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How Paul and the Jerusalem Council Might Speak to Division in the Twenty-First Century Church

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IS COMMUNING FROM THE CUP AN ENDANGERED SPECIES?

A Biblical and Theological Framework for Grounding the Eucharistic Practice.

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A Paper Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Theology of Saint John's University,
Collegeville, Minnesota, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Arts in Theology/Liturgy.

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
Saint John's University
Collegeville, Minnesota
July 6, 2006

This Paper was written under the direction of

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris McConnell", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature of Director

Christian McConnell

July 9, 2006

Mary Birmingham
Has successfully demonstrated the use of
Spanish
In this paper.



Signature of Director

Christian McConnell

July 9, 2006

**IS COMMUNING FROM THE CUP AN ENDANGERED SPECIES?
A Biblical and Theological Framework for Grounding the Eucharistic Practice."**

Description of the Project:

The intention of this paper is to affirm the practice of communion under both species by giving voice to an ancient tradition's inherited understanding of wine as a sign of the eschatological reign of God, the new Covenant. The four-pronged approach will be to articulate the reason communion from the cup is an endangered practice. The second step will be to craft a three-part defense of why the practice should be safeguarded. The third step will be to affirm the role and function of symbol since those who would appeal to the theory of concomitance would assert that no matter how fully developed a theology of the cup might be; the theology is subsumed in one species complete and whole anyway. By emphasizing the role of symbol this paper will attest to the importance of its function. Fourthly and finally this paper will conclude by illuminating the way in which participation in the cup defines and strengthens the faithful for mission.

This paper may be duplicated.

Mary C. Birmingham

July 9, 2006

Is Communing from the Cup an Endangered Species?

A Biblical and Theological Framework for Grounding the Eucharistic Practice.

A drought is on the horizon. There are dangerous echoes of the slow but steady parching of our communities that may eventually deprive us of a full sharing in the Eucharistic cup-- "by which the new and eternal Covenant is ratified in the Blood of the Lord."¹ In other words, the community's participation in the communion cup, the fullest sign of the new Covenant inaugurated by Christ at the Last Supper, is at risk of severe diminishment, or at worst, eventual extinction. If not rescued from the reductionist tendencies of liturgical rubricists, the assembly may one day find itself parched and thirsting for restoration and for full and complete participation in the eschatological banquet. One need only consider fifteen hundred years of liturgical history in which reception of communion was the exception rather than the rule, to know that such a drought is possible.

The intention of this paper is to strongly affirm the practice of communion under both species by giving voice to an ancient tradition's inherited understanding of wine as a sign of the eschatological reign of God, the new Covenant of which Christ spoke. Christ not only brought his blood to the Eucharistic cup, he brought the symbol of wine--a symbol already laden with metaphoric images of the anticipated kingdom. He presided at the dawn of "the new heaven and the new earth" (Cf. Is 65:17), and the Last Supper was its inaugural meal. Actualized within wine's symbolic referent was a highly developed eschatological framework. Wine was the symbolic expression of what Christ meant when he referred to the "new Covenant."

Unfortunately the Pauline theology of *cup as participation in the Paschal sacrifice* overshadowed the eschatological focus of the sacrament. The average Catholic today has little

¹ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM). Liturgy Documentary. Series 2. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003, no. 281.

appreciation of such a focus. A mystagogical retrieval of the multivalent layers of meaning incarnate in the symbol of wine that Jesus invited his friends to drink will hopefully punctuate its importance and provide solid biblical and theological grounding for continuing the Eucharistic practice unfettered.

Before launching this investigation I will elucidate my four-pronged methodology. The first step in the process will be to articulate the reason communion from the cup is an endangered practice. The second step will be to craft a three-part defense of why the practice should be safeguarded. This will be accomplished by tracing the etiology of the symbolic references of wine in culture, pagan ritual, Judaism, early Christianity and the early Patristic period in order to elucidate the untapped treasury of meaning inherent in the symbol as it was understood in pre-Christian, Christian and the early Christian era. Third, since the ritual use of cup is situated within the context of sacramental symbol, and drawing from the insights of Louis-Marie Chauvet I will conclude this paper by asserting the role and function of symbol. The latter is necessary as those who would lead us to the dry oasis would assert that it does not matter how fully developed a theology of the cup might be; the theology is subsumed in one species complete and whole anyway. By elucidating and asserting the role of symbol in the sacramental action, I hope to challenge the former assertion by proving that the function of symbol does matter.

Finally I will attempt to illuminate the way in which participation in the cup is deeply and integrally connected to the Christian life—the way in which it defines and strengthens the faithful for mission. To rob the people of God of so powerful a gift is to impoverish them—to parch them. It is this writer's sincere hope that our ancestors might speak a word from their dusty

tombs allowing an early theology not only to inform our present practice, but to convict us of its importance.²

Why the Eucharistic practice is at risk. Two recently revised liturgical documents reaffirmed communion under both species: the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal* and *Redemptionis Sacramentum: (On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist)*. Not only did the documents affirm the practice, but they also stated its inherent value.

Holy Communion has a fuller form as a sign when it is distributed under both kinds. For in this form the sign of the Eucharistic banquet is more clearly evident and clear expression is given to the divine will which the new and eternal Covenant is ratified in the Blood of the Lord, as also the relationship between the Eucharistic banquet and the eschatological banquet in the Father's Kingdom.³

So that the fullness of the sign may be made more clearly evident to the faithful in the course of the Eucharistic banquet, lay members of Christ's faithful, too, are admitted to Communion under both kinds...⁴

However, after having stated the value, both documents immediately evoke the teaching set forth by the Ecumenical Council of Trent regarding concomitance. The following directives serve to illustrate:

Christ, whole and entire, and the true Sacrament, is received even under only one species, and consequently that as far as the effects are concerned, those who receive under only one species are not deprived of any of the grace that is necessary for salvation.⁵

Christ's faithful, too, are admitted to Communion under both kinds, in the cases set forth in the liturgical books, preceded and continually accompanied by proper catechesis regarding the dogmatic principles on this matter laid down by the Ecumenical Council of Trent.⁶

² This query will be limited to the unpacking of the symbol of wine. Blood and sacrifice, two symbols that are equally subsumed in the sacramental sign will not be overtly addressed in this paper. This in no way indicates a bias for one symbol over against another (especially in light of their co-relationship). It simply reflects the constraints of an inquiry of limited scope.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Committee on the Liturgy, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (RS). (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2004), no. 100.

⁵ GIRM, no. 282.

⁶ RS, no. 101.

First, the documents eloquently encourage the faithful to participate in the cup, and then in subtle and subliminal fashion tell them it isn't necessary as the latter is subsumed into the bread complete and whole, thus giving permission and credence to omit it.

The latest document, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* takes the issue to a further level. It is enjoined upon the diocesan Bishop to completely exclude the practice when "even a small danger exists of the sacred species being profaned."⁷ Furthermore, the document insists that where a large number of communicants is present, or when access to the chalice would be difficult to arrange, or where the quality of the wine could not be ascertained, or when there might not be an appropriate number of appropriately trained and formed Eucharistic ministers, or when a large number of people abstain from reception⁸ ("...so that the sign of unity would in some sense be negated..."⁹), communion from the cup should be excluded. Lest anyone might find a reason to continue with the practice after such ominous enjoinders the document nearly seals its fate by asserting "the pouring of the Blood of Christ after the consecration from one vessel to another is completely to be avoided, lest anything should happen that would be to the detriment of so great a mystery. Never to be used for containing the Blood of the Lord are flagons, bowls, or other vessels that are not fully in accord with the established norms."¹⁰

While not assuming to know the minds of those who make such determinations, one might charitably assume that the overt concerns are based primarily on the intention to conform to the polemically established principle of concomitance which arose from the medieval Eucharistic debates. The issue of concomitance evolved from Peter the Singer's "objection to the

⁷ RS, no. 102.

⁸ One nearly waits with painful expectation for the author to take a breath. One would wonder (judging from the text) if the occasion exists in which it would **not** be a profanation of the species to provide communion from the cup.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., no 106.

‘separate consecration’ theory that ‘a body cannot exist without blood,’ and that no blood exists in the Eucharist until the chalice has also been consecrated.”¹¹ Theologians solved the problem by delineating the distinction. When the bread is consecrated into Christ’s body it follows that the blood is also present since a body indeed cannot exist without blood. The bottom line-- Christ’s blood is present in the bread at the moment of consecration.¹² A brief history will ensue later in this paper. This theology is not the primary issue in question. The issue at hand concerns the fact that the doctrine of concomitance perhaps might not be the most important theology at risk in this situation. The full weight of the sacramental sign perhaps is at greater risk than the former doctrine by virtue of its possible reduction.

