

PHILIP SCHATT

OCT 26 1988

LIBRARY

28  
N44  
m534  
R3  
1988  
NO 4

# **THE NEW MERCERSBURG REVIEW**

## **Journal of the Mercersburg Society**

Number Four

Autumn 1988

THE NEW MERCERSBURG REVIEW  
Journal of the Mercersburg Society

R. Howard Paine, Editor

Officers of the Society

President	Howard G. Hageman
Vice President	R. Howard Paine
Secretary	John C. Miller
Treasurer	James H. Gold
Executive Vice President	John C. Shetler

The New Mercersburg Review is published semi-annually by  
the Mercersburg Society.

Editorial Office

The New Mercersburg Review  
762 Tamarack Trail  
Reading, Pennsylvania 19607

215/777-0679



THE NEW MERCERSBURG REVIEW

---

Number 4

Autumn 1988

---

CONTENTS

Editorial Introduction	1	R. Howard Paine
Articles	3	The Relationship between a Theology of the Liturgy and a Liturgical Theology Jack Maxwell
	14	Evangelical Catholicity at Corinth: A Sermon Gabriel J. Fackre
	18	The Comparative Eucharistic Views of John Wesley and John Nevin Lynne Josselyn
	36	Contemporary Roman Catholic Eucharistic Devotional Practises Gerard S. Sloyan
	47	Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist for Children Frank Estocin
	53	Communion for Children: Light from Mercersburg on a Contem- porary Issue R. Howard Paine



## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Since the last issue of the New Review some changes have been made as the result of Ben Griffin's move to New Brighton, Minnesota. With every good intention Ben felt that he could continue with the editorship, working with an editorial committee made up of Society members in Pennsylvania. On reflection, however, it became apparent that we were creating an organizational structure that would be awkward and unwieldy. It was therefore decided by the Executive Committee and at Ben's suggestion that a new Editor be elected. I am pleased and honored to have been the one chosen.

It has also been necessary for us to set up a wholly new organization for printing and distribution as well. The typing was done by one of the secretaries at Trinity United Church of Christ in York where Ben had been pastor. Very generously Trinity Church assumed the cost of this part of the operation by permitting the work to be done during the hours that the typist was employed in the church office. The printing and binding was then done by a commercial printer in York. All of this operation has now been moved to the Reading area where we have been able to locate people who will serve us at a very reasonable rate.

Because considerable time was consumed in arranging for all of these changes we have missed two issues of the New Review -- Fall, 1987, and Spring, 1988. We hope to do better in the future.

This issue contains lectures and a sermon from the last two annual convocations, the one in Albany in June of 1987, and the Madison N.J. gathering in May of 1988.

Jack Maxwell's scholarship in Mercersburg studies is well known from days when he did his doctoral work in this area. We are pleased to have his contribution for publication here.

Gabriel Fackre, one of the most creative theologians of the United Church of Christ, has consistently acknowledged his debt to the Mercersburg influence. He was the preacher at Albany for the evening Eucharist.

Lynne Josselyn, a United Methodist, has been pursuing doctoral studies at Drew University under the tutelage of our President, Howard Hageman, and Charles Yrigoyen, a member of our executive committee. Her parallels and contrasts drawn between John Wesley and John Nevin provide a very captivating study.

Those attending the past two convocations have been particularly warmed by the presentations of Gerard Sloyan, a Roman Catholic, and Frank Estocin, a Ukrainian Orthodox, both of them gifted teachers of liturgical theology. They brought to our gatherings a dimension of insight which helped us to pursue our work with a grounding in some venerable tradition.

The Editor begs your forbearance for the inclusion of his lecture in this issue. It appears here because it was part of the program at Madison and did much to define the theme of that convocation.

R. Howard Paine  
Editor



Since the last issue of the *Journal* was changed from once a year to twice a year, it has been a source of much interest and discussion. It is a good intention that it should continue with the *Journal*, working with an editorial committee made up of Society members in Pennsylvania. In addition, however, it is a source of interest that we were creating an organizational structure that would be national and catholic. It was therefore decided by the Executive Committee and at the suggestion that a new Editor be elected. I am pleased and honored to have been the one chosen.

It has also been necessary for us to set up a wholly new organization for printing and distribution as well. The *Journal* was done by one of the secretaries at Trinity United Church of Christ in York where I had been pastor. The *Journal* was printed by Trinity United Church at the cost of \$100.00. The operation by separating the work to be done during the year that the *Journal* was published in the church office. The printing and mailing was then done by a commercial printer in York. All of this operation has now been moved to the *Journal* office where we have been able to have a paper which will serve us at a very reasonable rate.

Because considerable time was consumed in arranging for all of these changes we have missed the issue of the *Journal* -- 1981, 1982, and Spring, 1983. We hope to do better in the future.

Two issues contain lectures and a sermon from the last two annual conventions, the one in Albany in June of 1981, and the Hudson N.Y. gathering in May of 1982.

The *Journal's* editorial board is now working steadily as well known from days past as the editorial work in this area. We are pleased to have this contribution for publication here.

Editorial boards, one of the most creative theologians of the United Church of Christ, has consistently contributed his gift to the *Journal's* influence. In the tradition of Albany for the evening *Journal*.

These *Journal's* a United Methodist, has been printing editorial studies at New University with the *Journal* of our President, Howard Hanson, and *Journal's* a member of our executive committee. Her *Journal's* and *Journal's* from between John Wesley and John Newton provide a very interesting study.

These *Journal's* the past two conventions have been particularly wanted by the *Journal's* of *Journal's*, a Roman Catholic, and Frank Pascoe, a Unitarian Universalist, both of them gifted teachers of liturgical theology. They brought to our attention a dimension of insight which helped us to learn our work with a growing in some very rich tradition.

The *Journal* has been a contribution for the inclusion of its lecture in this issue. It appears that because it was part of the program at Hudson and did not follow the theme of that convention.

A. Edward Faine  
Editor



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A THEOLOGY OF THE LITURGY  
AND A LITURGICAL THEOLOGY  
AS SEEN IN THE MERCERSBURG LITURGIES OF 1857 AND 1866

Jack Maxwell  
Minister of the Presbyterian Church  
New Town Square, Pennsylvania

In his admonition to the clergy of Lubeck, Martin Luther said, "Do not begin with innovations in rites. . . . Put first and foremost what is fundamental in our teaching. . . . Reform of impious rites will come of itself when what is fundamental in our teaching has been effectively presented, has taken root in our pious hearts."

And centuries later Howard Hageman wrote: "What made the [Mercersburg] liturgical movement remarkable was not the Order of Worship, despite its high degree of liturgical skill. It was rather the fact that it was the first liturgy in the Reformed Church to articulate a theology. Indeed, it was at Mercersburg that there was worked out, often in the heat of battle, for the first time in the Reformed churches what could be called a theology of the liturgy."

The relationship between theology and worship in general and the liturgy in particular is perceived in significantly different ways by those in the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran/Reformed traditions. For the latter, theology and preaching determine the form and content of the liturgy; the liturgy is not determinative of theology and preaching. The self-revelation of God through Word and sacraments occurs within a liturgical framework; however, that framework is not itself an integral part of the self-revelation. Wilhelm Niesel put it this way:

The order has no value of its own, but only in so far as it serves to build up the Body of Christ. Since the matter there at issue is the gathering and perfecting of the congregation, the form of worship must be adjusted with this eschatological goal in view. That is to say, there is no classic order of service.

In the latter part of this paper I will return to such arguments and contend that before the job is done, one must move on beyond a theology of the liturgy to a liturgical theology, which is that theology to be read out of the shape, the conduct, and even the environment of worship--a liturgical theology which may very well contradict the most carefully and previously articulated theology of the liturgy.

I

First, a brief review of the salient features of Mercersburg theology, which, as others have observed, is not a "system;" yet one thing definitely leads to another.

Incarnation

The organizing principle was the doctrine of the incarnation. As we are to be found in and identified with Adam's guilt, so are we in and to be



identified with Christ's perfect life. This latter identification results in a "mystical union--the true and actual formation of Christ's life into the souls of his people."

Everything else was to be understood in terms of incarnation. "The true ground principle of Christianity is not Christ's death, but his incarnation, which not only comes before the atonement, but forms the basis of its universal possibility and power."

### Church

If the central doctrine of Mercersburg was christology, then the most important corollary was ecclesiology. It was unthinkable for Nevin to discuss the Church as an aggregation of believers brought together by external means into a pious sodality. The Church "is truly the Mother of all her children. They do not impart life to her, but she imparts life to them."

Nevin spoke of the Church as "actual" and "ideal." As imperfect as the "actual" may be, there is within it the "hidden force" of the "ideal" Church struggling to realize itself. Understood in its ideal catholicity the Church is an object of faith--an objective yet supernatural fact which we are required to affirm as a necessary part of the Christian faith.

### Sacraments

As the doctrine of the Church is a logical corollary to the doctrine of incarnation, so does the doctrine of the sacraments logically emerge from the doctrine of the Church. Indeed, if Mercersburg was nothing else, it was a sacramental and more particularly a eucharistic revival. Listen to Nevin again:

. . . the sacramental doctrine of the primitive reformed church stands inseparably connected with the idea of an inward living union between believers and Christ, in virtue of which they are incorporated into his very nature, and made to subsist with him by the power of a common life.

In full correspondence with this conception of the Christian salvation, as a process by which the believer is mystically inserted more and more into the person of Christ, till he becomes thus at last fully transformed into his image, it was held that nothing less than such a real participation of his living person is involved always in the right use of the Lord's Supper.

In his seminal work, The Mystical Presence, Nevin rediscovered for the Reformed churches Calvin's eucharistic theology and sought to contrast it sharply with the prevailing Zwinglianism of Puritanism. A storm of protest arose, led by Princeton's Charles Hodge--a fascinating story in itself, but one which is beyond the scope of this paper.

### Baptism

Although baptism received considerable attention in the denominational



press, the Mercersburg theologians did not produce a comprehensive interpretation of baptism comparable to their eucharistic theology. Nevin often stated with no hesitation: "In baptismal grace I firmly believe;" yet he was never anxious to speculate about the means by which this grace is received.

### Ministry

Nevin's understanding of incarnation, Church, and sacraments led to a particular doctrine of the ministry which, in the judgment of James Hastings Nichols, "broke most definitely with the reformers." According to Nevin, the nature of ministerial authority is "downwards and not upwards, from the few to the many, and not from the many to the few." To say that the Church is before the ministry in order of existence and in no way dependent upon it, but complete without it, is, in Nevin's opinion, a heresy which at once strikes at the root of all faith in the supernatural constitution of the Church, and turns both the apostolical commission and the gift of Pentecost into a solemn farce. In this regard Nevin came perilously close to making ordination a third sacrament.

### Summary

One returns to Mercersburg for two compelling reasons: first, the churchly and sacramental theology articulated by Nevin and Schaff remains a particularly perceptive analysis of Calvin. For the Nineteenth Century this articulation of Calvin's sacramental theology came as a bolt out of the blue and precipitated shock and heated controversy. In not a few circles it could still do the same today.

Second, Mercersburg remains the paradigm in the Reformed tradition of the relationship between theology and liturgy. There it was demonstrated convincingly that theological study must precede and then give rise to liturgical expression. The two complete prayer books of 1857 and 1866 are, indeed, the working out in an art form of the ideas and faith of the Mercersburg theology.

For Nevin and Schaff the liturgy was far more than an aid to decency and order. It was the sum of other things: the expression of doctrine, the voice of the catholic Church at worship, the guarantor against arbitrary freedom, the instrument of the common priesthood, and an art form which expressed the spirit of communal worship.

It was the theology of Mercersburg which demanded a liturgy. The latter was never a discipline independent of, but rather always a consequence of the former. The theology of worship did not prescribe the specific order, but it did establish certain principles. For example, the liturgy must be a Table (or altar) rather than a pulpit liturgy--that is, it must be a corporate vehicle by which the eucharistic union between Christ and his people can transpire rather than simply a collection of prayers and forms for the minister alone. Again, the liturgy must give rise to a worship which is objective--a genuine encounter between the Church and her living, present Lord--rather than a worship which indulges, if not exploits the subjective emotions of the individual.

Here is a capsule of the entire Mercersburg enterprise from the pen of Nevin:



Such a churchly theology, we feel at once, can never be otherwise than sacramental. Where the idea of the Church has come to make itself felt in the way now described, as involving the conjunction of the supernatural and the natural continuously in one and the same abiding economy of grace, its sacraments cannot possibly be regarded as outward signs only of what they represent. They become, for faith, seals also of the actual realities themselves which they exhibit. . . . In the end, also, unquestionably, the sacramental feeling here cannot fail to show itself a liturgical feeling.

A theology which is truly Christocentric must follow the Creed, must be objective, must be historical; with this, must be churchly; and, with this again, must be sacramental and liturgical.

## II

Schaff was appointed chairman of the liturgical committee of the German Reformed Church by the Synod of 1851; and there begins one of the more fascinating of all liturgical stories, as Schaff's latent liturgical genius soon began to appear. He was uniquely fitted to his task, having grown up in the United Church of Prussia with its Lutheran liturgical flavoring. Furthermore, he was an historian, a poet, a hymnologist, and the possessor of a native ability to compile, adapt, and compose liturgical sources, and then edit them into a unified whole.

At the Synod of Baltimore in 1852, Schaff reported the proposed design of the new German Reformed liturgy. It was to be the first complete prayer book in the Reformed tradition, consisting of sixteen parts.

- I. The Regular Service on the Lord's Day
- II The Festival Seasons, especially Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday
- III. Prayers for Miscellaneous Occasions
- IV. The Administration of Infant and Adult Baptism
- V. The Order of Confirmation
- VI. The Holy Communion
- VII. The Visitation and Communion of the Sick
- VIII. The Visitation of Prisoners
- IX. The Solemnization of Matrimony
- X. The Ordination & Installation of the Pastor
- XI. The Ordination & Installation of Elders & Deacons
- XII. The Laying of a Corner Stone
- XIII. The Consecration of a Church
- XIV. The Burial of the Dead
- XV. The Family Liturgy
- XVI. A Table of Lessons of the Holy Scripture to be read in the Church throughout the year, and a similar Table for the private use of Scripture.

In addition to the general design of the work, Schaff and his committee proposed the general principles upon which it was to be



constructed. They are significant not only because they shaped the subsequent liturgies, but also because one can see in these principles theology yielding liturgy.

First, "the liturgical worship of the Primitive Church, as far as it can be ascertained from the Holy Scriptures, the oldest ecclesiastical writings, and the liturgies of the Greek and Latin Churches of the third and fourth centuries, ought to be made, as much as possible, the general basis of the proposed Liturgy; the more so, as they are in fact also the source from which the best portions of the various liturgies of the sixteenth century were derived. . . . For the merit of the reformation in the department of worship, if we except hymnology, . . . does not so much consist in producing new forms of devotion, as in transferring those handed down from former ages into the vernacular tongues, in purifying them from certain additions, in reducing them to greater simplicity, and in subordinating them to the preaching of the Gospel, as the central part of Protestant worship."

This first principle is perhaps the most profound in its implications, for it opens up the early history of the Christian Church and makes it available, if not normative, for contemporary liturgical composition. According to Nevin, the German Reformed Liturgy was to adopt the sacramental principle of the ancient church, and with that came an appropriation of the forms to facilitate the principle. Note that the "liturgies of the Greek and Latin Churches of the third and fourth centuries" were to be the primary reference, rather than the worship of the New Testament Church. Scripture was understood to be a source--historical and devotional--but not the norm of worship. This meant simply that the two part structure of Word and Eucharist, fused after the canonical period, was accepted as liturgical fact.

In this intention to be ecumenical and catholic in its liturgy, the committee nevertheless made it quite clear that, second: "Among the later liturgies special reference ought to be had to the old Palatinate and other Reformed liturgies of the sixteenth century." Here the peculiar insights of the Reformation are acknowledged, as is the distinctive contribution made by the Palatinate-German wing of the Reformation; however, the sixteenth century is pointedly made a secondary liturgical reference.

From the third century in the first principle, the committee moved to the sixteenth in the second, then to the nineteenth in the third: "Neither the ancient Catholic nor the Reformed liturgies, however, ought to be copied slavishly, but reproduced rather in a free evangelical spirit and adapted to the peculiar wants of our age and denomination. . . . New forms may be prepared where it seems desirable, but in keeping always with the devotional spirit of the Church in her purest days."

In short, the liturgy must be indigenous both to the denomination and to the geography. Schaff's dynamic view of history and revelation is clear in this principle. The liturgy is, as it were, a tent rather than a tabernacle--i.e., its form and emphasis must change with time and circumstance. There were distinct advantages, according to Schaff and Nevin, in maintaining many of the historic forms of the ancient Church. The Decalogue, Lord's Prayer, Magnificat, Te Deum, etc. could not be excelled for their devotional quality and their ability to lend continuity and context to the Church's worship; however, the excellence of these



ancient forms did not preclude new forms peculiar to the present age and place of the Church.

In the fourth principle the theory of adaptability and indigenization is to be seen again. "Those portions of the Liturgy which are most frequently used, as the regular service on the Lord's Day, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, should embrace several forms, some shorter, some longer, some with and without responses, with the view to avoid monotony, and to adapt them the more readily to the condition and wants of our various ministers and congregations which are evidently not prepared for an entire uniformity."

In a sense this principle is more strategic and practical than theoretical. As it was eventually published, the Provisional Liturgy did contain the internal options described; however, they were all removed in the subsequent Order of Worship. Even though the retention of them would have been strategically wise, Nevin seemed bent on what ought to be rather than what would "sell."

Fifth, "the language and style ought to be throughout scriptural as much as possible; that is, simple, sublime, and devotional, such as we find in the Psalms especially, and in the Lord's Prayer. The doctrinal tone, which predominated too much in most of the Calvinistic Liturgies, ought to be used only within certain limits." Schaff firmly believed that it was possible to be both theologically sound and inspirational.

The sixth principle prescribed the addition of a "Family Liturgy," "not only on account of its independent value, but especially also because it would facilitate the introduction of the Liturgy amongst our laity, and thus promote its right use in the Church. For, in the opinion of your committee, a Liturgy will never be sufficiently appreciated by the congregations, if it is confined to the hands of the minister. Like the Bible, the Catechism, and the Hymn Book, it ought to be the common property and manual of every member of the Church. The laymen will take a far deeper interest in the devotional exercises, if they can follow the minister by their book, and respond at least with an audible Amen at the end of each prayer." The worship Schaff envisioned was to be truly corporate.

Seventh, "a liturgy ought not to interfere with the proper use of extemporaneous prayer, either in public or in private, but rather to regulate and promote it." This principle reflects Calvin's own reticence regarding free prayer, and relegates it to occasions other than the sacraments, ordinances, and regular Lord's Day worship.

