ed., *Irenaeus of Lyons on Baptism and the Eucharist: Selected Texts with Introduction, Translation and Annotation*, Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 18 (Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove Books, 1991), 21.

by invoking the name of Christ over the gifts. It thus confirms the doctrine of the one God creating and redeeming the world through the one Word.²³

The church order of the *Apostolic Constitutions* probably had its origin in the second half of the fourth century, during the doctrinal controversies with Eunomius. Book 8 contains a eucharistic prayer with an extremely long preface, which begins from a celebration of God the source of all. It speaks of God as bringing “all things from non-existence to existence.” It then goes on with a highly detailed celebration of creation, a small part of which is given here:

You girded the world that was made by you through Christ with rivers and flooded it with torrents, you watered it with everflowing springs and bound it round with mountains as an unshakeable and most safe seat for the earth.

For you filled the world and adorned it with sweet-smelling and healing herbs, with many different living things, strong and weak, for food and for work, tame and wild, with hissing of reptiles, with the cries of variegated birds, the cycles of the years, the numbers of months and days, the order of the seasons, the course of rain-bearing clouds for the production of fruits and the creation of living things, a stable for the winds that blow at your command, the multitude of plants and herbs.²⁴

Reading this detailed thanksgiving for creation today leads one to long for eucharistic prayers shaped in the light of contemporary cosmology, evolutionary biology and ecological consciousness.

The anaphora of St. Basil praises the God of all creation, and that of St. John Chrysostom praises God who brings us out of non-existence

²³ See Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 109-110

²⁴ Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers*, 106.

into existence. There is little of creation in the Roman canon. In Eucharistic Prayer II of the revised Roman Catholic liturgy, creation and redemption are held together in Christ: "He is the Word through whom you made the universe, the Saviour you sent to redeem us." Eucharistic Prayer III begins: "Father you are holy indeed, and all creation rightly gives you praise. All life, all holiness comes from you through your Son Jesus Christ Our Lord by the working of the Holy Spirit." And in Eucharistic Prayer IV, God is addressed: "Source of life and goodness, you have created all things, to fill your creatures with every blessing, and lead all people to the joyful vision of your light."

This brief survey of liturgical sources suggests that the memorial of the Eucharist is traditionally understood as an act of praise and thanksgiving for God's creation. I think it can be argued theologically that the Eucharist is intrinsically a memorial of creation and redemption together. This is supported in the classical theology of Irenaeus who sees creation and redemption united in the one Word. It finds support today in a theology like that of Karl Rahner, who sees creation, redemption and final fulfilment as distinct aspects of God's one act of self-bestowal in love.²⁵

This concept of the Eucharist as keeping memorial of creation is of fundamental importance in a time when human action is radically

²⁵ See for example Karl Rahner, "Christology in the Setting of Modern Man's Understanding of Himself and of his World," *Theological Investigations* 11 (New York: Seabury, 1974), 215-29, particularly at 225.

altering the climate with disastrous effects for human beings and for other creatures on Earth. We keep memorial of God's good creation, that embraces the 14 billion year history of the universe, the 4.7 billion year history of Earth and the emergence of life on our planet in all its diversity and beauty. Remembering creation involves a critical mindfulness. As David Power says, we include suffering in the remembrance of Christ, and this needs to include the suffering of the whole creation.²⁶ We remember the vulnerable state of the community of life on Earth today and bring this to God. We are called to a solidarity that involves all the human victims of ecological destruction as well as the animals and plants that are destroyed or threatened. We remember those already displaced from the homes and their heritage. We cannot but be painfully awared of the threat to many millions of other people.

We pray in solidarity with the global community, that the Eucharist which brings us into peace and communion with God may "advance the peace and salvation of all the world" (Third Eucharistic Prayer). When we come to the Eucharist we bring the creatures of Earth with us. We remember the God who loves each one of them. We grieve for the damage done to them. We feel with them. We hope for their future in God. We commit ourselves to their well-being.

²⁶ Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery*, 314-15. In his reflections at this point, Power argues that the creation story and the story of redemption cannot be given a similar historical footing. While this is undoubtedly true, I think what needs emphasis in our liturgies is God's *creatio continua*, and the one differentiated act of the God who creates and saves.