Both documents refer to the Council of Trent and the theology of concomitance as grounding for their solicitude. The authors of those documents were not alone in their concerns. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council were similarly concerned as attested to in Annibale Bugnini’s magnum opus, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975* concerning the negotiations involved in establishing the reforms. In the early stages of development opposition was raised.

The Congregation for the Clergy appeared to the Council of Trent, fearing that communion under both kinds would lead to deviations in dogma, while communion twice in one day was a novelty and therefore not acceptable; it was, in fact a deviation springing from a mind insufficiently enlightened with regard, for example, to the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in a soul in the state of grace... The Congregation for the Religious regarded communion under both kinds a matter of greater solemnity and therefore saw no reason for extending it; it also feared negative consequences with regard to faith in the real presence under each of the species...”¹³

Considering the history of the development of offering communion under both kinds, it is understandable that the GIRM would raise such concerns. The Fathers had no intention of

¹¹ Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy: The Worship of the Eucharist Outside the Mass* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 157-158.

¹² Cf. *Ibid.*, 158.

¹³ Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 631.

sparking new Eucharistic debates over real Presence.¹⁴ The later document, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, however, displays a near schizophrenic anxiety over use of the cup. One cannot help engage in a hermeneutic of suspicion and wonder if the latter document has more to do with recent polemic and apologetic stances that continue to emerge in this country calling for strict adherence to Tridentine orthodoxy (prompted by Catholic fundamentalist network television). Such apologetics anathematize and over-exaggerate local abuses which in turn get communicated to Rome. In the process parishes become a hotbed of controversy and Rome is forced into a reactive posture.

One might reasonably deduce, therefore, that communion from the cup could be put in the category of endangered species unless some sort of retrieval of the power of symbol is undertaken. As Shakespeare was wont to affirm, "Hope springs eternal!" Perhaps our ancestors might put these arguments in perspective.

The use of wine in ancient cultures. Symbols emerge out of ordinary existence. Before there was symbolic reference there was ordinary use which then evolved into symbolic reference. Most primitive cultures participated in a common meal. This meal created a sense of belonging to a cohesive whole and it provided a sense of family, tribe, clan, and community. There is no stronger bond than the bond created through meal fellowship. It is a uniquely human act. Animals eat to satiate hunger. Human beings gather for a meal to create a social network. They share belief, ideas, common hopes and aspirations, as well as a shared history. Alcohol was and is a primary component in the social framework of the meal. Alcohol loosens inhibitions and lends an air of festivity. Alcohol can liven a gathering or destroy it. Ancient biblical texts are clear in their disapproval of drunkenness. Wine was believed to open the heart to reasoning.

¹⁴ One can hardly blame them!

This sweet nectar was used as an analgesic and it lessened the effects of deep sorrow--“it is an artificial paradise, a drug that alleviates pain.”¹⁵ Wine was considered a blessing and a divine gift. Wine was an ambiguous drink, “like liquid fire, at once dangerous and beneficial.”¹⁶ A social matrix existed around its use; it helped create an environment conducive to forging social relationships.

The use of wine in pagan worship. The use of wine in pagan worship evolved naturally from its use in the culture. Wine was a bearer of significant meaning in most primitive religions. It was a common symbol in pagan worship. Let us consider the ancient Greek (@800-500 BCE) cult of Dionysius. The drinking of wine in ancient Greece was a communal action. The Greek symposium was convened “as a community, with its own rules intended to establish a setting of shared pleasure.”¹⁷ The codified and ordered religious ritual of the symposium included a libation of wine dedicated to the gods. The libation preceded the consumption of wine mixed with water by all in attendance. Dionysius, the god of wine was the subject of the dedication.

When we pour libations
To the gods, we pour the god of wine himself
That through his intercession man may win
The favor of heaven.¹⁸

Greek art portrays Dionysius taking human form and the wine becomes a “symbol of the conviviality and happiness of the symposium.”¹⁹ Not only was wine an important social and cultural medium, it embodied divinity and sought the intercession of that divinity.

¹⁵ Francois Lissarrague, *The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet* trans. Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 4.

¹⁶ Ibid., 5

¹⁷ Ibid., 19.

¹⁸ Euripides, *Bacchae*, 284-285, trans. Arrowsmith, in Lissarrague, 26.

¹⁹ Lissarrague, 37

One cannot be certain that the cult of Dionysius exerted any influence on first century Palestinian culture. There is no specific evidence of large scale accretion of Hellenistic syncretism. However, there were common elements in all pagan cults and Israel was not without its idols.

The Caananite idols Baal and Astarte were two such cults in which a wine libation offered to the idol was a part of the ritual system of both cults. Jereboam placed bulls in the sanctuary at Dan and Bethel in the northern kingdom. Jezebel established priests and sanctuaries for the cult of Baal. It was not until the Babylonian exile that Judaism was effectively weaned from its participation in idol worship. Pagan worship did, however, remain a constant source of consternation for faithful Israelites. Social and commercial association with pagans was strictly regulated. Idolatry was considered a cardinal, capital sin, worthy of the death penalty. Jews were forbidden to drink the wine of the Gentiles in fear that the wine was wine offered to the gods.²⁰

Even though there were varied attempts to reintroduce pagan cults in the Greco-Roman period there was fierce Jewish opposition. The Gospels are clear, however, that idol worship was alive and well in spite of opposition to it.

Referring back to the previously mentioned cult of Dionysius, it is interesting to note the way in which Dionysius was communicated to his devotees. Art portrays him being incarnated through the wine. Through Dionysius' intercession, favor from the gods was granted to all who offered him libation. While there is no concrete evidence that this cult existed in Israel during the Christian period, it is perhaps reasonable to assume that similar cults did exist and expressed a similar symbolic reference to the gods residing within the symbol itself (such as Dionysius existing in the wine of libation).

²⁰ Cf. "Idolatry," In *The Oxford Dictionary of Jewish Religion*, 1997, 347.

Perhaps, therefore, the Christian *ordo* inculcated, not just the appropriation of the Jewish use of wine, but also a reordering of the pagan symbolic reference of wine. Christian feasts and festivals often were created in response to pagan festivals. Perhaps there were echoes within Jesus' use of wine to overturn or redefine pagan rituals in which divinity was understood to be embodied within in the symbol (in Dionysius' case, the wine). The cults of Baal and Astarte did include the practice of ritual libation, so it is at least possible, if not probable, that a similar symbol/divinization was present in the cults during the pre-Christian and Christian era. Ultimately, for the Greeks gathered in the symposium, community was formed and god/Dionysius was communicated *in* the wine. Ultimately, for the first disciples, community was formed and God/Jesus was and is communicated in the cup of the Covenant.

Gordon Lathrop, in his book, *Holy Things*, insists that "human ritual grows by means of new embroidery on old patterns, the new use of old ritual signs, so that juxtaposition is the inevitable result."²¹ Jesus' use of wine not only juxtaposed the Jewish symbolic reference of wine which will be addressed next, but perhaps common pagan appropriations as well. Perhaps the action of associating his blood with the wine in the cup (blood was considered a person's essence, their life force) was a very subliminal antagonist polemic against pagan idol worship. It is at the very least a provocative consideration. Other scholars have similarly mused.

Eugene LeVerdiere speaks to the influence of the mystery cults when he maintained: The Johannine community included members of Jewish, Samaritan, and Gentile background, living in a cultural milieu pervaded by a variety of religious movements and mystery cults, with their initiation rites, emphasis on rebirth, small communities and ritual meals. Members of the community were bound to be influenced by some of these movements and cults. It was not easy

²¹ Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things*, A Liturgical Theology (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1993), 79.

for them to maintain the proper balance between Spirit and the flesh. Competing values quickly became divisive.²²

Gordon Lathrop's *Holy People*, (his second in a series after *Holy Things*) infers that the Fourth Gospel used themes drawn from the Jewish Tabernacles and the "current Greek Dionysian myth."²³ Lathrop maintains that the Gospel draws from such cultural material to exalt Christ, the true water source. Rituals from Judaism and the pagan culture were transformed—juxtaposed—and new meaning was appropriate for Christian worship. "Not the repeated libations in the temple at the feast of Tabernacles, but the "water" from Christ's heart, from his death will water the whole earth (John 7: 38-39; 19-34-35). Not Dionysian drunkenness or continued Jewish purification rites, but the "wine" of Christ's glorification, of his cross..."²⁴ Lathrop insists that in Christian worship as well as in John's Gospel, both Jewish and pagan cultural symbols are freely and strongly criticized. Both Jewish purification rites and the pagan Dionysian practices are ritual matters. "Each of these ritual symbols is re-used verbally in the Gospel to proclaim the meaning of Jesus."²⁵

Lathrop elucidates the ancient pattern for communal eating. He maintains that it was based on the Greek *deipnon* and the *symposion*. The meal pattern included an appetizer course, which included conversation, followed by the meal (*deipnon*), "followed by the removal of tables, the bringing of the mixed wine-cup, the ritual libation to the gods, and the *symposion* or common drinking and entertainment (or among the philosophically inclined, drinking and conversation."²⁶ Lathrop affirms that when Christianity was taking root Jewish meal practice

²² LaVerdier, Eugene, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and Early Church*, 118.

