

TOWARDS A EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE FOR THE
SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT: A RE-APPRAISAL OF REFORMED EUC-
HARISTIC THEOLOGY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE EUCHARIST
IN CATHOLIC LIBERATION THEOLOGY

by

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ABSTRACT

The theology and practice of the eucharist emerged as one of the major points of contention in the 16th Century Reformation. While the Reformers themselves differed in their respective eucharistic theologies, they were nevertheless unanimous in rejecting what they perceived as heresy and abuse in the theology and practice within the Roman Catholic Church. *Part One* of this dissertation explores the Reformed teaching on the eucharist by surveying the eucharistic theologies of the Reformers, Huldrych Zwingli and John Calvin, and more recent theologians, Peter Forsyth and Karl Barth.

The challenge of the Reformation, however timely and valid, did not go far enough. While the Reformers went to great lengths to expose theological heresy and to condemn abuses, they gave scant attention to the contextual implications of their theology. For instance, the Reformation focussed on such theological issues as the "essence" or "substance" of Christ's presence in the eucharist, without giving attention to its missiological implications within the contextual struggles for human liberation from socio-political and economic structures of domination, oppression and exploitation.

Roman Catholic theology of liberation, emerging from Latin America in the latter part of the 20th Century, presents a compelling challenge to both traditional Catholic teaching and

Reformed theology and practice. While not departing from the basic tenets of Catholic teaching, liberation theology adopts a radically critical stance, whereby any orthodox theology and practice is judged in terms of its relevance to the existential situations of human oppression, poverty and suffering. *Part Two* of this dissertation reflects on the response of liberation theologians to a new crisis for the sacraments within the Roman Catholic Church. This is done by surveying the eucharistic theologies of Juan Luis Segundo, Rafael Avila (from Latin America) and Tissa Balasuriya (from Asia).

The Churches of the Reformed tradition have not as yet adequately responded to the challenges within a country characterised by racism, state oppression, social injustices and economic exploitation. A Reformed eucharistic theology and practice should be formulated for the South African context, which takes seriously the criticisms of Catholic liberation theology, while simultaneously exploring the contextual implications of its own Reformed tradition. It is not necessary for a Reformed understanding of the eucharist to break with tradition, anymore than Catholic liberation theology does. What is required is that the tradition be retrieved in relation to the struggle for liberation within our historical context.

Part Three sets out the proposal for a eucharistic theology and practice for the South African context, in terms of two major themes, namely those of *protest* and *celebration*. These themes are fundamental to both the *biblical framework* and the *contextual application* of the eucharist, are consonant with the

intention of Reformed eucharistic theology. Central to the proposal will be the formulation of a theology and practice of the *community-of-faith*. It will become evident as to what is meant by community-of-faith as we explore the above themes.

PREFACE

The eucharist is known by a variety of names, each of which has some basis in the New Testament. Perhaps the most commonly used name is "Holy Communion", a term which is derived from St. Paul's statement in 1 Cor.10:16. Modern translations have abandoned the use of the term "communion" in this verse, using the term "participation" (RSV), (NIV), "sharing" (TEV), or "means of sharing" (NEB), to bring out the meaning of the Greek word *koinonia* more clearly. A second term is "Lord's Supper" (cf. 1 Cor.11:20), one which is probably used most widely in Protestant and Reformed Churches. A third term, which is used especially by the Christian Brethren, is "the Breaking of the Bread". St. Luke uses this term in Acts 2:42 (cf. Lk.24:35) for what may well be the Lord's Supper, and the corresponding verbal form "to break bread" is used by Paul when referring to the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor.10:16 and also by Luke in Acts 2:46, *et al.*

A fourth term, namely "the eucharist", will be the term used in this dissertation. Although the noun itself is not found in the New Testament, except as a variant textual reading in 1 Cor.10:16, the corresponding verb, "to give thanks" has a firm place in the biblical texts. (cf. Mk.14:23, Lk.22:17,19, 1 Cor.11:24.) The current use of this term, in ecumenical dialogues especially, suggests that it is probably the term

acceptable to most Church denominations and theological traditions. The term "eucharist" was also used by the Protestant Reformers, notably by Zwingli and Calvin, and while it has not traditionally been used within the Reformed tradition, there are no good biblical, theological or ecumenical reasons for not doing so.

The question of inclusive language is a difficult one. I have not at any point altered the male language of the quoted texts, as it is understood that the issue of inclusive language was not important at the time many of the writings cited were published. In the body of the thesis, however, I have endeavored to use more inclusive language, such as "humankind" for "mankind" (when used generically for the human person), "God's" for "His", and so on.

My special thanks to Prof. John de Gruchy, whose critical and constructive supervision has made this work possible, and to my colleagues at the Federal Theological Seminary, who assisted by way of proof-reading. Needless to say, any errors of substance or style are my own responsibility.

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encouragement, I could not have prevailed with this task.

PART ONE: REFORMED EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The sixteenth century Reformation produced substantial arguments and major re-appraisals in regard to the theology and practice of the eucharist. The Reformers, while taking a firm position against key elements of Roman Catholic teaching and practice, sharply differed from each other at various points in developing a "Reformation doctrine" of the eucharist. This dissertation does not propose to examine the divergent viewpoints of Reformation theologians as such, but rather to reflect on the teachings of four major Reformed expositors from the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, namely Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin, Peter Forsyth and Karl Barth.

From the period of the Reformation, I have elected to focus on the eucharistic teachings of Zwingli and Calvin, not because their positions are ultimately normative in the Reformed tradition, but because their teachings are foundational and formative. The impact of the Swiss Reformer from Zurich, who entered the debate by strongly opposing the Catholic teaching of the sacrifice of the Mass, is evident when we consider that Zurich abolished the Mass in 1525, hardly a year after Zwingli started preaching against this doctrine. The influence of Calvin, the Reformer from Geneva, spread far beyond. As a leader of the "second generation" of Reformers, Calvin did not

primarily have to contend against the Roman teaching of the Mass as sacrifice, or against the notion of transubstantiation - much had been done in this regard by earlier Reformers such as Luther and Zwingli - but rather to close the gap in existing ideas and practices among Lutherans and Reformed. An example of Calvin's "mediating" attempts is his *Short Treatise on the Holy Supper of our Lord and only Saviour Jesus Christ*. He introduces this treatise by stating:

As the holy sacrament of the Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ has long been the subject of several important errors, and in these past years been anew enveloped in diverse opinions and contentious disputes,...,I have thought that it might be useful labour to treat briefly and, nevertheless, clearly deduce a summary of what is necessary to be known of it.[1]

Whatever their disagreements, Zwingli and Calvin, in the sense of being Reformed theologians as distinct from being Lutheran, clearly belong together for the purposes of this examination. Forsyth and Barth do not belong together in the same way. However, as 20th Century Reformed theologians, Forsyth and Barth *restated* Reformed theology in their own contemporary historical contexts. Thus, while Zwingli and Calvin are *formative*, Forsyth and Barth are *interpretive* for the Reformed tradition.

Peter Taylor Forsyth, the lesser known of the two, was born in 1848 in Aberdeen. His major contribution to the debate on the eucharist is contained in his book entitled *The Church and the Sacraments*. [2] Locating himself within the ecclesiastical and theological spectrum, Forsyth described his position as being "neither current Anglican nor popular Protestant", but as

from "the Free Church camp, but not from any recognized Free Church position..."[3] In many respects Forsyth manages to integrate the Reformed and Free Church traditions,[4] and has been regarded as a forerunner of Barth. Commenting on Forsyth's work, Karl Barth states:

I have only heard a little time ago of the books of this man, and I was very much touched to see these things were written and said at a time in which they were forgotten and outmoded in England and on the Continent.[5]

The writings of Karl Barth (1886 - 1968) belong to a later period than Forsyth, as well as a different socio-historical and geographical context. His approach to the subject of the eucharist is in certain respects different. However, as with Forsyth, Barth's teaching on the eucharist is essential to this examination, as his theology represents the most detailed and thoroughgoing contemporary exposition of Reformed thinking.

1.2 HULDRYCH ZWINGLI

From the outset, the debate on the eucharist between the Reformers and the Catholics centred on the question of eucharistic *sacrifice*. The Reformers refuted the notion of the sacrifice of the Mass. Summoned by the papacy in January 1523, Zwingli conducted his "defence" by a repeated denial that the eucharist could be understood as a sacrifice, basing his argument on the New Testament teaching of Christ's *once for all and eternally valid sacrifice*. [6] Zwingli held that the eucharist was not a sacrifice, but rather "a *memorial* of the sacrifice and an assurance of the redemption Christ has manifested to us." [7]

Thus Zwingli's primary concern, in his first disputations with the Catholics, was to reject the notion of the sacrifice of the Mass. However, the question of the *nature* of the presence of Christ in the sacrament could not be avoided. Zwingli's early statements, therefore, though not intended to address the question as such, already incorporated ideas on the presence of Christ in the eucharistic celebration:

When in this faith they eat his flesh and drink his blood and recognise that they are given to them as an assurance, then their sins are forgiven, as if Christ had only now died on the cross. Christ is so powerful and present at all times, for he is an eternal God.[8]

While there appears to have been no clarity in Zwingli's thinking on the nature of the presence of Christ in the eucharist, there is no question about his total rejection of the notion of transubstantiation. Zwingli consistently spoke of the *necessity of faith* on the part of the participant in order for the eucharist to be an effective means of grace:

In short, the body and blood of Christ are nothing other than the word of faith, to wit, that his body slain for us and his blood shed for us have redeemed us and reconciled us to God. If we confidently believe that, then our soul receives food and drink with the body and blood of Christ.[9]

The emphasis on the necessity of faith in the participation of the eucharist is maintained in Zwingli's later writings. In a letter to his former teacher, Thomas Wyttenbach, during the latter part of 1523, the dominant issue was no longer the sacrifice of the Mass, but the question of how faith is to related the presence of Christ in the sacrament. For Zwingli, the believer's faith is not related to the eucharistic elements, but to "the body of Christ slain for us" for our

salvation.[10] However, once again we find no clear definition on the nature of Christ in the eucharist, except a shift of accent from the elements to the *action*. The significance of the presence of Christ in the eucharist is, for Zwingli, to be found not in the words, "This is my body", but in the words, "Take eat". Christ is therefore present for those who believe, and their faith is made strong where it is weak, or made joyful where it is strong.

Zwingli introduced a significant new dimension to his writings in 1524,[11] whereby the eucharist is seen as "an inward and outward union of Christian people", in which we "testify to all men that we are one body and one brotherhood".[12] Closely related to the emphasis of the eucharist as an *act of fellowship* is the idea of mutual commitment between believers:

Christ wills that his own shall be one, just as he is one with the Father, and for this union he has given us the sacrament...And as he gave himself for us, we also are bound to give ourselves one for the other, as for one's brother, indeed as for one's own member.[13]

Zwingli's "symbolic view" of the eucharist became most pronounced in his thinking during the latter part of 1524. The basic argument is now that the word "is" means "signifies"[14] in the Words of the Institution. It is out of this new emphasis that Zwingli also "discovered" John 6:63, which was to become the key text in his eucharistic teaching as a whole: "It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh is of no avail". In most of his subsequent expositions the two fundamental elements were: the flesh is of no avail and eating is believing.[15]

Already in 1525 there was conflict between Zwingli and those who held a Lutheran view of the eucharist, but it was not until early 1527 that he engaged directly with Luther. The debate was fiercest in 1527 and 1528, leading to the Marburg Colloquay in 1529. Theologically, Luther and Zwingli were at variance because of the dualism in Zwingli's thinking and Luther's inability to free himself from the medieval notion that the presence of Christ in the eucharist could only be real if it were physical. Zwingli argued that no physical element can affect the soul, and that inner grace, which depends on God's sovereignty, was needed. Therefore, the sign in the sacrament must not be equated with that which it signifies. Zwingli maintained that one approaches the spiritual reality as by *faith* and rises above the world of sense. Luther, by contrast, taught that God comes to us precisely in physical realities discerned by sense.

In Zwingli's eucharistic debates with Luther his main concern was with the words, "This is my body". In contrast to the Lutheran and Catholic views, Zwingli stressed that these words cannot be taken literally. A major point of contention was that Luther put "the chief point of salvation in the bodily eating of the body of Christ".[16] Zwingli attacked the notion of bodily eating on two grounds: faith and Scripture. For him the subject of the eucharist is the death of Christ, not the eating of the body, for the words "Do this in remembrance of me" refer to giving thanks for Christ's death, his body given for us, and not to the eating of his body.[17]

Zwingli's later writings on the eucharist produced nothing

new or different, affirming rather his basic points of departure.[18] In summary these are; that the eucharist is a thanksgiving for, and a memorial of, Christ's death, a confessing of one's faith in Jesus's death, and a pledging of oneself in a faith response to the meaning of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

Zwingli's approach to the eucharist, opened the way for radically new ways of eucharistic *practice*. Most significant was his insistence that the eucharist is to be experienced as a *community* event, accessible and easily understood by those participating. Thus in the *preface* to his liturgy, Zwingli set forth a sharp statement of policy: "It will be necessary to remove from Christ's Supper everything which does not conform to the divine Word." [19] By this statement, however, Zwingli did not propose to have some sort of biblical worship, evolved wholly out of Scripture and purged of all traditional things. Rather, his purpose was to be rid of symbols that he deemed unscriptural or ambiguous, so as to make way for authentic symbols that would express the New Testament Gospel with simplicity, clarity, and power. No longer would the service be read in Latin, but in German - the peoples' own language - and the priest was to speak clearly and audibly for all the people to hear and understand what was being done in eucharistic celebration. The eucharist, for Zwingli, was above all a contemplative experience of the goodness of God manifest on the Cross - so vivid to the person of faith that the event itself becomes alive and contemporary in its effect.

Zwingli apparently decided that the eucharist should be

celebrated only four times a year: at Easter, Pentecost, autumn, and Christmas. Infrequent as this may well be, in the historical context of the Medieval Church, Zwingli's quarterly celebration is probably an advance on the existing practice of Holy Communion in Zurich, namely that of once a year. Whatever defects there may have been in Zwingli's eucharistic theology and liturgy, his reformulations and innovations opened the way for more lucid and creative eucharistic worship. Bard Thompson, reflecting on the Zurich liturgy of 1535 observes:

Not in much speaking or teaching, not in profusion of ceremonies, but in monumental simplicity and stillness, this liturgy gave expression to the central affirmation of Zwingli's eucharistic theology: contemplation, fellowship, thanksgiving, and moral earnestness.[20]

1.3 JOHN CALVIN

As a Reformer, Calvin also entered the debate on the eucharist in strong opposition to Roman Catholic teaching. The text of *The Placards of 1534* illustrates just how sharply Calvin criticised and condemned the Roman position:

I invoke heaven and earth in witness of the truth, against this pompous and proud papal Mass, by which the world (if God does not soon provide a remedy) is and will be totally desolated, ruined, lost, and laid low: for in the Mass our Lord is so outrageously blasphemed, and the people seduced and blinded - something which we ought no longer to suffer or endure...[21]

In criticising the papal Mass, Calvin charged; *firstly*, that the once-for-all character of Christ's high-priestly sacrifice as described in the Letter to the Hebrews is set aside by the oft-repeated sacrifice of Christ in the Roman Mass; *secondly*,

that the Mass is an act of idolatry, localising in countless earthly places for adoration a glorified human body which is really in heaven; *thirdly*, that the so-called priestly miracle of transubstantiation is an utter denial of Scriptural teaching about the Supper and about examination of self before communicating; and *fourthly*, that the benefits of the Mass are contrary to those taught in Scripture as coming from the Supper.

In the first edition (1536) of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin deals with the question of the eucharist in the context of his refuting Roman Catholic doctrine, and in the final edition (1559) of *The Institutes*, a whole chapter of *Book IV* is given to exposure of errors in the eucharistic theology and practice of the Catholic Church. However, Calvin also radically differed from other Reformers on the subject, rejecting, for instance Zwingli's memorialism and Luther's "monstrous notion of ubiquity".[22]

In his analysis of the distinctive features of the eucharist, Calvin distinguished the visible signs from the "spiritual truth":

I say then, as it has always been received in the Church, and as it is said today by those who are teaching faithfully, that there are two things in the Blessed Sacrament: namely, the visible signs that are given us in it for our infirmity, and the spiritual truth which is symbolized to us thereby and likewise exhibited.[23]

The "spiritual truth" of the sacrament is not only symbolized by the signs but is "exhibited" - that is, presented and offered to the communicant. This does not mean, however, that

it is to be understood as being *contained* in the signs.