There is reason to wonder why the commissioners adopted these principles with so little debate, or even if they had the slightest notion where they would lead. George W. Richards even speculated that Nevin and Schaff may not have been fully aware of the implications of their proposals; however, Richards rightly observed that "the Baltimore principles are clearly in harmony with Schaff's and Nevin's conception of Church History, the idea of development and the continuity of the one holy Catholic Church through the centuries, yet always subject to the Holy Scriptures."



### III

By way of illustrating not only these principles, but also the salient features of the Mercersburg theology, I will briefly describe the ante-communion and eucharistic orders in the Provisional Liturgy.

"The Regular Service on the Lord's Day" begins when the minister takes his place "on the right side of the altar." The congregation stands and the minister says, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The congregation responds, "Amen."

There follows a call to Confession, whereupon the minister and congregation kneel and say the prescribed prayer together. In its effort to make even the absent Eucharist central to all worship, the committee directed that this prayer conform to that in the Holy Communion. I have identified our biblical references in the prayer.

The congregation continues to kneel while the minister rises to pronounce the Declaration of Pardon, concluding: "I announce and declare, by the authority and in the name of Christ, that your sins are forgiven. . . ."

The rubric directs that "Here and at the end of every Collect and Prayer, the Congregation shall say: Amen."

There follows the Apostles' Creed, a Versicle and Response, and the Gloria in Excelsis.

Then the minister reads the Gospel and Epistle for the day--a curious reversal for which there is no adequate explanation in the Liturgical Committee minutes. The Gloria Patri follows the readings.

The appointed Collect is introduced with the Salutation, after which follows the litany or the General Prayers. The latter consist of thanksgiving; intercessions for the Church, country, and all conditions of men; concluding with supplication.

"A suitable Psalm or Hymn" is sung, during which the minister moves to the pulpit to deliver a sermon, which, according to the rubric, "should be in harmony with the general order of the Church Year."

A prayer by the Minister and the Lord's Prayer by the congregation follow the sermon; after which the Deacons "collect the Alms of the People;" announcements are made; another Psalm or Hymn "ending with a Doxology," is sung; and the service is concluded with the Apostolic Benediction.

The Holy Communion is prescribed to be "administered publicly in the Church, in every congregation, at least twice a year, and if possible oftener." This liturgy begins and proceeds through the Sermon essentially as does the Regular Service on the Lord's Day, except that the Nicene Creed is used rather than the Apostles' Creed.

The eucharistic order prescribes that the offering vessel shall be returned to the minister, "who shall reverently place it upon the altar, as an oblation presented unto God."



An adaptation of the Collect for Purity and Scripture sentences "slowly and solemnly" pronounced precede the Prayer of Consecration, which begins with the Salutation, Sursum Corda and Gratia Agamus. The prayer itself includes the historic elements: thanksgiving for creation, providence and redemption; Sanctus and Benedictus; Words of Institution with the manual acts; epiclesis; anamnesis and oblation; a series of intercessions and the Lord's Prayer.

The epiclesis is a strong and powerful statement of Mercersburg eucharistic theology:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, send down we beseech thee, the powerful benediction of thy Holy Spirit upon these elements of bread and wine, that being set apart now from a common to a sacred and mystical use, they may exhibit and represent to us with true effect the Body and Blood of thy Son, Jesus Christ; so that in the use of them we may be made, through the power of the Holy Ghost, to partake really and truly of his blessed life, whereby only we can be saved from death, and raised to immortality at the last day.

The minister serves himself, then the elders and deacons, and then the people, who come forward to receive the elements, and are dismissed with a benediction. The post-communion thanksgiving and the Te Deum conclude the service.

By any measure the liturgies of Mercersburg are first-rate for any period, let alone for the mid-Nineteenth Century. They fulfill the guiding principles which Schaff articulated at Baltimore, and they reflect Mercersburg theology. They are conducted largely from the altar; the people are thoroughly involved; the lessons and sermon are dictated by the Church Year; the use of creeds and canticles provides continuity with the Church through the ages; the eucharistic prayer is classical in shape and language; traces of thirty-five different liturgies have been identified, yet the result is not a patchwork; biblical language and allusions are frequent; they are doctrinal and yet devotional.

#### IV

This is not to suggest, however, that these liturgies are beyond critical observation; yet, it is the case that while the Mercersburg personae fully understood the implications of a theology of the liturgy, neither they nor anyone else at the time gave any thought to liturgical theology.

I must suggest in only the briefest way the manner in which I am using the term--and an increasingly "loaded" term--"liturgical theology." Simply put, after a liturgy is written deliberately to reflect a certain theology, one must then read out of that liturgy--its shape, content, rubrics, gestures, and even its space--the theology which those liturgical aspects inherently convey. It may be the case--and I contend it often is the case--that the liturgical theology is inconsistent with the theology of the liturgy. I have seen some clergy carve the Thanksgiving turkey with a greater aura of mysterium tremendum et fascinans than they exhibit when presiding at the eucharistic Table.



Alexander Schmemmann writes about the "liturgical coefficient" of each element in the liturgy--"that significance which, apart from its own immediate content, each acquires as a result of its place in the general sequence or order of worship."

Ralph Keifer contends that "a eucharistic theology which does not take into account the actual celebration of the Eucharist is a theology of a Eucharist which does not exist."

Sister Mary Collins argues that "Christian liturgy . . . consists in a union of the verbal and the presentational . . . --conscious body reactions and intentional movement. . . ; the expressive, non-discursive use of sounds and rhythms and silence . . . ; color and textiles."

Peter Fink writes: "The problematic to which a liturgical theology must address itself is the all too observable discrepancy between actual liturgical celebrations in the church and the claims which theological reflection makes for those celebrations."

V

From the perspective of liturgical theology, thus too briefly and incompletely described, there are critical comments which may be made concerning the principal Mercersburg liturgies. First, the Liturgical Committee deliberately sought to make the Regular Service for the Lord's Day reflect the eucharistic order in an effort to make it clear that the Eucharist was normative, even if not celebrated. They succeeded in certain respects and not in others.

For example, the General Prayers should be introduced by the Salutation and Sursum Corda and thematically reflect the eucharistic prayer. Further, they should come after the offering rather than before the sermon--i.e., the ante-communion better points to the absent Eucharist if its order follows the eucharistic order.

The Creed is used in both orders as a response to the Declaration of Pardon. While some rationale could be provided for this, there appears to have been no thought given to the role of the Creed as a response to proclamation, a rehearsal of baptismal vows, and thus a gatekeeper to the Eucharist.

Both Nichols and Hageman have argued that Mercersburg "under-valued" preaching. It is certainly true that there is nowhere to be found any discussion of the relationship of Word and Sacraments, and this may very well be the result of a reaction against Puritanism and Mercersburg's determination to re-establish the centrality of the Eucharist. Yet in The Liturgical Question, in which Nevin went out of his way to establish the architectural and liturgical centrality of the altar, he insisted that this was not to be done in such a way as "to disparage the reading-desk or the pulpit, as being the proper organs of address from the side of God to the people."

Schaff wrote in a letter that the sermon cannot be valued too highly. "It produced the Church in the first century, reformed it in the sixteenth, and must regenerate it in the nineteenth."



Well, whatever the Mercersburg principals thought of preaching in the grand theological scheme of things, from the point of view of liturgical theology these observations can be made. Scripture and sermon are separated in time by several minutes, as they are separated in space--i.e., the Scripture is read from the altar, the sermon preached several minutes later from the pulpit. Furthermore, as long as the sermon pertains to the Church Year, it need not necessarily pertain to the prescribed pericopes for the day. From the order of events and from the respective spaces where those events took place, it would be difficult to extrapolate from the liturgy as conducted any serious relationship between Scripture and sermon.

A third matter has to do with architecture and altar. Mercersburg's persistent use of altar rather than Table had long irritated John Henry Augustus Bomberger--and not without historical justification. The divided chancel with the separation of pulpit and lectern and the center aisle reaching its destination and climax in the elevated altar fixed to the East wall was the architectural style Nevin believed the Provisional Liturgy and Order of Worship demanded. He was not ignorant of the distinction between the connotations of altar and Table, and he chose the former because he felt it better expressed "that mystical union which takes place between Christ and his people in every act of worship."

Nevin was reacting so strongly against a pulpit-dominated architecture and worship that he went to the other extreme. Harbaugh also argued for the use of altar instead of Table, claiming that this term better expressed the objective action of God in worship generally and the Eucharist particularly. Nichols suggests that Nevin "gave no sign whatever of being aware of the classical Reformed view of this subject."

Equally to the point is this: For all of Mercersburg's high and exalted eucharistic theology and brilliantly crafted eucharistic liturgy, it is something of a puzzle that there was little, if any, serious effort to increase the frequency of celebrating Holy Communion. The opening rubric in the Provisional Liturgy makes no mention of frequency. In the Order of Worship the rubric indicates twice a year "and if possible oftener." One cannot avoid the hunch that the Liturgical Committee would have liked to urge an increase in the celebrations of Communion; however, the members were undoubtedly aware that such a recommendation would open them to even more criticism. There is nothing in the minutes of the Committee to indicate that the matter was ever discussed.

+ + +

To bring criticism of this nature to the Mercersburg liturgies is to raise questions which neither they nor any of their contemporaries were asking; therefore the criticism is unfair. It is the case, however, that modern-day liturgical committees in the Reformed tradition need to move on beyond their operative theology of the liturgy--if they have one that is recognizable as such--to an examination of the theology to be read out of the structure, sequence and conduct of the liturgy they have produced.

As for the work produced by the Mercersburg liturgical committees, I remain a committed admirer, and share the enthusiasm expressed by J.S. Foulk, perhaps the most effective advocate of the Provisional liturgy and the Order of Worship:



Blame us not if we value our liturgy: It embodies  
the anthems of Saints; it thrills the heart with  
dying songs of the faithful it is hallowed with  
the blood of martyrs; it glows with sacred fire.



## EVANGELICAL CATHOLICITY AT CORINTH: A SERMON

Gabriel J. Fackre  
Professor of Historical Theology  
Andover Newton Theological School  
Newton Centre, Massachusetts

Text: I Cor. I:1-7; 12:4-6, 12-13

Pacelli and Roncalli -- two popes; two perceptions of the Gospel; perhaps two things Paul had in mind in his correspondence with the Corinthian Church.

Writing 15 years ago about them, Malachi Martin describes Pacelli and Roncalli in this way (keeping in mind Martin's own biases).

Polarity was essential to Pacelli: the inner, divinely consecrated authority of the City of God, and the outer besieging force of the "world," of "evil," of "anti-Christ." This polarity spelled intransigency and unremitting rejection of all parleying, all dialogue, for dialogue meant a moratorium with the forces of evil. Parleying meant compromise with the truth. Cardinal Stepinac, who remained in Yugoslavia and died in a Titoist prison, and Cardinal Mindszenty, who ended up as refugee in the United States Legation of Budapest -- these were the heroes for Pacelli. Pacelli had sharp memories of cardinal Innitzer and his deathly compromise with Hitler at the time of the Austrian Anschluss.

Pacelli was, thus, the last embodiment of the ancient City of God.

Roncalli however, had none of the traits which made Pacelli. Wherever he worked, he brought the look of the peasant farmer tempered by continual dependence on the vagaries of wind, of rain, of sun, of soil, buoyed with the confidence that this was God's world and not a Manichaean kingdom divided irrevocably between Good and Evil. He was calmed with the realism which acknowledges facts of life however brutal they be, and which has learned to sow the seeds of later harvests in unpromising grounds. A proverb of his native countryside ran, "Where weeds can grow, wheat can flourish." This innate realism, when focused on the world of his day, refused all artificial divisions in terms of once fiercely propagated ideologies. It could discern in the welter of changing seasons, in the gushing torrents of new fashions, in the slow dissolution of sacrosanct structures, the outline of an emerging order of things in which essential human values would be



preserved and in which the Gospel of Love would be of supreme importance. (Malachi Martin, Three Popes and the Cardinal, pp. 37, 38-39)

The Pacellian posture: Here it is. Take it or leave it! The Roncallian one: Where is it? Open the window. Let's look for it together!

Caricatures. Yes. But instructive ones -- worth it if they lead us into the Pauline text.

Paul had a Pacellian situation at Corinth. The Gospel had made its mark. Here was passionate commitment to Jesus Christ. "Everywhere, there are those who call on the name of Jesus Christ...you eagerly await for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed."

But along with that firmness of conviction and commitment to Jesus Christ went something else. Each one was certain they knew just what that meant. So thought those who followed Apollos, and those who followed Cephas, and those who followed Paul, those who spoke in tongues, those who prophesied, those who gave all they had to the poor, those who willingly went to martyrdom. Do you want to know what Christ expects? Who Christ is? Why, it's this -- following Apollos, Cephas, Paul, speaking in tongues, solidarity with the poor...

And do you want to know what it isn't? Do you want to know what is "of the Devil," "the Evil Empire," the city of the world that is opposed to the City of God? It's those other people who do not follow Cephas or Apollos, who do not help or heal or give their body to be burned or speak in tongues....

Paul confronted a congregation that had become balkanized. Each caucus within the church declared itself to be definitive of the church. A painfully familiar scene!

What is the Word spoken into this situation? Not as obvious as it might first appear. Why?

First of all, Paul strikes a Pacellian note: Jesus Christ is the only way. "He will keep you strong until the end. God has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ." You are on the right track with your firmness, as in Barmen "Jesus Christ is the one Word we have to hear and to trust and obey in life and in death." That is an exclusive and exclusionary Word. There is no other source of our proclamation "beside this one Word of God...no other events and powers, figures and truths," as Barmen put it so forcefully in a situation of captivity -- the captivity of the church to culture and its idolatries. "Woe is me if I preach not this Gospel!" Thus the Paul who writes to Corinth is no different than the Paul who writes to Rome. Here is the Paul of solus Christus. Here is singularity that is the presupposition of all else that is said in this Corinthian letter.

If it were not, Paul would have succumbed to "the Roncallian problem" as it has unfolded in the travail of the Roman Catholic Church in the decades after the second Vatican Council. The winds of the world not only ventilated the church when the window was opened; they seemed to loosen its



very foundations. But better to speak about the things one knows than the plight of our sisters and brothers. For this is the mainline Protestant problem too: such eagerness to attend to the world's agenda that the words of the world easily become the Word of God. Put your finger to the winds of the culture -- or the counterculture -- "go with the flow." "Get with it!" "Go for it!"

Accommodation to culture is not only the temptation of the mainline, but also of Protestants who vociferously attack culture. Here there are many ironies. Take the Christian Right and its assault on "secular humanism." When doing some research on this subject a few years ago I soon discovered the "worldliness" of our neofundamentalist sisters and brothers -- the fusion and therefore the confusion of a laundry list of single issue causes with the Gospel. Here was the substituting of a human secular agenda for the one Word, Jesus Christ. Then too there was the glamour and glitter world and commercialism of TV evangelism that did not look very much like the One despised and forsaken, weak, vulnerable, bruised for our iniquities, suffering for our sins.

The mills of God grind slowly but exceeding fine. The temptations of "money, sex and power" have now taken their toll on this worldly Christianity.

The Word sets the agenda, not the world! Let the world have its say at the meeting, but the final vote is cast by the Gospel.

So Paul speaks firmly and forcefully to Corinth about the Gospel and what it means in belief and behavior, from the dining room to the bedroom. No equivocation here about Christian identity. Jesus Christ is the one way, truth and life.

But, but..."is Christ divided?" Now Paul strikes a Roncallian counter-note in the Corinthian letter. He tells his readers that to understand Jesus Christ our only Son of God and Savior, is to understand him in the context of life together. This Gospel is no Lone Ranger religion. Down with imperial ideologies and pretentious individualisms! "The eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of you!" So Paul's marvelous Body imagery. "You are the Body of Christ, and individually members of it." there is no way Christ can be known among you for who he is and what he wills without the living of a life together that is this Body of Christ on earth. Each partisan, each perception is an organ of this Body, one that needs the other organs to function as a body. Or, to change the figure as Paul does: The Spirit has given you each a gift -- these understandings and powers of which you are so justly proud. Yet a gift is to be given away to others. And you in turn are to receive what others have to give to you. You are to be learners as well as teachers if the church is the community the Spirit intends it to be. "Each is given these gifts of the Spirit for the common good."

Paul does not forecast how it all comes out when this happens. We are never told in so many words what the Gospel of Christ would look like if the perceptions of Cephas, Apollos, Paul, the tongue talkers and the body burners were put together. We don't get a product; we get instead a pilgrimage. We get a I Cor 13 after a I Cor 12 -- an invitation to journey together to see if, in agape, we can learn from one another and therefore function together as a healthy body does. Each generation has to relearn



what this means with its own partisans and problems.

Here again our Protestant problems are instructive. Right now in mainline theology and church life much is heard of the "hermeneutics of suspicion." Namely: all points of view are interpretations formed by the power interests of the interpreter. Therefore we must expose you and your interpretation of the Gospel as the construal of an oppressor. And since all our views are perspectival, I am free to interpret faith in my own way. And as a victim of your oppression, mine is a legitimate interpretation, as yours is not. To the extent that this suspicionist hermeneutic makes inroads in our midst, to that extent we not only balkanize the church, we beirutize it. Each caucus behind its fortifications -- with no life together and no rationale for it.

Our fundamentalist sisters and brothers have similar problems with their Manichean and Armageddon theologies -- ones that divide the world up into the armies of light and the legions of Night. This poisons and polarizes the civil discourse so necessary for a political democracy. But sooner or later it catches up with the polarizer. For if the Evil Empire is out there, and the angelic Kingdom is right here, there is no spirituality developed that acknowledges one's own vulnerability to sin, no institutional checks and balances to forestall the pyramiding of power, and no accountability system within one's own institutions. Once again, we are living thru days that demonstrate the error of bad anthropology and illusory soteriology.

There is a better way. We might call it "evangelical catholicity." What else is Paul's two-fold Word to Corinth? Evangelical because there is a firm exclusive evangel which brooks no compromise: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is the one way, truth and life. Catholic because the way, truth and life that is Jesus Christ is known only through the catholicity, the inclusivity of the full Body.

This two-fold word I believe is one of the lasting bequests of Mercersburg. The Mercersburg vision is an evangelical catholicity, faithful to the christological center and catholic in its interpretation of it. It fights on two fronts resisting 1) the accommodation of the Gospel to culture and 2) the reduction of the Gospel to the single issue factions that regularly tear asunder the Church.