²³ Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy People*, 183

²⁴ Lathrop, Gordon, *Holy People*, 183.

²⁵ Ibid, 184.

²⁶ Ibid. 186.

was influenced by Greek meal patterns. The Jews, however, juxtaposed the meaning—idolatry was out of the question. The libation after *deipnon* and before *symposion* became the blessing of God over the cup. The Greek ceremonial at the end of the *deipnon* became ...the great place for the Jewish *Birkat ha-Mazon*,²⁷ attested by some scholars as the source for “Christian *eucharista* at table.”²⁸ Thus, insists Lathrop, Christian meals were complex cultural symbols, influenced by the dominant Greek culture. He does remind the reader, however, that even though the *deipnon* and *symposion* were incorporated into the Christian ritual meal, there was no *symposion* at the Last Supper. “The bread and cup and their meaning are given in the midst of the supper, and the meal ends with a hymn instead of the mixed cup, conversation and entertainment. Here the *symposion* cup is the cup of the garden (Mk 14:36) and the spoiled-wine drink of the cross (15:36), which is the arrival of the kingdom of God.”²⁹ Lathrop insists that just as Israel’s appropriation of the libation to the gods became thanksgiving and petition addressed to the God of Israel and that the entire Jewish meal proposed eschatological meaning, so to Christianity’s use of the cup inferred living and drinking in the last days of God’s reign on earth.

The use of wine in Judaism. Israel’s appropriation of wine communicates nothing less than the Covenant God forged with Israel. Wine was pregnant with multiple layers of meaning. It evoked joy, festivity and life.³⁰ Jews then and today wish one another, “le-Hayyim (“to life”). The Psalms affirm that wine gladdens the heart (Ps 104: 15). Wine was a sign of blessing and a foretaste of the future banquet. The Wisdom tradition echoes God’s covenant protection in its metaphoric meal referent.

²⁷ Ibid 187.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid. 192.

³⁰ “Wine” New Encyclopedia of Judaism, ed. Geoffrey Wigoder, co-ed. Fred Skolnik, Shmuel Himelstein, Washington Square: New York University Press, 1989, 2002, 831.

Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven columns;
She has dressed her meat, mixed her wine,
Yes, she has spread her table.
She has sent out her maidens; she calls from the heights out over the city;
“Let whoever is simple turn in here; to him who lacks understanding, I say
Come, eat of my food, and drink the wine I have mixed!
Forsake foolishness that you may live; advance in the way of understanding.
For by me the days will be multiplied and the years of your life increased. (NAB, Prov 10:1-11)

Wine was offered to those about to die and to mourners to soften their grief (Prov 31:6).

Wine was an integral part of the meal ritual in the home. The one who led a group of three or more males in the recitation of Grace after meals would pronounce the blessing over a cup of wine, which was then imbibed by all who were present.³¹ Wine was also integral to the anamnestic remembering of the Passover. There was no rejoicing without wine, without wine, although, excessive drunkenness was a sign of God’s wrathful judgment.

Wine was a symbol of intoxicating joy in the Lord (Ps 22:5). It was a sign of the land’s fertility and abundance (Gn 49:11; Deut. 33:28). Since wine was a product of the land of Israel, and a sign of the land’s fertility and abundance, it was also considered part of the first fruits given to the priests (Deut 18:4).³² Wine was offered in sacrifice in Jewish worship—the first fruits of creation offered to the Creator of all.

Wine was also associated with the sacrifice of praise. The psalmist [116] speaks of taking the cup of salvation and calling on the name of God. One cannot help but make the allusion to the cup of the vineyard—the reign of God—the cup of the covenant. The psalmist calls for a sacrifice, not of suffering, but of praise. Such a cup would thus be associated with the eschatological promises of the vineyard.

³¹ Cf. Ibid.

³² Eugene Laverdierre, S.S.S. “Wine,” In *The Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Ed. Carroll Stuhlmueller, (Collegeville, The Liturgical Press), 1996.

Cómo pagaré al Señor
todo el bien que me ha hecho?
Alzaré la copa de la salvación,
invocando su nombre.
Cumpliré al Señor mis votos
en presencia de todo el pueblo.³³

In his exegesis, Maximiliano García Cordero provides the context for the psalm. Having recovered his health, insists Cordero, the psalmist desires to manifest his gratitude for the good he has received from God. He wants to respond with a sacrifice of praise. Sacrifices were accompanied by libation. The psalmist talks of the cup of salvation as a form of ritual libation. Having been saved from death by YHWH, the chalice that needs to be on his lips is a cup of praise.

Una vez recuperada la salud, el salmista ansía hacer manifestaciones de gratitud a su Dios por el beneficio obtenido, y quiere corresponder con un *sacrificio de alabanza*, es decir, el sacrificio llamado «pacífico» (v. 8). Los sacrificios iban acompañados de libaciones. El salmista aquí habla del *cáliz o copa de la salvación* que sustituirá a la libación ritual. Ha sido salvado de la muerte por Yahvé, y, por tanto, en sus labios no habrá más cáliz que el de la alabanza, en el que se recuerde su salvación milagrosa.³⁴

In that cup the psalmist remembers his miraculous salvation. Cordero affirms the eschatological themes associated with wine and the meaning behind its use in the Judaic cult.

Wine was an image of God's rapturous love—a love so intimate that born from it was a ballad of lovers about to encounter one another in inseparable, ecstatic union.

I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride;
I gather my myrrh and my spices.
I eat my honey and my sweetmeats,
I drink my wine and my milk.
Eat friends; drink! Drink freely of love! (Songs 5:1)

At the threshold of God's garden, God awaits his lover. At the threshold of his kingdom God awaits those who will enter—God's beloved.

³³ *Trans.* How shall I make a return to the LORD for all the good he has done for me? / The cup of salvation I will take up, and I will call upon the name of the LORD / My vows to the LORD I will pay In the presence of all the people. [NAB]

³⁴ Cordero, Maximiliano García, en la *Biblia comentada* de la BAC in <http://www.fransciscanos.org/oracion/>

Ultimately, wine was a sign of the future messianic banquet. In those future days the mountains and hills were to drip with the juice of the grape. God's people would plant vineyards and feast on rich wine (Amos 13-14; Jer 31: 12). There would be feasting and drinking in the messianic kingdom of God. At the *End of Days* wine would form an integral part of the eschatological banquet.³⁵

Wine was a blessing for those who lived by the covenant and a curse for those who broke it (Deut 11: 16-17). Isaiah chastises those who have rebelled against God and he uses wine as a sign of the judgment of Israel as well as the blessing of the prophets. Just as water evokes life and death so too wine is a sign of promise as well as curse.

But you who forsake the LORD, forgetting my holy mountain, You who spread a table for Fortune and fill cups of blended wine for Destiny, You I will destine for the sword; you shall all go down in slaughter. Since I called and you did not answer, I spoke and you did not listen, But did what was evil in my sight and preferred things which displease me, therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Lo, my servants shall eat, but you shall go hungry; My servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; My servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; My servants shall shout for joy of heart, But you shall cry out for grief of heart and howl for anguish of spirit. (Is 65: 11-14)

Wine in this instance becomes a multivalent sign. It is both a sign of wrath and a sign of blessing. The messengers of God's word [the prophets] would be blessed with food and drink [wine] the rebellious would hunger and thirst [there will be no wine for them]. In the days of vindication, the grape that is crushed [wine] signals the advent of the kingdom. Isaiah warns them, "When juice is pressed from grapes, men say, "Do not discard them"; for there is still good in them"; Thus will I do with my servants: I will not discard them all" (Is 65:8). The juice of the crushed grape is an eschatological sign of the kingdom, but also a sign of the inherent goodness of humanity. When that kingdom comes, judgment follows. The wine then becomes not only a sign of its advent, but also a sign of pending judgment. All is not lost, however. God's mercy

³⁵ Cf. Ibid.

will prevail. God will not discard them for there is “good in them”.³⁶ (“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”)

A brief excursus is in order. Richard B. Hays in his book, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, approaches the task of exegesis by understanding the biblical texts as “literary texts shaped by complex intertextual relations with Scripture.”³⁷ “The reader whose ear is able, however, not only to discern the echo but also to locate the source of the original voice will discover a number of intriguing resonances.”³⁸ There are striking intriguing resonances between chapter sixty-five of Isaiah and the twenty-first chapter of Luke. Such resonances capture the fervor of the anticipated messianic kingdom. Luke’s gospel narrative seems to draw from Isaiah to convey the message: “The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Jesus is the *Long-awaited One* and he is the embodiment of the mercy ushered in by God at the *End of Days*. Now is the *End of Days*, wake up people!”