For Calvin the meaning of the eucharist resides in the *promises*; these promises are as though included or enclosed in the sign. But in what do the promises consist? Like Luther, Calvin identified them with the Words of the Institution. It is there that we should look for the purpose of the sign, the reason for its existence. What is promised us by the Words of the Institution is therefore really given to us at the same time as the material signs of the promise. However, the material elements have to be carefully distinguished from the body and the blood of Christ. In Calvin's *Treatise*, he explains his point of view on this subject with simple clarity:

Now, if it be asked whether the bread is the body of Christ and the wine his blood, we answer, that the bread and the wine are visible signs, which represent to us the body and blood, but that this name and title of body and blood is given them because they are as it were instruments by which the Lord distributes them to us. This form and manner of speaking is very appropriate.[24]

So with Luther, Calvin held that there is a "real" reception of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament, but for the latter, in a spiritual manner. The sacrament is a means by which Christ communicates himself to us. Calvin held with Zwingli that after the ascension Christ retained a real body of flesh and blood which was located in heaven. Nothing should be taken away from Christ's "heavenly glory - as happens when he is brought under the corruptible elements of this world, or bound to any earthly creatures". Moreover, "nothing inappropriate to human nature (should) be ascribed to his body, as happens when it is said either to be infinite or put in a

number of places at once." [25]

Calvin stressed that, while Christ is bodily in heaven, this distance is overcome by the secret working of the Holy Spirit:

...greatly mistaken are those who conceive no presence of flesh in the Supper unless it lies in the bread. For thus they leave nothing to the secret working of the Spirit, which unites Christ himself to us. To them Christ does not seem present unless he comes down to us...since this mystery is heavenly, there is no need to draw Christ to earth that he may be joined to us. [26]

Thus the eucharist is nothing less than a true "communion of the body". But in order for Christians to believe in the reality of the body, the notion of "the immensity of the body" must be removed:

There is a commonplace distinction of the schools to which I am not ashamed to refer: although the whole Christ is everywhere, still the whole of that which is in him is not everywhere. And would that the Schoolmen themselves had honestly weighed the force of this statement. For thus would the absurd fiction of Christ's carnal presence have been obviated. Therefore, since the whole Christ is everywhere, our Mediator is ever present with his own people, and in the Supper reveals himself in a special way, yet in such a way that the whole Christ is present, but not in his wholeness. For, as has been said, in his flesh he is contained in heaven until he appears in judgement. [27]

It is on the above point, namely the ubiquity of the body, that Calvin so sharply differed from Luther, and incurred the wrath of Lutheran theologians, who criticised the notion of *extra Calvinisticum* and charged that it was characteristically Calvinist to teach that after the Incarnation the Eternal Son had an existence *etiam extra carnem*. As the Lutherans saw it, the *extra* was superfluous since it provided nothing not already contained in Lutheran Christology. [28] Christ's activity after

the Incarnation was not restricted to the places where Jesus of Nazareth appeared. By virtue of the *communicatio idiomatum* the One Person continued to govern the universe, with his humanity abstaining from or concealing the use of its power to be ubiquitous while appearing to be limited to a place on earth. While Calvin rejected the doctrine of *bodily* ubiquity, he taught that Christ is ubiquitous according to his divinity which was and is hypostatically united to the flesh but not restricted to it. The eternal Word of God was and is hypostatically united to the flesh but is also beyond the flesh *etiam extra carnem*. [29]

On the above Christological basis, Calvin therefore insisted on the substance of bread and the substance of wine remaining in the eucharist. But Christ takes the signs which he himself designated for a purpose and makes them the means by which we participate in the reality. And if our theology and practice does anything to violate the reality of the sign, we are then detracting from that sacred conjunction which Christ himself effects by his Word and Spirit.

Calvin's view of the eucharist is also an expansion of his basic theological position which emphasizes the accomplished and indissoluble union which Christ has established between believers and himself, and the dynamic nature of this mystical union. For Calvin, Christ himself and not just Christ's benefits are the substance or reality in which we participate. The substance of the sacrament is the whole Christ (*totus Christus, sed non totum*), [30] the humanity no less than the divinity, present here by the power of the Word and Spirit. The

whole Christ is really and substantially present in the eucharist by the power of the Spirit - which is very different from saying that we have only a "spiritual presence" of Christ in the eucharist.

The importance of the eucharist in Christian life and worship in Calvin's view is underlined by his attempt to maintain a *weekly* celebration of the sacrament.[31] Condemning the Roman Catholic practice of annual communion as "a veritable invention of the devil,"[32] Calvin argued that the eucharist should be celebrated frequently, for in returning frequently to Christ's passion the eucharistic community is sustained and strengthened in faith, and nourished in mutual love for one another.

In Calvin's proposed *Order for Weekly Communion*, the importance of the ministry of the Word (Sermon) is illustrated by its placement, namely as the second item in the order of service:

First, then, it should begin with public prayers. After this a sermon should be given. Then, when bread and wine have been placed on the Table, the minister should repeat the words of the institution of the Supper. Next, he should recite the promises which were left to us in it; at the same time, he should excommunicate all who are debarred from it by the Lord's prohibition...When the supper is finished, there should be an exhortation to sincere faith and confession of faith, to love and behaviour worthy of Christians. At the last, thanks should be given, and praises sung to God.[33]

Apart from the Word, the eucharist has no power. What is required is not an incantation over the bread and wine, suggests Calvin, but "living preaching", addressed to the *people*, setting forth the promises of Christ, which are

antecedent to the eucharist and which supply meaning and reality to the signs.[34]

While on the one hand, like Zwingli, emphasising, the *corporate and communal* nature of Eucharistic worship, Calvin's introduction of the "exclusion clause" into the rite appears to spoil the eucharistic spirit and social character of the meal. However, Calvin is merely being theologically consistent in his call for those "unworthy" to be debarred from sharing in the eucharist, and regarded the measure as essential to the role of Christian discipline.[35] Calvin also sought to keep the eucharistic liturgy plain and simple.[36] His model for the Genevan Church, and for Christ's Church of all time and every historical context, is the ancient church which, for Calvin, meant the church "prior to the papacy".

Upon his return to Geneva in 1541, Calvin replaced *La Maniere et fasson* - the first manuel of evangelical worship in the French language, prepared by G. Farel - with the French liturgy he had prepared abroad. It was published the following year as *The Form of Prayers*, to which the imprimatur was affixed: "According to God's elect in the the Custom of the Ancient Church." For Calvin, worship, as true religion begins with docility, the quality of being teachable by God's Word.

1.4 PETER TAYLOR FORSYTH

Forsyth's point of departure on the subject of the eucharist is that the sacraments are essentially *corporate* acts belonging to the Church as a whole, and that their value, in the first instance, is communal rather than individual:

...it is an act of the Church more than of an individual. Further still, it is an act created by the eternal Act of Christ which made and makes the Church. At the last it is an act of Christ present in the Church, which does not so much live as Christ lives in it. It is Christ's act offering Himself to men rather than the act of the Church offering Christ to God.[37]

In so far as the sacraments are essentially corporate acts, they are also "necessary for the continued existence and power of a corporate body like the Church".[38]

The question arises as to what Forsyth means when he refers to "the Church", writing as it were from "no recognized Free Church position". "When I speak of the Church", remarks Forsyth, "I mean ... the true Catholic Church, the Church of Christ, the Church in all Churches, the community of the faithful".[39] The principle of Nonconformity is therefore, for Forsyth, only considered valid within the context of the Holy Catholic Church, in which all churches find their being. As such neither the Catholic nor the Protestant churches are *the* Church: they are but manifestations of the Church in its historical attempts to minister the Word and administer the sacraments in specific and contingent circumstances.

The sacraments, as corporate acts, belong to the Church but not in the sense it was conceived of and practiced in the Roman Catholic Church, namely under a doctrine of *ex opera operata*, whereby the sacrament is effectual, apart from the exercise of faith on the part of the priest or the people. Forsyth characterises the Roman understanding of the eucharist as a kind of "spiritual operation performed on the patient over his head." [40] Thus his fundamental objection to the Roman doctrine

is that the eucharist is supposed to be effectual "in just being done by the Church,..."[41]

Forsyth points out, however, that there is a sense in which the Catholic doctrine is correct, because the "fundamental value of the Sacrament lies in a supreme and final Act...an Act accomplished already, and here delivered to our address."[42] However, the finished work of Christ, an *opus operatum* never to be repeated, from which the eucharist gets its whole meaning is not an act "over our head".[43] Clearly, Forsyth wants to guard against a *magical* notion of eucharistic efficacy, which derives from a Catholic understanding. On the other hand, the idea of efficacy being dependent on human response - deriving from Zwingli's emphasis on faith - is equally to be rejected.

Forsyth speaks of preaching and the sacraments as the "two great expressions of the Gospel in worship", to be distinguished in the following way:

The Sacraments are the acted Word - variants of the preached Word. They are signs, but they are more than signs. They are the word, the Gospel itself, visible, as in preaching the Word is audible. But in either case it is an act. It is Christ in a real presence giving us anew His Redemption.[44]

Forsyth here introduces a nuance to the Reformed emphasis on the interconnection between Word and Sacrament. The stress now is no longer on the eucharistic elements as such, but on the *action* in the celebration of the eucharist. The real presence of Christ is therefore in the act, or eucharistic event, and not in the Bread and Wine. Therefore, the question of the presence of Christ in the eucharist is not resolved by trying to understand how the bread and wine become the substance of

Christ's body and blood, but by meditating on the *action* in the eucharistic event. Christ is present in the act, accomplishing his purposes. As such the grace which comes through the eucharist is not material, but psychic. It is real power which is communicated to the church through the elements; not because of the elements themselves, but by the nature of the act. Christ's body (in the sense of his entire being), and not his flesh is presented to us in the act.

For Forsyth, the difference between magic and genuine sacramentalism lies herein - to eat of Christ's flesh is to indulge in worship of a mystery cult, but to partake of his body is something entirely different:

It is of great moment to note that the Apostles and Evangelists do not think primarily...of the exalted Christ providing a heavenly food to eat or a transfigured blood to drink, but they thought of what Jesus did in self-donation on the Cross...The believer's eye is turned on the Cross and the body there, not on heaven and a celestial body there. They ate of that person in His Act, not in His substance; they ate of the body, not the flesh.[45]

The above emphasis, namely on the *living presence* of Christ in the eucharist also explains why Forsyth is so sharply critical of Zwingli's memorialism:

Let us at least get rid of the idea which has impoverished worship beyond measure, that the act is mainly commemoration. No Church can live on that. How can we have a mere memorial of one who is still alive, still our life, still present with us and acting in us?[46]

But any notion of transubstantiation, or consubstantiation, is ruled out altogether. Forsyth points out that there can be no idea of anything magical, and that the renewal which comes with the celebration of the eucharist must be a moral one, for it

cannot be metaphysical:

The action on the soul by the means of grace is in the psychic region, and not in that of either physics or metaphysics...Word and Sacraments produce on the soul certain impressions and ideas in a psychological way; then these impressions act sacramentally on a still more inward life, and carry home to our moral centre the real presence of God in His saving power.[47]

In line with the 16th Century Reformers, Forsyth also thus rejected the Roman Catholic teaching of the sacrifice of the Mass. He maintained that the eucharist could not be understood as a sacrifice performed by the Church, for in the sacrament Christ presents us his finished sacrifice. It is not we who offer Christ in sacrifice, but God who "offers himself" to us:

One error of the Mass is that the priest offers God. But no man can offer God, God offers Himself. He makes the sacrifice. He did in Christ.[48]

The eucharistic words, "This is my body", according to Forsyth, are to be interpreted as meaning: "This represents my body". Again the emphasis here is on the act and not on the element or symbol. When the symbol in the eucharist - which is not merely a symbol but a sacrament - lies in the Church's action, it is the act and not the element that contains Christ and appropriates his gift in the eucharist. Forsyth is here keen to explain that the eucharist, even as an act, is not merely presenting an image or an exhibition, but that it is a real transaction, a real deed, a real donation:

In so far as our action is symbolical, it is symbolical of Christ's Act, not of His essence...The exact point is that such symbolism did not lie in the elements but in the action, the entire action - word and deed. It lay in action first on Christ's part, then on the part of the Church.[49]

As such the "broken body" in the eucharist represents Christ's body as broken, not as substantial (or not in the substance), but in the "act of being broken for you".[50] In the eucharist therefore, no intrinsic value is to be sought in the bread and wine. The efficacy lies in the *act* and the *action*.

The importance of the Church community, or the community-of-faith, is a key factor in Forsyth's understanding of the validity of the eucharist. While the celebration of the sacrament does have a significance for the individual believer's experience of Christ, the eucharist is essentially a communal or community act:

...It is primarily the Act of the Church, not of an individual. And the Church has done all that the Sacrament means it to do even if there are several in the wrong frame of mind, so long, as it is a living Church of the New Humanity, and observe the occasion in the faith and obedience of the redeemer. The Lord's Supper is essentially a social and communal act...Hence we are not to seek its primary value in the special significance it may have for the individual's experience of Christ, as an individual.[51]

Forsyth therefore views the individual within the social context, or context of the community. In the Church the members are not simply individual units in contact with one another but become who they are in relation to one another, as members of the same Body, under the same Head, namely Jesus Christ. Individualism should thus be renounced, for in relation to the Church in general, and to the Eucharist in particular, it can be "fatal to faith".[52]

Consistent with his emphasis on the eucharist deriving its whole meaning from the finished Act of Christ on the Cross,

Forsyth understands faith to be the product and gift of the Cross, and "its native action on us." [53] The value of the sacrament is therefore not subject to, or dependent on, the faith of the believer, but lies "in something done to our hand, ... before and outside of our faith, before our faith was there - indeed, it puts our faith there, it creates it." [54] The nature of faith in the sacrament is thus not our qualification for partaking in God's Grace, but a moral response of obedience and thanksgiving to God.

For Forsyth, the key to the eucharist is ultimately to be found in the Cross, which also interprets the sacrament. The *practice* of the eucharist should be a frequent and dominant feature of the Church's life, as it represents the "real centre of the Church's common and social life." [55]

1.5 KARL BARTH

It is significant that we locate Barth's discussion of the eucharist in his *Church Dogmatics* [56] in the first volume under the section on "The Word of God in its Threefold Form". What is implicit in the above schema is stated explicitly by Barth with regard to the interconnection between the Word and sacraments:

The connection with the Lord's Supper is not to be regarded as merely incidental. What holds of proclamation and the Church in general, cannot be better represented than precisely by the sacrament. [57]

Any understanding of the eucharist as a theologically relevant entity is, for Barth, governed by the Word of God. [58] But the two, namely the Word and the sacraments, are integrally linked to each other. In his *Heidelberg Catechism* the point is again

underscored:

As preaching is a bit of history, history in the form of words, so baptism and the Lord's Supper are history in the form of acts. Preaching and sacrament belong meaningfully together.[59]

The Word and sacrament belong "meaningfully together" in that "our whole salvation is rooted in the one sacrifice of Christ, offered for us on the cross." [60]

Barth firmly rejected the Roman doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass, on the grounds that the eucharist testifies that we have complete forgiveness for all our sins through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ:

The Lord's Supper testifies to us that we have complete forgiveness of all our sins through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ which he himself has accomplished on the cross once for all...[61]

On the one hand the concept of the Mass as a repetition of the unique sacrifice of Jesus Christ is rejected, but also the idea that such a repetition performed by the church as necessary for salvation is disputed by Barth.

In line with the 16th Century Reformers, Barth also denied the validity of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which implies that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ:

Bread remains bread, wine remains wine, we should have to say, in the language of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The realism of sacramental consecration does not destroy the proper existence of the signs![62]

While on the one hand Barth rejected the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation, he also opposed the Zwinglian notion of bare signs, whereby the eucharistic elements have not a real

but only a symbolic relation to what is signified, only pointing to the presence as something apart from themselves.