It's no accident that sacramentality goes with evangelical catholicity. Paul connects them in his counsel to Corinth. "We are all baptized into one body, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, and we are all given the one Spirit to drink." The waters of baptism and the wines of eucharist offer a catholicity in Christ. At this Table we meet the one and only Lord, Jesus Christ. And we come to it and to him bringing our variety of gifts, so testifying that we need each other. We belong with each other around that one table, and in and with our common Lord.

Let us break bread together. Let us drink wine together.

Amen



THE COMPARATIVE EUCHARISTIC VIEWS OF JOHN WESLEY AND JOHN NEVIN  
with an emphasis on  
CHRISTIAN NURTURE AND THE ADMISSION OF CHILDREN  
TO THE LORD'S TABLE

Lynne Josselyn  
Minister of the United Methodist Church  
Former District Superintendent  
Doctoral Candidate in Liturgical Studies  
Drew University, Madison, NJ

The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast the Eucharistic views of John Wesley and John Nevin, and to cite how each of the Reformers in his time advocated and was involved in the nurture of children. It is my intent to provide brief settings of the theology of each of our reformers, to cite overviews on the meaning of the eucharist for them and then to look specifically at various aspects of the eucharistic meal with the intention of comparing and contrasting, and then to conclude the paper with a discussion of nurture.

The use of words or categories to explain these various aspects may not be identical, but it is my hope that in intention and commitment they will match closely. Any mismatching will be on the part of the author, not the reformers.

The desire to delve into such comparisons arises from my strong identification with John Wesley's views, my appreciation for John Nevin and a strong sense that they were very close in their eucharistic concepts as well as in many aspects of their understanding of christian nurture.

For John Wesley and John Nevin, word and sacrament were inseparably joined. For Wesley, preaching and the eucharist were aimed at the whole gospel, a necessary conversion to the whole faith and whole participation in the christian community seeking the wholeness of life.

John Nevin states this inseparable concept in these words, "A theology which is truly Christocentric must follow the creed, be objective and historical, churchly and again sacramental and liturgical.<sup>2</sup> There is never any satisfaction with anything less than an altar liturgy."<sup>2</sup>

In the Jack Maxwell book, Worship and Reformed Theology, Nevin describes marvelously what this altar liturgy and eucharistic theology encompasses.

(The Liturgy) gives us the true Reformed view of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, in a form answering at the same time to the faith and worship of the Primitive Church. It teaches, that the Lord's Supper is more than an outward sign, and more than a mere calling to mind of our Saviour's death as something past and gone. It teaches, that the value of Christ's sacrifice never dies, but is perennially contained in the power of His life. It teaches, that the outward side of the sacrament is mystically bound by the Holy Ghost to its inward invisible side; not fancifully, but really and truly; so that the undying



power of Christ's life and sacrifice are there, in the transaction, for all who take part in it with faith.<sup>3</sup>

Wesley and Nevin were together in viewing the Liturgy as one of word and sacrament. And Wesley not only supported the inseparableness of word and sacrament, but placed a strong emphasis on practice, as well. (Calvin shared this same point of view.) In 1784, September 10, Wesley wrote to the American Methodists, "I also advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord's Day."<sup>4</sup> He communed as often as possible (91 times a year at the age of 86) and encouraged others to do the same. "Constant Communion" was a theme Wesley often expounded on.<sup>5</sup>

Nevin was very close to the liturgy, having served on the Revised Liturgy Committee and been responsible for much of the writing. He stated, as I have already mentioned, in Catholic and Reformed what the liturgy teaches. So central for him was the mystical bond between the outward and the inward sides which enabled the undying power of Christ's life and sacrifice to be present in the transaction of the faithful.<sup>6</sup>

As a pastoral theologian Nevin was concerned with both theology and ecclesiastical history as experienced in the eucharist. The view of Christ's person and the conception formed of the church make the church visible and historical. "In the sacrament the doctrine of the primitive Reformation Church stands inseparably connected with the idea of an inward living union between the believers and Christ and made to subsist with him by the power of the common life."<sup>8</sup>

From a primarily missionary perspective,, Wesley grounded in hymns the reflection of his extra-ordinary mission. Through hymn writing, his own and that of his brother Charles, he cast his doctrine into form most readily usable by those he addressed in the Gospel Call.<sup>9</sup> (I shall relate Wesley's doctrines as they are contained in his views on the eucharist by citing certain hymns as occasions arise.)

As self-defined missionary and pastoral theologian we continue our comparative discussion. Up to this point it is apparent that both view an inseparable connection between word and sacrament, though their methods of description differ. (Nevin is by far more prolific and sets out his views in a more complex manner.)

As pastoral theologian Nevin very aptly describes our life in Christ as the true center of our life. He says that when we are joined to Christ we are one with him. This is a real union--a mystical union. Such union enables a new life;

Christ communicates his own life to the soul on which he acts, causing it to grow into his very nature. This is the basis of our salvation, the only medium by which it's possible for us to have interest in the grace of Christ.<sup>10</sup>

Nevin's concept of mystical union is a prerequisite to his actual views on the eucharist. But before looking at the specifics of the eucharist it is necessary to understand how he views our relationship with Christ which he calls the mystical union.



The mystical union includes a participation in the entire humanity of Christ and our total embracing as well, our understanding, and will and body. Christ's life must be formed in us as human life; it must enter into us and become united in us--body and soul.<sup>11</sup>

As Nevin speaks of a personal mystical union he also means a corporate mystical union. He writes of the relation of Christ to the church in this way: "This relationship involves no idealistic dissipation of his body and requires no fusion of his proper personality with persons of his people."<sup>12</sup> We spring from Christ in new life but stand in him as the ever living and ever present root. Christ is personally present in the church in the power of his divine nature, but the divine is at the same time<sup>13</sup> human and whenever his presence is revealed it is so revealed in two ways.

In this mystical union Nevin finally states that it is brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit which "proceeds from the father and the son in union with both in which the new creation in Jesus Christ upholds itself and reveals itself."<sup>14</sup> Though this new life is spiritual it is not only limited to the soul but affects the body as well, and is apprehended only by faith. Though we live in this mystical union on earth the balance will only be complete in the resurrection

This brings to a conclusion the introductory materials; now I will proceed in the following sections to the process of direct comparison the eucharistic views of John Nevin and John Wesley. I will be using certain categories as they relate to the eucharist. I mention these now in order to establish a quasi order in our minds. I shall cite the views of Wesley and Nevin as they perceive the sacrament as 1) a means of grace, 2) sign or symbol, 3) real presence, 4) importance of faith, 5) Christ's sacrifice, 6) our sacrifice, and 7) eschatology.

According to John Wesley, the eucharist is a chief means of<sup>16</sup> grace because in this sacrament the real presence of Christ is conveyed. This means of grace is only effective when we trust in the power of God whose work the sacrament is and in the grace of the Lord<sup>17</sup> who works in us. We cannot trust in our own merits nor in work worked. As the sacrament is the sure instrument of present grace the elements are organs<sup>18</sup> to convey His grace and the conveying is the work of the Holy Spirit. "The inward grace, which is the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper."<sup>19</sup>

John Nevin writes of an invisible grace, belonging to the ordinance of its own nature. Grace is not a reminder but a true and real exhibition of that which it represents. Nevin connects grace with signs and symbols and Wesley does, too. So I shall attempt to make the same connections.

For Nevin the sign does not make the sacrament; the other part is the invisible grace (already mentioned) that is mystically or sacramentally joined with the signs. "The sign and thing signified are, by Christ's institution, mystically bound together, so as to form in the sacramental transaction one and the same presence."<sup>20</sup> With this outward sign is represented grace and the union of these is mystical.<sup>21</sup>

For Wesley as for Nevin the bread and wine as symbols of the body and blood were symbols of spiritual sustenance that the christian received in the administration of the sacrament.<sup>22</sup> They were not really signs and



symbols but "a sure, confirming seal."<sup>23</sup> "The divine presence of our Lord makes the consecrated bread more than a sign of Christ's body; since, by his so doing, we receive not only the sign, but with it the thing signified, all the benefits of his incarnation and passion."<sup>24</sup>

Note how Wesley's doctrine emerges here in this hymn verse:

Effectual let the tokens prove  
And made by heavenly art,  
Fit channels to convey Thy love  
To every faithful heart.<sup>25</sup>

Accompanying the above discussion of grace, sign and symbol, is the importance of recognizing the eucharist as the real presence, and a mystical experience on the part of the faithful. These are the emphases I point to now.

Wesley, as with Calvin, confirmed that the bread and wine were signs of a Reality present, or the Real Presence,

"note Christ's glorified human body--the body of the incarnation raised incorruptible--but its dynamics, its virtues, which is by the Holy Spirit mediated to us in the sacramental action. To partake sacramentally of the Body of Christ is to partake of the substance of that God conceived in terms of the Spirit, not a spacial extension."<sup>26</sup>

Wesley often employs phrases like "Living Presence" or "Dynamic Presence" to stand for "Real Presence." Where God acts there God is for Wesley. To connect this Real Presence with the sign and means of grace we note in the prayer of consecration that it is asked that God make the consecration a real and effective sign, and an efficacious means of grace, as well.<sup>27</sup>

Though Wesley claimed little liking for mysticism he couldn't evade the mystical element in the Lord's Supper. He believed "The mystical relation which the bread by consecration has to Christ's body is sufficient to give it the name of "His Body."<sup>28</sup> "How it's done is mystery; that it's done is certainty of Christian life."<sup>29</sup> This mystery is made real in these hymn words:

O the depth of love Divine,  
Th' unfathomable grace!  
Who shall say how bread and wine  
God into man conveys!  
HOW the bread His flesh imparts,  
HOW the wine transmits His blood,  
Fills His faithful people's hearts  
With all the life of God!

Sure and real is the grace,  
The manner be unknown;  
Only meet us in Thy ways,  
And perfect us in one.  
Let us taste the heavenly power;



Lord, we ask for nothing more;  
Thine to bless, 'til<sup>30</sup> only ours  
To wonder and adore.

For Wesley and also for Nevin, as I shall soon point out, faith was of utmost importance to the entire eucharistic mystery. The benefits of the sacrament are contingent on faith though the efficacy does not rest solely on the inner state of the believer. The sacrament has the power to bestow faith in its own right, but at the same time as far as the believer is concerned, faith is indispensable. "By faith the believer can look back to the cross and forward to Christ. It is faith which enables the communicant to realize both the mystery and grandeur of the Lord's Supper."<sup>31</sup> And to state this another way, eating and drinking are the visible means whereby God conveys to our souls grace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Spirit which were purchased by the body of Christ once broken and blood once shed for us. With faith we receive the same.<sup>32</sup>

John Nevin states his real presence concept in this way. We note the power of the Holy Spirit so intricately involved here.

God is called upon to send down the powerful benediction of the Holy Spirit on the elements, that being set apart now from 'common to sacred' or mystical use, they may exhibit and represent (Calvin) with true effect the Body and Blood of His Son Jesus Christ in use of them, in sacramental transaction, we may be made through the power of the Holy Spirit to partake really and truly of His Blessed life, whereby we can be saved from death and raised to immortality on the last day.<sup>33</sup>

The presence is not in the bread and wine materially, but in the sacramental mystery as a whole--visible and invisible: the mystical union; connected by a true inward bond.<sup>34</sup> In this sacramental mystery Christ communicates to us in a real way.<sup>35</sup>

Nevin, too, emphasizes the necessity of faith in receiving the eucharist, in fact he is on the opposite pole with Wesley regarding the power of our faith. Nevin says, "The virtue of Christ's mystical presence is comprehended in the sacrament itself and cannot be said to be put into it in any sense by our faith. It brings us into right relation only."<sup>36</sup> On the other hand Wesley stated that it was our faith that brought us to realize the mystery and grandeur of the Lord's Supper.<sup>37</sup>

Nevin also states that a communicant must be in the exercise of faith at the time of receiving the sacrament or else the recipient will receive only bare signs. Faith forms the necessary condition for our becoming recipients of the grace at hand. "A gracious state, accompanied with gracious affections in the transaction itself, is the indispensable condition of a profitable approach to the Lord in the holy sacrament."<sup>38</sup>

For Nevin there is no power in the sacrament that can convert; "the grace that it exhibits can be apprehended only by faith."<sup>39</sup> But for Wesley, this is not always his belief. He gives the sacrament the power to convert. Receptibility could occur to any communicant.

In looking at eucharist as sacrifice we find that Wesley and Nevin are



close theologically. Wesley calls Christ the Paschal Lamb of God and says that in the sacrifice he was both victim and priest who "appears to sacrifice." "The divine-human nature of Christ enabled the sacrifice to be both the revelation of God to (man) and the presentation of (man) to God."<sup>40</sup> The Supper commemorates Calvary and Christ's everlasting sacrifice of himself but it is more than remembering, for over and over again we're invited to his sacrifice which is still new, the same as when it was first offered for us. "In the church, we present to God His Body and Blood in memorial that under the shadow of the cross and figure of His sacrifice, we present ourselves in very deed before Him."<sup>41</sup>

Again I will cite two hymns which clearly emphasize Wesley's doctrine of the eucharist as sacrifice.

O thou eternal Victim, slain  
A sacrifice for guilty man,  
By the eternal Spirit made  
An offering in the sinner's stead,  
Our everlasting Priest art Thou,  
And pleads Thy death for sinners now.<sup>42</sup>

Victim Divine, Thy grace we claim  
While thus Thy precious death we share  
Once offer'd up, a spotless Lamb  
In Thy great temple here below,  
Thou didst for all mankind atone,  
And standest now before the throne.<sup>43</sup>

Nevin echoes much of what Wesley has said, for he, too, sees no need of a new atonement<sup>44</sup> but the need to perpetually fall back on this one sacrifice for sin. He cautions not to lay hold of the merits of his death in an abstract way, but to lay hold of them in Christ himself, who is made of God unto all that we need for righteousness as well as life.<sup>45</sup> "The communion of Christ's body and blood is a real participation in his human life as the one-only and all sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world."<sup>46</sup> "Only through the medium<sup>47</sup> of Christ's sufferings and death can we come to have a part in his glory."

Both theologians recognize that this once offered sacrifice was for the sins of the whole world, and that our participation in the sacrifice meant not only that we recognized its impact but are prepared to present ourselves, as well. I shall relate this Christ sacrifice section to an emphasis on Our Sacrifice.

Nevin states that the Lord's Supper is the medium by which we are made partakers of the new covenant in Christ's death. Our participation in the eucharist involves real communication with the person of the Savior. It is in this real life union with Christ through the Holy Spirit that any imputation of what he suffered on our behalf comes to us. For to experience the sacrifice we must have true participation in the life of him by whom the sacrifice was made.<sup>48</sup> There is great power in the sacrament when the receiver experiences new life in this real incorporation with the person of the Redeemer.<sup>49</sup>

John Wesley discusses our sacrifice in the eucharist in the following manner. It is through the grace of Christ that the eucharist enables us to



make the sacrifice of ourselves, for corporately and individually christians offer to God the Body of Christ which they are. "Without Christ we can't offer anything but with Christ we would dare not offer ourselves to God."<sup>50</sup> I cite one last hymn:

Take my soul and body's powers,  
Take my memory, mind, and will,  
All my goods and all my hours,  
All I know and all I feel,  
All I think, and speak, and do;<sup>51</sup>  
Take my heart--but make it new.

Wesley also looks at the eucharist as Eschatology. In the mission and ministry of Jesus, his death and resurrection and life in the Spirit, centers the breaking of bread understood by the apostolic age in an eschatological setting. In Christ the kingdom has come, but the church awaits the second advent and the fulfillment of reconciliation through participation in Eternal Love.<sup>52</sup> In the eucharist we experience in one significant rite the reality of the coming of Christ, which is both His coming in humiliation and His coming in Glory. The sacrament is an earnest measure of eternal bliss, for Wesley so aptly said: "This sacred use is o'er when christians banquet with their Lord in Heaven and types and veils shall pass away."<sup>53</sup>

In a previous section Nevin mentioned that the state of the communicant was most important in receiving the sacrament. Wesley writes concisely what preparation the receiver must make, and includes "sorrow for sin, willingness to receive forgiveness, intention to keep the Law of God, and confidence that grace is sufficient to enable us to fulfill his righteous will."<sup>54</sup> As has been mentioned before, faith is indispensable to receiving Christ in the Lord's Supper. "The grace of the eucharist depends on the trustworthiness of God's promise, not on the faith of the communicant. It is not the faith of the believer that effects Christ's presence; it is always present by the word and the Holy Spirit."<sup>55</sup>

Finally, John Wesley mentions the eucharist as the Communion of Saints. We not only partake of the Living Christ through him and one another but through the saints in glory, too. For in the eucharist christians are knit into one indivisible fellowship of love.<sup>56</sup> In the sacramental banquet the church militant and church triumphant join, and christians receive by anticipation the fullness of the Messianic Banquet when Christ shall have secured his kingdom.<sup>57</sup>

The specifics on the comparisons of Wesley's and Nevin's views of the eucharist are now brought to a close. They were walking closely together most of the time for their beliefs both stemmed from John Calvin. He was their foundation and their father in the faith. Certainly their views on eucharist as a means of grace, sign and symbol, real presence, mystery, Christ's sacrifice, and our sacrifice were close enough to almost be interchanged. Also, their attention to the mystical union, though Nevin wrote more thoroughly on this aspect, was most compatible. Now let us turn to their views on nurture.

In speaking of the nurture of children I want to focus on two words--baptism and confirmation, both which really deserve a more extensive concentration than I have time to share now, but which include a process of



nurture on the part of both Reformers.

Wesley and Nevin each recognized the importance of infant baptism or the baptism of children, for confirmation or membership into the church could not occur without it. Wesley termed baptism a starting point on the road to salvation.<sup>58</sup> He stated that without baptism children cannot enter into covenant with God nor can they enter into the church of Jesus Christ; baptism has become now (as was circumcision under the mosaic law) the door of the entrance into the Gospel dispensation. "In baptism, children are brought into the spiritual life of the church, and within the church, they come under the influence of both convincing and sanctifying grace."<sup>59</sup> "In baptism the infant receives a state of justification which does not terminate with the first actual sin, but it endures well beyond, never ending if the child comes to his own faith at the age of discretion."<sup>60</sup>

Wesley relies on scripture, especially Matthew 19:13-14 and Luke 18:15: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He views these words as establishing the foundation for his thoughts that infants ought to come to Christ, be admitted to the church and be dedicated to God.<sup>61</sup>

It is the parents of these children who take this above responsibility, for they must be willing to give the child to God and take a two-fold vow: 1) to take up the obligations and privileges of the covenant, and 2) promise to teach the child the ways of the Lord.<sup>62</sup> It is important to note that Wesley maintained that the baptism of children only belonged to those whose parents were faithful members of the covenant community. Here he relies on the views of William Wall, Samuel Wesley, John Calvin and Richard Baxter.<sup>63</sup>

For Wesley the beginning of nurture commences with infant baptism and follows a natural process as cited by Calvin. "Infants are renewed by the Spirit of God, according to the capacity of their age, until that power which was concealed within them grows by degrees and becomes fully manifest at the proper time."<sup>64</sup> For Wesley that time was designated as the age of discretion at which time the goal of sanctification, the total renewing of the soul and the complete restoration of the moral image of God, would come to fruition. And to assist in this nurturing process is religious education through the home, society and school which I will turn to shortly.