Both Luke’s Jesus and Isaiah chastise the people. They warn of pending judgment. Jesus forewarned his disciples of the wrathful judgment to come upon the people. “They will fall by the edge of the sword (like the Israelites in Isaiah’s prophecy?) and be taken as captives to all the Gentiles; and Jerusalem will be trampled (like the blood of the grape?) underfoot...(Lk 21; 23-24). Jesus’ plea from the cross, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” (Lk 23: 34) is a later interpolation, but it makes perfect sense that it was a later addition. A mere two chapters earlier Jesus makes the same prediction as Isaiah. Doesn’t it make sense that in light of the Jesus event, the redactor of Luke saw fitting to place the words of God’s mercy squarely on

³⁶ This novice cannot help but notice the allusion to “blended wine for Destiny” in verse eleven. Could this be a chastisement against those who participate in the cult of Dionysius or similar idol worship? The allusion to spreading the table for Fortune [the gods?] and filling blended wine [the pagans mixed water and wine and offered it to Dionysius]. Is it possible that Isaiah was responding to such pagan worship?

³⁷ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1989, ix.

³⁸ Ibid., 22.

the lips of Christ himself? "Father forgive them, they know not what they do" (Lk 23: 34). Jesus is the embodiment of the mercy offered in Isaiah. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promised expectation. Jesus is the wine of judgment and the wine of mercy. While the wine as kingdom metaphor is not overtly stated, there are echoes--Luke's gospel does appreciate the signification of wine as the herald of the messianic kingdom.

The Use of Wine in the New Testament. The New Testament retains the symbolic imagery of wine as is evident in the Synoptic Eucharistic narratives and the parables of the vineyards. The image of the vineyard is a sign of the kingdom and hearkens its immanence. The Eucharistic accounts are laden with echoes of messianic and eschatological fulfillment. Jesus finishes offering the cup of thanksgiving. He announces that the wine he was sharing with them is the blood of the new covenant but then he adds: "Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the *fruit of the vine* until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (Mk 14: 25). Jesus not only ushers in the reign of God, he embodies it.

One cannot help but notice the allusion to the first fruits offered to the priest (Deut 18:4). The priests were offered the first yield of the land in thanks to the author of all Creation. Here now stands the Creator--Jesus is the vine and its fruit. He is the first fruit of all creation; he is the first vine cut from the vineyard, a sign that other vines are waiting to be harvested. As Son, he is the author of nature, and the one who will restore it. He is the fulfillment of the messianic promise of the renewal of the earth--the first fruit of the vine offered for all of Israel.

Herbert Vorgrimler, in his book, *Sacramental Theology*, affirms that the word over the cup (Mark 14:24) "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," interprets Jesus' violent death in terms of Exodus 24:5-8 as a new covenant, and understands Jesus as the servant of YHWH depicted by Isaiah, who as mediator of the covenant (cf. Isa 42:6; 49:8) bore

the sins of 'the many' that is, of all, and who interceded for the guilty before God (Isa 53:12). The eschatological point of view (Mark 14:25; Matt 26:29; Luke 22:18), even if it does not go back to Jesus himself, bears the marks of his spirit: it reflects the certainty of Jesus' conviction about the realization of the reign of God, and it reveals the confidence with which Jesus, as a just Jew, went to his death, in the firm faith that YHWH would not abandon those who are faithful."³⁹ Vorgrimler insists that it is through anamnesis that the cross is made immediately effective. It is, "according to the word over the cup, the new 'covenant,' in fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34."⁴⁰ Whenever the liturgy is celebrated all who participate are to recall the covenant and thus "keep before our eyes the fact that God expects of the partners in the covenant a particular standard of behavior."⁴¹ Thus do participants who worthily celebrate the Eucharist proclaim the Lord's death until his return. This is the way in which Jesus' "eschatological point of view is retained."⁴²

Thus, the cup holds within it the eschatological reality of the reign of God. Matthew is even more emphatic. "I tell you this from now on, I shall not drink *this* fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom" (Mt 26: 29). One wonders if he emphasizes *this* fruit of the vine so that his mostly Jewish audience would not miss the point. "Hear well, people of God, *this* is the fruit of the vine you have been awaiting, do not miss what is before you!" This fruit of the vine is **the** eschatological realization of the kingdom. This wine is the wine of prophecy.

Luke's narrative places the cup after the bread. The New American Bible footnotes suggest that the cup before and after the meal infers that Jesus was celebrating the Passover.

³⁹ Vorgrimler, Herbert, *Sacramental Theology*, 140.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 140-141.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

Those same notes also attest that vv 19 and 20 are considered by some exegetes as the Eucharistic cup (Lk 22: 14-20; footnotes: 22:15 and 22, 17). Jasper and Cuming however are more explicit concerning the textual problems. All manuscripts include the cup before the bread, but some MSS of Luke omit the cup that takes place after the bread. There is no solid agreement as to which is the preferred reading. The Lukan order appears in the Didache and in 1 Corinthians perhaps witnessing to an early practice that eventually disappeared.⁴³ Bradshaw refers to scholarly opinion suggesting that a double strand exists within the tradition.⁴⁴ One strand elucidates an eschatological focus evident in Jesus' words concerning the "fruit of the vine", and the other strand is constituted in the interpretive words over the bread and wine relating them to Christ's body and blood. Scholars do not all agree that Jesus' interpretive words can be traced to the Last Supper. There is a consensus, however, that an eschatological focus existed in the Christian communities prior to Pauline influence.⁴⁵ The many allusions to the metaphoric images of wine as kingdom throughout the Synoptics and John witnesses to an eschatological dimension in Eucharistic understanding.

Eugene LaVerdiere points to this wine as referent of the kingdom theme when he too refers to a Eucharistic prayer of the *Didache*. He affirms that at this early stage the prayers were simple, "'We give you thanks (*eucharistoumen*), our Father, for life and knowledge; to you be glory forever' (9:3)"References to the 'holy vine of David' introduces a messianic, eschatological note.⁴⁶

For Paul blood/sacrifice becomes the primary metaphoric language through which the cup and the kingdom is referenced. One could posit a guess that Paul allows the wine/kingdom

⁴³ R.C.D. Jasper and G.J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 3rd ed. (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 14.

⁴⁴ Paul Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 6.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ LaVerdiere, Eugene, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church*, 140.

metaphor to become debris from his former heritage for two reasons. First, even though Paul was Jewish, those he evangelized were not. Gentiles would have little sense of the rich Jewish symbolic associations of wine. Perhaps if they did have symbolic associations regarding wine, they would be so laced with memories of pagan worship that he thought it best not to keep those memories kindled. This might be particularly an issue in light of the controversies over eating food that may have been sacrificed to idols (Rom 15:13-23). Perhaps using wine as a metaphoric image would be too closely associated with the wine of libation used in idol worship. Paul refers to cup and blood, but never wine. Also, it is possible that overt eschatological language was not helpful when trying to build a new framework around the reality that Jesus' return was no longer as immanent as once thought.

Second, blood as covenant became a primary symbolic reference for Paul. C.P.M. Jones reminds us that the cup-saying in the Eucharistic narrative in 1 Corinthians 11:25 is a herald of the covenant. It is based on a passage in Jeremiah 31:31-34 which commissions a new covenant, "but provides no means for its inauguration."⁴⁷ Jesus provides his own blood, just as blood was offered at the installation of the first covenant (Exod 24: 4-8).⁴⁸ Paul only implicitly refers to the blood, however, due to Jewish abhorrence for drinking blood. Thus, as stated earlier, he refers to the cup throughout the narrative. Perhaps Paul simply transfers all the symbolic references of wine as kingdom into the symbol of blood, thus subsuming those images into the language of covenant and blood. Johannes H. Emminghaus reminds us that Paul and Luke (1 Cor. 11) put special emphasis on the cup, the container of the wine, as a symbol of the new

⁴⁷ C.P.M. Jones "The Eucharist: The New Testament" in *The Study of the Liturgy* ed. Cheslyn Jones, (New York: Oxford University Press), 1992, 195.