Barth thus upholds the Christological character of the eucharist, which consists formally in Christ's own appointment of the elements with His word of promise attaching to them, and materially in Christ's giving Himself to his people when in compliance with his institution they do as he commands:

...*Ceteris imparibus*, we are reminded of the eating and drinking of bread and wine, which do not in themselves, but which, without ceasing to be what they are, acquire and have in the Lord's Supper, the function and capability of indicating and confirming the fellowship of the community with the Lord, its participation in His body and blood and its attachment to His person. Thus, even though these human words do not cease to be elements of general human speech which may be used and understood or misunderstood by all, nevertheless, not by the men who speak them but by the omnipotent God who calls these men to the service of His Word and uses their secular words, they are given the power to bear testimony to His Word.[63]

Barth's Christological view of the sacraments is attested in an essay by J.K.S. Reid, who argues for a preservation of the Christological character of the sacraments. Reid quotes Barth asking the question; "How is a theology, a piety or an ecclesiology to become Christocentric unless it is so by nature?"[64] Reid points out that the very term by which the eucharist is described since the Reformation is significant in regard to this question:

...the Holy Communion is frequently called the Lord's Supper; and this is supported by other phrases such as the Lord's Table and the Cup of the Lord. Nor are these mere names; they really signify what is thought and held about the Holy Communion. It is His supper that is celebrated, His table to which men are invited, ...the real president of the feast, the real host of the supper, and also the real agent in all that is done or effected is our Lord Himself.[65]

The question of the nature of the presence of Christ in the eucharist is dealt with by Barth from the point of view of Christ being present in his Body, the Church.[66] He observes that "there are not three Christs", but only "one Christ,...and therefore only one body of Christ".[67] The real presence of Christ in the sacrament should therefore not be conceived of apart from Christ's presence amidst the community-of-faith or apart from his presence in the Church within history.

For Barth, the meaning of the eucharist as *event* consists in two distinguishable features. On the one hand there is the earthly eating and drinking of bread and wine, and on the other hand there is the eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Spirit. Yet paradoxically it is one event.

...we have to remember especially that in the Lord's Supper it is distinctively a question of outward and inward, visible and invisible, physical and spiritual nourishment at one and the same time. Where the human mind normally separates these two spheres, in the action of the Holy Spirit, and drastically in the action of the Lord's Supper, they are comprehended and united.[68]

The authenticating, or making real, of the mystery whereby Christ becomes sacramentally present in the eucharist, does not depend on the faith of the participant, but on the action of the Holy Spirit. Barth, following Calvin, is therefore opposed to the Zwinglian teaching of faith as constitutive in the eucharist. Barth stresses the role of the Holy Spirit both as actualising the eucharistic event as well as being the sole agent of faith. Faith as such is dependant on the action of the eucharist as a whole:

Faith does not rest on itself, but on God's

action. The Holy Spirit creates faith through preaching. The same Holy Spirit confirms the reality of the righteous action of God, and therefore the reality of our faith, through the actions which precede (baptism) and follow (Supper) preaching...As in the creation of faith, so in this confirmation of faith we have to do with the work of the Holy Spirit...In celebrating baptism and the Lord's Supper, the congregation represents and receives the confirmation of faith through the Holy Spirit...[69]

The question of the role of faith is, however, closely linked to the eucharistic event itself. The suggestion that the Lord's Supper is also "an answer to a question about faith"[70], implies that the meaning of the eucharist is to be comprehended only from within the framework of faith, as faith alone can grasp the gift of Christ. But faith, for Barth, does not constitute the eucharistic event. The eucharist calls forth a response of faith without which the sacrament could not be comprehended.

The nature of the eucharist as *community event* which establishes fellowship and unity in the Church is underscored by Barth, when he states that in the sacraments we are concerned "in a uniquely dramatic way with the action of the community, and indeed with the action by which it establishes fellowship." [71] The eucharist is thus both a sign proclaiming the visible and spiritual unity of the Church, as well as an event which re-creates, re-establishes and renews this unity in Christ.

1.6 REFORMED EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY

It is evident, from our survey of the eucharistic theologies

of Zwingli and Calvin, Forsyth and Barth, that the Reformed position *vis-a-vis* the eucharist has been formulated on the basis of repudiation and challenge to the theology and practice of Roman Catholicism. (See *APPENDIX* for the Catholic position after The Council of Trent and at The Second Vatican Council).

At the root of the Reformed teaching we find therefore, *firstly*, the emphatic repudiation of the Catholic teaching and practice of the sacrifice of the Mass. This position was variously criticised and condemned, from Zwingli, who held that the eucharist was a memorial of Christ's sacrifice and not a repetition thereof, to Forsyth, who contended that the basic error of the Mass was that it implied that in the eucharistic celebration the priest was offering God.

Without exception, The Reformed theologians rallied their arguments around the New Testament teaching of Christ's *once-for-all* sacrifice. (cf. Rom. 6:10, Heb. 7:27, 9:12, 10:10-14, 18, 1 Peter 3:18.) Barth's teaching in the Heidelberg Catechism, outlines the position in clear and simple terms:

Question 67. Are both the Word and the Sacraments designed to direct our faith to the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ...? "Yes, indeed, for the Holy Spirit teaches in the gospel and confirms by the holy Sacraments that our whole salvation is rooted in the one sacrifice of Christ for us on the cross...Preaching and sacrament refer to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ..."[72]

Flowing out of its repudiation of the sacrifice of the Mass, Reformed teaching on the eucharist emphasises the close interconnection between the Word and the Sacrament, which is Christocentrically based. The Reformed understanding of the unity between Word and Sacrament derives from the theology of

the Incarnation. Calvin makes the point succinctly when he states that the only Word known and responded to is the incarnate Word. Christ therefore holds within himself both Word and Sacrament. The eucharist as such represents a hypostatic union between the eternal Word and the flesh, but not thereby necessarily restricted to the flesh.

In Reformed eucharistic theology, the Word and the Sacrament belong together, in the sense that the Bread and Wine are the signs which proclaim the Word of God to us, while the Word of God is employed by the Spirit to proclaim the spiritual reality of the Sacrament. Calvin's insistence that the eucharist be celebrated on a weekly basis demonstrates his theological consistency on the matter. If the Word and Sacrament are thus indissolubly linked, it follows that the celebration of the Eucharist has to be accompanied by the preaching of the Word, and *vice versa*. It is therefore an anomaly that in many Reformed Churches today the eucharist is celebrated only once a month, and in some instances only once a quarter, while the preaching of the Word is seldom - if ever - excluded from weekly services of worship.

The *second* major point of contention for the Reformers was the Catholic teaching of transubstantiation. It was this notion of transubstantiation (i.e. the "changing of one substance to another") that Reformed theologians found most objectionable. In Reformed thinking, the "adoration of the Host" (bread which has changed from the substance of bread to the substance of the body of Christ) constitutes nothing less than idolatry. The fundamental error in transubstantiation is

not that it proposes a miraculous event. For what could be more miraculous than the Eternal Word becoming flesh, or Christ bestowing his presence in the material elements of the Sacraments? It consists rather in the evacuation of the eucharist of all sacramental meaning. This results from a rationalization of the sacramental *mystery*, which also denies the gracious activity by which Christ gives himself in the sacrament.

The fundamental Reformed position with regard to Christ's presence in relation to the eucharistic elements is concisely expressed by Barth, who holds that "bread remains bread, wine remains wine..., in the language of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The realism of sacramental consecration does not destroy the proper existence of the signs".[73] Barth and Calvin in particular make the point very clearly that the bread and wine are visible *signs*, (albeit eminently appropriate and indispensable signs) but to be distinguished from the "spiritual truth" with which they are connected, but not equated. It would appear, however, that the Zwinglian emphasis, i.e. that the bread and wine in the eucharist *signify* the body and blood of Christ is more prevalent in the understanding of the Reformed churches, particularly amongst the laity. Zwingli, it should be noted, later moved nearer to the position of Calvin, who maintained that the bread and the wine in the eucharist were signs which exhibited the presence of Christ, but not signs which *represent what is absent*.

The question emerges however, as to how (or in what sense) the Reformed theologians conceived of the presence of Christ in

the eucharist, in relation to the bread and wine. Calvin's thinking on this matter best represents Reformed teaching, whereby the symbols of bread and wine are not to be *equated* with the substance (of Christ's body and blood) itself but are the *means* by which the Lord acts effectively in us. The substance (or matter) of the eucharist is Christ with his death and resurrection, by which he obtained righteousness for us. Thus Christ himself - the whole Christ (*totus Christus, sed non totum*) - and not just Christ's benefits are the substance or reality in which we participate. The aim of the eucharist is therefore that we may grow into one body with Christ as we partake of his substance and experience the reality the benefits of his grace. The point needs to be underscored. Fundamental to the Reformed teaching is the understanding that Christ gives *himself* to us in the eucharist.

The above emphasis opened the way for a shift of focus in Reformed thinking, from the eucharistic elements (i.e. bread and wine) to the eucharistic *action*. Though implicit in the expositions of Zwingli and Calvin, this shift is more explicit in the later theologians, and in particular in Forsyth. For the latter, efficacy, or sanctity in the eucharist, is not to be found in the Bread and Wine, but in the eucharistic *action*. In so far as our action in celebrating the eucharist is symbolic, it is symbolic of Christ's act and not of his essence. As such the church's act of celebration uses the elements (of bread and wine) as sacred tools, yet it remains the act and not the elements that contains Christ and appropriates himself and his benefits of salvation. Christ's presence in the eucharist is

hereby understood and experienced in the *event of the celebration as a whole* and not merely in the consuming of the Bread and the Wine. This is not to deny that the eating of the Bread and drinking of the Wine are of special significance in the eucharistic, representing as it were the climax in the celebration.

The Reformed teaching on the function of *faith* and the *role of the Holy Spirit* in the eucharist are two related matters which need to be outlined. By and large the Reformed position does not adopt the Zwinglian emphasis, whereby the role of faith is elevated to the point of making the efficacy of the eucharist dependant on a human response. On the contrary, the normative Reformed teaching - which is very much related to the spirit of the 16th Century Reformation, i.e. *by grace we are saved through faith* - is that faith operates essentially as a response. The Holy Spirit creates and strengthens faith by the Word and elements, and in so doing makes real both its subject and object in the eucharist, namely Jesus Christ.

The exercise of faith in the celebration of the eucharist is therefore not our qualification, but rather our moral *response* to the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. In other words the eucharist is not constituted by the exercise of faith, but our faith is affirmed and strengthened by the eucharist. The prayer of *Great Thanksgiving* in eucharistic liturgies reflects the importance of the response of faith in thanksgiving to God's mighty act in Jesus Christ.

The essential role and function of the Holy Spirit is thus

central to the Reformed understanding of the eucharist. From Zwingli's "discovery" of the importance of the Spirit, following John 6:63, to Calvin who affirmed that the benefits Jesus extends to his church are not transmuted otherwise than by the power of the Holy Spirit, to Barth (explicitly) and Forsyth (more implicitly), the understanding is clear and emphatic: the eucharist is made real and beneficial only by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

The *third* and final feature of Reformed eucharistic theology and practice we wish to delineate is the eucharist as *community event*. This emphasis first emerged very strongly with Zwingli who insisted that the eucharist was to be understood and practiced as an act of fellowship. Barth, following Calvin, emphasized that the sacraments are not private affairs but that they belong to the church. Forsyth likewise stressed the point, that the sacraments are corporate acts belonging to the church as a whole, and that their value, in the first instance, is communal rather than individual.

The Reformers' focus on the importance of community, and community participation, in the eucharist, brought about a new assessment and evaluation in regard to the *practice* of the eucharist within Reformed churches. The 16th Century Reformers themselves provided alternative liturgies suitable to the new views on religion. Zwingli, for example, produced two books entitled *De Canone Missae Epicheiresis* (1523) and *Action oder Bruch des Nachtmals* (1525). These were derived from the Roman Mass, but with all accretions removed. John Calvin's rite, *La forme des prieres* (1542), was, however, of much greater

significance and consequence. For Calvin the correct procedure was a preaching service followed by the eucharist. He regarded weekly eucharistic celebration as essential, but the Genevan magistrates allowed it only quarterly. However, Calvin's form of service (or rite) has had great influence on all succeeding Reformed liturgies. Several of the Swiss cantons, such as Vaud (1940), Geneva (1946), and Bern (1955) have recently issued revised liturgies, influenced both by the earlier Reformed rites and by the classic forms. The Genevan rite of 1556, known as the *John Knox's Genevan Service Book*, was the first Reformed rite in English.

The current situation in Reformed churches, with regard to the frequency of celebration and liturgical forms of the eucharist, is extremely diverse and varied. By and large the use of Worship-Service books is made optional, and even where these are used much variation is practised by local churches. However, there is a growing sense in Reformed churches of the centrality and importance of eucharistic practice in the life of the Church. This is evidenced by, among other things, the appointment in many Reformed churches of committees to examine and advise their Assemblies (and other bodies) on matters such as the theology and practice of the eucharist.

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6. cf. Romans 6:10, Hebrews 7:27, 9:28, 1 Peter 3:18.
7. Z 1 460.6 - 10. (The abbreviation "Z" stands for *Huldrych Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke*, Corpus Reformatorum 88ff., Berlin/Leipzig/Zurich, 1905-)
8. Z 11 127.15 - 128.8
9. Z 11 141.14 - 144.16, *et al.*
10. Z VIII 85.26-34. Zwingli here draws on the analogy of a flint, suggesting that just as there is fire in the flint only when it is struck, so Christ is found under the form of the bread only when he is sought in faith.
11. The most notable of Zwingli's writings before he came under the influence of Cornelius Hoen is *A Proposal Concerning Images and the Mass*, May 1524.
12. Z III 124.27 - 125.15,26
13. *ibid*
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16. Z V 572.15-16, 754.10-15.
17. Z V 572.27-573.2, 706.5-11.
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31. Calvin was, however, prevented from this ideal by the direct veto of the Genevan city council, who wished to follow Zurich in a quarterly observance.

32. *Inst.*, 1V.xvii.46, (1536 Edition)

33. *Inst.*, 1V.xvii.43, (1536 Edition)

34. *Inst.*, 1V.xvii.39, (1543 Edition)

35. According to his doctrine of election, Calvin conceived of the church as the company of the predestined, the holy people of God. As such the integrity of "the liturgy of the Faithful" should not be compromised, for thereby God seals his promises to his chosen people.

36. cf. "Proposed Order for Weekly Communion", *Inst.*, 1V.xvii.43, (1536 Edition)

37. Forsyth, *Church and the Sacraments.*, pp.216, 274

38. Forsyth, *Different Conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice*, London : Independent Press, 1956, p.162

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40. Forsyth, *Church and the Sacraments*, p.230
41. *ibid*
42. *ibid*
43. *ibid*
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45. *ibid.*, p.270 - 271. The sense in which Forsyth understands the meaning of Christ's Body is clearly that of the whole person, and not the mere organism.
46. *ibid.*, p.228 - 229
47. *ibid.*, p.278
48. *ibid.*, p.238.
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53. *Church and Sacraments*, p.230
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58. Barth very briefly defines the term "Word of God" in the context of proclamation as that which "attests itself in Holy Scripture in the word of the prophets and apostles, to whom it was originally and once for all uttered through God's revelation". *ibid*
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68. *Church Dogmatics.*, IV:2, p.708
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PART TWO: THE EUCHARIST IN CATHOLIC LIBERATION THEOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Two major events in the 1960s shook the Catholic Church in Latin America to its foundations: Vatican II in 1962-65 and the General Conference of Latin American bishops (CELAM II) in 1968. These two events, more than any others, gave *official* impetus to the emergence of liberation theology.

Latin America, for a long time the scenario of exploitation and poverty amongst the masses, had inadvertently been sowing the seeds of large scale social revolution. When the social teachings of Vatican II and the social encyclicals of Popes John XXIII and Paul VI began to trickle down into Latin America, a small but growing number of bishops, priests, and lay persons found confirmation of what they themselves had come to see as the role of the Church in the building of a new social order. After all, six hundred bishops from Latin America had attended the opening proceedings of Vatican II, and they could do no otherwise than be deeply committed to the social documents that they and their colleagues had supported. Thus a new era began for the Catholic Church in Latin America, an era marked by a growing concern for the poor, resistance to the powerful and privileged, distrust of the established order, and protest against the prevailing structures of an unjust social order.

CELAM II, which was held in Medellin, Columbia, in 1968, is described by Enrique Dussel as the "Vatican II of Latin America".[1] Gustavo Gutierrez points to the year 1968 as the "birthdate of Latin American liberation theology." [2] What the Medellin Conference did above all else was to focus attention on the Latin American situation, and in particular on its pervasive human injustice and oppression, and to raise the question: What does God have to say and what ought the Church as God's agent do about all this suffering?