John Nevin, as with John Wesley, firmly believed in baptizing infants and children, too. And he also felt that the children of believing parents had a right to be baptized<sup>65</sup> so they could receive a real title to all the grace of the new covenant.

The German Reformed Church doctrine on baptism has been based on a number of 16th and 17th Century Confessions. I wish to cite only a few references for our purposes, though the list is long.

In the Augsburg Confession of 1530, Article 9, we read that by baptism the grace of God is offered: and that young infants are to be baptized and by baptism commended to God and received into God's favor.<sup>66</sup>

The Former Helvetic Confession of 1536 states the following: "In Baptism water is the sign and the thing itself is regeneration and adoption



among the people of God. Baptism is a sacrament whereby the Lord doth regenerate us, and cleanse us from our sins."<sup>67</sup> And a similar statement from the Confession of Poland, 1645, speaks of the Sacrament of Baptism being

"instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ and administered by the Minister of the Word, both to infants born in the church, and to adults coming into the church by profession of faith, by the washing of water in the name of the Holy Trinity; in order to signify and witness the internal absolution from sins, or the remission of sins, by the blood of Christ, and to effect a renewal or regeneration, by the Holy Ghost."<sup>68</sup>

And again, in relation to infants, the Gallican Confession, 1559, affirms "that infants, being born of holy parents, are by the authority of Christ to be baptized."<sup>69</sup>

Nevin and Wesley used similar words in speaking of baptism--washing, regeneration, remission of sins, all of which are significant in their theologies. But for both, infant baptism is the beginning of a process, a process of religious education which we shall refer to as nurture. And not only baptism but nurture, as well, has deep roots in and grows out of the church. Hear how John Nevin puts it:

Infant baptism taken as a mere abstract rite or usage, can never maintain its ground. As it grows from the church system, so it can never thrive or prosper truly save in the bosom of this system. It is properly but the initiative of all that is comprehended in a true church life, as a process of preparation for heaven. Take away the idea of this process, as something needed to carry forward and complete what is thus begun, and the true sense of the sacrament is gone. Infant baptism assumes the possibility of educational religion, under the special appliances of the church, and looks to it as its own necessary complement. The idea of confirmation<sup>70</sup> is required to bring it to its true and full sense.

Nevin relied heavily and almost solely on The Heidelberg Catechism as an instrument of nurture. He believed that knowing the Catechism, children and youth were prepared for a personal approach to the sacramental altar, or the other great sacrament, and also, it prepared them and introduced them to all the privileges of their state church. "Faith in a life-bearing church comes to the same thing at last with faith in a life-giving Christ; for the Church is the Body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."<sup>71</sup>

How did nurture begin for Nevin? Always in the home, for parents were to train their children in the faith so that at the proper season they could be handed over to the church to be prepared by catechetical discipline.<sup>72</sup> Such preparation led to confirmation, a rite in which the vows on the part of<sup>73</sup> the subject could be expressed, thus completing the sacrament of baptism.



Since the Heidelberg Catechism was the main instrument for the nurture of children in the Reformed faith, let me turn now to a discussion on how it was used.

The Catechism was a symbol of faith and was designed chiefly for those children and youth not yet confirmed or those newly confirmed. It was to make them intelligent, consistent and lovely christians.<sup>74</sup> The Heidelberg Catechism brought forth the truths of the Bible and aided children in learning the doctrines in the language of the scriptures. It was used in the home, in the Sabbath School and in the Pastor's class for catechetical instruction.

In the home the parents would assign one section to be the lesson for the week. (The Catechism was comprised of 50 sections or Lord's Days which, other than family, Sabbath School and catechetical instruction, was often sermon subject material for an entire year.) On each Sabbath Day, either before or after public worship, the family gathered and the children would be asked to repeat the answers to the questions in the assigned section. This family session then closed with a hymn and a prayer. Nevin spoke of the importance of parental instruction in this way. "The Father is the priest in the family and must stand between the children and God and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."<sup>76</sup>

When the Catechism was used in the Sabbath School the answers were often shortened to meet the developmental level of the very young children, but later, as youth, when they attended the pastor's class they needed to memorize word for word every printed proof text.

It was always the procedure in the German Reformed Church for parents, Sabbath school, teachers and pastors to unite their efforts in the instruction or nurture of children, the aim being preparation for Confirmation. Although the rite of confirmation was of highest interest and importance to the German Reformed Church it did not make its way fully felt until the turn of the 19th century.<sup>78</sup> The justification for this rite is found in Acts 8:14-17 "as showing by way of analogy that baptism finds its proper completion in the laying on of hands."<sup>79</sup>

Confirmation is of a two-fold character, an act of consecration and of benediction and includes a:

free and personal assumption of the baptismal vow, a renunciation of the three great enemies; a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and a life-long consecration to His blessed service.<sup>80</sup>

Central to this rite is the laying on of hands by which the crown and completion of the sacrament of baptism are symbolized. No wonder the Heidelberg Catechism instruction emphasis is so important!

John Wesley does not concentrate so much on the goal of confirmation as on the importance and process of christian nurture and religious education which culminates at an age of discretion when children "have learned what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism."<sup>81</sup> Their religious education, including the study of baptism, the ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer, sought to bring the child to fiducial commitment to Christ about the age of



discretion. "By faith and the renewal of the vows made at his baptism, the child fulfills the meaning of his baptism. For the supreme goal of christian nurture is personal faith in Christ."<sup>82</sup>

For Wesley, Christian nurture is:

the joint operation of Spirit and faith community attempting to bring the baptized child to faith in Christ at the age of discretion. It has two objectives: 1) to preserve the child in his baptismal grace; and 2) to prepare him through religious education for future faith. Hence, nurture is the divine means of giving fulfillment to Christian baptism."<sup>83</sup>

His principle of christian nurture is based on four presuppositions: 1) at birth the mind is a tabula rasa, having no innate ideas, so the child must have a good program of control and stimulation, 2) Sin as an inherent force still resides in the souls of infants following baptism. 3) Religious education is the divine instrument in nurture for rectifying this remaining power of sin or "bias of nature." Such religious education includes submission to the will of the parent and the denial of self--which ultimately has to do with obedience to the will of God. 4) At the age of discretion individual reason is sufficient enough to make choices.<sup>84</sup> We're not certain when that age comes, but John himself was admitted to the Lord's Supper for the first time at the age of eight, and it is written that he admitted some children at age six.<sup>85</sup>

As was religious instruction in the home of vital importance to John Nevin, so it is with Wesley. He called on christian parents to be:

"workers together" with God filling the children's minds with good things by force of habit and stimulation of reflection. He said, "the home is where primary education must be started, maintained and increased in proportion to the spiritual needs and growth of the children."<sup>86</sup>

Also, as in the same thinking of Nevin, Wesley placed a great deal of emphasis on the role of the father. Though the earthly father would be with the children for only a short time he must train them in anticipation of heaven. He is responsible with the Holy Spirit in nurturing them in three specific activities: 1) restrain the children from evil; 2) correct them often for their imperfections; and 3) instruct them regularly and systematically.<sup>87</sup>

Wesley's major theme in religious education was the love of God, and by citing examples of divine love to even small children they came to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength.<sup>88</sup>

Wesley rejoiced with parents who observed their children growing in grace in the same proportion as they grew in years. But when this grace was not evidenced and a baptized child failed to come to fiducial commitment at the age of discretion Wesley felt it was due to one of the following reasons: his parents have not been diligent, other adults have interfered or the child resisted.<sup>89</sup>



Wesley placed strong emphasis on parental authority as stated in Colossians 3:20, "Children obey your parents in all things." Covenant children must zealously pursue submission of their wills while parents faithfully labor for its establishment. Wesley taught the young children to probe their own wills and to make sure they obeyed their parents in all things. He even questioned them in the following manner: "Do you do nothing which you know to be contrary to the will either of your father or mother? Do you abstain from everything which they dislike, as far as you can in conscience?"<sup>90</sup>

Wesley didn't place all the educational or nurturing responsibility on the home, but emphasized that it was a joint activity with the Holy Spirit, the covenant community and the active participation of the child.<sup>91</sup>

Instruction in the home did not replace family worship but was in addition to it. As this model was important for John Nevin it was also for Wesley. The Annual Conference of 1744 declared that family worship should be held in each home and in order for the preachers to be assisted in this oversight, he enlisted them in a program of instruction which was specifically designed to strengthen the nurture of children in the home. His pattern for family worship was modeled after that of Philip Henry in the late 17th century. The design included: a short prayer, the singing of a Psalm, scripture read and expounded, the children reciting what they heard, a lengthy prayer and a benediction. And on Thursday evenings, the worship included a prolonged period of catechizing.<sup>92</sup>

Besides the christian nurture children received at home, they also received special instruction in societies and in Wesley's schools. The societies for children each consisted of ten members who met once a week under the direction of a preacher. Their original study book was Wesley's Instruction for Children.<sup>93</sup>

Wesley's christian schools emphasized the need for an unbroken continuity from infancy to young adulthood and were designed to "thrust young people into a needy world, going forth with faith, piety, disciplined skills and talents, equipped for a life of service."<sup>94</sup> His major schools were Kingswood for boys, Publow, founded by Miss Hannah Owen for girls, and his Orphan house at Newcastle.

The details of Publow and Orphan House are not easily accessible, but let me share a few comments about Kingswood. I sense this project was Wesley's pride and joy. In establishing it, he carefully chose the location, the faculty and the student body, selecting only those boys who excelled in spiritual maturity.<sup>95</sup> The school was one of "physical and mental training" in a religious context. (Many of his ideas of hardening the body and strengthening the mind came from John Locke.)

Wesley's Kingswood boys ranged in age from six to twelve years and were selected always on the basis of their spiritual maturity. Since they were all baptized many reached the age of discretion very early, for we read that Wesley freely admitted them to the communion table.

A final aspect of christian nurture relates to the Methodist Sunday School, first established at Bolton in 1787 with an emphasis on the restraint of children from evil, the imparting of good manners to the



students, the teaching of reading, especially the Bible, and singing which brought great pleasure to Wesley in his last years of life.<sup>96</sup>

The process of bringing the child from the baptismal font or the preparatory stage to the communion table as a child of faith is all known as christian nurture. Wesley and Nevin, as well, placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of such a process. Should we be doing the same?



# NOTES

1. Paul S. Sanders, "Wesley's Eucharistic Faith and Practise," Anglican Theological Review, (1966), p. 158.
2. Charles Yrigoyen, Jr. and George H. Bricker, eds., Catholic and Reformed, (pittsburgh, 1978), p. 381.
3. Jack Martin Maxwell, Worship and Reformed Theology, (Pittsburgh, 1976), p. 236.
4. Sanders, op. cit., p. 159.
5. Ibid., p. 160.
6. Yrigoyen and Bricker, op. cit., pp. 402-03.
7. John W. Nevin, The Mystical Presence, (Boston, 1966), pp. 23-25.
8. Ibid., p. 31.
9. Sanders, op. cit., p. 161.
10. Nevin, op. cit., p. 165.
11. Ibid., pp. 166-8.
12. Ibid., p. 171.
13. Ibid., pp. 171-2.
14. Ibid., p. 173.
15. Ibid., p. 175.
16. John C. Bowmer, The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism, (London, 1951), p. 169.
17. Sanders, op. cit., p. 164.
18. Bowmer, op. cit., p. 171.
19. Ole E. Borgen, John Wesley on the Sacraments, (Nashville, 1972), p. 55.
20. Nevin, op. cit., p. 177.
21. Nevin, loc. cit.
22. Sanders, op. cit., p. 163.
23. Bowmer, op. cit., p. 171.
24. Borgen, op. cit., p. 68.



25. John and Charles Wesley, Hymns on the Lord's Supper, (London, 1948), Hymn 72, vs. 2.
26. Sanders, op. cit., pp. 165-6.
27. Borgen, op. cit., p. 75.
28. Ibid., p. 61.
29. Sanders, op. cit., p. 163.
30. Wesley Hymns, no. 57.
31. Bowmer, op. cit., pp. 176-7.
32. Sanders, op. cit., pp. 164-5.
33. Yrigoyen and Bricker, op. cit., p. 401.
34. Nevin, op. cit., p. 182.
35. Ibid., p. 181.
36. Ibid., p. 183.
37. This paper, p. 8.
38. Nevin, op. cit., p. 183.
39. Ibid., p. 182.
40. Bowmer, op. cit., p. 182.
41. Sanders, op. cit., p. 169.
42. Wesley Hymns, no. 5, vs. 1.
43. Ibid., no. 116, vs. 1.
44. Nevin, op. cit., p. 179.
45. Ibid., p. 247.
46. Ibid., p. 164.
47. Ibid., p. 179.
48. Ibid., p. 180.
49. Ibid., p. 251.
50. Sanders, op. cit., p. 170.
51. Wesley Hymns, no. 155, vs. 5.
52. Sanders, op. cit., p. 167.



53. Bowmer, op. cit., p. 184.
54. Sanders, op. cit., p. 171.
55. Ibid., p. 172.
56. Ibid., p. 168.
57. Ibid., p. 169.
58. Borgen, op. cit., p. 122.
59. David Ingersoll Naglee, From Font to Faith, (New York, 1987), p. 128.
60. Ibid., p. 129.
61. Borgen, op. cit., p. 142.
62. Ibid., p. 143.
63. Naglee, op. cit., p. 122.
64. Borgen, op. cit., p. 166.
65. John W. Nevin, History and Genius of the Heidelberg Catechism, (Chambersburg, PA, 1847), p. 157.
66. E. V. Gerhart, "The Doctrine of the Reformed Church," Mercersburg Review 20, (1868), p. 199.
67. Ibid., p. 217.
68. Ibid., p. 210.
69. Ibid., p. 204.
70. John W. Nevin, "Noel on Baptism," Mercersburg Review 2 (1850) p. 263.
71. Nevin on the Catechism, p. 158.
72. Ibid., p. 157.
73. Ibid., p. 160.
74. J.H. Good and Henry Harbaugh (trans.) The Heidelberg Catechism, (Chambersburg, PA 1849), p. vii.
75. Ibid., pp. viii and ix.
76. Ibid., p. xxii.
77. Ibid., p. xix.
78. Joseph H. Dubbs, "Confirmation in the Reformed Church," Mercersburg



Review 29 (1877), p. 391.

79. Ibid., p. 392.
80. Ibid., p. 393.
81. Naglee, op. cit., p. 205.
82. Naglee, loc. cit.
83. Ibid., p. 205.
84. Ibid., pp. 208-11.
85. Ibid., p. 212.
86. Ibid., p. 215.
87. Ibid., p. 216.
88. Ibid., p. 220.
89. Ibid., p. 221.
90. Ibid., p. 222.
91. Ibid., p. 223.
92. Ibid., p. 226.
93. Ibid., p. 227.
94. Ibid., p. 228.
95. Ibid., p. 229.
96. Ibid., p. 139.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Borgen, Ole E., John Wesley on the Sacraments, Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, 1972.
- Bowmer, John C., The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism, Dacre Press, London, 1951.
- Dubbs, Joseph H. "Confirmation in the Reformed Church," Mercersburg Review, July, 1877.
- Gerhart, E.V. "The Doctrine of the Reformed Church," Mercersburg Review, April, 1868.
- Good, J.H. and Harbaugh, Rev. H. trans. The Heidelberg Catechism, Chambersburg, 1849.
- Maxwell, Jack Martin, Worship and Reformed Theology, The Pickwick Press, Pittsburgh, PA, 1976.
- Naglee, David Ingersoll, From Font to Faith, New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 1987.
- Nevin, John W. History and Genius of the Heidelberg Catechism, Chambersburg, 1847.
- Nevin, John W., The Mystical Presence, United Church Press, Boston, MA 1966.
- Nevin, John W. "Noel on Baptism" Mercersburg Review, May, 1850.
- Outler, Albert C., editor, The Works of John Wesley, Sermons III, Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, 1986.
- Sanders, Paul S. "Wesley's Eucharistic Faith and Practice," Anglican Theological Review, Vol. 48, 1966.
- Wesley, John and Charles, Hymns on the Lord's Supper, (1745).
- Yrigoyen, Charles, Jr. and Bricker, George H., editors, Catholic and Reformed, The Pickwick Press, Pittsburgh, PA, 1978.

## Other Sources

- Brevint, Daniel, "The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice," Bristol, 1673.
- The Book of Discipline, United Methodist Church, Doctrinal Statements, (Lord's Supper) United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, TN, 1984.
- The Heidelberg Catechism, 1563 and the Palatinate Liturgy, Heidelberg, 1563.



CONTEMPORARY ROMAN CATHOLIC EUCHARISTIC  
DEVOTIONAL PRACTISES

Gerard S. Sloyan  
Professor of Religion  
Temple University  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Reporting on contemporary eucharistic devotion and practice outside the liturgical actio in the Roman or Catholic Church in its major Western rite can be done in two ways. One is to cite from the many documents of the now defunct Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy and Sacred Congregation of Rites, both active in the immediate post-conciliar period, and the contemporary Sacred Council for Divine Worship which overlapped the other two briefly; another is to transmit "hard data" from relatively scientific inquiries. I am not familiar with any of the latter, although there undoubtedly have been questions put to pastors and people in various jurisdictions on the matter. Andrew Greeley, while still at the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago a dozen years ago, periodically reported that Catholics in overwhelming numbers approved the changes in rite and language. A not very tightly controlled study conducted by the National Association of Diocesan Liturgy Officers seven or eight years ago brought the same result. A third source of information is the impressions people have gained through living in Catholic circumstances during the twenty-one years plus since Vatican II. As a fulltime academic who finds himself employed pastorally only on Sundays, I do not trust my impressions as much as those of Catholic pastors.