⁴⁸ Cf. Ibid.

covenant...”⁴⁹ The kingdom is a concern for Paul; wine is simply not the metaphor he uses to describe it.

Third, blood and sacrifice were powerful metaphors for an illegal, persecuted religion that faced the threat of death by their participation in that religion. While such an assumption resides in the realm of conjecture, it is nevertheless provocative and worthy of reflection.

One must not overlook the allusion to eschatological inebriated joy (again, another reference to the wine as kingdom referent) in the letter to the Ephesians. Participating in the kingdom requires that one not become drunk on wine, but rather be inebriated in the Spirit of God (probably an echo of Ps 22:5 alluded to earlier). “And do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father” (Eph 5:18). This exhortation in Ephesians clearly seems to draw from the biblical metaphor of wine as a sign of the kingdom.

As illustrated above there was a strong sense (at least an underlying consciousness) in Matthew, Mark and Luke of the Hebraic symbolic referent of wine as harbinger of the eschatological kingdom. If the Synoptics illustrate that reality, then the Gospel of John is a classic masterpiece. Chapter one begins with Peter’s brother Andrew running to Peter with the news that he had met the Messiah, the one whom “Moses wrote in the law, and also the prophets, Jesus son of Joseph, from Nazareth” (Jn 1: 40-46). The reader is immediately alerted to the immanence of the kingdom. The story swiftly segues to the wedding feast at Cana. The *wine* ran out. Jesus’ time had not yet come. The new *wine* of the kingdom was suspended in

⁴⁹ Emminghaus, 4

liminality, ready to cross the threshold at the Master's command. He had only to say the word and the *wine* would flow. The fulfillment of Israel's hopes is in *this wine*.

Yes the days are coming, says the Lord, when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the vintager, him who sows the seed; the juice of grapes shall drip down the mountains, and all the hills shall run with it. I will bring about the restoration of my people Israel; they shall rebuild and inhabit their ruined cities. Plant vineyards and eat the fruits. (Amos 9:13-14).

The *wine/juice of the grapes* is the new covenant Jesus was inaugurating. He is the vine of that new wine and we are its branches. Jesus inaugurates the kingdom and takes it to its completion. Jesus reminded his followers that he would not drink wine again until he would drink it in the new kingdom (Mark 14:25; Mt 26:29; Lk23:36). His refusal of wine from the cross was significant. In the Gospel of John Jesus signals the end of the old covenant and the inauguration of the new. The wedding feast at Cana alerted Israel that that the reign of God was near. The good wine of the eschatological kingdom was yet to be fulfilled—but it was coming. John's Gospel has Jesus' wailing his thirst from the cross and accepting the wine that was offered. All was finished. His work was accomplished. The old covenant came to fruition. John's Gospel ended as it began.

The Gospel tradition provides a plethora of *feasting in the reign of God* images—"messianic feeding."⁵⁰ Yet the messianic feeding was clearly in the realm of two worlds—the kingdom of God *now* and *not yet*. Geoffrey Wainwright reminds his reader that while Jesus refers to the future reality of the new banquet/kingdom, there is an earthly dimension: "His meals during His ministry had messianic significance."⁵¹ Wainwright refers to Jesus' parabolic actions and the accompanying words of interpretation and compares those to the actions of the prophets in the Old Testament in which the prophets demonstrate what God wanted by performing an action. In other words, they perform an action that imitates the action of God, such as in the case

⁵⁰ Geoffrey Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 29.

⁵¹ Ibid.

of Jeremiah who was ordered by God to smash the earthen flask and declare that the Lord would similarly squash Judah and Jerusalem as a result of apostasy (Jer 19).⁵² One might observe this prophetic pattern in the Johannine use of *signs*. Jesus performs signs that point to the future kingdom that will be inaugurated upon his death. Concomitant with that future kingdom is a sense of participation in that kingdom in the earthly realm. Wainwright expresses it accordingly: "In some such sense as this the meals of Jesus during his ministry were signs of the coming feast in the kingdom: they were a throwing forward into the present of the first part of the future feast."⁵³ Wine, therefore, was a significant symbol in the realized eschatology of John's Gospel.

It is important to stress the connection between the new covenant and the kingdom. Wainwright affirms that the new covenant is a form of the kingdom already introduced by Jesus. The Eucharist was the meal of the new covenant, but that covenant only was realized through the death of Jesus. The cup affords participation in the death of Jesus, and ultimately in the new covenant. Rudolf Schnackenburg presents a distinction between the kingdom and the new covenant: "the new covenant has as its *goal* the perfect fellowship with God in the kingdom of the final consummation."⁵⁴ The church on earth already enjoys the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28; cf. Jer. 31:34c). Christianity already enjoys a foretaste of the future age (Heb 6:5). The church must, however, continually strive to retain what it sacramentally and amnetically looks forward to—perfect union with God as envisioned by Jeremiah.

'The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant and I had to show myself their master,' says the Lord. 'But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' says the Lord. I will place my law upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and kinsmen how to know the Lord. All from the least to the greatest, shall know me, says the Lord, for I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no more. (Jer 31: 31-34)

⁵² Cf. Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁴ R. Schnackenburg *Gottes Herrschaft und Reich*, pp. 173-80, and *Die Kirche Im Neuen Testament*, 165-72 in Wainwright.

Wine/kingdom and the Patristic era. In what way, then, does the church continue its understanding of meal (wine) as representative of the kingdom? There are occasions in which the Patristic Fathers place the symbol of wine on center stage. For the most part, however, the symbol becomes subsumed in the language of *cup* and *blood*. What is maintained and expressed in the cup referent is the eschatological focus that wine brought to the cup of the Last Supper in the first place.

Origen takes the symbol of wine and deliciously transforms it into the language of sacramental intimacy and participation in the altar of Christ which is “but an image of the body of Christ.”⁵⁵ He evocatively compares the communicants’ approach to the cup with the metaphor of married intimacy. He invites the communicant to imagine Christ as the lover who seals a kiss on the mouth of the soul—the kiss of love which cleanses and washes transgression away (an allusion to baptism already received).⁵⁶ Through baptism the communicant approaches the altar to be kissed once again. “Why?” asks Origen. What other than a lover’s sonnet could express the inexpressible? “For your breasts are better than wine” (Songs 1:1). Wine then becomes a sign of the paucity of the symbol—“sacraments are better than wine, than wine which, although it has sweetness, has joy, has agreeableness, yet has it in its worldly joy; but in you is spiritual delight.” In other words, the symbol points to union with God and includes it, but is still but a foretaste of the union that is to come. Nothing can express the ultimate joy of that union adequately. The poverty of its essence speaks of and contrasts the abundance it points to. All who come to the cup remember and awaken what is deep within the soul—total inebriated delight in the Lord. The invitation is present. The king invites us into his storeroom and “we

⁵⁵ Origen, *on the Sacraments*, 7

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, #5.

will follow you eagerly! Bring me, O king, to your chambers. With you we rejoice and exult, we extol your love; it is beyond wine: how rightly you are loved" (Songs 1.4).

Origen reminds those who have fed on Christ's Body that nothing is lacking in those who are fed at the Lord's Table.⁵⁷ He recalls the psalmist who was wont to point out that the Lord himself leads us to the place of refreshment (the kingdom); the Lord alone converts our hearts. The Lord alone leads us through the dark valley of life's disappointments, sorrow and grief that cuts the entrails from those who can barely breathe amidst its crushing force (Ps.23). The intoxicating cup of the future meal is incarnate in the heavenly meal in which the neophyte has participated. Origen eloquently expresses a realized eschatology:

And so you have come to the altar, you have received the grace of Christ, you have obtained the heavenly sacraments. The church rejoices in the redemption of many, and is glad with spiritual exultation that a household dressed in white attends her. You have this in the Cantic of Canticles. Rejoicing, she invites Christ, having prepared a banquet which seems worthy of heavenly feasting. And so she says: 'let me brother descend into His garden and take the fruit of His fruitbearing trees' (Sg 4.16). What are these fruitbearing trees? You were made dry wood in Adam, but now, through the grace of Christ, you sprout as fruitbearing trees.