It was inevitable that such social upheavels within the life of the Church would profoundly affect its theology and practice. The eucharist has always been at the centre of Roman Catholic Church life and witness, and Latin America is no exception. The liberation theologians perceived very sharply that the crisis experienced by the Church in Latin America is most acutely reflected in the theology and practice of the eucharist. The resounding criticism from liberation theologians is that the existing eucharistic observance was more a source of alienation than a means of communion, more a sanctioning of the status quo than a stimulus to reform, more a residual cultism than a commitment to the precept and praxis of loving one's neighbour.

The Catholic Church in Latin America had to face up to a moment of truth for itself, for the crisis of the eucharist was in fact a crisis for the Church. The 16th Century produced a Reformation.[3] The 20th Century needs more than reform in the Church, it cries for *transformation* in Church and society.

Liberation theology is a reponse to such a need, providing a radical criticism of the status quo in Church and society, and suggesting the way forward to transformation.

The impact of liberation theology was not to be confined to Latin America. Africa and Asia have shown themselves to be fertile soil for this new way of doing theology. On the subject of the eucharist, a significant contribution has been made to the debate by Tissa Balasuriya, a Roman Catholic priest from Asia. We will thus here survey the eucharistic theology of Balasuriya, together with the expositions of two major Latin American liberation theologians, namely Juan Luis Segundo and Rafael Avila.

2.2 JUAN LUIS SEGUNDO

J. L. Segundo is one of the most prolific writers among Latin American liberation theologians.[4] Segundo, a Jesuit priest, was born in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1925. He studied philosophy in Argentina, received a licentiate in theology at Louvain, Belgium, in 1956, and earned a doctorate from the University of Paris in 1963. Ordained as priest in 1955, Segundo later founded the Pater Faber Pastoral Centre in Montevideo and served as its director until it closed in 1975.

Segundo's teaching on the eucharist is contained in his book entitled, *The Sacraments Today*[5], the fourth volume in the series, *A Theology for a New Humanity*. The five-volume series is a course in theology produced by and for the grassroots

communities of the Pater Faber Centre. As such Segundo's eucharistic teaching reflects his basic view of theology, seeing it not as an academic discipline for scholars, but as the reflection of ordinary believers on their real-life experiences. He approaches the subject of the eucharist from the point of view that a "new crisis"[6] has arisen for the Sacraments. Segundo describes the crises as follows:

The sacramental life of the Church has gone into decline at different points in church history. But the decline we are now witnessing has a distinctive feature that makes it not only new but unique. It has not been brought on by ignorance, indifference, or rebellion against the Church. Difficult as it may be to believe at first glance, *it has been brought on by the Church itself.*[7]

The "new crisis" which has arisen for the Sacraments is a crisis for the Catholic Church, brought on by the Church itself. The crisis manifests itself, according to Segundo, in the serious contradiction that exists between the eucharistic fellowship and the community life beyond the celebration of the rite. The Church has not responded with any urgency to this contradiction, allowing people to continue calling themselves Christian when very little else outside of the observation of a rite unites them with each other. The crisis of the sacraments is also therefore a crisis of the *unity* of the Church. Segundo raises the following questions:

When is it that human beings are honestly and truly gathered in unity? Is it when they are searching for the significance of the gospel in their own lives, and are disposed to pass critical judgement on the latter in order to provide an opening for the former? Or is it when sacramental practice joins people together who share no vital idea of life despite their lip service to Jesus?[8]

The crisis of the unity of the Church, and the questions

raised by Segundo, are not unique to the Catholic Church in Latin America and abroad. The 16th Century Reformation itself confronted a very similar situation, but in the process of dealing with it the unity was broken and a major schism in the universal Church resulted. Reformed theology has since attempted to recover the sense of the Church as the Body of Christ, and the eucharist has come to be seen as the supreme symbol of the unity, not only of the Church, but also of Christ with his members (*totus Christus membra cum capite*). But like liberation theology, a truly Reformed theology sees the unity of the Church as rooted in commitment, originally in the sense of a committed personal faith rather than a faith related to social praxis. The emphasis in liberation theology is on the latter, namely, that the essential unity of the Church is to be found in the active struggle for human liberation.

Segundo therefore regards the unity of Christians around sacramental practice, without unity in community life as a whole, to be a contradiction. He suggests that much of the Church's yearning and zeal for ritual reform and liturgical renewal is a superficial way of solving a much deeper problem: the problem of *community*. Therefore the new crisis is not brought on by the sacraments as such. It is also not a crisis over the sacraments, but a crisis over the "*coherence and meaningfulness of the Christian community*".[9] It was precisely this kind of contradiction, Segundo observes, that drove Camilo Torres to withdraw from continuing with priestly functions, and not because he ceased to find the eucharist meaningful. What Torres found meaningless was the continuous doling out of

sacraments to Christians who were evidently closed to love, insensitive to injustice, and unfeeling toward the poverty and anguish of their dispossessed fellows.[10]

On the question of what constitutes *Christian community*, Segundo states:

Let us agree that of late we have abused the term *community*. We do so when, for example, we apply it to something so formless as the so-called "parish community" - thereby referring to a crowd of people who attend Sunday Mass together without really knowing each other before or after. We use the same exaggerated latitude when we hasten to apply the term *community* to any group of Christians who get together for reflection or study.

Without denying that the latter kind of group can be the first step toward community, we feel that the Christian community is something much more. Its definition springs from the gospel statement: "If there is love among you, then all will know that you are my disciples"(John 13:35).

Two words would seem to be an indispensable part of any Christian community. One is *sharing*, the other is *giving*. And both must be taken in a very concrete sense, not in any mythical or symbolic sense...[11]

Authentic Christian community would therefore, in Segundo's view, manifest itself as a sign. And the content of that sign is "at once an historical event and the structure of any and all human progress: i.e., the paschal mystery of Christ. That is the fundamental dialectic that underlies the whole process of evolving love between human beings." [12] This dialectic is shown by the sign we call the sacraments, whereby the Christian community is inspired and strengthened to speak its liberating word in the history of humankind.

The role and importance of Christian community in relation to the eucharist is further illustrated in Segundo's treatment

of related theological issues, such as the question of eucharistic *efficacy*. Outlining his basic position, Segundo holds that the efficacy of the eucharist cannot be understood as "efficacy *imputed* to a juridically valid rite." [13] The efficacious truth (or true efficacy) of the eucharist does not therefore depend on an objectively correct formula. Rather, efficacy demands that "the sacraments be historically *true*: that is, efficacious with respect to man's liberation in real-life history." [14]

Segundo thus brings the historical debates (since the Reformation to Vatican II) on the doctrine of the eucharist into praxiological perspective:

...the sacraments will be valid and efficacious, as Christ intended, to the extent that they are a consciousness-raising and motivating celebration of man's liberative action in history. That does not reduce them to a merely human gesture. God is operative in them, but his activity consists in working through the praxis of man...Where that does not happen, there efficacious truth and true efficacy will be missing - no matter how perfect the rite is... [15]

Observing that much of the confusion and ambiguity around the concept of efficacy has to do with the problem of *dualism* in Christian thought and practice, Segundo insists that, for those committed to human liberation, giving *truth* and veracity to this word (i.e. *efficacy*) means "combatting all the residues of dualism." [16]

It is Segundo's perception that Christians who approach the sacraments today ordinarily have the notion that they are doing something useful and necessary for eternal life. Given the situation of a growing alienation between the eucharistic *rite*

and the eucharistic *community life*, the eucharist is in danger of being reduced to nothing more than a kind of *magical* ritual. The danger of the eucharist being reduced to some kind of magical ritual was precisely one of the major points of criticism made by the Reformers. Forsyth, for example, expresses the basic Reformed perspective as follows:

The Sacraments get their whole meaning from an *opus operatum* never to be repeated. It is wrong to say they are just memorials; but it is equally wrong at the other end to say they are valuable and effective as conjurations, with their power acting in a magical way, as if the formula employed had a coercing effect on the spiritual world when done by a duly canonical person recognized there, as if they acted on the elements and not on the people. They are not magic, nor machinery.[17]

It is of importance, for Segundo, that Vatican II gave recognition to the benefit that a critical process of *secularisation* can have for Christianity. By implication the Church is acknowledging that the present manner of living the Christian religion has need of such a critical process. Moreover Vatican II is also hereby admitting, according to Segundo, that in actual practice a magic-oriented tendency has taken over a large part of sacramental life.[18] Thus the process of secularisation is precisely the occasion for the Church to take seriously the world's critique on the Church and its sacramental life. And the solution to the sacramental crisis is not to be sought in the adapting, reforming or modernising the sacraments in order for the *religious rite* to be more acceptable to a desacralised world. What has to be done, Segundo suggests, is "to show that the sacraments form part of the very essence of authentic Christian experience." [19]

The crisis of the sacraments, brought on by contradictions and lack of community-life cohesiveness, and resulting in magical notions of the eucharist, have also left the Church suffering from "sacramental intoxication":

...We are intoxicated with rites. What is suitable and even necessary in functional, properly balanced proportions becomes toxic when it is administered beyond due limits. From the pastoral standpoint this seems to be the case with respect to the administration of the sacraments...Another feature of this general state of intoxication among Christians has been obligatory frequenting of the Eucharist, quite independent of any perception of its communitarian and historical function.[20]

The Church should therefore not be surprised to experience a substantial measure of withdrawal from the practice of the sacraments by communicants. For Segundo the withdrawal is not necessarily a negative sign. By withdrawing, people are able to put some distance between themselves and the eucharist, a distance which creates room for search and discovery of more meaningful and authentic Christian community. In order to begin reversing the process of "sacramental intoxication", therefore, the "rhythm of sacramental life must be adapted to the external and ultimately decisive function of Christian community".[21]

Segundo points to the New Testament writings on the life and nature of early Christian community as the definitive guide and pattern for eucharistic communities today. The image that emerges from the New Testament is, according to Segundo, "a community that goes about its work of love, interpreting history on the basis of a common code-key and an internal cohesiveness that is achieved and expressed in the

sacraments." [22] In contrast to the notion so prevalent today, that participation in the eucharist is something necessary for eternal life, the early Church saw the distinctive signs of sacramental participation rather as spontaneous gestures in a community that was in possession of eternal life. [23]

2.3 RAFAEL AVILA

Rafael Avila was born in 1941 in Bogota, Colombia. He studied sociology at Louvain (Belgium) and was professor of religion at Javeriana and LaSalle Universities in Bogota. His works include *La Liberacion* [24] and *Teologia y politica*. [25] *Worship and Politics*, [26] which embodies Avila's eucharistic theology, is his fifth book published in Spanish, and the first to be translated into the English language.

Alan Neely, who was responsible for the English translation of *Worship and Politics*, assesses the significance of Avila's work as follows:

The significance of Avila's essay is not...his critique of contemporary theology and practice, but rather his proposed design of a Eucharist for the future. He refers to it as 'design of a Eucharist for Latin America', but the implications of what he outlines reach far beyond the geographical, cultural, or sectarian limits of that continent. [27]

For Avila, the purpose behind his "design of a Eucharist for the future" is to allow the eucharist, "which celebrates the most radical of liberations", to authenticate itself. [28] It is

his fundamental criticism that the eucharist has been so "barricaded with rubrical sandbags that, rather than being a bridge between the sign and the people, it has become in reality a wall that must be demolished".[29]

From the outset, a major emphasis becomes apparent in the eucharistic theology of Avila. Highlighting the difference in approach to the liturgy of the eucharist between Vatican Council II and the Medellin conference, Avila underscores the Medellin position whereby the "liturgical celebration crowns(*cumbre*) and nourishes(*fuentes*) a commitment to *the human situation*,..."[30] In the Second Vatican Council the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" was the first work completed by the prelates, whereas in Medellin the liturgy occupied a more subordinate position and primary attention was given to questions of justice and peace.[31]

The difference, for Avila, is a major one, as the liturgical concept of Vatican II represents a dualistic perspective in which the church considers itself the collective subject of a sacred history parallel to secular history. In Medellin, on the other hand, the liturgy emerges as the climax of the efforts for development, promotion, and liberation of Latin America and entails a new commitment to these efforts. This is the perspective with which Avila emphatically aligns himself, a perspective which characterises the eucharistic liturgy as "a stop along the way", where "we celebrate festively *our* history and its paschal, eschatological meaning." [32] Avila immediately points out that he is not suggesting a parenthesis here for Latin American history in order to celebrate another history.

Rather, it is the "recapturing and the reassuming of it by taking great pains to discover its profound meaning and accepting the challenge that that meaning implies in order to carry it to its final conclusion." [33]

Crucial to the above challenge, for Avila, is the question of *sin* in relation to the celebration of the eucharist. Avila again takes his cue from the Medellin documents on liturgy, in which the *awareness of sin* is an outstanding feature. For the bishops at Medellin, "all liturgical celebration is essentially characterised by the *tension* between what is already a reality and what has not yet fully come to pass....It has a sense of the joy and a *painful awareness of sin*". [34]

Avila holds that in Latin America the above affirmation signifies that the liturgy should indicate clearly with words and signs the distance between the actual Latin American situation and the purpose and intent of God, otherwise there is no "celebration of tension" and no radical awareness of sin. Without such a radical awareness of sin an oppressive social order cannot be seriously challenged. Making the connection then between the emphasis on sin and the eucharist, Avila observes:

The Eucharist should, therefore, be a kind of prophetic crisis that calls into question the status quo in order to provoke a change in thinking and action. The purpose, we repeat, is not to give sin an opportunity for making a formal entrance into society, but rather to judge it and to unmask it. If we are ingenuously unaware of the accused or if we refuse to judge them, this is not prophecy and it quickly dissolves the tension that should be celebrated. It negates hope and remains caught in the trap of positivism. [35]

The necessity for the eucharist to be a "prophetic crisis"

emerges as a crucial point in Avila's eucharistic theology. He warns that if the eucharist does not become a judgement (*krisis*), it remains "in the middle of the road straightened by the walls of positivism".[36] Citing Christ's words in John 9:39: "It is for judgement that I have come into the world", Avila holds that the Word became incarnate not merely to be with us but primarily to provoke a crisis. The danger of positivism is particularly that it limits thinking to the given and confines action to the established order. And what is worse, according to Avila, is that positivism "defends what it has done even without desiring to do so, because to limit oneself solely to reflecting on or describing the de facto situation is to convert the situation into a *mechanism for propoganda and for duplication of the system*".[37] When this is confirmed by a eucharistic theology and practice then the implication is that the system is the will of God. As such the eucharist will be a political sign in one way or another whether the church is aware of it or not. This is where the danger lies for the church, because "one who is political without knowing it is an easy victim of manipulation." [38] If, on the other hand, the eucharist is to be *intentionally* a political sign, the church will have to be aware of the relationship between faith and politics, the church itself being a case in point.[39]

For Avila, the embodiment of the "prophetic crisis" which the eucharist should bring about is reflected in the prophetic words and deeds of Camilo Torres. Torres' dramatic action, in the context of Colombian history, highlighted the contradiction

between the "eucharist as a sign and Colombian history as the content".[40] Therefore the eucharist cannot be a "floating sign" in history, but is a "fixed sign" in our historical realities, not merely for reflection, but primarily for judging history. Torres showed up the contrast between positivism and prophecy in relation to the eucharist, and as a prophetic clarion he raised his voice "to show that worship was coexisting peacefully and cynically with injustice and sin." [41]

Avila suggests that such notions as the apolitical nature of the church are nothing but an ideological illusion. The eucharist, more than any other aspect of the church's life, completely dispels the above myth. Avila outlines the following reasons as to why the eucharist is inevitably political:

...It occurs necessarily *in a political context...*, it has to *confront* its own context with the faith...because each of the members who participates *has a line* of political conduct...because it *radicalizes* and *energizes* politics...because it promotes personalization, socialization, and liberation...because it celebrates the utopia *awakened* by creative imagination...because it inescapably sows seeds of *nonconformity*...because here the real *authenticity* of the faith is measured by political commitment...because political commitment demands that the faith *do the truth* (verify) and not merely *preach* (verbalize)...because it *relativizes* every political scheme no matter how appealing it might appear.[42]

Central to Avila's purpose of attempting to outline a "design of a eucharist" is the awakening of Christians to the "political character of conforming or reorienting the direction of our political conduct and of making the readjustment necessary in order to do so consciously and effectively." [43]

Given the Latin American contexts of poverty and oppression, the struggle for liberation becomes the only legitimate context for authentic eucharistic life:

We believe that at this historical moment *the only legitimate context for the Eucharist - a Eucharist such as we have proposed - is one in solidarity with the movement for the liberation of our continent, and more concretely with the exploited classes of our society...* A community celebration of the Eucharist solemnly commits all Christians to struggle actively against everything that discriminates and disintegrates humanity.[44]

Avila alludes to what has become known as the "protest Masses" which were celebrated in Colombia, Bolivia, Chile, and in other Latin American countries following the Medellin conference. His assessment of these masses is precisely that they have given authentication to the meaning of the eucharist in context:

We...consider these Masses as constituting a legitimate *locus theologicus*. They constitute a prognostic sign of the kind of liturgy viable for Latin America, a liturgy that will challenge the responsible theologian to assume them as the beginning point for critical reflection.[45]

As such the Eucharist can, and should be, a threat to every inhuman or oppressive system to the degree that it is supported by an "extremely dangerous praxis".[46]

The questions raised by the Reformation and the responses from the Council of Trent and Vatican II are not disregarded by Avila. However, his approach to questions such as the *nature of the presence of Christ* in the eucharist differs radically from that of the Reformation or Trent. For Avila, Christ's presence in the Bread and Wine cannot be grasped apart from the "cultural objectification of our history":

When...we affirm that the Eucharist is...the objectification of our history, *we understand that the objectification is an action* (acted out by the ecclesial community) and not a thing (bread and wine). These are the elements utilized in an objectifying action, but they are not the objectification itself. They derive their significance from the general context of the Eucharistic action.[47]

The Bread and Wine in the eucharist are not there simply as themselves, not simply as something material, much less as something magical. They are also there as products of the community that celebrates its labour, its results, and its manner of production. When humanity, here represented by the church, proclaims, "This is my Body", it is affirming itself - and the fruit of human labour (concretized in the bread and the wine) - to be the Body of Christ. Avila observes:

That Christ is *also* in the bread and in the wine implies that he is not only human, but also "the fruit of human labour", by which human beings humanize nature and also humanize themselves. This implies that...Christ places (offers, proposes) himself before us as the fruit of our "gestation", *obliging us to evaluate our offering and the human process that precedes and defines the offering - that is, the social relationships of production hidden under the appearances of bread and wine.*[48]

In his concluding remarks, Avila characterises the eucharist as "a hermeneutical variant of history".[49] Both the theology and practice of the eucharist come together in "*a kind of symbolico-structural exegesis of history*".[50] While celebrating history, the eucharist also thus becomes a perpetual evaluator and judgement of the historical process.

2.4 TISSA BALASURIYA

Tissa Balasuriya, who hails from Sri Lanka, is arguably one of the most influential theologians to emerge from Asia. Serving as chaplain to the Asian Catholic Student Federation, Balasuriya also heads the Centre for Society and Religion.[51] His teaching on the eucharist is contained in a book with the suggestive title, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*. [52] Leo Nanayakkara, Bishop of Badulla, who writes the *Foreword* to Balasuriya's book, observes that Balasuriya "writes with a deep concern for and a love of the priesthood and the Eucharist, while at the same time calling for new thinking on the meaning of these realities today." [53].

Balasuriya's basic contention is that the eucharist, which is "the most liberative act", has been so domesticated by socio-economic systems, that it now enslaves its participants:

... the Eucharist has been domesticated within the dominant social establishments of the day. Its radical demands have been largely neutralized. Its cutting edge has been blunted. Worse still, it has been and is being used as a legitimation of cruel exploitation...The working classes feel alienated from it and by it.[54]

From the outset, Balasuriya affirms the Catholic position whereby the eucharist is regarded as *central* to the Christian community. His criticism of the eucharist, therefore, is not intended to "belittle the sacrifice of Christ and our participation in it", but rather an attempt "to give it a more real, deeper, and fuller meaning in our own circumstances." [55]

Tracing the practice of the eucharist in Christian communities over the centuries, Balasuriya proceeds with his

criticism by noting that towards the year 1100AD a drastic change had taken place in the liturgy, whereby the eucharist had become "clericalised":

By the year 1100 the Eucharist had a completely different form and meaning. By this time it had become clericalized. The priest was the all-important functionary of the Eucharist. He recited the prayers in an alien tongue - Latin. Most people did not understand it. He said the prayers silently from an altar that was separated from the people...The people did not participate in the action of the Eucharist...[56]

The result was that the eucharist no longer functioned as that creative event in which the whole Christian community shared with their own life situations. This was in stark contrast to the practice in the early Church when the liturgy was "warm and communitarian"[57], reflecting the lifestyle of the early Christians as described in the book of Acts 2:42-47. Balasuriya characterizes this lifestyle of the early Christians as "socialistic"[58] and notes that the eucharist was intimately related to this kind of lifestyle and fellowship.

Such a situation, whereby the eucharist had become "clericalized", was "a consequence of the individualistic approach to religion and the eucharist."[59] Balasuriya suggests that Catholic spirituality has, for many centuries, adopted this kind of pietistic, individualistic approach, whereby the emphasis in the theology of the eucharist was on its effect *ex opere operato*. It thereby neglected the personal element in the eucharistic celebration, namely *ex opere operantis*. Thus the eucharist tended to be a mechanical ceremony under the control of the priests without much impact on the relationships of persons. And so both "rich and poor,

exploiter and exploited, colonizer and colonized, good and bad were all present at the same Eucharist and received Communion without challenging or questioning their relative positions." [60] The clericalization of the eucharist, in Balasuriya's assessment, also opened the way to the kind of abuses that led Martin Luther to denounce the Mass as "spiritual traffic based on clerical cupidity" [61]

The eucharist represents the supreme symbol of Jesus self-offering unto death. Avila bemoans the fact that over the centuries the Christian tradition has largely diluted or neglected the eucharistic emphasis on the self-sacrifice of Christ, and the accent has rather been on the real presence of Christ under the form of bread and wine and in the tabernacle. [62]

Moreover, the fact that the adoration of the blessed sacrament was made a central element in Catholic spirituality resulted in a eucharistic theology and practice which made Jesus "a prisoner of the tabernacle." [63]

Balasuriya is especially severe in his criticism of the roles of capitalism and colonialism over the centuries, in reducing the eucharist into a tool of exploitation:

The tragedy of the subordination of Christianity to European power politics was also the tragedy of the Eucharist. As the priests and monks went hand in hand with the colonialists, the Eucharist was desecrated in the service of empire... Gold grabbed from the native people of South America was used to adorn Christian monasteries and churches, as in Lima, Peru. The gold used to decorate the ceiling of the Basilica of Saint Mary in Rome is claimed to have been brought from the new territories conquered for the Christian rulers and religion... In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the growth and development of

the technologically superior countries went hand in hand with the largescale exploitation of the proletariat in the rich countries and all of the people in the poor countries. The eucharistic ceremony did not disturb the peace of conscience of the exploiting capitalists; it tended to legitimize their nefarious activities.[64]

The result was that the essential elements of eucharistic spirituality, namely that of *giving and sharing*, became obscured. The eucharist had rather come to represent a "spirituality" of *grabbing*. Clearly, Balasuriya considers the profit motif behind capitalism incompatible with the spirit of the eucharist. He suggests instead a form of socialism in which there is common ownership of the means of production and distribution:

While there are often sharp divergences between Christians and Marxists, there is also a very deep interconnection...Marxism can teach Christians what the Eucharist must mean in the real world of class exploitation. Christians can recall Marxists to the ideal of the classless society in which human beings must all be respected in equality and freedom.[65]

In Sri Lanka, a radical reorientation of the eucharist in theology and practice, had taken place since the first Mass was celebrated in 1505 by Franciscan missionary Frey Vincente. The Franciscans, who came along with the Portuguese merchants, brought with them a theology of the eucharist that "had to do with salvation of souls through conversion"[66] without any hint of a connection of the eucharist with the "continuation of the lifework of Christ in relation to human liberation".[67]

The turning point came after independence in 1948, whereby thinking concerning the eucharist underwent radical changes in many Christian groups. This culminated in a National Synod being held in 1968/69. In its Declaration on Christian Worship,

the Synod made clear its understanding and acceptance of the social significance of the eucharist:

28. Finally Christ is really present in the community...Communion at the altar means that one is ready for Communion with one's neighbour in all his needs and pursuits.

29. The more hidden the face of our neighbour through poverty, hunger, imprisonment, homelessness or unemployment, the greater the possibility of our awakening to the glory of God by relating ourselves savingly to him. Communion rightly understood will involve a real sharing of all that we have. Such sharing, even at the level of breaking ordinary bread for the poor, involves a certain breaking of our political and economic patterns which assure security to the privileged few.

30. If Christians really profess to come together to break bread, it means that they are willing to be broken in terms of their comfort and security so that other men may be bound to them and to God in their self-sacrificing love. And sharing perishable bread is but the initial affirmation of the Eucharistic celebration. The further implications on the social, political, economic and religious planes can be immense.

31. The Christian community in whom the saving God is really present must be qualified by the hunger and thirst for justice. In the present historical situation of shocking inequalities and injustices, the worshipping community must strive to be present at the points of crisis, growth and liberation of society, so that they may be followers of the Master who laid down His life for the community.[68]

Balasuriya acknowledges, however, that in the Sri Lankan context, synodical declarations, as quoted above, have not yet been significantly translated into action. It is thus his contention, that for all the rhetoric, the eucharist, by and large, is still *in captivity* within contemporary societies. The new types of exploitation are "far more subtle, sophisticated, and universal than the crude forms of early capitalist or old colonial exploitation." [69] The eucharistic "reforms", so far carried out by the official churches, are

inadequate to significantly address the issues of continued oppression and exploitation. In so far as liturgical reforms are necessary and useful, such reforms are secondary. Balasuriya's fundamental concern is rather with a total reorientation of Christianity in order for it to function as a liberating power, and not as an ally of oppression.

It is thus Balasuriya's firm contention and emphasis throughout his book that the eucharist can, and should, itself first be liberated from its captivity. And it is when Christians "make a fundamental option against oppression, and struggle against it, that the Eucharist itself will be liberated"[70] For Balasuriya, the signs of this liberating process are to be witnessed through the life, work and worship of many groups already committed to "integral human liberation in the perspective of Jesus Christ".[71]

1.5 EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION

The extent to which the advent of liberation theology has transformed the Catholic churches in Latin America has yet to be assessed.[72] It is clear however, that liberation theology has profoundly influenced these churches in their understanding of themselves and the nature of their witness in contemporary society. The new perspectives on the theology and practice of the eucharist perhaps best demonstrate this change.

From our survey of the eucharistic theologies of Segundo, Avila and Balasuriya, it is abundantly clear that the fundamental issues are no longer those of doctrine and orthodoxy, but of *praxis* and the relevance of the gospel to contemporary contexts of suffering and oppression.[73] When Segundo, for example, talks about "new crisis" that has arisen for the sacraments, the crisis is not a doctrinal one. It is rather a crisis of *praxis*. At the root of the crisis lies a *serious contradiction between the meaning of eucharistic fellowship and the lack of community life beyond the celebration of the rite.*

The new emphasis on *praxis* stands in direct contrast to the pre-occupation with matters of orthodoxy and doctrine which dominated the 16th Century Reformation and the Roman Catholic response leading up to the Council of Trent. Both the Protestant and Tridentine Reformers were primarily concerned about the Church rather than the world. To their credit, the liberation theologians in Latin America have perceived that a reformation of another kind is imperative, namely the transformation of society. The extent to which the Latin American Catholic Church *qua* Church has taken seriously the criticisms of liberation theology has yet to be explored. What is certain, however, is that with the advent of liberation theology, the Church in Latin America could not remain the same, and the vestiges of a theology and practice from medieval and colonial eras could no longer be maintained.

It is significant that liberation theology emerged with a fundamental challenge directed at theology *itself*, or at the

nature of doing theology as such. The title of Segundo's major work, namely *The Liberation of Theology*, [74] epitomises the conviction amongst Latin American liberation theologians that the task of liberation theology had to begin with the liberation of theology itself. In much the same way the Asian theologian Balasuriya perceives that the *eucharist* itself has to be liberated from its captivity, theological and otherwise. The eucharist, which represents the liberation event *par excellence* of God, has been so distorted that it serves rather to domesticate and enslave its participants. The liberation of the eucharist from its captivity was a matter of extreme urgency, for the eucharist is regarded by Balasuriya, for instance, as a key factor in the "total reorientation of Christianity to become a liberating power and not an ally of oppression". [75]

The much debated issues of the Reformation, such as the eucharistic presence of Christ and the efficacy of the eucharist, are not ignored by liberation theologians. However, these questions are discussed from the perspective of socially liberating praxis. Segundo, for example, makes the point very emphatically that the efficacy of the eucharist does not depend on getting the theological or liturgical formulas right. Rather, the validity of the eucharist is to be measured in terms of efficacy in relation to human liberation within history. The intention here is not to underplay the work of God, but to show that in so far as God is present and active, his activity consists in working through human praxis towards liberation.

For Roman Catholic liberation theologians, the acid test through which the eucharist must pass in order to "prove" its efficacy is its strict relevance to the context of the struggle for human liberation. Avila, for instance, avoids any ambiguity on this score by insisting that in the present historical milieu in Latin America, the *only* legitimate context for the eucharist is "one in solidarity with the movement for the liberation of our continent,..."[76].

The eucharist, therefore, has to become an *intentional* political sign, not merely because eucharistic life occurs necessarily in a political context, but because the eucharist demands from its participants a commitment to the struggle against all forms of human degradation, oppression and exploitation. It is a fundamental contradiction when the eucharist is celebrated while no prophetic crisis is brought to bear on the situation of injustice and oppression.

The nature and orientation of the *community* which celebrates the eucharist thus becomes a crucial factor in the process of liberation. The "new crisis" of the sacraments is precisely understood as a crisis over the coherence and meaningfulness of the Christian community, or the community of faith. And while liturgical reform of the eucharist has proved to be necessary, and should be an ongoing process, liturgical reform by itself will not resolve the crisis. Liberation theologians point to the New Testament, which presents an enduring model of Christian community, a community "that goes about its work of love, interpreting history on the basis of a common code-key and an internal cohesiveness that is achieved and expressed in

the sacraments".[77]

The eucharist in *crisis and captivity* is a recurring theme of criticism by liberation theologians. The criticism also strongly applies to the cult whereby the "adoration of the sacrament" has degenerated into a ritual in which Jesus becomes a "prisoner of the tabernacle". The eucharist has come into crisis precisely because the eucharist itself has been abused and distorted. Instead of being a uniting symbol, the abuse and distortion have led to the *unity and coherence* of the Church's life being undermined. It is an unbearable contradiction, for liberation theologians, that rich and poor, exploiter and exploited, for instance, continue to be present at the same eucharist without radically questioning their relative socio-economic and political positions. Instead of re-inforcing such divisions, the eucharist should represent an "extremely dangerous praxis"[78] which threatens the perpetuation thereof.

Eucharistic communities, according to the above criticism, have too seldom reflected on the type of society in which they live. There has not been much critical social awareness among participants in the Sunday parish eucharist, who come together to celebrate as a matter of obligation and routine. In Latin America, the emergence of *base communities* reflects precisely the discontent amongst the masses of Christians who are no longer prepared to accept and perpetuate a religion which serves to enslave rather than to liberate. Within the context of base-community life the eucharist thus finds much more authentic expression and deeper meaning for the historical life

of its participants. The base-communities therefore represent a kind of re-expression of the Gospel in the everyday life-situation of the people. And the eucharist, far from being reduced into a kind of sedative against the painful experiences of life, is allowed to provide the occasion for liturgical celebrations, which neither deny the pain nor joys of authentic Christian experience.

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 2. G. Gutierrez, in the "National Catholic Reporter", Dec.11, 1982, p.11
 3. The 16th Century Reformers vigorously denounced heresies and condemned abuses in the Church, but their reforms did not go far enough. (*Part Three* of this dissertation develops this point.)
 4. Of Segundo's better known works, outside of Latin America, are *A Theology for For a New Humanity*, Volumes 1 - 5, New York : Orbis 1973, and *The Liberation of Theology*, New York : Orbis, 1976.
 5. New York : Orbis Books, 1973.
 6. Segundo, *The Sacraments Today*, p.3
 7. *ibid*
 8. *ibid.*, p.11
 9. *ibid.*, p.38
 10. Camilo Torres was a priest from a prosperous family in Columbia who radically changed his social and political views while studying sociology at Louvan, and later left a university post to join Colombiun revolutionary forces.
 11. *ibid.*, p.39
 12. *ibid.*, p.68
 13. *ibid.*, p.55
 14. *ibid.*
 15. *ibid*
 16. *ibid.*, p.45
 17. Forsyth, *Church and Sacraments*, p.230
 18. Segundo, *op cit.*, p.13
 19. *ibid*
 20. *ibid.*, p.35. Segundo observes that this tendency is carried to its extremes in Catholic schools where daily attendance at Mass is obligatory.