The same is true of teachers and ecumenical officers who spend much more time than I in the company of fellow Catholics. I might mention, however, my conviction that any apparently scientific inquiry is likely to be the sum total of expected impressions of the respondents, by definition a select group, and not truly indicative of a widespread devotional outlook. For that reason I am prepared to trust the impressions of Catholic colleagues as much as I would the studies done by, let us say, diocesan liturgical commissions. Only assurance about the method and instrument used in an attitudinal survey would change my view. Thus, there was the document Memoriale Domini of 29 May, 1969, an "Instruction on the Manner of Distributing Holy Communion," which report on the answers given to three questions on a change in the rite (received by 12 March, 1969) as follows:

1. Do you think that attention should be paid to the desire that, over and above the traditional manner, the rite of receiving holy communion on the hand should be admitted?

Yes: 597	Yes but with reservations: 315
No: 1,233	Invalid votes: 20

2. Is it your wish that this new rite be tried first in small communities, with the consent of the bishop?

Yes: 751	Invalid votes: 70
No: 1,215	



3. Do you think that the faithful will receive this new rite gladly, after a proper catechetical preparation?

Yes: 835

Invalid votes: 128

No: 1,185

The document concludes, after the responses: "From the returns it is clear that the vast majority of bishops believe that the present discipline should not be changed, and that if it were, the change would be offensive to the sentiments and the spiritual culture of these bishops and of many of the faithful." Eighteen years later it is by no means clear that this is what the bishops believed. The petitions to the Holy See by upwards of eighty hierarchies to change the discipline in their jurisdictions seems to indicate that the great bulk of the 2,000 respondents gave the answers they thought were expected. The turnover in bishop incumbents cannot account for the reversal in the short period, nor can any genuine change of conviction in so large a number. Many, therefore, had an outlook other than the one they reported, which peer pressure (or the absence of peer pressure) brought to light. The example chosen is not in the realm of devotion to the eucharist outside of Mass. It illustrates the fact, however, that inquiries originating even from Peter's See do not necessarily elicit the true state of things. Probes of popular sentiment must always be made in addition.

This having been said we proceed to our twofold source: recent Roman documentation and ordinary observation of devotional practice.

The commonest modern practice in 1965 outside the eucharistic rite was the widespread one of visits to the "Blessed Sacrament" (Fr.: saint sacrement).<sup>2</sup> This familiar term, paradoxically, designates the reserved species more often than the sacrament as celebrated, although eucharistic reception is sometimes spoken of as "receiving the Blessed Sacrament," usually in conjunction with its being brought to the sick (more often "receiving communion," not "taking communion," an uncharacteristic phrase). The postconciliar documents praise unreservedly the practice of colloquies with Jesus Christ or with God in the presence of the eucharistic Lord. Interestingly, and somewhat distressingly, they do so in most cases in terms of adoration of Christ's deity, not his role as intercessor with the Father. This establishes the persistence of the anti-Arian reaction<sup>3</sup> and probably also reflects an apologetic response to sixteenth-century accusations of idolatry before "a bit of bread." Pius XII's encyclical letter Mediator Dei (Nov. 20, 1947) is quoted as recalling that "the primary and original purpose of the reserving of the sacred species in church outside Mass is the administration of Viaticum. Secondary ends are the distribution of communion outside Mass and the adoration of Our Lord Jesus Christ concealed beneath these same species. . . This practice of adoration has a valid and firm foundation."<sup>4</sup>

A now forty year-old reminder occurs in the following context in Eucharisticum Mysterium: "When the faithful adore Christ present in the sacrament they should remember that this presence derives from the sacrifice and is directed towards both sacramental and spiritual communion."<sup>5</sup> In other words, the reserved sacrament is recognized as having no existence apart from the rite that produced it and the future consumption of the panem vitae et calicem salutis aeternae (Roman Canon). The "devotion which leads the faithful to visit the Blessed Sacrament



draws them into an ever deeper participation in the Paschal Mystery. It leads them to respond gratefully to the gift of him who through his humanity constantly pours divine life into the members of his body. Dwelling with Christ our Lord, they enjoy his intimate friendship and pour out their hearts before him and pray for the peace and salvation of the world. . . . Thus they nourish those right dispositions which enable them with all due devotion to celebrate the memorial of the Lord and receive frequently the real bread given us by the Father."<sup>6</sup> Here the reality of both the incarnation and the eucharist is expressed best among the various mentions of visits to or contemplative prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Elsewhere, as has been indicated, the practice is not related to the eucharistic rite. This may be because discussions of church design--nave, chancel, altar, and side chapel--may not be thought to require it. The contradictory tradition implicit in the assumption that tabernacles for reservation can indifferently be on the altar or in a place proper to another devotion does not surface for discussion in the documents. Passions that ran high on these questions two decades ago have subsided, leaving behind them as perhaps the commonest settlement in older, city churches the retention of an ornate altar against the wall (mensa, predella, reredos or dorsal curtain, and tabernacle) while a new and usually permanent altar for the Mass has been placed before it. Christ dynamic in the presence of Christ static, so to say.

Has the devotion of Catholics to prayer before the Blessed Sacrament kept pace with the assumption of the documents that it will continue uninterrupted despite liturgical reforms? The answer is clearly no, although it will be a brave person who will attempt to establish the relationship. Let me try to name some elements of the question and only at the end suggest a cause-and-effect relationship.

First, I think there is no conscious disregard whatever of the reserved eucharistic bread in Catholic circles. There has been neither theology nor popular writing to suggest that Christ does not remain in the species and should not be impetrated/adored there. Ex professo devotional writing goes on the assumption of the documents that popular practice is undisturbed. But it is far from that. It is severely wrenched. Among the reasons are the situation, unheard of in pre-Council days, of churches locked all day to preclude theft and vandalism. This is a widespread, not merely an urban phenomenon, at least in this country. Secondly, sisters, brothers, and priests were the chief promoters of devotion to the reserved eucharist to the laity, both children and adults. It was their piety; they were remarkably effective in making it the people's piety. Since the Council it is no longer their piety. This is true not primarily because of diminished fervor or unreflective activism but because seminaries and religious houses of formation no longer stress it. The eucharist has come to mean the celebration of the eucharist. It is an action. There is no action vis-a-vis the reserved bread. If the case could be made that contemplation has increased among Catholics since Vatican II, it could likewise be made that the inward search of the self is as much a part of it as the glory of God, the love of Christ, or the strength of the Spirit.

A final consideration is that the postconciliar Catholic, not uninfluenced by activism and the dread of solitude in the culture, is one who does very little that is Christian apart from the company of others. Almost certainly the framers of the Council document on the liturgy could not have guessed how seriously their enunciation of the fourfold presence



of Christ (in his minister, in the eucharistic species, in his word, and in his church) would have been taken, with major attention to the fourth mode of presence. The charismatic movement has contributed to this, with its stress on the Spirit's special presence in all (charismatic?) believers. But even those Catholics who flee association with the movement or have been untouched by it are increasingly loath to do a Christian thing like prayer apart from others. Devotion to the reserved Blessed Sacrament does not put people in touch with other people (nocturnal adoration, which fosters an innocent conspiratorial mentality about rising in the night, is an exception). Hence this devotion is on the wane for reasons largely unrelated to eucharistic theology as well as those that derive from it.

The Council document had mandated that the relationship between the liturgy and other, non-liturgical devotions be maintained. The latter must harmonize with the former and "be in some way derived from it and lead the people toward the liturgy as to something which of its nature is far superior to these devotions." After private prayer before the Blessed Sacrament the most widespread non-liturgical devotion in 1965 was surely exposition of the eucharistic bread, invariably concluding with a cruciform blessing of the people ("Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament") before reposition. Exposition was distinguished between solemn and simple, the latter employing not a monstrance but a veiled ciborium which remained in the tabernacle while the doors were opened wide. Even though every sacristy in the land in the youth of Catholics displayed a framed permission for solemn exposition (and benediction) from the bishop ordinary, the distinction was little observed. Benediction with the lunula fixed in an ostensorium (monstrance) was at a pastor's discretion and one needed to be a sister sacristan or enrolled in a seminary, where the faculty knew liturgical law, to learn that most weekdays were forbidden days and that there was such a thing as "simple exposition/benediction." Again, the postconciliar documents leave this seven or eight century-old practice undisturbed. Such exposition "stimulates the faithful to an awareness of the marvelous presence of Christ, and is an invitation to spiritual communion with him. It is therefore an excellent encouragement to offer him that worship in spirit and in truth which is his due."

The practice of brief solemn exposition with hymns, a concluding oratio and a blessing has returned to limited favor in the last few years after a ten-year eclipse. It was never prohibited or even obliquely deemphasized in the postconciliar documentation. The regional hierarchies, rather, suggested suitable hymns often translations of the widely used O Salutaris Hostia and Tantum Ergo (the concluding verses, respectively, of Verbum Superbum Prodiens and Pange Lingua), both attributed to Aquinas (d. 1274); in any case, part of the office of the feast of Corpus Christi. The postconciliar congregation of the Roman See S.C.D.W. issued guidelines for this devotion in the spirit of Sacrosanctum Concilium (CL). These suggested Bible readings, prayers, hymns and a period of silent prayer during the exposition so that contemplative prayer would derive from the scriptural treatment of the eucharist. "Exposition merely for the purpose of imparting the blessing is forbidden."<sup>10</sup>

Despite such efforts, the devotion has languished. It has widely been charged that "renewal" had as part of its aim the suppression of such popular rites. This was true only insofar as bishops, priests, and people



perceived a conflict between the eucharist as action and as center of contemplation, as meal and as visual manifestation of incarnate presence. I say "insofar as" because I cannot estimate the extent of such perception. Let me record only that I have never encountered a piece of pro-liturgical eucharistic writing that recommended the actual suppression of benediction with the Lord's body. If there has been such writing, it has escaped me.

More influential on popular piety, certainly, was the sharp lapse of the practice in seminaries. This was coupled with the creation of Bible services and other forms of prayer, both there and among sisters and brothers in houses of formation. The clergy, while not nearly so inventive as seminary students and candidates for the religious life, had a part in deemphasizing "benediction" because it represented to them their indentured servitude. I mean that the popular character of this devotion among religious sisters and small numbers of the laity governed the Sunday and weekday schedules of many priests. There was also the widespread mentality of "benediction with everything," chiefly devotions like prayer services in honor of Mary's immaculate conception her role as sorrowful mother. These were popularly called "novenas," though they had lost their original ninefold character as preparations for Pentecost during the great depression and became weekly prayer services begging God for needs like employment. The weekly novena had fallen on hard times everywhere with the growth of post-WW II prosperity. It left untouched, however, the phenomenon of "benediction for the nuns," a demand that could strike at times that were grossly inconvenient to golf schedules but, at a profounder level, were likewise a regular skirmish in the war between the sexes. Betwixt young priests who wished to do something devotional other than "give benediction" and older ones who sought an escape from the tyranny of the devotion--some lazy but many with a better instinct for eucharistic piety than the petitioners--benediction did not flourish in the period prior to 1965.

Perhaps the strangest eucharistic devotion of the early twentieth century, and it has a long history, was the solemn exposition and blessing that immediately followed a sung or solemn Mass (respectively with one presider or a deacon and subdeacon). This last Mass of the Sunday, by local church law beginning no later than 1:00 p.m., was characterized in many places by the equally strange practice of not inviting the faithful to communicate. (This was also the case with funeral Masses; weddings, too, except for bride and groom). Abstention from receiving the eucharist probably began as the practical result of the fast from midnight. In any case, the Lord's body was no more made available at 11:00 Masses than at 1:00. The Benediction immediately following an hour of choral solemnity was probably not a visual substitute for communicating but a creeping backward from the long-lapsed devotion of afternoon vespers that had concluded with it. An accommodated version of canonical vespers was a widespread afternoon and evening devotion in German, Polish, Slovak, and Hungarian churches. Those of Italian and Irish make-up had other popular devotions later on Sunday, no less frequently. As attendance at them waned in non-rural areas the vestigial benediction was offered to late Mass-goers, often a diametrically different congregation than the vespers people had been.

Be that as it may, benediction is reportedly making a comeback. Its chief protagonists, I am told, are sisters and priests in the 50-70 age



range who think that something was taken from them. Often they are restoring it to school populations without providing students with any historical context. These students have, in many cases, been previously exposed to a better eucharistic piety, so their wonderment at the enthusiasms of their elders must grow. The restoration of benediction in conservative seminaries (a euphemism for reactionary) is doubtless<sup>12</sup> at the root of this movement but I welcome information on this subject. Also, I doubt if the prohibition of exposition merely for the purpose of imparting the blessing is being observed in this movement of preconciliar restoration.

A document of 1967, in speaking of exposing the Blessed Sacrament for a protracted period at the conclusion of Mass, says that the host thus exposed should have been consecrated at that Mass and that the decoration accompanying exposition should avoid obscuring the desire of Christ in instituting the eucharist. This desire or purpose is identified as "nourishing, healing and sustaining us."<sup>13</sup> Since these ends are accomplished primarily through eating, although also by contemplating, the only conclusion one can draw is that ornate settings for monstrances that are exclusively in the order of sight are being subtly opposed. Eucharistic breads in the vessel or on the paten from which they are familiarly distributed would fulfill the above directive best. Yet the basic principle remains in force, quoted from a decree and canon of Trent "Nor is [this sacrament] to be<sup>14</sup> adored any the less because it was instituted by Christ to be eaten."

Finally, the document of 1973 just cited brings to an end the longstanding and illogical practice of celebrating the eucharist coram sanctissimo, viz., in the presence of the blessed sacrament exposed. It does this by forbidding such celebration in the same part of the church as that where exposition is going on, and correctly gives as the reason that "the celebration of the mystery of the Eucharist includes in a more perfect manner that spiritual communion to which exposition is intended to stimulate the faithful."<sup>15</sup> Dealing with the commonest case of conflict, namely the Masses of the Forty Hours Devotion or in those chapels and churches which have a rescript allowing perpetual or all-day adoration, the instruction Eucharistiae Sacramentum continues:

If exposition is prolonged for a day or for a number of successive days it should be interrupted during the celebration of Mass unless Mass is celebrated in a chapel apart from the exposition and some at least of the faithful remain in adoration.<sup>16</sup>

Five numbered sections follow dealing with "Exposition Over a Longer Period," a "Brief Period of Exposition," and "Adoration by Religious Communities."<sup>17</sup> In these, the use of hymns, scripture readings and prayers cited in note 7a above is prescribed. The simple reposition of the eucharist by night in places devoted to daily exposition is provided for. The form of adoration in which only one or two members of a religious community adore successively is described as permissible and indeed highly commendable.

At the heart of this discussion is the practice of Forty Hours Devotion which, as centered on the exposed eucharist, seems to date to Milano as a prayer to avert the "sack of Rome" by Charles V in 1527.<sup>18</sup> A



certain Gian Antonio Belotti, preaching in Lent in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the northern city, asked the faithful to remain forty hours before the blessed sacrament four times a year: at Easter, Pentecost, the Assumption, and Christmas. The custom moved to the cathedral in Milano in 1529. By 1537 it had taken the form there of various churches practicing the devotion in turn so that there was a continuous chain of adoration of the exposed sacrament by day and night throughout the year. In this form it has survived on a Sunday to Tuesday basis until after the Council. No diocese was without the devotion in some church or churches in the early part of every week. The custom went uninterrupted by the Council but it had undergone serious sociological changes in the 1950s and 60s. The impact of television on evening devotions of any sort was part of this. Another was the sociology of priestly life. When S. Philip Neri of the Oratory at Rome adopted the Forty Hours Devotion in 1550 and the Jesuits followed suit in 1553, it was made among other things a period of reparation for excesses committed during the pre-Lenten carne vale. This association is long forgotten, but any U.S. priest over 50 will recall the waning function of the devotion as social cement and lubrication for the clergy. Pastors would invite guest preachers on Sunday morning and the next two evenings--one preacher or two or three. The church would be filled at the Monday and Tuesday morning Masses, people would drop in for "visits" throughout the day (and night), and the Tuesday "closing" was solemnized in this country in a way that Corpus Christi normally was not except in the ethnic parishes above cited. (On the last point, New England clergy can supply data on the Franco-American scene. I know neither it nor the Hispanic/Lusitanian in these matters.) Pastors vied with one another to provide hospitality to fellow priests on this occasion: dinner, then a sizable procession of clergy at the closing exercises, followed by post-prandials and conversation or card-playing far into the night. The laity were motivated to attend the closing of the Forty Hours by the exhortation to "show the other priests of the diocese what devotion to the blessed sacrament the people of St. Bartholomew's have." The priests made it their social life in that fast receding day when few sought female company without shame and the homosexual orientation of the clergy was, at least overtly, near the zero point. (I underscore orientation, not practice, on which I have no information and certainly do not wish to make a point.) This detail is far from irrelevant to my main point, however. The Forty Hours Devotion was a solid element in the male camaraderie of a once resoundingly heterosexual fraternity. The gatherings in the rectory went from the intellectual to the raucous, depending on the host pastor. At the center of the proceedings was a solid piety and a preaching above the common, since aside from priests' funerals the clergy seldom proclaimed the word before their peers. One did not accept an invitation to preach and go ill prepared, for the church was likely to be packed with worshipers and the sanctuary lined with not only the seniores but also the best and brightest.

There is little I should care to bemoan in the passing of priestly mores over my short lifetime, but the ritual of a Forty Hours closing in the home of an intelligent, warmhearted host is one of them. They still happen, of course, but with great infrequency. Many parishes close the exercises at Tuesday morning Mass because so few will come out at night. At the evening sessions there is more and more the pattern of one nursed drink, no mention of cards, and a discreet heading for automobiles at 10:00 for the one or two hour drive home.



Our Methodist colleagues may have trouble accepting the talismans of the masculine piety I speak of. They long ago resorted to the sanctifying power of matrimony to obviate such celibate needs. They may fairly ask, however, did such patently tangential benefits to the clergy do anything--positive or negative--to the eucharistic piety of the people? The answer, I think, is that Catholics take delight when a respected shepherd is surrounded by his colleagues in a celebrative way. There was a great popular pride taken in the many who came to old St. Bartholomew's on that annual occasion.

A grace note needs to be added on the devotion known as nocturnal adoration. It too dates to pious confraternities of the counter-Reformation period (U.M.C. readers please forgive). Religious clergy are its more usual protagonists--Redemptorists, Passionists, and other such newer groups among them. Sometimes the Priests' Eucharistic League of a diocese, sponsored by the Blessed Sacrament Fathers of Bl. Julian Peter Eymard, will have lit the original torch. With the waning of that League other secular or regular clergy continue the sponsorship. Diocesan and religious-clergy retreat centers for men are often at the heart of this devotion. It consists, as can be easily deduced, of a vigilance in prayer through the night before the blessed sacrament--usually but not necessarily exposed. This is a layman's counterpart of the practice of such religious sisters as the Society of St. Mary Reparatrix, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, etc. Lay women are normally not engaged in it because it tends to be based on traditional sex roles in the family. My impression is that the practice is largely diminished since the Council, that it continues unabated in certain urban centers, and that it is engaged in by priests and laymen who have gone largely untouched by renewal in the liturgy. There are doubtless exceptions to the latter statement. I should like to be informed of them. I also suspect that this pious practice is more likely to be put at the service of specific causes like the pro-life movement than other forms of social morality. This is not a gratuitous swipe at those dedicated to this serious moral-political issue so much as an observation about their engagement (or lack of it) in the wider worship life of the church.