Gladly did the Lord Jesus accept, and with heavenly kindness He replied to His church. He says, 'I have come down into my garden, I have gathered the vintage of my myrrh with my perfumes, I have eaten my bread with honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk.' 'Eat', he says, 'my brothers,' and be intoxicated' (Sg 5.1) 'I have gathered the vintage of my myrrh with my perfumes.' What is this vintage? Know the vineyard, and you will recognize the vintage. It says: 'You have transplanted a vineyard out of Egypt' (Ps 79.9), that is, the people of God. You are the vineyard, you are the vintage. Planted like a vineyard, you have borne fruit as in a vintage... 'I have drunk my wine with my milk.' You see that the gladness which is not alloyed by the filth of sin is of this sort, as often as you drink, you receive the forgiveness of sins and you are intoxicated in spirit. For he who is drunk with wine sways and totters, he who is drunk with the Spirit is rooted in Christ. And so, glorious is the drunkenness which effects sobriety of mind. This is my short and hurried explanation of the sacraments.⁵⁸

Origen reminds the neophytes that what they supped was a foretaste of the heavenly kingdom, yet that same kingdom resides (as vineyard) in the earthly realm. Through their participation in the cup, they participate in that kingdom.

Other Fathers express the same sentiment. Jerome insists:

We drink his blood, and without him we cannot drink, and every day in his sacrifices we press fresh wines from the fruit of the true vine and of the vine Sorec (Is 5:2) which means 'chosen', and from these vines we drink the new wine in the kingdom of the Father, not in the oldness of the letter but in the newness of the

⁵⁷ Ibid., #12

⁵⁸ Ibid., 15-17.

Spirit, singing the new song which no one can sing except in the kingdom of the Church which is the kingdom of the Father." (*Ep.* 120, 2, PL 22, 985f)⁵⁹

Drawing from the Ephesians reference mentioned earlier, Jerome expresses the same realized eschatology as that of Origen. Participation in the cup is a participation in the new covenant; it is participation in the new wine of the Spirit in which songs that could only be sung in the kingdom reveal its reality. Jerome's eschatology clearly understands wine as symbol of the kingdom.⁶⁰

Cyprian, in his arguments against the aquarians (those who assert a water-only cup), implies that participation in the Eucharistic cup in the kingdom on earth is a prerequisite of drinking new wine in the future heavenly banquet.

Whence it appears that the blood of Christ is not offered if there is no wine in the cup, and that the Lord's sacrifice is not legitimately celebrated if our oblation and sacrifice does not correspond to his passion. And how shall we drink new wine, of the fruit of the vine, with Christ in the Father's kingdom if in the sacrifice of God the Father of Christ we do not offer wine and mix the cup of the Lord in accordance with Dominical tradition? (*Ep.* 63, 9, *CSEL*, p. 708)⁶¹

Cyprian argues that not only is participation in the cup a foretaste of what is to come, what is to come will not be experienced without the foretaste. To drink from the cup, then, is to drink in the reign of God *not yet* so that one may drink in the cup *yet to come*. The wine as kingdom metaphor expresses not only an eschatological perspective but a soteriological one as well.

Cyril of Jerusalem equates the cup with the cup of Psalm 23 mentioned above. Those who drink, drink with the joy of a happy heart (*Ecc* 9:7). Cyril emphasizes the benefits already enjoyed by the initiates but points to the joy that awaits as the person advances "from glory to glory."⁶²

Theodore of Mopsuestia appeals to the eschatology found in John and Paul's Letter to the Romans. The bread and wine become eternal living food. Even though wine is not singled out

⁵⁹ in Wainwright, 45.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶² *Cf. Ibid.*, 47.

overtly as Theodore prefers to use the bread and wine referent, his eschatology of the Eucharistic meal is profound. Wine becomes the drink of immortality. Theodore draws heavily on Israel's symbolic referent of bread/wine as bearer of the messianic reign. He situates the participation in the Eucharist within the realm of Christ's post-resurrection appearances. Participation in the cup is a participation in the Christ who manifests his resurrection—the future kingdom—to the communicant. Through communion we receive the firstfruits of creation and the grace of the Holy Spirit which feeds us, quenches our thirst and sustains us until the future kingdom arrives. “He also sets the eucharist firmly in a perspective of *hope*, thus allowing both the ‘already’ and the not yet to emerge: By [this spiritual food] [and drink] we expect to become immortal and to abide for ever in those (blessings) in the hope of which we take this holy food of the mysteries (XV, 8)”⁶³

In the liturgy of *Addai Mari* the metaphor of nuptial banquet employs the image of cup to illustrate that Christ is not only present as food, but is the presider of the nuptial meal. The nuptial feast is a present reality. As the priest communicates from the chalice he says:

“For the guests at your banquet, heavenly bridegroom, you have prepared the chalice of your precious blood. Of that same you have given me to drink, sinner as I am. Glory be to your ineffable love, for ever. Amen.”⁶⁴

The Coptic version of the second anaphora of St. Mark also expresses a realized eschatology—a *now* and *not yet* dimension to participation in the Eucharist. The fragment continues:

“Take this and drink from it, all of you; this is the blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of their sins...” For as often as you ...drink this cup, you proclaim my death and confess my Resurrection...That [they may be to all of us who] receive for faith, for sobriety, [for healing, for joy, for sanctification,] for renewal of soul, body, [and spirit, for sharing in eternal life,] for self control and of

⁶³ Ibid., 48.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

(sic) immortality, for...[that] in this also as in all [may be glorified and hymned and sanctified you] holy and honored and all...[Name...].⁶⁵
The anaphora is clearly praying for the strength to live in the new covenant--here and now.

Participation in the cup is participation in the *Resurrection* of Christ. However, concomitant with that sense of temporal kingdom lays the future hope of immortality.

The late fourth century anaphora of St. Mark inscribed on the *Deir Balyzeh Papyrus* makes a succinct connection with the Hebraic messianic wine referent, "so this wine which came from the vine of David and the water from the spotless lamb are also mixed together became one mystery, so gather the catholic Church..."⁶⁶

This Eucharistic meal then is understood as the gathering of the catholic, universal *Ecclesia*--the people of God, gathered around one eschatological banquet.

The Liturgy of John Chrysostom is the most articulate concerning what is expressed and signified in the Eucharistic cup. Recent scholars however have pre-dated this prayer and suggest that it belonged to the Anaphora of the Twelve Apostles. If that is so, then this prayer reflects an earlier tradition. That notwithstanding, it bears our reflection.

...and that which is in this cup the precious blood of your Christ, changing it by your Holy Spirit, Amen; so that they may become to those who partake for vigilance of soul, for fellowship with the Holy Spirit, for the fullness of the kingdom [of heaven], for boldness toward you, not for judgment or condemnation.⁶⁷

It would appear that the anaphora gathers an entire eschatological framework--Jewish and New Testament-- into his anaphora.⁶⁸ Fellowship with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5?) consists in relationship with God in this world (the kingdom *now*) as we await the face to face meeting in the next. The anaphora anticipates the fullness of the future kingdom, but it exhorts communicants to be bold

⁶⁵ R.C.D. Jasper and G.J. Cuming, 56.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 80.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 133.

⁶⁸ Whether or not the anaphora's framework is conscious is beside the point. Whether it was consciously drawing from known New Testament and Jewish sources makes no difference. The point is that the theology of those sources trickled down as the church developed in history.

and to work diligently in the kingdom at hand. The anaphora also seems to be aware of the Hebraic notion of condemnation and judgment that coincides with blessing that is associated with messianic expectation and which is particularly expressed in chapter sixty-five of Isaiah referenced above. The cup is dangerous. To gaze into its divinized liquid, is to see a mirror image of ourselves, asking ourselves the challenging questions. We boldly strive to establish the kingdom or we face condemnation. While we can do no less than live the Gospel imperative in the face of so gratuitous a gift, John warns us to be diligent. There are consequences. It matters how we live.

As demonstrated in the examples from the Fathers cited above, wine as kingdom is clearly a referent carried into post-Apostolic church consciousness. It is most often subliminally expressed in terms of cup and blood, but the eschatology that Christ brought to the cup at the Last Supper continues to be a major theology. In some ways it seems to appear more often than the notion of sacrifice. Yes, Paul's theology of *participation in the cup as participation in the paschal sacrifice* is one important lens for understanding the cup. However, along side Paul's theology—enjoying pride of place—is the understanding of cup as participation in the eschatological reign of God both *now* and *not yet*. Few people in the ordinary parish pew could articulate that; some have never even heard it. For that reason it makes safeguarding its practice all the more urgent.