21. *ibid.*, p.34
22. *ibid.*, p.45
23. cf. 1 John.5:14 "This letter is to assure you that you have eternal life".
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31. *Medellin Documents* 1 & 2
32. *ibid*
33. *ibid*
34. Medellin, "Liturgy", 2
35. *Worship and Politics.*, p.76
36. *ibid.*, p.77
37. *ibid*
38. *ibid*
39. Avila points out that there are currently many studies on this particular theme. He cites, for example, Gilberto Gimenez, *La dimension socio-politica de la practica de la fe'* and Concilium 84, *Political Commitment and Christian Community*.
40. *ibid* p.81
41. *ibid.*, p.81. The *sin* to which Avila refers here is primarily the evil that is manifested in the whole social order and structural systems of injustice, oppression and forms of dehumanisation.
42. *ibid.*, p.90-91.

43. *ibid.*, p.89.
44. *ibid.*, p.100
45. *ibid.*, p.86
46. *ibid*
47. *ibid.*, p.94
48. *ibid.*, p.95
49. *ibid.*, p.106
50. *ibid.*, p.105
51. The Centre, together with other organisations, such as the National Christian Council, played a significant role in the indigenization of Christianity within Sri Lanka.
52. London : SCM Press, 1979
53. Quoted in Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation* p.ix
54. Avila, *op cit.*, p.xi
55. *ibid.*, p.5
56. *ibid.*, p.28
57. *ibid.*, p.27
58. *ibid.*, p.24
59. *ibid.*, p.29
60. *ibid.*, p.36
61. M. Luther, quoted in Balasuriya, *op cit.*, p.31
62. *ibid.*, p.33
63. *ibid.*, p.34
64. *ibid.*, p.38
65. *ibid.*, p.82
66. *ibid.*, p.97
67. *ibid*
68. Quoted in Balasuriya, *op cit.*, p.113
69. Balasuriya, *op cit.*, p.41
70. *ibid.*, p.62

71. *ibid*

72. The emergence of Base Communities in Latin America clearly signify that the Churches were ripe for the reception of radically new ways of doing theology, and the advent of liberation theology was undoubtedly a catalyst in this process.

73. The sense in which the term "praxis" is used in this dissertation is to underscore the distinction between theory and practice in matters of faith and obedience, whereby praxis is understood as human action in the process of social transformation.

74. New York : Orbis, 1973

75. Balasuriya, *op cit.*, p.6.

76. Avila, *op cit.*, p.100

77. Segundo, *op cit.*, p.45

78. Avila, *op cit.*, p.86

PART THREE: A PROPOSAL FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

3.1 FORMATIVE EVENTS IN THE REFORMED TRADITION

Two historical events, from the 16th Century Reformation and from the life of 20th Century Reformed churches respectively, form a crucial background to our discussion. The first is the action of Martin Luther on All Saints' Eve, 31 October 1517, and the second is the walkout of Dr. A. A. Boesak and others during a eucharistic service held at the 1982 World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) Assembly in Ottawa. *Both these events represent a dramatic action of protest.*

The fastening of a placard inscribed with *Ninety-five Theses upon Indulgences* on the church-door at Wittenberg by Luther epitomised the spirit of the Reformation and set the tone for a movement characterised by radical protest against the perpetuation of heresy and abuse within the life of the Church. Among Luther's writings of 1520 were the so-called Reformation Treatises. The first Treatise, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, constituted a revolutionary call to the princes and magistrates of Germany to facilitate reform in the Church by destroying the power of the Pope in Germany. The second, *The Babylonish Captivity of the Church*, was an assault upon the current doctrine of the seven sacraments, and the third, *Of the Liberty of a Christian Man*, was a renewed statement to the Pope of the doctrine of justification by faith and its consequences

for the moral life of the Christian.

It is significant that the movement which spearheaded the Reformation in Germany came to be known as *Protestantism*, borne as it were out of an action of protest against the emperor's revoking of the "recess of 1526". The 1526 recess, approved that year by the Diet of Speyer, provided that each state should conduct its religious affairs in accord with its obligations to God and emperor. Emperor Charles V, however, sent a demand to the Diet of Speyer that it revoke the recess of 1526 and proceed against Lutheranism. Lutheran estates drew up a strong protest to the emperor on the conviction that they could not be compelled to act contrary to their faith or conscience. Because of this action they were called the *Protesting Estates*, and eventually all those who left the Catholic Church were called *Protestants*. [1]

The protest action inspired by Dr. Boesak at Ottawa is decisively significant to our discussion for two reasons: *firstly*, his action took place during the celebration of the eucharist, and *secondly*, the protest was directed both against the perpetuation of Apartheid in South African society and the white Dutch Reformed Churches (DRC) who refused to denounce the system of Apartheid in Church and society.

While the protest action by Dr. Boesak resulted in the WARC Declaration on Apartheid, and culminated in the suspension the white DRC Churches from WARC membership, the contextual significance of the event - within Church and society in South Africa - has not been fully realised. [2] In his book, *Black and*

Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation and the Calvinist Tradition[3], Boesak points out that the WARC, at its 1982 Ottawa Assembly, also accepted the *status confessionis* classification of apartheid, recognising that apartheid is not merely a political matter, but that it "threatens faith in Jesus Christ, threatens the integrity of the Gospel, and threatens the credibility of the Church of Jesus Christ".[4] The protest-event during the eucharist service at Ottawa is generally regarded as a one-off event, and has not been echoed in subsequent eucharist services. Moreover, since 1982, there has been no fundamental change or breaking away from the system of forced racial separation in South African Churches and society. It is therefore my contention that Reformed Churches (and Christians) in South Africa have yet to explore the contextual imperatives of this heritage of protest.

Although the issues which gave rise to Protestantism during the sixteenth century were essentially theological, their implications for the *practice* of the eucharist were no less radical and substantial. It is my submission that neither the movement of the Reformation itself nor post-Reformation churches have to any significant degree grasped and explored such implications. The 1982 Ottawa event represents an exception rather than the rule. The element of protest should be explored, not only because it does *in fact* represent an essential feature of the Reformed tradition, but also because the situation of *crisis* in South Africa has reached a *kairos*, a moment of truth in our history.[5]

3.2 THE EUCHARIST AS PROTEST

3.2.1 BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK

The origin of the eucharistic meal cannot be fully understood unless its historical antecedents in the Old Testament are exposed. The Book of Exodus graphically describes the experiences of the Hebrews living in Egypt, in a land of slavery (Exod.13:3, 20:2; Deut.5:6), burdened by repression (Exod.1:10-11), subjected to severe working conditions (Exod.5:6ff, 8:11), humiliations (Exod.1:13-14), and enforced birth control measures (Exod.1:15-22). In spite of the oppression, the Hebrews continued to multiply. When Pharaoh who "knew nothing of Joseph" (Exod.1:8) became king, he was alarmed at the rate the Hebrews were increasing in his country. He instructed all the midwives in the land to kill at birth the Hebrew male children.

The people groaned and God heard their lament and took pity on them, commissioning Moses to lead them out of bondage. In Exod.3:7-8 the promise of liberation by God is unmistakable. God promises to act on behalf of the Hebrews against the Egyptians, namely, to smite the latter and compel them by "a mighty hand" (Exod.3:19-20). By God's intervention the Hebrews are freed, and liberation is effected in the form of a revolutionary breakaway from slavery onto the road to political and religious freedom and the creation of a just society. Moses and Aaron were nothing less than radicals in the

revolution against Pharoah (Exod.5:1-5).

The first Passover commemorated the event of liberation while subsequent ones re-enacted and perpetuated the event. The Passover meal which the Jews celebrated - and continue to celebrate each year - commemorates this exodus from Egypt and from the clutches of oppression. As the ritual of the meal begins, the youngest in the family asks, "What is the meaning of this rite?" Then the head of the house recounts the story of what happened in Egypt at the first Passover. This repetition of the narrative and of the meal is the *zikkaron*, the special act of remembering.[6] The significance of the *zikkaron* is that it brings the past right down to the present, so that those observing it are taking part in the original Passover again.

The Passover, celebrated in subsequent times of persecution and oppression, created a pregnant atmosphere in which the thirst for liberty was heightened among the Jews. Passover was therefore a time when the Jews were most liable to protest or revolt against contemporary enslavements, nourished, as it were, at the *feast of liberty*.

According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus celebrated his last Supper with his disciples as a Passover meal (Mark 14:12,14,16 and parallels). John's Gospel, however, does not concur with the Synoptics, putting the time of Jesus' death before the Jerusalemites ate the Passover lamb (John 18:28).[7] In any event, the important point here seems to be that Jesus' last meal before he died was at *Passover time*.

If we accept that Jesus inaugurated the Supper in the context of the Passover - and used the term *eis ten emen anamnesin* which was to be repeated - we have to conclude that he intended that term to carry the same connotation in the eucharist as it did in the Passover, namely, the bringing of the past right down into the present. Our *zikkaron* is, then, the historic passion of Christ for the liberation of all humankind made immanent. On the one hand, Jesus, as a Jew, in celebrating Passover, looked back to the act of liberation in which God revealed his almighty saving power on behalf of his people. On the other hand, Christ also reshaped the Passover rite, anticipating the "new exodus" that he was to accomplish in Jerusalem.[8]

In the eucharist there is thus the inescapable focus on God's liberation in history. We remember, recapitulate, and participate in the liberty won by God and given to us by Jesus Christ in his victory over the forces of sin, evil and death. Thus any collaboration with the historical manifestations of the forces which attempt to negate Christ's continuing work of liberation contradicts our eucharistic beliefs. When St. Paul, for example, discusses the issue of evil in the community in the first letter to the Corinthians, he says: "You cannot take your share at the table of the Lord *and* at the table of demons" (1 Cor. 10:21). Drawing on images from the Hebrew Scriptures, St. Paul places before the people the imperative of choice between being one with Christ at the eucharist or being one with manifested evil in the world. The implication is clear: there can be no oneness with Christ while at the same

time being supportive of - implicitly or explicitly - social structures and political regimes that oppress and dehumanise God's people. The Biblical witness, therefore, compels us to interpret the eucharist - in the South African historical context, and elsewhere in the world - as a *veritable protest against all forms of human enslavement resulting from the sins of injustice and the evils of oppression.*

3.2.2 EUCHARISTIC PROTEST WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

It is highly significant that Dr. Boesak chose the celebration of the eucharist at Ottawa to register his protest against the perpetuation of Apartheid in Church and society within South Africa. The significance of this event goes back to the 1857 Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). The Synod decided that it was permissible - whereas it was previously not - to hold separate services for whites and blacks. The decision was taken essentially on the basis of "the weakness of some" (i.e. whites) - their "weakness" being a refusal to worship and be part of a racially integrated congregation.[9] Whatever social pressures may have been at work here, or cultural justification given, the fact of the matter is that the DRC Synod took a decision which was in contradiction with Reformed teaching on the unity of the Church. Apartheid, at its worst, undermines the integrity of the Gospel and enforces division within the Church of Jesus Christ.

The eucharist is essentially the church's meal. Although the individual can enjoy fellowship with the Lord outside of

eucharistic celebration, the Supper is a feast shared by the Lord's people. This arises from the very nature of God's action in Jesus which was to inaugurate a new covenant, that is, to create a people to enjoy communion with him and to serve him. At the Supper the people are present as a people, that is, as a church. The imagery of the one loaf is used to symbolise their unity as the body of Christ. (cf. I Cor. 10:17) The eucharist, which is thus the supreme symbol and action of *unity* within the Church cannot be celebrated with integrity by Churches and Christians who are *not united* in their denunciation of, and collaboration against the systemic evils and structural injustices of Apartheid. The crucial question that emerges here is that of Church *discipline*.

Calvin was the first of the Reformers to include a statement on disciplinary action, as part of the eucharist liturgy, whereby "offenders" were excommunicated and prevented from partaking in the eucharist. In his *Geneva rite*, first published in 1542, the liturgical order is outlined as follows:

We have heard, brethren, how our Lord celebrated his Supper with his disciples, and thereby indicating that strangers, namely those who are not in the company of the faithful, ought not to be admitted. Therefore, in accordance with this rule, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, I excommunicate all idolaters, blasphemers, despisers of God, heretics, and all who rebel against parents or their superiors, all who are seditious, mutinous, quarrelsome or brutal, all adulterers, fornicators, thieves, misers, ravishers, drunkards, gluttons, and all who lead a scandalous life. I declare that they must abstain from his holy table, for fear of defiling and contaminating the holy food which our Lord Jesus Christ gives only to his household and believers. [10]

The point we wish to illustrate here is not the necessity

for excommunication arising from every possible moral offence, but the serious threat to the unity of the eucharist and to the integrity of the Gospel where sin is not denounced and broken with. Reformed Churches of the 20th century may well object, with some measure of moral indignation, to Calvin's rite. The crux of the matter, however, in relation to our discussion, is not that Calvin went too far in his rite, but that he did not go far enough, at least in the right direction. The implication of Calvin's "list of offenders" is that the kinds of sin which threaten the integrity of the Gospel, or the unity of the eucharist, are those sins mainly associated with with personal acts of immorality. A more serious dimension of sin, which operates within societal structures and systems, is ignored. It is precisely this dimension of sin, which represents a much more serious threat to the unity of the eucharist, and to the integrity of the Gospel, that was dramatically highlighted by the protest action of Dr. Boesak during the eucharistic celebrations at Ottawa.

A theology and practice of the eucharist for the South African context, which takes seriously the socio-political and economic dimensions of sin, cannot ignore the importance of discipline. However, for many Reformed Churches, the concept of Church discipline is extremely limiting, both in terms of theology and practice. The practice of discipline within most congregations of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, for instance, is largely a matter of censure, whereby "offenders" are debarred from participating in the eucharist for a specified period of three or six months.[11] It is clear,

in terms of its wider relevance, that the concept and application of discipline needs to be radically revised, both in relation to the contemporary contexts of black communities-of-faith, and in relation to the theology and practice of the eucharist in the Reformed tradition.

The question of the *nature* of Christ's presence in the eucharist emerged as one of the major issues raised by the Reformation. While the Reformers differed amongst themselves on this issue, they were unanimous in rejecting the Roman Catholic teaching of transubstantiation. The major issue, identified in *Part I* of this dissertation, revolves around the sense in which the eucharistic words of Christ, "This is my body...This is my blood" are to be interpreted. In the final analyses, both the Catholics and Reformers affirmed a notion of the *real presence* of Christ in the eucharist, in direct relation to the elements of bread and wine. Theologically, the Reformers rightly disputed the notion that Christ becomes substantially (or in substance) equated with the bread and wine, maintaining that Christ's relation to the eucharistic elements should rather be understood in sacramental or symbolic terms. What the Reformers failed to explore was the existential, or contextual, meaning of Christ's presence represented or signified by bread and wine.

Bread is a symbol of work, of everyday commerce. The levels of poverty and hunger in oppressed communities in South Africa, exacerbated by growing unemployment, has a direct bearing on the use of bread in the eucharist. Does the use of bread in the eucharist, for instance, not take on a profoundly

disturbing significance, when through unemployment, poverty and deprivation, God's people go hungry? And in what sense should a poverty-stricken community relate Christ's presence with bread in the eucharist, when bread has become an unaffordable commodity? It is my contention that this is precisely where the role of the community-of-faith, both in its theology and praxis, comes to the fore. The community is here represented by all those adversely affected by the existential situation of hunger and deprivation. The community as a whole therefore becomes the author of a theology and practice, liturgy and praxis which is an authentic expression and reflection of their faith and experience.

Given the pre-dominance of poor communities in South Africa, the dominant strain of eucharistic theology and practice should therefore, represent a eucharistic theology and practice of protest. A very poignant example of the contextualising of the eucharistic symbols was the substituting of bread with porridge at a recent eucharistic service.[12] The use of porridge, while it may raise certain objections, illustrates precisely the point of poverty and deprivation. If the use of porridge is prevalent only in certain communities, the question needs to be asked why! Is it essentially to be explained in cultural terms, or is it because even the culture or custom of a community is determined by its resources, or lack of essential resources.