The Lifting Up of All Creation to God

The eucharistic memorial is not only an act of thanksgiving and praise for creation and redemption, it is a lifting up of the whole creation to God. In exploring the ecological meaning of the eucharistic memorial, I find helpful insights in the work of two Orthodox theologians, Alexander Schmemmann and John Zizioulas, now Metropolitan John of Pergamon. Schmemmann explores the biblical meaning of memory, and finds it grounded in a theology of God's creative memory:

Here we should recall that in the biblical, Old Testamental teaching on God, the term memory refers to the attentiveness of God to his creation, the power of divine providential love through which God "holds" the world and *gives it life*, so that life itself can be termed abiding in the memory of God, and death the falling out of this memory. In other words, memory, like everything else in God, is *real*, it is that life that he grants, that God "*remembers*"; it is the eternal overcoming of the "nothing" out of which God called us into "his wonderful light."²⁷

Memory is a gift given by God to human beings. In us, memory becomes our responding love to God, "the encounter and communion with God, with the life of life itself."²⁸ It is given to the human, out of all creation, to remember God and through this remembrance to truly live. Schmemmann says that if every creature in our world witnesses to God and declares the glory of God, it is only the human being who remembers God, "and through this living knowledge of God,

²⁷ Schmemmann, *The Eucharist*, 125.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

comprehends the world as God's world, receives it from God, and raises it up to God."²⁹

Salvation is the restoration of memory as a life-giving power. Christ is the incarnation and the gift to humankind of God's memory in its fullness, as love directed to each human being, towards the world and all its creatures.³⁰ In liturgy we recall what has already been given to us, the creation of the world, its salvation in Christ and the coming of the kingdom of God. This kind of remembering involves the past and the future in the present: "We recall, in other words, both the past and the future as living in us, as given to us, as transformed into our life and making it life in God."³¹

This memory is an act of thanksgiving and blessing. As the world is created by the word of God through blessing, so it is saved and restored to us by thanksgiving and blessing. In thanksgiving and blessing, "we recognize and comprehend the world as icon, as communion, as sanctification." According to Schmemmann, when in the Eucharist we remember Christ who "took bread," this bread means the matter of creation, the whole world of creatures, transformed as new creation in Christ.³²

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 125-6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 128.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

³² *Ibid.*, 176.

John Zizioulas has spelled out his ecological theology in a series of lectures given at Kings College London.³³ He argues that the ecological crisis cannot be met simply by arguments based on reason. What is required, if we hope to change priorities and life-styles, is a different *culture* and a different *ethos*. Zizioulas is convinced that what is needed above all is a *liturgical* ethos. Like many Orthodox theologians, he sees human beings as called by God to be “priests of creation.” He distinguishes this priestly task sharply from the notions of sacrificial priesthood that he associates with medieval and Roman Catholic theology.

For Zizioulas, the concept of being a priest of creation is linked to the idea of being fully personal. He sees each baptised person as called to be, like Christ, a fully *personal* being. This involves being relational rather than self-enclosed, being able to go out of self to the other, in what he calls *ek-stasis*. Persons are always ecstatic, in the sense that they achieve personhood only in communion with others. Humans are relational beings. Their vocation is to relate in a fully personal way to God, to other humans and to other creatures of God. According to Zizioulas, humanity and the rest of creation comes to their completion in the life of God through each other.

When humans come to the Eucharist, they bring the fruits of creation, and in some way the whole creation, to the eucharistic table. In the East, the central eucharistic prayer is known as the anaphora, a word

³³ John Zizioulas, “Preserving God’s Creation: Three Lectures on Ecology and Theology,” *King’s Theological Review* 12 (1989), 1-5, 41-45 and 13 (1990), 1-5.

which means the lifting-up. In the Eucharist, creation is *lifted up* to God in offering and thanksgiving. The gifts of creation are lifted up to God and the Spirit is invoked to transform the gifts of creation, and the assembled community, into the Body of Christ.