On the correlation between charismatic prayer groups and Catholic pentecostals (not to be confused) and eucharistic devotions outside the Mass, I am simply uninformed. Since the concern of both is with the movement of the Spirit as discerned first in the biblical word, whether manifested in healing, tongues, or gifts of prayer, I am going to guess that the positive correlation is not high. I should especially be interested in knowing whether a negative correlation exists, either with the eucharistic rite or with the body of the Lord as the center of other devotions. I repeat, I welcome any data or impressions.

The final consideration of this paper will be, not Corpus Christi or the procession to the Tabernacle of Reposition on Holy Thursday (since both are liturgical celebrations), but communication of the body of Christ outside of Mass. Viaticum is not indicated here but the receiving of communion as an isolated matter by the well who, for some reason, cannot be present at the celebration. The practice has a long history and includes aberrations like communicating people from the tabernacle before or after Mass who nonetheless are present for it. I did not do any research on this; merely took it for granted that it was an accommodation to the pious who were approved by their confessors for more frequent reception when most



persons in the West abstained. Anyway, whereas the Constitution on the Liturgy assumes rather than spells out that the sacrificial-symbolic rite and the meal are one, there is a surprisingly "soft" policy of communicating any who ask for the sacrament at any time of night or day. That is probably because of the total inaccessibility of priest-presiders in some parts of the Catholic world and their relative inaccessibility (i.e., the unavailable functionary) in others. I could discover, however, no extended discussion of keeping the eucharistic rite and the body of Christ which it produces together. Perhaps because any such discussion could easily lead to the even further inaccessibility of the sacrament, the postconciliar documents abstain from it. Instead, other ministers of distribution than priests are emphasized, as well as the needs people have of this sacrament while kept from it by schedule or physical location. I therefore record my impression that reception of communion during the communion rite at Mass has become all but universal since the Council. That a wafer on the tongue is still available on request in the large city churches of the friars, as before, I am quite willing to believe. At the same time, I have participated at some very good celebrations with Capuchins and Friars Minor near Pennsylvania Station in New York. Neither is the huge sacrament dispensary it once was--which may be a correlate of liturgical seriousness.

I conclude by recording the general impression that, while the postconciliar documents are at pains to preserve all popular eucharistic pieties that are in any way defensible, a reverse gresham's law of good coin driving out bad has inexorably been at work in the last decade in the Roman communion. The liturgy of the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper has, in a word, carried all before it.



# NOTES

1. Austin Flannery, O.P. (gen'l ed.) Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1975), p. 151.
2. The practise of reservation is reaffirmed in the General Instruction on the Roman Missal (26 March, 1970), V, x, 27677, Flannery, op. cit. p. 193. The practise of reservation in special chapels apart from the nave is praised, but there is tolerance expressed for and no clear reprobation of tabernacles on altar tables. The Instruction of the S.C.R., Inter Oecumenici (26 Sept., 1964), n. 95, is quoted in Eucharisticum Mysterium of the same Congregation (25 May, 1967), III, ii, C, Flannery, p. 131, reversing the order, viz., "in the middle of the main altar or on a side altar, but in a truly prominent place."
3. Cf. "The Defeat of Teutonic Arianism and the Revolution of Religious Culture in the Early Middle Ages" in J.A. Jungemann's Pastoral Liturgy (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), pp. 1-101.
4. S.C.R., Eucharisticum Mysterium, III, i, A, Flannery, p. 129; Mediator Dei: AAS 39 (1947), 569.
5. Op. Cit., III, i, B, Flannery, p. 130; cf. Intro. c, 5, ibid., pp. 103-04.
6. Ibid., III, i, B, p. 130.
7. CL, n. 13, Flannery, p. 7.
8. Cf. New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v.; Herbert Thurston, S.J., "Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament," The Month for June, July, August, September, 1901; Jungman, op. cit., p. 87.
9. EM, III, v, Flannery, p. 133.
10. Eucharistiae Sacramentum (21 June, 1973), n. 89, Flannery, p. 252.
11. Medieval and renaissance abstention from communicating is the subject of another paper. For the practise of receiving the eucharist after Mass (from a priest who had removed his chasuble), in pre-Anabaptist Germany, cf. Edmund Bishop, "Pastor Dreygerwolt's Notebook, 1521-25," in Historica Liturgica (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918), pp. 451 f. This account of St. James Parish, Munchen, includes mention of



the days on which people communicated and their numbers. Corpus Christi was not such a day! The practise of solemn exposition, which the papal legate, Nicholas von Kues, had restricted to two days of the year in 1452, had expanded largely in the following 70 years (p. 450).

12. Lest I adopt the unrealistic posture of the intellectual I submit the accompanying paper of Carl Dehne with approval; cf., Peter Hebblethwaite in Esquire (May 8, 1979), p. 33: "Wojtyla, then, unlike many intellectuals, does not despise popular religion. He is too much of a theologian not to want to purify it of superstitious elements, but he is not above harnessing it as a display of the Church's strength."
13. Ibid.
14. Eucharistiae Sacramentum (21 June, 1973), Intro., I, 3, Flannery, p. 243, quoting EM, Intro. C, 6, Flannery, p. 104 and, in turn, Council of Trent, Session 13: Decree on the Eucharist, ch. 4: Denzinger-Schonmetzer 1642 [877]; canon 2, 1647 [884].
15. Op. Cit., II, i, A, n. 83, Flannery, p. 251.
16. Ibid.
17. Op. Cit., 86-90, Flannery, pp. 252-53.
18. Cf. "The Forty Hours Devotion and the Holy Sepulchre" in Pastoral Liturgy by J.A. Jungmann (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), pp. 223-38; for its medieval Maundy Thursday origins, related to the sculpture of Christ in sacrament and in carved image for forty hours, cf. Bishop, "Holy Week Rites of Sarum, Hereford and Rouen Compared," op. cit., pp. 294-96.
19. Cf. Eucharistiae Sacramentum I, ii and iv, Flannery, pp. 245-46, 247.



## BAPTISM, CHRISMATION AND EUCHARIST FOR CHILDREN

Fr. Frank Estocin

Dean, St. Vladimir Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral

Dean, Philadelphia Deanery, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

Instructor of Liturgy, Canon Law and Ethics

St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary

Bound Brook, New Jersey

As a clergyman--priest of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Archdiocese of the USA and Diaspora, I am deeply honored to share with you our Orthodox tradition as pertains to "Baptism, Chrismation and the Eucharist for Children," especially at this time of our celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the Orthodox Christianization of Ukraine and the Millennium of the establishment of our Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Our tradition is deeply rooted in Sacred Scripture, the teachings of the Fathers and the liturgical pastoral practices of two ancient ecclesiastical Centers, the Jerusalem Church and the Church of Constantinople. Our ministry to children reflects the above. Since Orthodox Theology is convinced that human life begins with conception and views abortion at the taking of a human life [in this we are guided by Exodus XXI: 22-23, the teaching of Saint Basil the Great (4th century) and the regulations established by the VIth Ecumenical Council, Canon 91 and the 21st Canon of the Council of Ancyra], conception and pregnancy are viewed as sacred events. This gift of God, the gift of life is emphasized by our solemn celebration of New Testament conception events, such as the conception of Mary the Theotokos in the womb of St. Anna, the conception of St. John the Baptist, and the conception of Christ, Only begotten Son and Word of God in the womb of Mary. Thus, Orthodox women are called upon to honor and exercise great care over the life which has been entrusted to them. Obvious is the fact that the father is bound to exercise care for the newly conceived and to provide that which is necessary for the health of mother and child.

The event of birth is greeted with joy and thanksgiving not only by the parents and immediate family, but also by the parish family. And it is here that we as a "faith and praying" community manifest our joy for the gift of life. The orthodox Church in the person of the priest-pastor visits the mother shortly after birth and celebrating the ritual prescribed for this joyous occasion [Prayers On The First Day After A Woman Has Given Birth], renders gratitude to Almighty God, asking Christ "born of our all-pure Lady, the Birth-giver of God and ever-virgin Mary" to be "merciful to this your handmaiden, who today has given birth to this child...preserve this child born of her...grant her [the mother] full recovery...and grant that this child born of her may worship You in the earthly temple which You have prepared for the glory of Your Holy Name." In this the first of our pre-baptismal celebrations, prayers are also offered for all those who have in any way assisted in the birth of the child and have cared for the mother namely, doctors and nurses.

In keeping with the Old Testament Community's practice of naming and circumcision on the eighth day and in imitation of Christ's naming and circumcision [St. Luke, II: 21], the eight day old infant is brought to the temple (parish church), but as is customary today, the priest-pastor visits the parents in their home on the eighth day, where a ceremony unique to the



Orthodox Spiritual Tradition is celebrated namely, the "Naming of the Child." It is during this service that the infant is officially named by the signing of the sign of the Cross on the forehead, mouth and breasts and we anticipate with joy the day of the child's Baptism, Chrismation and (First) Holy Communion. Of interest is the prayer offered which is presented here in an abbreviated form: "O Lord, our God, we pray and implore You, that the light of Your face may shine upon this Your servant (at this point the infant is named), and that the Cross of Your Onlybegotten Son may be graven in his (her) heart and thoughts...and that he (she) may be united in due time to Your Holy Church and receive the awesome mysteries of Your Christ...and receive the bliss of the elect of Your Kingdom." The priest then takes the infant in his embrace and offers him (her) to Almighty God with a prayer which recalls Christ's nativity and His being held in the arms of the righteous Simeon.

The words "united in due time to Your Holy Church and receive the awesome mysteries of Your Christ..." in the aforementioned pre-baptismal liturgical service and celebration sees its fulfillment on the 40th day after birth, when the infant is presented for solemn Baptism, Chrismation and Holy Communion. This is a celebration of great joy, participated in by parents, godparents and where possible the entire parish community. By custom we celebrate Baptism and Chrismation on the 40th day in imitation of Christ's presentation in the Temple, the conclusion of Mary's period of purification and Simeon the Righteous' heralding of Christ "the light of revelation to the gentile nations and the glory of Your people, Israel."

The contemporary practice of the Orthodox Church is to celebrate Baptism and Chrismation independent of the Eucharistic Liturgy, a practice which most certainly is out of character with the early 4th and later centuries practice of celebrating these sacraments within the Eucharist, the visible sign of total unity and full membership in the Church. It should however be noted that in some parish communities the rite of Baptism and Chrismation are celebrated prior to the daily and Saturday and Sunday Eucharist, the Eucharist following immediately, so that the newly baptized might receive Holy Communion--the outward sign of full membership in Christ's Holy Church, the reception of the living Christ in the Eucharist. This pertains to adults as well as infants and children. Concerning the celebration of Baptism and Chrismation within the Eucharistic Liturgy, it should be noted that to this day the Orthodox Tradition knows of and celebrates Baptismal/Chrismation feasts and seasons, a vestige of that time in the history of the Church when Baptism and Chrismation were celebrated first on the Feast of feasts--Paskha (The Passover of the Lord--Easter) and then extended to other major Dominical feasts namely, Pentecost, Lazarus Saturday (the eve of Palm Sunday), Theophany (Epiphany) and the Nativity of Christ (Christmas). Today's celebration of the aforementioned feasts still have vestiges of their Baptism/Chrismation character, notably the Baptismal trisagion "All who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia." [Gal. 3:27] Since in the Orthodox Christian Tradition the Eucharist is the sacrament (mysterion) most sublime, the Very Christ not symbolic but real from whom all sacraments have their origin and since every Sacrament finds its fullness in the Eucharist, Baptism and Chrismation as well as all other Sacraments are properly celebrated not outside of, but within the Eucharistic Liturgy as is the case with Holy Orders.

Through Baptism the infant is transformed, filled with the Holy



Spirit, made a new creation, a child of God's Kingdom, a member of the holy flock of Jesus Christ, an honorable and complete member of Christ's Church, a consecrated vessel, a child of light and an heir of Christ's Kingdom. The liturgical tradition of the Church beginning with the 4th century, tradition supported by the writings of among others, Saint John Chrysostom, give ample evidence that the Nicean and post-Nicean Christian Communities witnessed the baptism of not only adults during the above cited Baptism/Chrismation Seasons and Feasts, but also infants and children brought by their parents. We know from history for example that the principal celebrant of Baptism/Chrismation namely the bishop, would baptize the children and as many adults as he wished, and proceed with the newly baptized children and adults (the other adults, often over three thousand, were baptized by those clergy who concelebrated with the bishop celebrant) to the sanctuary for the celebration of and reception of the Eucharist.

The Orthodox Tradition properly knows only one form of Baptism namely, triple immersion with the formula, "The Servant of God [name] is baptized in the name of the Father, Amen, and of the Son, Amen, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen." Having renounced Satan and united himself or herself to Christ, the child (infant or adult) professes the Catholic Faith (The Nicean Creed), is anointed and baptized, clothed in the newness of life after "the image of Him who created him (her) and made a partaker of the "death and resurrection of Christ." He or she need only now receive the fullness of the Spirit--Chrismation, which is celebrated in conjunction with Baptism. The newly-baptized is sealed with "The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit," the formula of this Sacrament and is with Holy Chrism anointed on the brow, eyes, nostril, lips, both ears, breasts, hands and feet and by Divine Power becomes the anointed of God and the living temple of the Holy Spirit. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem presents the reasons which reflect our practice of Baptism and Chrismation as two sacraments yet celebrated as one saying, "Having been baptized into Christ, and put on Christ, you have been made conformable to the Son of God...being therefore made partakers of Christ, you are properly called Khristoi (Christs)...or anointed. As He (Christ) was anointed with the spiritual oil of gladness, the Holy Spirit, who is so called, because he is the author of spiritual gladness, so also you were anointed with ointment (Chrism), having been made partakers and fellows of Christ But beware of supposing that this is plain ointment. For as the Bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is mere bread no longer, but the Body of Christ, so also this ointment is no more simple ointment, nor to say common, after the invocation, but the gift of Christ; and by the presence of His Godhead, it causes in us the Holy Spirit. It is symbolically applied to your forehead and your other senses; and while your body is anointed with visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the Holy and life-giving Spirit...For as Christ after His baptism, and the descent of the Holy Spirit went forth and vanquished the adversary so likewise, having after Baptism and Mystical Chrism put on the entire armor of the Holy Spirit, stand against the power of the enemy and vanquish it, saying, 'I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me [Phil. 4:13].

The infant or child is now by Baptism and Chrismation made a full member of Christ's Kingdom and Church, a reality which is manifest by the reception of the Holy Eucharist. As I am certain most know, the Orthodox Church believes that Christ is not symbolically present but truly and really present in the elements of bread and wine. Thus the newly-baptized receives what we shall title for the purpose of this paper, "First Holy



receives what we shall title for the purpose of this paper, "First Holy Communion" immediately following Baptism and Chrismation and on a regular basis thereafter at every Eucharistic Liturgy.

Since our concern here is children and most certainly infants given what has been said about our pre-baptismal rites on the day of birth and on the eighth day or "Naming" and the actual Baptism and Chrismation on the 40th day, our tradition witnesses the total participation in these sacred events of the parents as well as the sponsors (here it should be noted that Orthodox legislation calls for only one sponsor for Baptism and Chrismation though by custom two godparents participate). To consider Orthodoxy as only 'ritual' is erroneous. Every aspect of our celebrations--our liturgies are built upon Sacred Scripture and Tradition, and the Orthodox Christian is called upon to be imbued with and know Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Holy Fathers. This is integral to our worship, to our way of life.

Parents are viewed as the primary teachers of Religion, have as their sacred obligation a thorough knowledge of the Orthodox Christian Faith, have a sacred mandate to be a Scripture living family, a family of prayer and Faith and faithfulness and to impart the treasury of the Faith to their child or children. By word, deed and example they, having as parents of a living faith, presented their offspring for Naming, Baptism and Chrismation and, having received the Eucharist with their newly Baptized and Chrismated son or daughter continually reinforce their child's Christ-likeness. It is the parents who pray for their child and with their child. They participate with their child in every liturgical celebration, most notably the Eucharistic Liturgy at which they receive the Eucharist as a family in Christ. It should be noted that our liturgical way of life teaches via Word and Sacrament and in a very real sense parents and children are co-celebrants together with the bishop or priest celebrant of every liturgical teaching and sacramental celebration. Our liturgical way of life imparts knowledge and understanding through which we discover God, and thus parents as they grow in spiritual life and understanding, impart the same to their children and spiritually grow with their children, being strengthened by Word and Sacrament. As the "primary teachers and examples of Faith" the parents are more responsible for the total spiritual and living faith development of their offspring than any parish Sunday School or program of Religious Education. And rightfully so, for in our marriage ceremony properly titled "The Rite of Matrimonial Coronation," the crowns placed on the heads of the couple speak of a spiritual reality namely "God crowned" to whom life is entrusted to its fullest for, "they besought life of You, and you bestowed it upon them."

In reality, not all Orthodox Christian parents participate fully in the life of the Church. Our obligation as Orthodox pastors of the souls entrusted to us by Almighty God is to make parents aware of what has been stated in this presentation, to establish them and their families on the firm foundation of our Faith, the resurrected Christ, who emptied Himself for our sake, who ascended into heaven and with whom we are called upon to take our places at the right hand of the Father, who sent down upon us and who in every Sacrament sends down upon us the Holy, life-giving Spirit.

In those Orthodox parishes of any ecclesiastical jurisdiction where the emphasis is upon a "living liturgical, scriptural, sacramental experience" you will witness families of Faith, parents with babes in arms,



parents and children and young adults actively participating in the fullness of life in Christ, approaching the chalice to receive the Holy Eucharist, worshiping, praying and studying together, contributing to their own and their parish's and Church's growth and development in Christ.

In summation, permit me to point out some aspects that have been overlooked so far, and present an overall view of what has been presented. First, the latter: The Orthodox Church of Christ is with the one who has been conceived from conception through birth. The spiritual realities of being baptized and clothed in Christ, the obligations and responsibilities to this the greatest and most sacred of all Divine gifts--life and more than adequately presented in our pre-Baptismal/Chrismation rites and the actual Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist which come about through the power of the Pentecost event--the descent of the Holy Spirit. In all of these sacred mysteria, parents as well as godparents have a primary role which in paraphrasing the hymn of Simeon the Righteous is, we have seen Your salvation, a light of revelation and the glory of Your people--our child, our children. Thus, the sacred obligation to impart the Faith, to nurture it and to develop it by a Christ-like family sacramental life.