I.H. Marshall concludes, after surveying the relevant Scriptural texts in some detail, that "Jesus spoke of the bread as representing his body;...",[13]. If the bread in the

eucharist is in fact the symbol of Christ's presence, and not Christ's substance, are we then not conceding that Christ is not bound to a *particular* eucharistic element? And porridge, therefore, as much as bread, could be considered a valid substitution as the symbol of his presence. The crucial issue here is whether the substitution brings the reality of hunger and poverty most sharply to bear, not only in relation to Christ's presence in the eucharist, but also Christ's presence and purposes within a socio-economic and political situation of deprivation and oppression. The porridge hereby constitutes both the *symbol and action* of protest against systems and structures both in Church and society which maintain and perpetuate an oppressive status quo.

Wine is a symbol of leisure, of fun, pleasure, gaiety. Leaving aside the meretricious and exploitative nature of much that passes for pleasure, let us confine the argument to leisure. The economy of leisure in South African society is no less in need of transformation than the economy of work. The fact that certain groups of people in this country have so much leisure time and activity is not unrelated to its denial to others. Furthermore, the fact that one is able to enjoy leisure is related to that fact of being employed, earning an income, etc. To an unemployed person, leisure is a meaningless or even offensive concept. Moreover, we cannot remain oblivious of the human ravages of the "dop" system which is still being maintained on many wine farms in South Africa, and the payment of wages under the poverty datum line to black workers in the wine industries.

In the September 1986 issue of *Reader's Digest*, Roger Kenyon and Nazeem Howa tell the story of continued farm-worker exploitation and the perpetuation of the "dop" system in an article entitled, "South Africa's Harvest of Shame":

Dawn in the Little Karoo: a bell summons Flip Botha (not real name) and his fellow farm workers to gather round a 50-litre drum of wine. Each fills a tin can with a generous measure and gulps it down. This is the first of seven free drinks that will keep Flip Botha inebriated throughout the working day. He is a hapless victim of the "dop" system, a form of alcoholic serfdom outlawed decades ago, but still widespread in the Western Cape.

Such factors raise serious questions for the use of wine in the eucharist, wine being the symbol of Christ's life-blood shed for us.

On the one hand the very symbol of wine can be used as the means of radical protest against the sins of exploitation and degradation. This can be done by writing into, adding or amending our set eucharist liturgies so as to reflect an awareness, for instance, of the ambiguities and contradictions in society. A fundamental feature of such a liturgy should be that it facilitates the transformation of wine (and bread) from symbols of oppression to symbols of liberation.

Other options could be explored with regard to the use of an alternative symbol where wine (or grapejuice) is beyond the means of purchase within a given community of faith. Tea without milk, or sugar and even water, for example, have been used in some instances and under certain circumstances.[14]

Other traditional symbols used in the eucharistic service could also be effectively adapted. The candle, for instance,

which is normally used to symbolize the light of the Gospel message, could be contextualised by placing around it a piece of circular barbed wire, signifying that the South African government, in its allout efforts to muzzle and silence the opposition is resorting even to silencing the truth and demands of the Gospel. We are therefore proposing that the urgency of the challenge to the Churches in South Africa, as perceived in the *The Kairos Document* should be taken seriously. The section in the Document on "Transforming Church Activities" is particularly relevant at this juncture:

The Church has its own specific activities: Sunday services, communion services, baptisms, Sunday school, funerals and so forth. It also has its specific way of expressing its faith and its commitment, that is, in the form of confessions of faith. All of these activities must be re-shaped to be more fully consistent with a prophetic faith related to the KAIROS that God is offering us today. The evil forces we speak of in baptism must be named. We know what these evil forces are in South Africa today. The unity and sharing we profess in our communion services or Masses must be named. It is the solidarity of the people inviting all to join in the struggle for God's peace in South Africa...

...Much of what we do in our Church services has lost its relevance to the poor and oppressed. Our services and sacraments have been appropriated to serve the need of the individual for comfort and security. Now these same Church activities must be reappropriated to serve the real religious needs of all the people and to further the liberating mission of God and the Church in the world.[15]

The guiding principle here is the necessity to register a visible and audible protest against systemic evils and structural injustices which are being perpetuated, and which result in God's people being caught in a web of poverty and degradation.

The task of creating a more relevant eucharist liturgy also

entails the exploring and introducing of new forms of prayer. Both in terms of its content and format, many of the eucharistic prayers contained in traditional liturgies are inadequate to facilitate the authentic experiences and expressions of communities suffering under the evils of oppression. In formulating its own prayers of *penitence*, for instance, the community-of-faith needs to express more than just a vague consciousness of sin and the desire for forgiveness. What, for instance, are the kinds of sins prevalent in an oppressed community, apart from the more personal and private acts of immoral living? These need to be identified and incorporated. Moreover, to pray for forgiveness, is also, in Harvey Cox's expression, "to strive consciously for a new role":

The objective side of the Christian notion of repentance is that the future is not just a continuation of the past. The unexpected and unprecedented can happen. Men are not fated by tragic flaws but free to start over.[16]

The prayer of penitence should therefore take seriously the eucharistic *eschatology*, whereby hope in the advancement of God's future kingdom is constantly kept alive.

Likewise new spiritual songs need to be composed and eucharistic hymns be adopted, which relate more authentically to the life and experiences of the oppressed communities-of-faith. Although there has been a proliferation of new and more contextual liturgical material in South Africa in recent years - like the *June 16 Liturgies*, [17] - not much has filtered through to local congregations or parishes, and integrated into the eucharist and other regular worship

services. Such liturgical changes to our traditional eucharist services should influence our eucharistic theologies, and *vice versa*. The task, however, of working towards the realisation of a more just society and a more unified Church in South Africa goes beyond changes to our eucharist liturgies. The faith expressed in our eucharistic worship must be translated in the total life of the community, otherwise the believer experiences a crisis, both in relation to his faith in general and to the sacraments in particular.

Within the Latin American context a crisis of the sacraments was precipitated by a "serious contradiction that began existing between the eucharistic fellowship and the lack of meaningful community life beyond the celebration of the rite." [18]. It was precisely this kind of crisis which led Camilo Torres to forego his priestly functions, whereby the celebration of the eucharist made no difference to the Christian response to situations of poverty and injustices.

If we are therefore maintaining that the eucharist, within the South African context, calls for a theology and practice of protest, *the life of the community-of-faith beyond the eucharistic rite should reflect the same theology and praxis of protest*. If, for instance, a farm-worker celebrated the eucharist on Sunday which heightened the awareness of his exploitation, and on Monday he meekly submits to the kind of routine which affects his human dignity, the credibility of the eucharist itself is undermined. For this very reason the moral and material support of the community-of-faith is so essential. Should such a worker lose his job as a result of

his protest, the community should be ready and willing to rally in support of him.

Alternatively, if a member of the community should be engaged in some form of protest against injustice, and the eucharist in which he partakes does not relate to his existential experiences, the credibility of eucharistic worship is seriously called into question. Indeed, it is a fact of the South African situation that many members of churches in the black communities have withdrawn from worship and other related activities because the Church's life and worship is so lacking in contextual application. Between the eucharistic rite and the community life beyond the rite, therefore, there should be a coherence, which should precisely show up any contradictions either way.

We are hereby proposing that a eucharistic theology for the South African context needs to adopt a *new hermeneutic*, whereby the rite and the existential reality stand in a dialectic relationship. Given such a hermeneutic, the vexed questions of sacramental *efficacy*, for instance, debated at such lengths by the Reformation, are brought into contextual perspective.

The efficacy, or efficaciousness, of the sacrament, under the above understanding goes beyond theological categories. No matter how liturgically "correct" the rite may be observed or theologically "accurate" it may be interpreted, efficacy of the sacraments should be directly related to historical reality, and in particular to human liberation from sin and oppression. Far from wanting to reduce God's activity in the sacrament,

with regard to the efficacy of Christ's death for human redemption, we are insisting that eucharistic efficacy is authenticated by human *praxis* towards liberation in history.

The following perceptions from Segundo, emerging from the Latin American context, are clearly applicable to South Africa.

The Latin American believer poses the same "what for?" about his historical *praxis* and his "sacramental" *praxis*. He is no longer content to utter the key word: efficacy. He suspects that this term often serves to leave the "wherefore" shrouded in obscurity, when the whole weight of decision should focus on it.

If a person does not recognise that history has its own proper salvific density, that it is a real though imperfect and ambiguous anticipation of the final kingdom, then he will employ the term "efficacy" for activities that have little relationship to the salvation of history.[19]

Much of the theology in South Africa transmitted by 19th Century missionary endeavours retained a stubborn strain of *dualism* in Christian thought and practice. Central to our task of creating a contextual eucharistic theology and practice in oppressed communities is the combatting of all residues of such dualism, which in practice stands at the root of conservative stances and reactions within South African Churches and society. Since such conservatism is ideological, the question of adopting a unified vision of history and affirming its salvific import is not merely a theoretical one, it is also a political act in quest of true efficacy. The nature and scope of political activity is to be determined by the eucharistic community itself, for the levels of poverty and oppression differ from community to community. But the theological basis would be the same, a basis which compels an historical

community to a life and action which is *efficacious* to its own human liberation. Given our South African context of oppression, the need for a eucharistic theology and practice of protest and resistance to such oppression is compelling. And participation in actions of protest and resistance by members of the community also becomes the *sine qua non* for the formulation of such a eucharistic theology.

The theme of *protest* is further strengthened if we take seriously a certain emphasis within the Reformed tradition, namely the eucharist as *anamnesis* or memorial. A contextual application of this emphasis compels us to speak of the *anamnesis* in terms of a *dangerous memory*. [20] Once again the Catholic liberation theologians gave contextual substance to the above Reformed emphases:

Socially speaking, the Eucharist periodically celebrated should be a loud cry of alarm and of protest, disquieting and awakening us to socio-political responsibilities. In this sense the religious action - and above all the eucharistic action - is extremely dangerous for every inhuman and oppressive system. [21]

The following words engraved on a plaque fixed on the outside of a church-building in what used to be called District Six very forcefully illustrate the perpetuation of a *dangerous memory* which is inseparable from the theology and praxis of eucharistic communities in South Africa:

All who pass by remember with shame the many thousands of people who lived for generations in District Six and other parts of this city and were forced by law to leave their homes because of the colour of their skins. Father forgive us.

3.3 THE EUCHARIST AS CELEBRATION

3.3.1 BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK

Passover, for the Israelites, was the celebration *par excellence* of God's liberation of his people. The rite expressed, and continues to express, the present liberty of God's people, reclining as free men and women around the table, celebrating God's gracious act of deliverance. Had God not acted, the Jews would still be in bondage, not yet a people (*laos*), without name or dignity. The rite of Passover repeats and re-enacts the story, reminding the people of their roots, of their dependence upon God, and of their liberation within history. But the celebration of Passover does more than just represent a past deliverance. It gives resources for living as free people in the present, and provides a foretaste of the joys of a fully consummated liberty that is to come. Each Passover points forward - "Next year in Jerusalem" - and beyond to the messianic banquet.

When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, the eschatological hope of the royal feast in the glory of the kingdom of God was very much part of his vision. (Mark 14:25; cf. Matt. 26, Luke 22:18). The *festive meal* as symbolising the eschatological vision of God's kingdom is also clearly attested in the Old Testament, as for instance in Isaiah 25:6-9. Jesus awaits this blessed meal at the table of God together with the coming of the fullness of the kingdom of God. And those who belong to

Christ through the faith will also partake of this banquet. (Matt. 8:11, Luke 13:28ff, 14:15-24). This meal will be his royal marriage feast which he celebrates with his bride and kingdom people. (Matt. 22:2-14, 25:10; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7, 21:2, 22:17).

However, this nuptial joy of God's kingdom has already begun with Jesus' coming and his work of liberation on earth. With his Person, Work and Word the kingdom is already made present. (Mark 1:15). As such his followers should not fast and mourn, but as wedding guests, celebrate the feast with the Lord in the joy of the present and future fulfillment. (Mark 2:19, and parallels; Matt. 11:18f; John 3:29). This meal-fellowship of the earthly Lord with his disciples, marked by poverty and lowliness, and yet also illuminated by the light of the coming banquet in glory, is now discontinued with the Institution of the Lord's Supper. Through Jesus' surrender to death on the Cross, they are now discontinued by himself. But this is done only for the purpose of making a breach through which the way leads to the *new meal* in the eschatologically transformed world of glory, in which redemption and liberation of all creation is fulfilled. Yet that which is to be fulfilled is already being realised now. The present hour and its event thus belong to the eschatological reality of the kingdom of God.

The eucharistic event is therefore a *supreme moment of celebration and festal joy*, representing the interim between the now discontinuing old and the coming new meal-communion with Christ. The eucharist is thereby also a mirror which captures and retains the redemptive reality of the old table

fellowship *together* with the future banquet of the final liberation in the kingdom of God.

Israel's anniversary celebrations, which are also covenant-renewal festival, are characterised by the anticipatory view of the fulfillment of the covenant at the end-time. Therefore festive joy prevails at these feasts. (Deut.16:11,14; 14:26; 26:11; 2 Chron.30:23,25f; Ezra 6:22; Neh.8:10.) Eschatological certainty of the covenant people's salvation, the festive meal, and liturgical joy form a unit. And the joy of the festival is rooted in the movement from the agony of death to the joy of deliverance, from the memory of misery to the expectation of the time of salvation. This breakthrough from the distress of death to messianic joy of the day of the Lord is mirrored in many psalms which are closely related to Israel's tradition of worship. For example, there are the psalms that deal with Christ's Passion, (Ps.22) and the psalms that were sung at the end of the Passover meal. (Ps.116-118, especially Ps.116:8-13; 118:13-18).

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus against such a background of celebration and festal joy. When the eucharist is therefore celebrated, the nuptial feast again becomes present in a new form and amidst the sorrows of this earth, Jesus' fellowship with God's people engenders that radiant joy which hovers over the dawn of end-time fulfillment.

3.3.2 EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

It may be said that the eucharist as *celebration* is a given,

and does not need to be emphasised, for do we not even refer to the eucharistic worship as the "celebration of the sacrament". The point at issue in our proposal, however, is not whether the eucharist is celebrated, but the *nature and form* of eucharistic celebration, and its meaning beyond the rite. The point is a crucial one, bearing in mind the situation of oppression and poverty in South Africa. The objection is usually heard from those who suffer at the hands of an oppressive state: *How can we celebrate in a situation such as ours?* We will attempt to show that celebration is not only fundamental to the eucharist as such, but also that celebration should be an essential feature in the life and work of oppressed communities-of-faith.

The basic cause and motivation for eucharistic celebration is found in the meaning of the eucharist itself. The eucharist is a celebration of human liberation. Liberation, as opposed to enslavement or oppression, is the event *par excellence* which calls forth a response of celebration.

The sense and experience of eucharistic celebration of which are speaking is the kind being practiced and nurtured in the Latin American base community-life. Gustavo Gutierrez who, as a priest in Peru involved in the praxis of base-community life, provides a useful definitional outline of the base Christian Community (CEB):

To understand the word "base", we must realize that the first point of reference, strictly speaking, lies outside intro-ecclesiastical boundaries. It is to be found in the world, where the church is present and where it must witness to the love of the Father... "Base" means the poor, oppressed, believing classes, despised cultures, and so forth... It also

refers to all those, whatever their ecclesial responsibility might be, who make their own the life, the interests, and the aspirations of the poor and oppressed.[22]

In our quest to formulate an authentic eucharistic theology and practice for South Africa, much can be learnt from the Latin American base-community context with regard to eucharistic celebration. The following is an example of a eucharistic rite celebrated in a basic Christian community in Brazil:

The place of celebration is decorated with flowers, in token of festivity. In the centre of the space on a table covered with a tablecloth, everything that has been brought for the meal is placed. Tea, or any other refreshing drink, is prepared. At one end of the table, on a plate, a cake of sweet cassava is placed and a quantity of assai, cherimoya fruit, cashew nuts or passion fruit.

The *monitor* explains that the community is about to re-experience what Jesus did, by means of food and drink familiar to the people in their own region. Then follows a song of oneness and fellowship, and a prayer of praise and gratitude. The plate with the cassava is placed before the eldest person, who takes up the cake, breaks it, recites or paraphrases Jesus Words found in Matthew 26:26 "Take this and eat...This is my body", and gives a portion to each person present. All eat in silence and with great reverence.