An important element in Zizioulas's thought is his insistence that this priesthood is not confined to the ordained but is the God-given role of all the faithful. Equally important is the conviction that this "lifting up" is not restricted to liturgical celebrations but is meant to happen in the whole of life. It is meant to involve all human interactions with the rest of creation. The "lifting up" of creation is meant to be played out around the planet continually by every human being. Fundamentally this priestly task seems to involve an authentic personal love for other creatures in all their specificity and uniqueness. It involves a fully human feeling for them and celebration of them in God. Our stance towards the rest of creation, our personal engagement with it as fully relational beings, is a central dimension of our life before God and salvation in Christ.

The ecological crisis requires the deepest resources of the human community. With Zizioulas, I believe that in the Eucharist Christians have the source for an authentically ecological ethos and culture.³⁴ It does not provide answers to all the practical questions that confront

³⁴ See Patricia A. Fox, *God as Communion: John Zizioulas, Elizabeth Johnson, and the Retrieval of the Symbol of God* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2001), 70.

us, but it does offer a motivation and a genuinely ecological ethos.³⁵ We lift up creation to God and praise God on behalf of all of Earth's creatures: "All creation rightly gives you praise" (3rd E. Prayer); "In the name of every creature under heaven, we too praise your glory" (4th E. Prayer). I have long been struck by Yves Congar's remark that whenever he prays the great doxology at the end of the eucharistic prayer he is conscious of the whole creation. At this moment, we lift up the whole creation through, with and in Christ, "in the unity of the Holy Spirit" to the eternal praise and glory of God.³⁶

The liturgical stance makes clear how human beings are related to other creatures. On the one hand we are closely interconnected with them in a kinship of creation. On the other hand we are unique as personal creatures called to remember and praise God on behalf of the whole creation. This calls us into a relational stance before the whole of creation. Christian eucharistic practice, when understood and lived in all its depth, is capable of sustaining an ongoing conversion to a personal and loving stance before the rest of creation.

³⁵ Zizioulas says: "All this involves an *ethos* that the world needs badly in our time. Not an ethic, but an *ethos*. Not a programme, but an attitude and a mentality. Not legislation, but a culture." See his "Preserving God's Creation," *King's Theological Review* 13 (1990), 5.

³⁶ See Yves Congar's remarks on the doxology in his *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Volume II (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), 224

Invoking the Eschatological Spirit

As the eucharistic prayer is always a memorial that involves praise and thanksgiving to God for both creation and redemption, and as it is always a lifting up of creation to God, so it is also always an invocation of the eschatological Spirit. Even when there is no explicit *epiclesis*, the Spirit of God is invoked over the gifts of bread and wine and over the assembly that they might become the body of Christ. It is always the eschatological Spirit who creates an event of communion. The Spirit makes the assembly an eschatological event that anticipates the future when all will things will be taken up and find their fulfilment in divine Communion.

Communion with each other in Christ is a participation in and a tasting of the divine Communion, in which the whole creation will be transfigured and all creatures will find their eternal meaning and their true home. This Communion, of the “Source of Life and Goodness” with the eternal Word and the life-giving Spirit, is both the origin of all things and the fulfilment of all things. It is this dynamic Communion of the Three that creates, sustains and empowers all the diverse forms of life on our planet. It is what enables a community of life to emerge and to evolve. In ways beyond imagination, this trinitarian life will be the fulfilment of all the creatures of our planet, and all the wonders of our universe. As we participate in the Eucharist, we know our own kinship with all the creatures sustained and nourished by the presence and action of the triune God in whom “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28) and we taste in

anticipation the final communion of all things in the shared life of God.

The Spirit at work in the Eucharist is the Creator Spirit, the Breath of Life who empowers the unfolding of the universe from the beginning and enables the evolution of all the diverse creatures of our planet. It is this Spirit who will bring the universe and its creatures to their final fulfilment in Christ. The Christ we encounter in the Eucharist is the risen one, the one in whom all things were created and in whom all are reconciled (Col 1:15-20). Even when we focus our attention in the eucharistic memorial on Christ's death and resurrection, this is not a memory that takes us away from creation. It involves us directly with creation, with Earth and all its creatures. When we remember Christ's death, we remember a creature of our universe, a product of our evolutionary history, freely handing his whole bodily and personal existence into the mystery of a loving God. When we remember the resurrection, we remember part of our universe and part of our evolutionary history being taken up in the Spirit into God. As Rahner says, the resurrection of Jesus is not only the *promise* but the *beginning* of the glorification and divinisation of the whole of reality.³⁷ The Eucharist is the symbol and the sacrament of the risen Christ who is the beginning of the transfiguration of all creatures in God. Eucharist is both sign and agent of the transforming work of the