The *wine that embodies the reign of God* motif of Eucharistic theology diminished as participation in the cup diminished in the ensuing medieval and Scholastic period. Eucharistic theology was more concerned with objectified issues of real presence, validity and the way in which Christ is present in the Eucharistic species. From this preoccupation came the dogma of concomitance elucidated earlier. Two issues or practices underpinned the development of this

dogma: the reservation of drinking from cup to the priest celebrant alone and “to be able to see the *whole* Christ, in his divinity and his humanity.”⁶⁹ The teaching on concomitance stated that through the words of consecration “at the level of spiritual being or substance”⁷⁰ the bread is changed only into Christ’s Body, the wine is changed only into his Blood. But since both Body and Blood cannot exist one without the other in the human body and since Christ’s divinity belongs with his humanity, both are actualized at the words of institution so that “in each part the whole Christ is present, and it was thought, nothing was being denied to the laity when the cup was withheld from them.”⁷¹

John Hus and John Wycliffe, two reformers of the late fourteenth, early fifteenth century rejected the Scholastic formulations of transubstantiation. They called for communion under both species and they insisted that unworthy, reprobate clergy (including popes) forfeited the right of authority within the Church. They insisted that in order for one to be saved, communion must be received under both species. The reformers also insisted that warrant for both species is found in Sacred Scripture itself. Wycliff insisted that authority emanates from personal piety, not from the clerical office. He, unlike Hus, was never excommunicated. However, due to his continuing influence over Hus’s followers (Hussites) and the Lollards, his teaching was formally condemned at the Council of Constance. Hus, on the other hand, even though he was promised safe passage to that same Council, was arrested enroute and subsequently executed/burned as a heretic. It was against the teaching of these two reformers that the Council of Constance in 1415 upheld the dogma of concomitance.

⁶⁹ Vorgrimler, 160.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Later reformers would raise similar issues. In his work *The Babylonian Captivity*, Martin Luther presented his theology of the seven sacraments. He looked to Biblical authority and Dominical command—that is, words of Christ that would warrant or validate a given sacrament. With regard to the Eucharist, he advocated restoring the cup to the faithful and he challenged the doctrine of transubstantiation. He did, however, affirm the real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, and rejected the teaching that the Eucharist was a sacrifice offered to God.

In light of these and other issues of the reformation, the Council of Trent reaffirmed the dogma of concomitance set forth by the Council of Constance. Trent insisted that the Church possessed the authority to restrict reception to just one species—that of bread. It would take another four hundred years before the cup would be restored to the laity. The Second Vatican Council established a return to the practice of communion under both species while still affirming the dogma of concomitance as is noted in *Redemptionis Sacramentum*.

Having thoroughly traced the etiology of the symbolic association of wine with the eschatological reign of God—the new Covenant—it is important to place all of this research at the mercy of what is understood about symbol—its role and function. To reiterate my thesis—those responsible for a reductionist theology would still insist that all that has been said is already present, whole and complete in the one species of bread. Thus, this discussion must be placed within the context of symbol.

Symbols, their role and function. Jean-Marie Chauvet reminds us of how a symbol was understood in antiquity. The piece of an object was given as a contract to another party. When both pieces of the object were placed together in their original form (“putting together—*sym-*

ballein), each party and their descendents knew that they were parties in the contract. The contract was binding by written or oral law.⁷²

Symbols speak to us before a word is uttered. My daughter lived across the street from the World Trade Center. She lost her home, her livelihood and the life she knew (nothing in comparison with those who lost their lives). The firemen who were the first at the scene were her neighbors. She had a cordial relationship of smiling and sharing pleasantries on her way to the subway each day. They *all* were the first to die.

She and all her friends owned caps with the initials *NYFD* emblazoned on them--before 9/11. Every newsstand sold them. After 9/11 my daughter's cap became a treasured symbol. No longer was it just a cap. So much life was brought to bear in that cap--the firemen she knew, the home she loved, the memories of that day of horror, dodging what she thought was airplanes dropping bombs, the love of the city and the life she left behind. The symbolic referent of that cap became "the whole of the world to which it belongs; better, it carries it within itself."⁷³ It *is* what it symbolizes. This in no way suggests that the cap really is the event of 9/11, but it is 9/11 symbolically—"because the function of symbol is to *re-present* the real, therefore to place it at a distance in order to present it, to make it present under a new mode." Her life in New York is present to her in that symbol. Chauvet calls this process 1. fitting together and 2. crystallization. The event was put together with the cap and a new experience of the cap revealed the reality of 9/11 and all that she experienced in that event. The symbol embodies the reality. She is there and it is now.

In relation to the Eucharistic cup, the wine carries within it, not just the re-presented *blood* of Christ, but all the eschatological symbolic referents that were part of the reality—all

⁷² Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 69-90.

⁷³ Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 72.

that Christ brought to that Last Table. The wine is one party in the contract, and wine as eschatological kingdom, or wine as blood is another part in the contract. The community brings its experience of wine as blood—the blood that was spilled and poured for humanity—and what it means to share Christ's blood—his life essence. Just because there is an impoverished sense of wine as kingdom, does not mean that it is not part of the reality. It is the role of liturgical, mystagogical homilists and catechists to unfold those rich associations—to remind people that they share in the banquet of the messianic kingdom—that their participation in the cup is a foretaste of the future banquet and that through their participation in that cup they commit to establishing the kingdom anew.

Questions must be asked regarding what is at stake in diminishing the practice of communing from the Eucharistic cup. If there is no encounter with the cup in the first place, how are they to fit together and crystallize all that is contained in its fullness? Must they only imagine it?

Unfortunately the world understands symbol as something that stands for another—something that is like another. Chauvet tells us that liturgy has paid dearly for this definition. It makes little difference that water used for baptism is hardly enough to fit in a thimble, let alone a substance in which someone could drown (a sign of submersion into death with Christ). Liturgy understands symbol as metaphor—it **becomes** the other. Embodied in the wine is the represented blood of Christ and announcement and continued inauguration of the eschatological banquet. It embodies and becomes Christ's life essence—his blood running through our veins. It becomes the new covenant Christ instituted at the Last Supper through the sign of wine and cup. The cup is the fullest sign of the covenant. As mentioned in this thesis, both documents mentioned above strongly attest to this reality. The Christ covenant of the Last Supper is

subsumed in the cup. We are there and it is now. How do the faithful participate in that covenant fully if they are to only imagine it in the liturgy? Is their participation imaginary as well?

The third way symbols function, insists Chauvet, is through *recognition* or *identification*.⁷⁴ Referring to the earlier example of contracts in antiquity, the joining of the separate parts of the contract causes the *recognition* or the *identification* of the persons as parties in the contract. Each party holds the piece and both parties recognize that they are part of the whole. My daughter identifies with all that 9/11 embodied—massive loss of life, devastation to a city, loss of innocence, loss of a way of life. Not only my daughter, but every one of her friends, and other New Yorkers respond the same way when they encounter a similar cap. Each has his or her own story, remembrance, and pride over being a New Yorker, anguish and loss to share. The cap is not just a symbol for my daughter it is a symbol for all who were part of the story or who were integrally connected to it. Chauvet insists that this is “one of the major functions of symbol: it allows all persons to *situate themselves as subjects* in their relation with other subjects or with the world of these other subjects.”⁷⁵

Again one must ask: How are the faithful able to identify with the blood of the cup and the cup as kingdom if there is no encounter? Does this encounter take place vicariously? How do they identify with that which is absent, especially in light of the fact the symbol itself is the medium by which the *One* who is absent is made present?

Chauvet talks about the paucity of the symbol standing in bold dissimilarity to the immensity of the thing that is signified. In other words, the small morsel of bread stands in stark contrast to the grandeur of the future banquet. The symbol in and of itself is scant--a small piece

⁷⁴ Ibid., 70.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 73

of bread-as-Body versus the banquet in heaven; a small sip of wine-as-Blood versus the eternal vineyard. The symbol is dearth as it is, by its very essence. And so it must be if it is to reveal the magnanimity of that which it signifies. Again it begs the question: How is anything signified in any meaningful way if it is not present, but only imagined? The meagerness of the sign in comparison with the ultimate feast is but a reminder of what awaits us. However, if we reduce its meagerness even more, it risks being lost.