Some aspects of our Baptismal/Chrismation Rite which have not been treated in detail are, the tonsuring of the newly-baptized after Chrismation, a rite of dedication to God as witnessed by the prayer, "O Lord God, who through the baptismal font, by Your goodness, sanctify them that believe in You: Bless this child here present..and as you blessed the head of David the King by the hand of Your prophet Samuel, bless also the head of Your servant [name] by the hand of me, a sinner...so that he (she) may behold the good things of Jerusalem all the days of his (her) life." Here the bishop or priest celebrant cuts the hair of the child in the form of the Cross, saying: "The servant of God is tonsured in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

During the Rite of Baptism/Chrismation and Eucharist special prayers are said for the mother and child and I quote in part, "...made her (the mother) worthy to partake of Your Holy Mysteries (Holy Communion) without condemnation...bless this child born of her. Increase him (her), sanctify, enlighten...endow him (her) with good understanding."

The Baptismal/Chrismation Liturgy concludes with a solemn presentation of the child to the Church and the Church community, a presentation which has its roots in Christ's presentation in the Temple of Jerusalem. Again, I quote in part the prayer, "O Lord...who was brought to the Temple on the fortieth day...and was carried in the arms of the righteous Simeon...bless unto every good deed this infant...so that having been vouchsafed Holy Baptism, he (she) may receive the portion of the elect of Your kingdom, and be preserved together with us, through the grace of the Holy, Consubstantial and indivisible Trinity." After this prayer, the bishop or priest celebrant takes the newly Baptized and Chrismated into his arms and solemnly presents the child to the Church with the proclamation, "The servant (handmaiden) of God [name] is presented to the Church, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." In keeping with Orthodox Christian Tradition, the celebrant takes the male child into the Holy of Holies (Sanctuary), while the female child is carried not into the Holy of Holies, but up to the sanctuary doors--the Royal or Holy Doors. The ceremony concludes with the singing of the Hymn of Simeon, "Now let Your servant depart in peace..." and a dismissal referring to Christ's baptism in the



Jordan."

The entire Baptismal/Chrismation Rite is solemnly sung and those present hold lighted candles, symbolic of the presence of Christ, the Light of the Word. The newly-baptized are clothed in a white garment, the "Robe of Righteousness" while the liturgical hymn troparion, "Vouchsafe unto me the robe of light, O You, who clothe Yourself with light as with a garment..." and given a Cross to wear.

It has been my honor to share with you, the members of the Mercersburg Society reflection on our Eastern Orthodox view of and celebration of Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist for children which is the norm in our spiritual tradition and Christian way of life. What has been presented today is only an outline which may be of assistance to you in your desire to enhance the lives of your Christian communities, to return to ancient expressions of the totality of Sacramental life in Christ before the garment of Church unity was sundered.

I pray that the life-giving Spirit be with you and guide you in all things, and that you and those whom God has entrusted to your care, might ever feel the living presence of the Holy Spirit, just as that abiding presence was felt by the Apostles on that first joyous day of transfiguration and transformation--Pentecost.

Thank you for your attention.



COMMUNION FOR CHILDREN  
LIGHT FROM MERCERSBURG ON A CONTEMPORARY ISSUE

R. Howard Paine  
Pastor Emeritus  
St. Thomas United Church of Christ  
Reading, Pennsylvania

In the course of pursuing my subject I have been reminded again and again of one of the Laurel and Hardy movies which has been a favorite of mine since I was a boy. I am sure that you will remember the comedy routine that I am talking about. It is the episode of trying to deliver a piano to a house which stands at the top of a long narrow flight of outside steps. First, the two funny men stand at the foot of the steps scratching their heads while trying to figure out how to do the job. Then they carry the piano in its packing case to the top of the steps only to discover that it is turned the wrong way, thus requiring that they carry it back to the side-walk to start over again. A next time they carry it up almost to the top when they are met by a man who wants to come down the steps, and since the steps are too narrow for him to squeeze past, they have to carry it down again. And so the frustrations of carrying out the task continue with one hilariously funny episode after another, bringing to mind the experiences of Sisyphus, king of ancient Corinth, whose punishment in the world of the shades was to roll a huge stone up a hill, only to have it roll back again incessantly and inexorably.

These comparisons may help you to understand some of my frustrations in trying to find resolution of a matter which is still tormentingly present with us by seeking light from theologians whom we consider highly influential in the shaping of our sacramental theology. Again and again I have turned to a next page in their writings encouraged to believe that there at last one shall find the golden key sentence that will unlock the hidden solution only to discover that one is left with another "almost, but not yet" predicament. Consequently the scenario which you will find unfolding through the pages of this paper will be an attempt to gather pertinent points from the theology of the Mercersburg divines and their immediate heirs and then to do a little prospecting of my own while being guided by what I believe to be the directions towards which their teachings lead us as we attempt to meet the demands of a contemporary problem.

The issue, of course, is heralded in my title, "Communion for Children." By "children" we mean young children who have been baptized but not yet confirmed. It is a problem for us because in most instances we are living with a tradition in which admission to first communion was withheld until after one had been confirmed, usually during early adolescence. We have been exposed to such rationales for confirmation as "completion of baptism" or "being ready and prepared to approach Holy Communion with a full understanding." Confirmation has been a significant rite of passage with admission to communion as the visible reward for having completed the requirements expected after a period of catechesis. This tradition has been continued despite the fact that other denominations with whom we are in contact have been raising some questions--theological, sociological and psychological--which have led them to break with the tradition and invite younger children to the communion table. In some instances we have known colleagues to yield to these diverting influences and change their practises for various assigned reasons. Still there is a lingering anxiety



over the fact that we do not like to go it alone in such matters; and we would much rather be doing things in a way that has some theological sanction, be it no more than that of our covenant life together.

### The Catholic Approach

The unique merit in J.W. Nevin's theology on every issue was that he took the Catholic approach. By so doing he was able to rise above sectarianism and the most narrowly Reformed doctrine. The best place for us to start in addressing the issue at hand is by making search for Nevin's teachings about the Sacraments, especially Holy Baptism. We find a most concise statement of the views held by Nevin in his presentation of the issues involved in "The Anglican Crisis" which he unravels in an article in the July, 1851 issue of The Mercersburg Review.

The idea that the holy sacraments are divine acts, that they carry in them a mystical force for their own ends, that they are the media of operations working towards salvation which have their efficacy and value not from the mind of the worshiper but from the power of the transaction or thing done itself, reaches back plainly to the earliest times of the Church, and has been counted a necessary part of the christian faith by the great body of those who have professed it through all ages. Baptism has been held thus to be for the remission of sins, and to carry with it in some way an actual making over of the subject, on the part of God or Christ, of the grace it signifies or represents. In this view, we find it identified very directly from the first with the idea of regeneration itself. So through the whole period before the Reformation. The mystical sense of sacrament, and its real relation to the new birth, are everywhere acknowledged and appear intertwined with the universal system both of doctrine and worship. The use of infant baptism in particular turns altogether on the assumption of such an objective force in the ordinance, and must be surely undermined indeed, sooner or later, wherever this assumption is renounced. Protestantism in the sixteenth century had no thought of breaking here with the faith of previous ages ....

In presenting "The Old Doctrine of Christian Baptism" in an article appearing in the April, 1860, issue of the Review, an article which is chiefly an exposition of the teachings of St. John Chrysostom, Nevin deplores the eroding effect of regarding baptism merely with a "spiritual significance."<sup>2</sup>

E.V. Gerhart, spiritual and academic successor to Nevin, maintains that the prevailing view of baptism in the Reformed Church of the sixteenth century was a continuation of the catholic teaching. He writes:

(The Reformed Confessions) teach as with one voice, that Holy Baptism, being the union by the power of the Word, of the thing signified with the sign, is the Sacrament of Regeneration; that in and through Baptism



we receive forgiveness of sins, are ingrafted into Christ, and are thus made partakers of a new spiritual life by the power of the Holy Ghost; and that no one can have an assurance of sins forgiven, and peace with God, or can enter into the kingdom of Heaven, who refuses to be baptized.<sup>3</sup>

Daniel Y. Heisler, a local pastor in the Reformed Church, who was a frequent contributor to the Review, published an article in the July, 1871, issue under the title of "Scripture View of Holy Baptism." The theology that emerges there is expressed in eucharistic language:

The whole church constitutes a blessed union of souls--"one body"--and this oneness of the Saints is attained in their union and communion with Christ, the living head into whom we are baptized, and so made partakers of Him--of His death--of His resurrection--of His eternal and blessed life!<sup>4</sup>

In another article in the Review Gerhart critiques certain Presbyterian writers who questioned the efficacy of infant baptism and states again that the low view of baptism held by large numbers of clergymen within that communion is the result of theological confusion and has contributed significantly to the neglect of baptism by almost two thirds of the parents who should have been directed otherwise.<sup>5</sup>

#### The Polemical Stance

All of us are aware certainly that the efforts to define the efficacy of infant baptism were much more polemical than apologetic. The struggles of the mid-nineteenth century on the part of catholic theologians were being carried on against rationalist tendencies which had their concrete expression in the biblical literalism and the anti-sacramentalism of the Baptists. Even more vexing was the low view of the sacraments taken by the Puritans who should have known better.<sup>6</sup> The Quakers represented this entire rationalistic movement driven to its logical extreme. Pietism with its insistence on experiential religion presented a threat from another side. Its insistence on a radical conversion which was then affirmed by an ex post facto submission to baptism took on such a subjective dimension that infant baptism would be out of the question.

In crafting their defenses and designing their attack against these tendencies which were infecting the entire American Protestant scene at that time, the avatars of Mercersburg established for themselves and the church a very definitely catholic understanding of the sacraments. They left no doubt that baptism is a sacrament with objective efficacy as a means of grace. The water of baptism not only cleanses from original sin and/or past sins, but it has a projected effect. For this reason the person who delays baptism so that he may have the cleansing as near to the end of his life as possible has missed the entire point of sacramental grace.

Since one sins after baptism there are three things which are provided liturgically:

- a. A reminder of one's baptism at the beginning of the Lord's Day



service by making use of the trinitarian solemn declaration.

- b. The office of confession at the beginning of each Lord's Day service.
- c. The Preparatory Service which is effective as a proclamation of the Word of God.

I must confess that I have drawn these conclusions through an examination of the liturgical material that was developed by Mercersburg rather than from anything which they wrote concerning a protestant equivalent of the Sacrament of Penance. Suffice it to say that any system which creates a strong advocacy for infant baptism will find itself traveling the same road in dealing with the matter of absolution for sins after baptism which led Roman Catholics to their more elaborate array of sacraments. Although Mercersburg was accused of Romanizing tendencies it had no intention of reasserting sacramental penance. It did succeed, however, in offering some very viable alternatives.

Having said this, I must remark further that a doctrine of the continuing efficacy of baptism places the Preparatory Service in an anomalous position, but it is my contention that the Sacrament of Penance continued to have an influence on practises which prevailed beyond the time of the Reformation.

Equally anomalous in our cultic practise has been the Rite of Confirmation. This opportunity for affirming one's baptism at a time of fuller discretion and understanding has also continued within the Protestant movement with a certain amount of difficulty spawned by the Roman sacramental theology. Within the Roman Church the fact that confirmation was a sacrament performed by the bishop gave to it a status which was often confusedly regarded as being higher than baptism. It was accompanied with a great deal of anticipation relative to the episcopal visit, often being delayed for a considerable length of time as dioceses became larger and bishops became more involved in temporal affairs. Also, there was an elaboration of ceremonial which gave to confirmation a dramatic impact which was often lacking at the time of baptism.

The insistence of the reformers that the number of sacraments be limited to the two which enjoyed definite dominical command cut down confirmation to a very limited stature and led to a new theology of baptism which confined the action of the Holy Spirit to that one sacrament, thus leaving confirmation dangling in limbo. Zwingli was not at all inclined to continue assigning any merit to confirmation because for him baptism was even lacking in a highly sacramental significance as an act which bestowed any grace of the Spirit. It was a sign and witness of a grace already bestowed. Luther held a higher view of baptism, but this also led to his discounting the necessity for confirmation because he saw no necessity for any additional bestowal of grace by the Spirit other than that received in baptism. Melancthon rejected confirmation as "an abominable ceremony." Calvin referred to it as an "abortive image of a sacrament...which cannot be mentioned without injury to baptism." Calvin did endorse the idea of an intense period of catechetical instruction at the end of which the catechumen might present himself to be questioned on the articles of the faith before the Church and be expected to make a full confession of his faith publicly, using a definite formula consistent with the creedal



position of the church of the ages. He did not, however, suggest that this occasion should be marked with any ceremony including the laying on of hands.

The inclination to depreciate confirmation would have continued until it had been completely forgotten, perhaps, had it not been for another force that was creating stress among those who had pulled away from Rome. The Anabaptist movement was insisting that baptism had no merit if the one being baptized was not fully aware of the expectations implicit in the vows. The classical reformed movement was not about to abandon infant baptism in the face of this criticism; it was too conscious of the necessity for a conservative treatment of the traditions. Nevertheless the Anabaptist tendency to push the protestant insistence on biblical sanction to its full implications could be embarrassing if not appropriately addressed. The result was a reclaiming of some residual merit in confirmation as an occasion for responsible affirmation of one's baptismal vows at a time of maturing awareness. As time went on and the church was overtaken by the effects of the Pietist movement confirmation got a further boost as a time when one could make a subjective response to the objective grace of baptism, thus rounding out the action of the sacrament. Close on the heels of this development was to come the rise of rationalism when faith was expected to be accompanied by an intellectual grasp of the gospel before the effects of one's baptism could be fully realized. In attempting to gain a fuller appreciation for some of the cultic practises surrounding the Rite of Confirmation it should be helpful to draw upon material which was presented in a paper on <sup>7</sup>"Initiation into the Christian Church" which I presented some years ago. Here I traced six emphases which have influenced the theology and practise of confirmation since the time of the Reformation: catechetical, hierarchical, sacramental, traditional, pietistic and rationalistic.

The catechetical emphasis can be traced back to the humanistic influence of Erasmus upon the Reformers, particularly Huldreich Zwingli. Great emphasis was laid upon intelligent church membership and a full understanding of the symbols of our faith. Catechisms proliferated, and sermons of several hours length were preached on the catechism during afternoons of the Lord's Day. This intensive instruction was not limited to young people, but their involvement in it was of great importance since their fitness for full participation in the life of the church had to be determined on the basis of their being able to profess the faith in their own right. It could be said that whereas confirmation by the bishop had been a symbolic act celebrating admission into the church catholic, the loss of which was a serious enough matter, the emphasis on the universal articles of the faith, the decalogue, the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the scriptures, served as a much more acceptable way of assuring catholicity for one's involvement in the christian community.

Mercersburg bought into this emphasis very heavily. A tercentenary edition of The Heidelberg Catechism was published in 1863 containing a lengthy historical introduction, detailing much of the history of catechetical instruction in the Reformed Church from the time of its inception. The committee which prepared this monumental piece was composed of E.V. Gerhart, D.D.; John W. Nevin, D.D.; Henry Harbaugh, D.D.; John S. Kessler, D.D.; Daniel Zacharias, D.D.;<sup>8</sup> William Heyser, Esq.; Rudolph F. Kelker, Esq.; and Lewis S. Steiner, M.D.



Henry Harbaugh, the practical pastor, was most heavily involved in advocating the importance of proper catechization. Since an understanding of the sacraments was extremely important, this would be one reason for delaying first communion until a later age, but Harbaugh did promote a continuing course of training into and through adulthood. He edited a new addition of the Heidelberg Catechism and produced The Golden Censer, a devotional book for the use of catechumens which enjoyed wide use in the church for many years. Others also contributed articles to the Mercersburg Review on the place of the catechism and the accompanying method of instruction, indicating to us the great importance of this particular emphasis.

This emphasis, of course, tended to support the idea that baptism was more fully effective once a person had a more complete grasp of the faith. It operated hand-in-glove with the hierarchical emphasis which was introduced through the work of Martin Bucer. Bucer saw confirmation as a time when one placed one's self under the discipline of a local church and exalted the rite by reintroducing the laying on of hands without implying that the action had any sacramental significance. He did offer his liturgy for confirmation as a time of admission to the Lord's Supper, a practise which has had wide influence ever since that time. Bucer had a fine sense of the dramatic dimension of liturgy, and he did much to aid in the recovery of fit ways to do things, but he may be one to provide proof that "religion is danced out before it is thought out." As a matter of fact as one reads through much of the literature coming to us from Mercersburg, one is impressed by the fact that while much attention is given to a theology of Baptism and even more to a theology of the Eucharist very little attention is given to a theology of Confirmation, and the practise of withholding admission to the Eucharist until after one has been confirmed is accepted almost uncritically as a "given" which requires little further to be said in its defense.

From Bucer it was a next easy step into the camp of those who wanted to recover a sacramental emphasis for confirmation. The act of the laying on of hands could be accorded scriptural support, and there was a feeling that this action bestowed the Spirit in a fuller measure than was the case with baptism. In the 1866 Order of Worship of the Reformed Church we find the solemn act of laying on of hands as practised by the apostles of our Lord by which they "communicated the gift of the Holy Ghost for the confirmation of believers after their baptism." It also speaks of the rite of confirmation as "invoking upon you in larger measure the Holy Ghost."<sup>9</sup>

In the Book of Worship of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (1947) the minister extends the right hand of fellowship to the newly confirmed, a ceremonial action carried down from the practise in the Palatinate and one which is offered here as a liturgical elaboration over the laying on of hands in its predecessor order of 1866. This action is accompanied with the words: "I now receive and welcome you into the fellowship of this congregation, and invite you to partake of the Holy communion, and to participate in all of the privileges and obligations of the church of Jesus Christ."<sup>10</sup> I have even attended a service recently where at the time of this greeting the pastor distributed the boxes containing church offering envelopes to the newly confirmed. This gives us yet another facet of theology to be considered in connection with our subject.

A recovery of the traditional elements which would tend to enhance



churchly order certainly played a large part in the thinking and practise of the Mercersburg movement. There was no inclination whatsoever to abandon the custom of infant baptism. The articles of faith and the catechetical system which taught them in a disciplined way were bound to experience a recovery. Confirmation fit very well into the need for affirming one's baptism at a time of fuller understanding and more mature participation. The necessity for church and family to form a firm alliance in the nurture of children and youth in the faith was a theme which required little advocacy. All of these things taken together produced a climate in which the traditions could enjoy wide acceptance.