³⁷ Karl Rahner, "Dogmatic Questions on Easter," *Theological Investigations IV* (New York, Seabury Press, 1974), 129.

risen Christ in the whole of creation. The Eucharist points towards and anticipates the divinisation of the universe in Christ.

At the end of 2 Corinthians Paul prays: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion (*koinōnia*) of the Holy Spirit be with all of you” (2 Cor 13:13). The communion of the Holy Spirit not only unites us with Christ and with all those who partake of the one bread and the one cup, but also takes us beyond the local assembly and beyond the wider church to a communion of all God’s creatures. Jurgen Moltmann says that the experience of the Spirit “leads of itself beyond the limits of the church to the rediscovery of this same Spirit in nature, in plants, in animals, and in the ecosystems of the earth.”³⁸ The experience that we are a part of an inter-related community of creation, that we are in some ways kin with other creatures before God, this is too is part of the *koinōnia* of the Holy Spirit.

Because our eucharistic communion involves us with the Word in whom all things are created and with the Spirit who breathes life into all creatures, it is a communion that involves us with the whole the community of life on Earth. This means, as Tony Kelly says, that the “most intense moment of our communion with God is at the same time an intense moment of our communion with the earth.”³⁹ By

³⁸ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1992), 10.

³⁹ Tony Kelly, *The Bread of God: Nurturing a Eucharistic Imagination* (Melbourne: HarperCollins, 2001), 92. See also his *Eschatology and Hope* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2006), 181-200.

being taken up into God, we are caught up into God's loving engagement with the creatures of our planetary community. This begins to shape our ecological imagination: "The Eucharist educates the imagination, the mind, and the heart to apprehend the universe as one of communion and connectedness in Christ." In this eucharistic imagination, a distinctive ecological vision and commitment can take shape.⁴⁰

With this kind of imagination at work in us, we can see the other creatures of Earth as our kin, as radically interconnected with us in one Earth community of life before God. We can begin to see critically — to see more clearly what is happening to the Earth. We are led to participate in God's feeling for the life-forms of our planet. An authentic eucharistic imagination leads to an ecological ethos, culture and praxis.

Conclusion

The argument I have been making is that when Christians gather for Eucharist they bring creation with them. The one loaf of bread and the one cup of wine, fruits of the Earth, work of human hands, given and received at a common table, are the signs in which Christ gives himself to us. Eating and drinking this bread and this cup together continually points to our inter-relationship with all the living creatures of Earth, and with the land, the atmosphere, the rivers and the seas

⁴⁰ Kelly, *The Bread of God*, 100-1.

that support life. At the heart of the Eucharist is the memorial of praise and thanksgiving. It is fundamental to an ecological theology to understand this as memorial of God's marvellous deeds that include creation as well as redemption and the promise of final transformation. The eucharistic memorial is always a lifting up of the whole creation, a lifting up that takes place not in the Eucharist, but one that is lived in the whole of life in an ecological ethos and an ecological vocation. Every Eucharist is an invocation of the Spirit who makes us one with each other in Christ, and makes us one with the whole creation in the eschatological communion of the Trinity.

These considerations raise further questions: How can our celebrations better manifest and highlight the ecological meaning already inherent in the eucharistic symbols? How might our celebrations better reveal the liturgical and theological truth that in the Eucharist we keep memorial of God's work of creation as well as God's work of redemption, and better bring out its ecological consequences? What might help us rediscover the deeply Christian idea that we lift up creation to God in praise and thanksgiving in every Eucharist and in the whole of life? How might we make more explicit the idea that in the Eucharist the Spirit of God brings us into an eschatological communion with the Trinity that involves all the creatures of God? How can we further unpack and explore the all the symbols, words, actions, gestures as well as the ritual logic of the Eucharist to bring out its ecological meaning?