The fourth characteristic of a symbol is its "*submission to the communal Other*."⁷⁶ Chauvet insists that the identification is possible insofar as the subjects are under the agency of the *Other*—"this *Other*, which we have previously designated as what binds subjects among themselves, what subjects them to a common 'symbolic order' and allows them to form a *community*." In the instance of the cap (recognizing that the cap metaphor is weak at best) the *Other* is that which binds all *New Yorkers*—an incredible sense of pride in their city, a sense of common loss, of being a *New Yorker*—the overall New York ethos. To be a *New Yorker* now—to encounter the symbol of the *NYFD* cap, is to be part of a closely-knit family—a community that has lived through the worst and survived. Chauvet reminds us that the symbol functions to mediate identity by "being a *creator of the community*."⁷⁷ In my daughter's action of wearing her cap in the city, she was, in essence, creating community with all with whom she came in contact. If they were *New Yorkers* before the experience, 9/11 gave new meaning and expression to what it means to be just that.

If the symbol creates the community, how then is the community created in the action of drinking from the cup? Those who sup from the cup, become, the very life essence of Christ—his Blood; they in turn go out as community in service of the kingdom. The cup cannot create a

⁷⁶ Ibid., 70.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

cup/blood identity if it is only imagined. It is in the community's participation and gathering around the present and future banquet that community is formed. If a significant portion of the banquet is missing. The community goes hungry, or is at least parched, dry and thirsting for that which has been denied.

Nathan Mitchell, in his book, *Cult and Controversy*, adds an exclamation point to the importance of symbols when he insists that they function as verbs—not nouns, “they are actions.”⁷⁸ Mitchell insists that every symbol requires interaction: “Every symbol involves the human subject in a transaction, an interaction between “self,” and “other.”” The result of this transaction is disclosure, revelation: the ‘other’ reveals itself as present and powerful for the human subject.”⁷⁹ All symbols possess multiple meanings and are “ambiguous experiences of hidden-ness and revelation.”⁸⁰ Thus, proffers Mitchell, symbols express meaning “only when we start living them, acting and moving about in them.” One must therefore ask, “How does one live, act and move within the symbol of wine as realization of the eschatological reign of God if it is absent?” Mitchell reminds us that symbols put us in touch with reality by exposing us to the ambiguous richness of that which is signified in the sign.⁸¹ We are thus led deeper into the complexity of what is and what is real. The symbol itself leads us into the truth of the sign. How is it possible for the symbol to function as Mitchell describes when present documents/theology continue to uphold concomitance and in effect maintain that the symbol is not really needed because it is subsumed in a different symbol altogether? Simply stating it elucidates the incongruity of the claim. When Mitchell affirms that “symbols do not explain: they tantalize, tease the human imagination into new ways of seeing, knowing, being and

⁷⁸ Mitchell, Nathan, *Cult and Controversy*, 51-52

⁷⁹ Ibid., 52.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Cf. Ibid.

having,” one must again muse: “How can this be when that which teases and tantalizes is altogether missing?”

Furthermore, as Mitchell later attests, “symbols have shadows: they affirm presence while signaling absence, and affirm absence while signaling presence. This is precisely what gives symbols their inexhaustible vitality, their ability to draw us ever more deeply into themselves and their mysterious power to bestow and withhold.”⁸² With that analysis as a backdrop the absence of the symbol becomes a matter of simple arithmetic. If that which is present affirms absence, how can that which is absent, affirm absence? It would appear from this equation that zero plus zero equals zero!

One need only imagine the theory of concomitance taken to the next logical consequence to realize the minimalist effect this doctrine impinges. If indeed Christ is present, complete and whole in the Precious Blood as he is in the Eucharistic Bread, then it follows that communion *could be given* only from the cup at the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy. If that were to rise to the fore in a logical defense of the theory of concomitance, no doubt the imagined outcries from people in the pews would be deafening and it (the theory) would perhaps be reevaluated by those responsible for such evaluations!

Implications for the people of God. Having broken open the rich heritage associated with the symbol of wine in ancient culture, pagan associations, Judaism, Christianity and the Patristic era, how then do we create a proposal for the future? What are the implications for the average person in the pews—those whom we serve?

There can be no mistaking the reality that the tradition witnesses to a profound eschatological symbolization of wine. This symbolization invites us into the reality it expresses.

⁸² Mitchell, 402.

The community may not approach the cup as passive spectators. The cup demands participation. The Eucharist proclaims, inaugurates and continues the advent of the kingdom. God's will in that endeavor is represented in the community's participation in the Eucharist.

Returning to the original thesis of this paper, the only hope of insuring and safeguarding this essential Eucharistic action is, as has been elucidated, to stress the function of symbol. If the function of symbol is to allow participants to interact with that symbol and to transform their lives, one must still logically ask, "How can one interact with a symbol that is not visible?" If in our sacramental symbols a visible substance is wedded to an invisible truth, how then does that invisible truth get communicated if the visible substance is absent? One must hearken to the power of symbols if one is to make a convincing argument for maintaining, retaining and insisting on communion under both species. If the Church deems it important to safeguard the dogma concomitance, so be it—let it stand. However, that being the case, it is all the more crucial that communion from the cup not only be allowed, but that it be insisted upon, lest we lose its significance altogether!

In conclusion, the kingdom of God was understood and has always been understood as the restoration of the Shalom/Peace of Eden. God entered into a covenant with the human race. God promised, "I will be your God and you will be my people." (Gen 1) God's side of the bargain was to provide providential care. In response to so gratuitous a gift, human beings promised in return to live in peace and harmony with one another [*hesed/biblical justice/covenant love*] and to be good stewards of God's creation. As a sign of their fidelity, the people entered into a holy covenant with God; they would care for God's creation and for those who could not care for themselves—the widows, orphans and the poor. The reign of God, therefore, is at hand when the lion lies down with the lamb, when creation is nurtured and

respected and when all of God's people are no longer in want. When the post-resurrection Christ stood in the midst of his disciples and said, "Shalom," he was announcing the restoration of Eden—the lost Paradise (Jn 20:26). He was announcing a new Covenant.

The cup commits us to that Covenant. Drawing from insights by Johann Baptist Metz Wainwright affirms,

The risk of facile doctrine of progress is removed if it is remembered that eschatology includes a moment of judgment and renewal. According to II Pet. 3:13f, at the day of the coming of the Lord the heavens will be kindled and dissolved and the elements will melt with fire, and there will be new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. But in the Eucharist we have precisely a projection, from the future and in terms of a set of comprehensible symbols, of the coming of the Lord. In the Eucharist the Lord comes to judge and to recreate; to cast out what remains of unrighteousness in His people and to continue the work of renewal begun in baptism; to threaten the world with an end to its old existence, and to give it the promise, through the new use to which bread and wine is put, of attaining its true destiny. No general eschatology will have done justice to the evidence of the Eucharist unless it includes a present moment of judgment and renewal which is the projection of the cataclysm that will inaugurate the universal and incontestable reign of God.⁸³

The cup stands in judgment of our lives. It reminds us that the Eucharist is a radical way to live and an even more radical way to love. It does not leave the world unchanged. We are given a glimpse of the bright and future world to come. Heaven is wedded to earth for a brief moment and those who come in despair over the loss of loved ones, frightened by the ominous threat of annihilation, discouraged by the loss of values in our culture, frightened that their children are losing their way, disillusioned by the hypocrisy of world and religious leaders, overwrought and feeling helpless over the starving, oppressed and tortured masses in the world—for one brief suspended moment a glimpse of what lies beyond this realm is re-presented, actualized and made present.

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God]. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order as passed away.' (Rev 21: 1-4).

⁸³ Wainwright, 150-151.

Fortified by this drink, they become *blood poured out* and are thus empowered to go out and change that world which at first glance seems so impossibly unchangeable. They are enlivened to go out and proclaim that bright and future city. Our people deserve to know what we celebrate in the cup.

If Gordon Lathrop is correct, then indeed the Christian remembrance of Jesus' defining last meal with his friends and his reference to drinking wine in the kingdom is a juxtaposition of all that the culture and all that Israel believed and hoped about its future—all that was embodied in the wine of gladness and the wine of fulfillment.

Jewish meaning surrounding the cup of wine and it was asked that these acts should be repeated with the same intention. In that cup a new covenant was forged. If indeed the new wine of the covenant was embodied in Jesus' cup, then, mingled in that wine is the reign he came to establish and the fulfillment of that reign in his life, passion, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven as well as the sending of the Holy Spirit. The eschatological reign of God is subsumed into that fruit of the vine and work of human hands. Heaven *is* wedded to earth. There will be *no more* mourning. Tears will be drowned in its libation. The reign of God was and is at hand. The kingdom of God was, is and will be supped from Jesus' cup for all who dare to drink.

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