After all have partaken, the same person who distributed the cake takes up the tea, or fruit drink, and repeats the words of Matthew 26:27-29 "All of you must drink from it...for this is my blood...for the forgiveness of sins." The drink is then distributed in mugs, and after another moment of silence some joyful singing follows.[23]

The significant feature of the above celebration is that although it is characterised by reverence, there is no suggestion of any morbidness or rigidity. Rather, the atmosphere is characterised by a spirit of joyful participation. The use of cassava, cashew nuts, flowers, etc.

adds significantly to an atmosphere of *festivity and celebration*, while at the same time setting the eucharist in a much more authentic socio-economic and cultural context.

The air of festivity, or spirit of celebration, is sadly lacking in the experience of most Reformed churches in this country. Yet, a major thrust of the Reformation criticisms against Roman Catholicism was its banality, and lack of participation in the eucharist as a event in which the community-of-faith participates. Jurgen Moltmann, a twentieth century Reformed theologian, suggests that the Reformation itself created such an incongruity:

Going back in history, we find that in Europe the secular and religious feasts were driven out of public life by the Reformation, especially the Calvinistic Reformation. Puritanism and middle-class industrialisation made a pact against the festive spirit. Why? The modern world of work requires life to be rationalised in terms of its goals, means, and success...Thus, for these modern people, enlightened Protestantism reduced the liturgies of Christian worship to doctrinal and moral instruction, excluding doxological and hymnological expressions as superflous and time-consuming.[24]

It was to the New Testament and the early church that the Reformers of the sixteenth Century tried to return. While the Reformation was in essence a theological upheavel, its momentum shook the entire liturgical life of the medieval church. Matters of worship, such as the *nature and frequency* of eucharistic practice, emerged as central issues throughout and after the Reformation. Unfortunately, the Reformers knew much less about the worship of the New Testament, not having the benefit of the results of modern scholarship and research. But there can be no doubt about the sincerity of the Reformers to

return to early forms of worship. At times they carried this to excesses of legalism while protesting at the same time against the idolatry of others.

The Reformation was characterised by the rediscovery of the church as the whole people of God. This had radical implications for worship. It meant, amongst other things, that once again the laity were called to participate fully in worship, to perform their own liturgy rather than being passive spectators, or engaging in their own personal devotions during common worship. The New Testament teaching of the "priesthood of all believers"[25] emerged as a key theological principle to which the Reformers appealed.

In order to recover a corporate sense in common worship, certain drastic changes were necessitated in the forms of worship received from the medieval church. For instance, the Reformers rightly felt compelled to translate the services into a *language* understood by the people. Many of the Reformers stressed the importance of frequent eucharistic celebration, while rediscovering the importance of the Service of the Word, with its focus on the Scriptures and their exposition in preaching.

The solution, however, goes beyond just merely altering our liturgies. If the eucharist is not perceived theologically as representing human liberation *in its totality*, no amount of liturgical tampering will have the desired effect. It is to their credit that the Catholic liberation theologians so adequately grasp this fact, and so extensively expound its

existential implications. Avila, for instance, asserts that the eucharist is to be understood and experienced as "the banquet of the liberty of the children of God." [26]

In an effort to enhance the celebrative nature of eucharistic worship in oppressed communities-of-faith within South Africa, Reformed churches could greatly benefit by adopting more of the free-style and exuberant nature of worship prevalent in the African Independent churches (AIC). [27] The *collective* role of the community-of-faith is crucial in the process of creating an authentic event, whereby the eucharist is experienced as celebration, but a celebration which does not play-down, ignore or deny the reality of oppression, injustices and human suffering. In this process the musicians, the actors, the workers, the teachers, the unemployed, and everybody else who is integral part of the community-of-faith collaborate to create their own authentic theology and practice of the eucharist, to transform both the rite and its existential application. The peculiar *cultural* elements of a given community should be as fully incorporated as possible so as to enhance further the authentic character of its eucharistic life. [28]

While the experiences and insights from the base communities in Latin America are an invaluable resource, much could also be learned from the African continent and context as well. One of the new church songs of Zimbabwe, for example, was composed by Rev. Canaan Banana, now president of that country, in the days before independence. It is a recomposition of a song used at Ndebele weddings, which has since swept through the Xhosa

Catholic Church. The text of this song makes it a liberation song, whereby the connection is made between Christ's death and political liberation, without sacrificing its religious or cultic frame of reference: *Igazi leMvana linamandla* - the blood of the lamb has power; *amandla* - power to save from sin, and *amandla* used in the sense of its significance for political power. Commenting on the song, a black woman from South Africa observed:

...that song by Canaan Banana. I can sing it just indifferently. But when you know what it means - *igazi leMvana* - it's not simply blood, it comes from inside, belief, conviction, that *igazi leMvana* can actually free you - *linamandla!*, has got power. And when you translate this into singing...it completely absorbs you, transforms you.[29]

The creators of a more contextual community life of *faith* need to see and make the connection, not only between faith and politics, but faith and the community experience as a whole, including its cultural life. Fr. Dave Dargie, who heads and directs the Lumko Missiological Institute,[30] expresses the urgent need for the promotion and development of African church music, for instance, in order to facilitate a more wholistic experience of liberation:

Experience in the field of African church music leads one to fear for the perpetuation of African music. So few people now play instruments such as musical bows. One sees children, accomplished African musicians at the age of five, eventually leaving school trained as third class "European" musicians through the inadequate medium of tonic solfa, and with a sense of rejection of their own musical heritage. This is an aspect of cultural repression, which needs liberation...How can a person without pride in his national heritage become a person in the fullest sense of the word, or find the courage to endure suffering for the sake of his people.

The introduction of the *marimba*, which is an adequate

replacement for piano or organ accompaniment in worship services, is a wellcome innovation, but not enough is being done to encourage and promote a much more widespread use of this authentically African instrument and music. Young people in the black communities in South Africa could begin to explore, for example, the vital links and mutual relevance between the *genre* and spirit of contemporary black theatre and the life of faith.

The element of *protest*, which is a feature of black theatre today, should not be seen as unrelated to the eucharist as experienced by the oppressed community-of-faith. But equally present in black theatre productions is an irrespressible spirit of *celebration*. A classical example is the theatre production of *Hoza Albert*.^[31] On the one hand the play represents a vital resource of protest theology for the eucharist. The play, which portrays the life of the black communities under oppression, moves towards a climax with the *calling up from the dead* the fallen heroes in the struggle for liberation, such as the late Chief Albert Luthuli (*Albert*).^[32] On the other hand, the play is one of exuberance and celebration. It celebrates the revival of the spirit of Luthuli and others in the struggle, not only against oppression but also against capitulation, compromise or despair.

The community-of-faith engaged in the struggle for liberation needs to see more clearly the connections and explore more fully the dynamic between a politico-cultural event, such as *Hoza Albert*, and its eucharistic life. In this instance the vital aspects of connection and continuity are

those of *protest and celebration*. The protest is against the forces of death and oppression in the South African context, and the celebration is of the triumph of liberation and the Resurrection.

Reformed theology emphasises that the eucharistic worship is not merely a commemoration of Christ's death, but it is also the celebration of His resurrection from the dead, and therefore in the Lord's Supper we are also celebrating his living presence. In essence Christian worship was and is the feast of Christ's resurrection from the dead. And the feast of the Resurrection, which is really inseparable from the eucharist, stands in the midst of history, combining in a unique, singular way *past and future, memory and hope*. The presence of the suffering and the death of Christ is hope in the mode of memory. The presence of the coming kingdom of God is memory in the mode of hope. Through the eucharist the death of Jesus is proclaimed "until he comes". It is therefore at the same time the sacrament of memory and hope and, in the harmony of both, the expression of presently experienced liberation.

The memory of Christ's suffering and dying forbids the using of the feast as an escape from the miserable conditions of poverty and oppression. Rather it makes silent suffering a conscious pain. But the hope of the resurrected and coming Christ also forbids the community-of-faith simply to complain about its suffering or to indict its causes. In this feast the joy of freedom is deeply bound up with pain. This dialectic of the eucharistic feast should lead the community into the

dialectic of life itself.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has not been to present a proposal which offers a blueprint for eucharistic theology and practice in the South African context. The task of doing theology and formulating praxis is - as I attempted to show - that of the collective community-of-faith, and the process is a dynamic and ongoing one.

It is my contention, however, that without the fundamental features of *protest* and *celebration* the life, worship and witness of eucharistic communities (of whatever Church denomination) represents, *firstly*, a denial of the best in all our Church traditions, *secondly*, a contradiction of the Biblical witness, and *thirdly*, a betrayal of the liberation struggle in South Africa towards the transformation of Church and society. In the final analyses, it is not how truly orthodox we are, or how faithful to our Reformed (or Catholic) heritage we are, but how true we are to the theological and praxiological implications of the Gospel in our response to the demands of God's kingdom.

This dissertation is not only intended to be a contribution to the theological debate on the eucharist in academic circles. It is also written as a document of faith aimed at

inspiring and challenging Church communities-at-large. The challenge is one whereby all Christians in South Africa are called to engage more fully in *protest* action against the evil that prevails, but to do so in the spirit of *celebration*, knowing that we already share in the triumph of God's kingdom, as, with Christ we advance towards the fulness thereof.

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 2. In a public declaration, the WARC condemned apartheid as sinful, rejected it, and declared theological justification of apartheid to be a theological heresy, error, and repudiation of the gospel.
 3. Johannesburg : Skotaville, 1984
 4. Boesak, A.A. *Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation and the Calvinist Tradition*, p.133.
 5. The awareness amongst many Christians in South Africa that the situation has in fact reached a moment of truth, is sharply reflected in a document written and published by a "group of theologians" in 1985, entitled *The Kairos Document*, Braamfontein : Skotaville, 1985
 6. *Zikkaron* is the Hebrew parallel for the Greek phrase, *eis ten emen anamnesin*, which is repeated by Jesus in the Words of the Institution {I Cor.11:24f.}
 7. Joachim Jeremais, for example, argues in favour of the Last Supper being a Passover celebration. *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1955, p.14f.
 8. Jesus' longing to celebrate the Passover is conveyed in the words which come at the beginning of Luke's account of the Supper: "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." (Luke 22:15)
 9. A. Moorrees, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika, 1652-1873*, Cape Town, 1937, p.595.
 10. Calvin, quoted in *Baptism and Eucharist: Ecumenical Convergence in Celebration*, eds. M. Thurian & G. Wainwright, p.146.
 11. The "offenders" singled out for discipline are usually women who fall pregnant out of wedlock, or those church members who are "convicted" of over-indulging in strong drink.
 12. The eucharistic service, being cited here, was held in a black township near Johannesburg during an Ecumenical Conference in 1988.
 13. Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper*, Paternoster, Exeter, p.51

14. This is the case especially in the very remote rural areas, where grape juice is not easily obtainable or readily available.

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18. Segundo, *op cit.*, p.11

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25. cf.1 Pet.2:9f., Rev.1:6,5:10, etc

26. Avila, *op cit.*, p.82

27. The AIC is a kind of umbrella name used to refer those groups of Churches also designated as the "Zionist Churches", "Apostolic Churches", and "Churches of the Spirit".

28. There exists a great need to recover many of the traditional African religious and cultural symbols, which suffered rejection during the period of 19th Century missionary expansionism to Africa.

29. Quoted in *African Church Music and Liberation*, by Fr. Dave Dargie.

30. The Lumko Missiological Institute was established in the Transkei around 1970 as a project of the Catholic Bishops Conference with the aim of fostering and renewing Christian Ministry and the formation of Christian Community

31. *Hoza Albert* played to capacity audiences at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town, during 1986.

32. Literally, *Hosa Albert* means "come here Albert". In the context of the play we could interpret the phrase as "arise

from the dead, Albert".

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APPENDIX.

Excerpts of Roman Catholic teaching on the eucharist as outlined by The Council of Trent and The Second Vatican Council.

1. THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF TRENT

I. I. DECREE ON THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST (1551).

Chapter 1: The real presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist.

1513 To begin with, the holy Council teaches and openly and straightforwardly professes that in the blessed sacrament of the holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, is truly, really and substantially contained under the appearances of those perceptible realities (cf. n. 1526)...

1514 For all our predecessors in the true Church of Christ who treated of this most holy sacrament very clearly professed that our Redeemer instituted this wonderful sacrament at the Last Supper, when, after He had blessed bread and wine, He declares in plain, unmistakable words, that He was giving to them His own body and His own blood.

Chapter 14: Transubstantiation

1519 Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly His body that He was offering under the species of bread (cf. Mt. 26:26ff, Mk 14.22ff, Lk. 22.19f, 1 Cor. 11.24ff), it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now again declares that, by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of wine into the substance of His blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly named transubstantiation (cf. n. 1527).

Chapter 4: The worship and veneration to be shown to this most holy sacrament.

1520 There remains, therefore, no room for doubting that all the faithful of Christ, in accordance with the perpetual custom of the Catholic Church, must venerate this most holy sacrament with the worship of *latria* which is due to the true God (cf. n. 1531).

1.2 DOCTRINE ON THE MOST HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS (1562).

Chapter 1: The institution of the most holy sacrifice of the Mass

1546 ..., Christ instituted a new Pasch, namely Himself to be offered by the Church through her priests under visible signs in order to celebrate the memory of His passage from this world to the Father when by the shedding of His blood...

Chapter 11: The visible sacrifice...

1528 In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered Himself once in a bloody manner (cf. Heb. 9.14, 27) on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner....

Canons on the most holy sacrifice of the Mass

1555. 1. If anyone says that in the Mass a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God or that the offering consists merely in the fact that Christ is given to us to eat, *anathema sit*.

1556. 2. If anyone says that by the words "Do this as a memorial of Me" (Lk. 22.19, 1 Cor. 11.24.) Christ did not establish the apostles as priests or that He did not order that they and other priests should offer His body and blood, *anathema sit* (cf. n. 1546)

1557. 3. If anyone says that the sacrifice of the Mass is merely an offering of praise and thanksgiving, or that it is simple commemoration of the sacrifice accomplished on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice, or that it benefits only those who communicate; and that it should not be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfaction and other necessities, *anathema sit* (cf. n. 1548)

2. THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

2.1 ENCYCLICAL LETTER *MYSTERIUM FIDEI* (1965)

1577 It is not allowable...to exaggerate the element of sacramental sign as if the symbolism, which all certainly admit in the Eucharist, expressed fully and exhausted the mode of Christ's presence in the sacrament. Nor is it allowable to discuss the mystery of transubstantiation without what the Council of Trent stated about the marvellous change of the whole substance of bread into the body and of the whole substance of wine into the blood of Christ (cf.n.1519), speaking rather only of what is called "transignification" and "transfinalisation"...

The presence of Christ under the eucharistic species is His presence in the fullest sense.

1578...This presence is called "real" not in an exclusive sense, as if the other kinds of presence were not real, but "par excellence", because it is a substantial presence by which Christ, the God-man, whole and entire, becomes present (cf.n.1516f)

Eucharistic symbolism is no adequate expression of this presence.

1580 The way Christ is made present in this sacrament is none other than by the change of the whole substance of the bread into his body and of the whole substance of the wine into His blood,...

2.2 INSTRUCTION *EUCCHARISTIC MYSTERIUM* OF THE S. CONGREGATION OF RITES (1967).

1581 3. The Mass, the Lord's Supper, is at the same time and inseparably: a sacrifice in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated; a memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, who said: "Do this as a memorial of me" (Lk.22.19); a sacred banquet in which, through the communion of the body and blood of the Lord, the people of God share the benefits of the Paschal sacrifice, renew the new Covenant which God has made with men once for all through the blood of Christ, and in faith and hope foreshadow and anticipate the eschatological banquet in the Kingdom of the Father,...

1585 55. In the celebration of the Mass, the principal modes of Christ's presence to His Church are gradually revealed. First of all, Christ is seen to be present in the assembly of the faithful gathered in His name; then in His word, as the scriptures are read and explained; in the person of the minister; finally and in a unique way *modo singulari* under the species of the Eucharist...

1587 58. Devotion, both private and public, towards the Sacrament of the Alter even outside Mass, provided it observes the norms laid down by the legitimate authority and those of the present Instruction, is highly recommended by the Church, since the Eucharistic Sacrifice is the source and summit of the whole Christian life (n.1576).

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