What I think becomes clear in these reflections is that human action, which is an expression of love and respect for the living creatures, the atmosphere, the seas and the land of our planet, can be seen as not only in continuity with, but also as in some way part of the work of the eucharistic Christ. On the other hand, knowing and wilful acts that contribute to global climate change and to the destruction of habitats and species can be seen as a denial of Christ. They deny the meaning of what we celebrate when we gather for Eucharist.

Participating at a common table set with bread and wine calls us to a memorial thanksgiving that is already the beginning of an ecological conversion, a turning towards a love for our planet and all its creatures as the gift of God. When the name of Christ is invoked over the bread and wine, the Creator Spirit leads us towards a way of feeling, living and acting as part of a global community of life. These signs are intrinsically rich in ecological meaning. They point us to the whole of creation. They locate us within a sacramental approach to the whole of life.

Book Review

David M. Chapman, *Born in Song, Methodist Worship in Britain*, Warrington: Church in the Market Place Publications, 2006. ISBN 1 899147 56 x

Summarizing, with sufficiently critical comment, the entire range of worship practices of one Christian tradition, even over the brief span of Methodism, some 200 years, is a considerable challenge, but David Chapman has brought it off with notable success. Within this book's 355 pages may be found a history of Methodist worship in Britain which stands alongside Karen Westerfield Tucker's magisterial *American Methodist Worship*. Chapman is a Methodist minister, and also serves on the international Roman Catholic-Methodist dialogue.

Methodism is not a single tradition. Uniquely, Chapman tells the distinctive stories for each rite of John Wesley's abridgement of the *Book of Common Prayer* 1662 and his other provisions for worship in the fledgling holiness movement within the Church of England; then the subsequent history of the Wesleyan Methodists, who after his death in 1791 stayed closest to the provisions of BCP; then the various divisions and reunions of Methodist bodies, e.g. the Primitive Methodists, the Bible Christians, until their union in Britain in 1932 (thirty years after Methodist Union in Australia).

Chapman casts his story in terms of a constant tension between loyalty to BCP, which Wesley heartily approved, and Puritan critique

of it. (The Wesleys' family history contains clergy ejected in 1661 for their Puritan views, as well as the high church opinions of Susanna and Samuel Wesley, John and Charles' parents.) In preparing his abridgement in 1784 for use by the abandoned Methodists in the newly United States, many of Wesley's changes were in the Puritan direction, partly because he saw them as suiting the conditions of a nation with no established church and a pioneering culture. During his lifetime he was able to maintain a balance (in Britain) of understandings; after his death, many of the breakaway groups did so precisely on liturgical grounds, strongly influenced by Revivalism. Methodism has lived within this tension ever since.

We learn many fascinating things in this detailed study. The Methodist Sunday service began at 5pm to avoid the same hour as the Church of England – both Evensong and Dissenting afternoon services began at 3pm. It was freer in its form, and evangelical in its purpose. I learned the origin of a favourite Methodist phrase, 'the right hand of fellowship' (Gal. 2:9): it was an acceptable ritual gesture of affirmation when the laying-on of hands was regarded with suspicion. Wesley vehemently opposed the development of church choirs, and was mostly suspicious of pipe organs, as distracting from the congregational nature of worship. He dropped the 'giving away' of the bride in the marriage rite: in the next century it was restored because it suited less enlightened popular sentiment, and has been banned again in contemporary rites. The Bible Christians also omitted the promise of the woman to 'obey'.


In succinct descriptions of each rite – the Preaching Service, the Lord’s Supper, rites of initiation, love-feasts, watch-nights and Camp meetings, the Covenant service, marriage, funerals, ordination, the use of Morning Prayer, hymnody, music, architecture and the liturgical year – Chapman traces in effect the theological divisions of Protestantism, in which Methodism took up a median position between Anglicans and the Free Churches, the Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist churches of classical Dissent.