The influence of the Pietistic Movement is evident in both the positive contribution that it made as well as in the negative response to some of its main emphases. The emphasis on personal preparation through Bible reading and prayer is evident in the Golden Censer of Henry Harbaugh. On the other side of the coin we detect a tendency to regard confirmation and Holy Communion as end products of education to which one came when one felt that one was "ready." Because of a heavy emphasis on personal conversion, Baptism became less important, and entrance to the Christian life was associated chiefly with confirmation. One strong reply to the pietistic emphasis on personal conversion was given by Calvin Gerhard in an article on "True Conversion and Baptismal Grace" appearing in the July, 1874 Review. Here Gerhard describes a developmental theory of Christian growth, nurtured by the Word and the work of the Spirit initiated through Holy Baptism, averring that these were the true means of grace. It is interesting<sub>2</sub> to note, however, that he doesn't once make any reference to confirmation.

As with Pietism, so also with Rationalism can we see an influence that came about in the confirmation practises taught by Mercersburg in spite of themselves. There is an insistence upon "understanding" implicit in the entire catechetical emphasis, and being "ready" for full membership in the church with access to Holy Communion meant intellectual assent to the faith of the church as much as moral integrity. In reaction to the rationalism of the Baptists and Puritans, however, there was a strong return to the power of baptismal regeneration and a new, high doctrine of the Sacrament of Water and the Spirit. As a matter of fact we could very well say that much of the motive force of Mercersburg was supplied by its strong intention to address directly the unchurchly tendencies of Pietism and Rationalism which had settled into the church like a disease.

In consequence of what we have just observed much of the literature of Mercersburg assumes a strongly polemical character. It finds itself making the strongest possible case for the efficacy of infant baptism because of the pervasive influence of the Baptist insistence on believers' baptism. At the same time it is maneuvered into a defense of confirmation as a time when the process initiated by baptism in one's infancy is realized in fuller measure. It reiterates the Calvinistic teachings about prevenient grace in reply to the contention that Baptism is meaningless if the one being baptized has no awareness of what is taking place. Yet it acknowledges that there must come a time when one assumes personal responsibility for the vows taken by one's parents in one's behalf. There is a renewed emphasis on the nurturing influence of the family in providing Christian education. The role of the pastor in this process is carefully delineated, and the entire course of catechization is given renewed support. In achieving this emphasis, however, there emerges a theology of



confirmation, more by inference than by explicit expression, which tends to weaken the initially professed theology of baptismal grace. And as a further result access to Holy Communion is denied until one has passed the mark in confirmation, a position which tends to weaken the doctrine of baptism even further if we are to regard it as a sacrament of incorporation into the Body of Christ.

One who has not read all of the literature carefully might easily assume that the high sacramental view of Mercersburg would inevitably lead to an understanding of Baptism as sufficiently full of grace to provide unimpeded access to the Eucharist. But we soon discover otherwise. Nevin, in a long review of Essay on Christian Baptism by Baptist W. Noel, M.A.; writes as follows:

Infant baptism taken as a mere abstract rite or usage, can never maintain its ground. As it grows from the church system, so it can never thrive or prosper truly save in the bosom of this system. It is properly but the initiative of all that is comprehended in a true church life, as a process of preparation for heaven. Take away the idea of this process, as something needed to carry forward and complete what is thus begun, and the true sense of the sacrament is gone. Infant baptism assumes the possibility of educational religion, under the special appliances of the Church, and looks to it as its own necessary complement. The idea of confirmation is required to bring it to its true and full sense. Where faith remains at all in its character as a sacrament, it will be felt to carry with it a demand for such personal acknowledgment and response on the part of its subject, at the proper time, under the hand of the Church; which in such case will not be viewed as a new and independent transaction, however, but rather as the natural and suitable close of the baptismal act itself. <sup>13</sup>

It is interesting for us to follow the writings of Henry Harbaugh as accurate reflections of the thought of Mercersburg since he was out on the firing line as a local pastor during most of the years of his service to the church. In the April, 1861, edition of the Review he published an article on "The Early Introduction of Catechization in the Reformed Church," in which he reveals his disposition concerning the time for first communion in his comments about prevailing practises in various branches of the church. Following his quote from a Dr. Ashbel Green of the Presbyterian church concerning the practise of catechization and the attendant examination following the conclusion of the course of study, Harbaugh says:

At the close of the paragraph just quoted, we would naturally expect him to say that these instructions looked directly forward to the full initiation of the catechumen into the Church, that they were led to expect this, and that this end was reached as a matter of course. But instead of this, it is evident that these catechetical exercises looked in that direction only in the same way as do the instructions of any



Bible class or Sunday school. We are immediately and painfully reminded that this was something radically different from the old idea of catechization, by the words which follow the extract made: "The Catechumens thus instructed, soon, of course, "--became full members of the Church? no; though that too may have been so; but it evidently is not in the author's mind, as the end to be looked for directly, and as the proper end of this catechization--"soon, of course, reached the years of maturity, finished their education which, in many instances, was of a liberal kind, and were preparing to enter on business for themselves, and to become heads of families."<sup>14</sup>

The salient words in the above passage are "full initiation, into the Church" and "became full members of the Church." They reflect the customs and beliefs to which Harbaugh adhered. In the same article Harbaugh maintains that catechetical training should be for young and old alike. since an understanding of the sacraments was important, this would be one reason for delaying admission to Holy Communion. As a matter of fact he advocates having adults receive instruction several days prior to receiving the Sacrament on succeeding occasions. Harbaugh even quotes a passage from a report by the Swiss delegates to the Synod of Dort, albeit approvingly, in which they noted that pastors may also delay marriage until evidence of knowledge in matters of religion is shown. In attempting to relate to all of this logic about "readiness" one is moved to comment that the same could be applied to the Sacrament of Baptism, thus falling over into the Baptist camp.

But God forbid! Hence the occasion for all of the polemics. Among the earliest issues of the Review we find a series of articles by Harbaugh which are translations of a work on The Doctrine of Christian Baptism and the Baptist Question by Dr. H. Martensen, Professor of Theology in the University of Copenhagen. Although Martensen is a Lutheran, Harbaugh prefaces his translation with this justification: "If the doctrine of the tract is true Lutheranism, it will be seen that it differs in its theory of Christianity, as far from what goes under that name in this country, as it does from the Baptist theory itself." I do not intend to quote from this material at length; a few brief references should suffice. Martensen contends that evangelical Protestantism has allowed itself to be lured into the Baptist camp by defending confirmation as the completion or fulfillment of Baptism. In so doing it is acknowledging adult baptism as the norm. Instead it should be advancing infant baptism as the churchly way and with biblical sanction since baptism celebrates the election by God and his intention subsequently to be operative by grace in the life of that person. He deplores the fact that confirmation is overvalued at the expense of infant baptism. The Baptist contention that baptism merely signifies a grace already present or a level of Christian development already achieved strips baptism of any sacramental virtue at all. In speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus was demanding baptism as the way by which one enters into a state<sup>15</sup> of grace from a prior condition of having had no experience with it at all.

Even though Martensen ascribes to confirmation a subsidiary role, he does speak of it as "the personal ratification of the confession of faith...(Giving) a right to the participation of the Lord's Supper. "Apparently no one was being troubled at that time over the



evident discrepancy between a high view of baptism and the intervention of confirmation before one was admitted to the Lord's Supper. At that time the welcoming of children to the table of the Lord was not even an issue.

Another quote, this time from an article on "Catechetical Instruction" by F.W. Kremer, a pastor in Lebanon, PA, in the April, 1854, issue of the Review: "But the most solemn part of pastoral catechizing is that which contemplates the preparation of the young for full communion with the Church. This is the last and most important stage of the general process of catechetical training...that by divine blessing, they may be duly prepared to pass from the school, through the catechetical class, into the Church, and ultimately from the Church into heaven!"<sup>16</sup> Sometimes one can observe a bend in the theological stream wearing away at the constraining banks until what was somewhat crooked begins to look straight. This can be illustrated by offering one last quote from an article in the July 1877 issue of the Review written by the Rev. Prof. J.H. Dubbs, Audenried Professor of History and Archaeology at Franklin and Marshall College, son of one of the great pastors of the Reformed Church in Allentown, author of numerous historical works in Reformed Church matters, and a second generation teacher in the Mercersburg tradition.

The central and essential part of Confirmation is, however, the laying on of hands. By this means the Church not only expresses her approval of the profession which has just been made, but actually claims to impart "in larger measure the Holy Ghost, by whose help alone we are able to live holy and obedient lives."

We do not hold that Confirmation is a sacrament, in the accepted sense of the word; it is rather the crown and complement of the sacrament of baptism. But surely we can say with Ebrard that "it is a mystic, sacramental act," or with Melancthon, when speaking of ordination, that "it partakes of the character and qualities of a sacrament." It springs out of baptism, and we cannot dispense with it without mutilating the sacrament. The Reformed Church is therefore fully justified not only in refusing to regard Confirmation as an empty ceremony, but in considering it a precious treasure, to be carefully guarded and safely transmitted to subsequent generations.

This exaltation of confirmation stands in sharp contrast to the impression given in an article appearing in the October, 1872, issue of the Review on "The Doctrine of Baptism as Taught in the Heidelberg Catechism," written by the Rev. Prof. E.V. Gerhart, a colleague of Dubbs and also a second generation Mercersburg affiliate. Confirmation is not mentioned once in this entire article, a very strange thing indeed when one realizes that catechisms were related to confirmation in the order of things. In fact throughout the literature that we have been working there is a strange absence of any thoroughly worked out theology of confirmation.

#### The Existential Realities

It is time to make some summary observations and to draw some



conclusions in the light of what we find Mercersburg to have been saying and the kind of movement in the contemporary church that we are addressing.

First of all, there is no doubt at all that Mercersburg represented a strongly sacramentalist position. Baptism was the washing of regeneration, the sign and seal of a new birth, the means of grace by which one is incorporated into the Body of Christ. However, there is the counter-veiling belief that baptism is the beginning of a process of nurture which is consummated with confirmation. This tends to produce a tension in view of the fact that the incorporation celebrated in baptism should be indiscriminate in character as declared by St. Paul, a logic which should have made it unreasonable to refuse access to any part of church life for children. Writing in 1850 against the Baptist position, Nevin makes such a strong case for infant baptism, so strong that it could be played out to a theological support for infant communion, but then he steps back to denounce infant communion as an "abuse" and an "excess."<sup>18</sup> This observation helps to define the dilemma. The Mercersburg divines were making a defense against rationalism which had stripped baptism of any efficacy as a channel of grace. The Baptist church represented the logical outcome of this rationalistic view of the sacrament by which one celebrates a grace that has already been bestowed. It helped none at all that Zwingli's views were very closely akin to this. Biblical literalism which is both rationalistic and antitraditional further compelled the Baptists to try to imitate exactly what transpired at Jesus' baptism. Puritanism, the word which Mercersburg used as a general cataloguing of common garden variety American Protestantism, continued to practise infant baptism, but with little zeal because it regarded it as an empty form signifying a grace already bestowed. Quakerism, another off-shoot of rationalism, taught that the spiritual reality of a grace either conveyed or demonstrated in a sacrament is in effect without resort to the physical elements or signs.

The mid-nineteenth century was a time when the Reformed would be in a defensive position because of the large number of anabaptists in Pennsylvania. The Puritans of New England were particularly galling because they were in essence an established church with a sect mentality. The Baptists should have been less arrogant because of the high rate of infant mortality of the time.

The other current that was moving strongly alongside of rationalism was, of course, pietism. This manifested itself in the revival movements and New Measures that were shaking many local parishes of the traditional churches to the foundations. Nevin's Anxious Bench<sup>19</sup> was a rallying cry for recovery of the place of the catechism, a position which was taken up vigorously by Harbaugh and others. Recovery of the church system as represented in the catechism was to be achieved through a thorough program involving church and family working closely together. This system could be authenticated when it could be related to a developmental view of baptismal efficacy allowing for a subjective as well as a subjective efficacy.

It is not difficult to see how the heavy emphasis on catechesis with confirmation as the moment of recognition and achievement could encourage an attendant prize of admission to the Lord's Supper. Even Mercersburg was influenced by the attempt made to reply to the anabaptists by which confirmation was held up as the fulfillment or consummation of baptism. Too, even Mercersburg was tinged with some of the doctrines and practises surrounding confirmation which had come as accretions following the



Reformation. The result was that confirmation was retained and supported without a strong theological statement in its behalf.

A high view of baptism leads one inevitably to the position of inviting children to the Eucharist, but Mercersburg was reflexively and temperamentally unable to take that one last step. The mid-nineteenth century would not be a time when there was any strong inclination to extend the privileges of children and youth. We must recognize that in our day it is sociological pressure as much as theologically ordered imperatives which has created a rationale for inviting children to the Lord's Table. We dare not idealize the Mercersburg divines to the point where we are unable to admit that they were also children of their time. They were elated to be advocates of a system which encouraged the family to meet its responsibilities in bringing their children for instruction and confirmation. They may even have taken some delight in arrogating for the pastor certain episcopal prerogatives as the confirming officiant. (Shades of congregationalism?) I am tormented by the fact that so little attention is given to playing out to completion a theology of confirmation. It is just there, and whenever it is mentioned it compromises the theology of baptism.

The pressures for change which are current in our time did not exist for Mercersburg. Today we tend to place the child in the midst and on a pedestal as well. Traditionalists and conservatives alike may deplore some of the attendant problems that this creates in society and resent the incursion into church life of the sentimentality which often displaces reason in dealing with children. We are embarrassed to have to admit, however, that when the advocates of admitting children to the Eucharist depart from their sentimentality, even from their sociological or psychological rationales, and drive us back to our theological ramparts, they do not encounter much difficulty in discovering fissures in the wall. Yes, even more, I would go so far as to say that when they have breached the wall they find documents left behind that can be used to support their contentions. It seems reasonable to propose that we should be using our energies and our intellect to help our adversaries develop a theological position that we can all live and work with together.



# NOTES

1. John W. Nevin, "The Anglican Crisis," Mercersburg Review 3 (1851), pp. 369-70. Hereafter cited as MR.
2. John W. Nevin, "The Old Doctrine of Baptism," MR 12 (1860) p. 210 ff.
3. E.V. Gerhart, "Holy Baptism, the Doctrine of the Reformed Church," MR 15 (1868), p. 227.
4. D.Y. Heisler, "Scripture View of Holy Baptism," MR 18 (1871), p. 427.
5. E.V. Gerhart, "The Efficacy of Baptism," MR 10 (1858), p. 1.
6. Puritanism for Nevin was represented by what he thought he saw on the contemporary scene. It was a denomination which had strayed from its Calvinist roots as it embraced an atomistic ecclesiology and an anti-sacramental approach. Faith was grounded in experience and tradition was what was being gathered out of the current understanding of the church as a voluntary society. It must be acknowledged that Nevin's caricature for purposes of giving to this paper a true historical flavor without intending to imply that the Congregational Christian Churches at the time of the merger into the United Church of Christ still bore the same visage as that perceived in the mid-nineteenth century.
7. R. Howard Paine, Initiation into the Christian Church, (Collegeville, PA; Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, 1978), pp. 9-20.
8. E.V. Gerhart, et al, The Heidelberg Catechism in German, Latin and English: with an Historical Introduction, (New York: Charles Scribner, 1863).
9. An Order of Worship for the Reformed Church, (Philadelphia, 1866), p. 204.
10. Book of Worship of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, (Cleveland, Ohio, Central publishing House, 1947), p. 266.
11. Henry Harbaugh, The Golden Censer; or Devotions for Young Christians, (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1860).
12. Calvin S. Gerhard, "True Conversion and Religious Experience," MR 21, (1874), p. 444 ff.
13. John W. Nevin, "Noel on Baptism," MR 2 (1850), p. 263.
14. Henry Harbaugh, "The Early Introduction of Catechization in the Reformed Church," MR 13 (1861), pp. 212-13.
15. H. Martensen, "The Doctrine of Christian Baptism and the Baptist Question," translated by and presented with brief notes by Henry Harbaugh, MR 4 (1852), pp. 305-21 and 475-85; MR (1853), pp. 276-310.



16. F.W. Kremer, "Catechetical Instruction," MR 6 (1854), p. 220.
17. J.H. Dubbs, "Confirmation in the Reformed Church," MR 29 (1877), p. 393.
18. John W. Nevin, "Noel on Baptism," MR 2, (1850), pp. 248-49.
19. John W. Nevin, The Anxious Bench, (Chambersburg, PA, Publication Office of the German Reformed Church, 1844).



FIFTH ANNUAL CONVOCATION  
THE MERCERSBURG SOCIETY

May 22 and 23, 1989

Ursinus College  
Collegeville, Pennsylvania

Convocations of the Mercersburg Society are open to the public. Members of the Society will receive details concerning the 1989 Convocation. Others may write to the Rev. John C. Miller, Secretary, 1321 Marie Avenue, Ephrata, PA 17522, for arrangement details, including housing.



1. The first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the

the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the

the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the  
the first of these is the fact that the



## THE MERCERSBURG SOCIETY

The Mercersburg Society has been formed to uphold the concept of the Church as the Body of Christ, Evangelical Reformed, Catholic, Apostolic, organic, developmental and connectional. It affirms the ecumenical creeds as witnesses to its faith and the Eucharist as the liturgical act from which all other acts of worship and service emanate.

The society pursues contemporary theology in the Church and the world within the context of Mercersburg Theology. In effecting its purpose the Society provides opportunities for fellowship and study for persons interested in Mercersburg Theology, sponsors an annual convocation, engages in the publication of articles and books, stimulates research and correspondence among scholars on topics of theology, liturgy, the sacraments and ecumenism.

The New Mercersburg Review is designed to publish the proceedings of the annual Convocation as well as other articles on subjects pertinent to the aims and interests of the Society.

Membership in the Society is sustained by \$12.00 per annum for general membership, \$15.00 per annum for members of the Corporate Board, and \$5.00 per annum for students, payable to the Treasurer:

The Rev. James H. Gold  
P.O. Box 207  
Ickesburg, PA 17037

## MANUSCRIPTS AND BOOKS FOR REVIEW

Manuscripts submitted for publication and books for possible review should be sent to:

R. Howard Paine, Editor  
The New Mercersburg Review  
762 Tamarack Trail  
Reading, PA 19607

Manuscripts should be typewritten and double-spaced. Three copies of each manuscript are required, along with a self-addressed and stamped envelope for their return if found unacceptable. The first page of the manuscript should carry the proposed title and the author's name. Under the name should appear the "identification line," giving the title or position, the institution, and the location.

Superior numerals in the text should indicate the placement of footnotes. The footnotes themselves should be typed separately at the end of the manuscript. Examples of style for references may be found in a past issue of The New Mercersburg Review.