Occasionally I suspect a lapse in Chapman’s work. He seems to allow the possibility that baptism may have something to do with naming a child. He doubtfully depends on Gregory Dix for the origins of the *agape* in discussing the Methodist love-feast. It would be interesting to know the names of the liturgical enthusiasts whose work made the changes in subsequent editions of service-books: he notes that liturgists are ‘magpies’ and added or removed words because of personal taste rather than on solid theological or historical grounds. He neatly criticizes the recent introduction of the binding of hands in a stole at marriage, and the modernist purging of biblical language in the name of a post-agricultural society.

Chapman keeps his description of the theology of worship in Methodism until his last chapter. He rightly hesitates to predict the future of worship forms in British Methodism, but notes that its new relationship with the Church of England in a Covenant (signed in 2003) means that the old tension will undoubtedly be maintained.

This is a book for Uniting Church liturgical leaders to ponder, as it sets out many continuing liturgical and theological neuralgic points. There is a useful bibliography, and a detailed list of the various editions of service-books.

— *Rev Dr Robert Gribben*



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Obituary

The Revd Dr David H. Tripp: Methodist liturgical scholar

David Tripp died in Indiana, USA, on 16th December 2007 following a post-operative stroke. He had been a Methodist minister in that state for the last fifteen years. He was born in London in 1940, and was adopted – and in turn adopted a son and a daughter. At the end of his first marriage to Kathleen, he moved to America and in 1988 married Diane Karay, a United Presbyterian Minister and liturgical scholar in her own right. He was ordained in 1968 at Wesley's Chapel, London, and served the British Methodist Church in circuits in Liverpool, Manchester and London in the intervening years. He studied at Wesley House, Cambridge (when Edward Ratcliff was alive), Leeds (from which he took an MA and his PhD) and the University of Heidelberg in Germany. He was a prodigious scholar with a central interest in liturgiology, though his first love was Patristics. His doctorate was on the ritual life of Second Century Gnosticism. He was associated with two of the learned liturgical societies in Great Britain, as Secretary of the Henry Bradshaw Society, 1976-86, and served on the Council of the Alcuin Club. Unfortunately, he rarely attended the *Societas Liturgica*, so few Australians had a chance to experience him.

He was probably best known for his study of the annual renewal of the Covenant, generally regarded as Methodism's special contribution

to liturgical forms (and which is represented in *Uniting in Worship*). His bibliography, especially of journal articles, runs into three dozen pages, in several languages, and on a variety of topics, which includes the rites of the Cathari (*Studia Liturgica* 1977), symbol (*Grove Liturgical Study* 26), the apocryphal Gospels, the practice of fasting, several chapters in Jones, Wainwright & Yarnold's standard text *The Study of Liturgy* (SPCK 1978 and 1992), Methodist and Protestant history, church architecture, ecumenism, spirituality, hymnology – in fact, his breadth of reading and extraordinary recall of detail meant that there were few liturgically-related matters on which he did not have a refreshing insight. A dozen items a year was not uncommon, and all from the full load of pastoral ministry. Few scholarly journals in the field have not a contribution from him.

He was the epitome of the scholar-pastor. Before ordination, he trained and worked as a secondary teacher, and teaching was his special mark, from the instruction of Local (Lay) Preachers to doctoral examiner for Cambridge and several other universities. He followed the present writer as Ecumenical Lecturer at the Church of England Theological College at Lincoln, UK, 1983-88, and while on sabbatical there, was Visiting Professor at Notre Dame University, Indiana. He was a guest lecturer at The Queen's College, Birmingham UK, the Roman Catholic seminary at Brugge (Belgium), St John's, Collegeville MN, the local Mennonite seminary, and many conferences of church and academy.

He had a very quick wit, but it was never long before one found oneself embroiled in a serious topic and well behind in trading minutiae, which inevitably led to illumination of something worth exploring. He was a wise pastor and a cheerful friend. There was always a touch of 'the glory', a worshipfulness, in his speaking and his writing. Mr Wesley would have been proud of him.

— *Rev Dr Robert Gribben*

Contributors

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Robert Gribben is Professor of Worship and Mission at the Uniting Church Theological College in Melbourne. He read theology at Wesley House, Cambridge, and was ordained by the Methodist Conference of Victoria and Tasmania in 1970, serving as Methodist minister seven years before union and a further three when teaching in the UK in the 1980s. He is a Fellow of the School of Historical Studies of the University of Melbourne.



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