Martyrdom and Eating Jesus: Two Neglected Practices?[1]

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What does eucharistic practice have to do with martyrdom? Are the two related, and, if so, how? Such are the questions I will address here as I attempt to uncover what it means to be a church predicated on the memory of its martyrs.

In the Catholic Church, the Eucharist renders martyrdom intelligible. That is, in consuming the flesh and blood of Jesus, one "becomes" Christ, therein making it possible to fully participate in the most glorious imitation of Christ: martyrdom. This appears to be reversed in the Anabaptist tradition. Based on the accounts given by early Anabaptist theologians, the ability to produce martyrs is what makes participating in the Lord's Supper an intelligible act. Due to the ethical importance placed on this sacrament by the early Anabaptists, it can be argued that martyrdom is what makes the Lord's Supper possible. Yet, if this is true, what becomes of this meal once it no longer produces martyrs? Does the limited partaking of this sacrament create an unlikely climate for the production of martyrs, or is it because we produce so few martyrs that we no longer have any basis for involvement in the Lord's Supper?

In this essay I will examine the theology of the Lord's Supper in the thought of the sixteenth-century Anabaptist Balthasar Hubmaier. By examining only Hubmaier, I am not attempting to ignore the multi-faceted account of the Supper in sixteenth-century Anabaptism.[2] However, despite the polyphonic voices and interpretations found in the sixteenth century, one can argue that the Lord's Supper provides the possibility for participation in the divine economy. Such participation engenders particular claims made on the participants' bodies. This event does not merely imply the giving of our lives for others physically, but also implicates the participants materially (these two components are never purely separable). In consuming the bread and wine, we commit ourselves to love one another in very distinctive ways. Financial burdens are shared and lives are sacrificed for others. It is at least this much

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that the early Anabaptists shared in common in their eucharistic theologies. I will, however, focus on one interpretation in particular: Hubmaier's account of the Lord's Supper as invoking a transformation, not in the elements, but in the participants. Such a transformation, Hubmaier assumes, necessitates a giving of one's own flesh and blood (just as Christ did) for others.

I also examine the Anabaptist "theology of martyrdom." This requires a brief assessment of the Anabaptist conception of the cross and how baptism implicates one in Christ's cross. What is discovered is the notion of a teleological necessity of persecution toward the church. Since the servant cannot expect better treatment than the master, the historical inevitability of suffering becomes necessary for the Kingdom to come to fruition. The true church is, therefore, the suffering/persecuted church.

Finally, how does this account of martyrdom constitute, or how is it constitutive of, eucharistic practice? There are very lucid lines running from baptism to martyrdom, but what is the direct connection between eating the flesh and blood of Christ (here, symbolically) and the shedding of one's own blood as the ultimate form of bearing witness to Christ? If there is a connection, which Hubmaier's theology seems to imply, what becomes of our current forms of eucharistic practice in relation to being a persecuted or non-persecuted people?

Balthasar Hubmaier and The Supper

> *We all are one bread and one body – we all, who have fellowship in one bread and in one drink. As one little kernel does not keep its own flour, but shares it with others, and a single grape does not keep its juice for itself, but shares it with others, so should we Christians act – or we eat and drink unworthily from the table of Christ.*
>
> – Balthasar Hubmaier[3]

When asked for his explanation of the Lord's Supper, Hubmaier responds:

> It is a public sign and testimonial of the love in which one brother obligates himself to another before the congregation that just as they now break and eat the bread with each other and share and

> drink the cup, likewise they wish now to sacrifice and shed their body and blood for one another; this they will now do in the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose suffering they are now commemorating in the Supper with the breaking of bread and the sharing of the wine, and proclaiming his death until he comes. Precisely this is the pledge of love in Christ's Supper that one Christian performs toward the other.[4]

Missing is any account of the materiality of Christ in the elements. This does not mean that Christ is simply absent from the meal; it is rather the denial of the substance of Christ's body in the elements.[5] The bread and wine are memorial symbols reminding Christians of their forgiveness of sins at the expense of Christ's life. Though the bread is bread and the wine is wine, the Lord's Supper is instituted by Christ as a reminder of his sacrifice for creation. As often as Christians participate in this sacrament, they are reminded of what was done on their behalf. Such a reminder is not intended for mere observation; instead, it involves Christians in specific practices that render participation a reality.[6] The consumption of the bread and wine obliges believers to live out their baptismal vow – their pledge of love. The Lord's Supper is not just a memorial; it is a "living memorial." It is a sign of the obligation to love one's neighbor. Just as baptism concerns God, the Supper concerns our neighbor. The bond made in the Supper commits the baptized to lay down their body for Christ, just as Christ laid down his body for all.[7] For Hubmaier, within these two sacraments exist the resources necessary for enabling Christians to love both God and neighbor.

Hubmaier begins something of a revolution in sacramental thought. Rather than dismiss the term "sacrament," he redefines it: "[N]ot the water, bread or wine but . . . the baptismal commitment or the pledge of love is really and truly 'sacrament' in Latin; i.e., a commitment by oath and a pledge given by the hand, which the one baptized makes to Christ."[8] Hubmaier is not arguing that the elements are displaced by the actual pledge made in the receiving of them (for the pledge is best expressed through the taking of the elements); rather, he is suggesting that the ethical importance tied to receiving the Lord's Supper trumps all concern as to whether or not Jesus is physically present in the bread and wine.[9] What matters is not the metaphysical substance of the elements but the ethical character of the activity involved in consuming

them. It is not the transformation of the bread and wine that takes precedence; what is significant is the transformation of those who commit themselves to the way of Christ. To accept the gracious gifts of baptism and Eucharist is to commit one self to a way of life that, as it surrenders ownership of the body to Christ's Body, becomes self-denying. Hence, in his book *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism*, John D. Rempel argues that the Supper in Hubmaier's theology is an "ethical summons to imitate Jesus' surpassing act of self-giving."[10] This summons grants human agency an important role insofar as it demands a particular response to this gift of God. Such a response, however, is not intended to be fully carried by the individual believer; the agency of the church becomes the center of his eucharistic theology. Hubmaier's favorite phrase "the body of Christ in remembrance" necessitates a human response by placing the church as the subject of the sacrament. The "breaking of bread is a human means of recalling Christ and imitating him."[11] The Supper is not to be merely contemplated philosophically or sentimentally, nor to be viewed as a past reality; rather, it demands attention in the present by calling forth concrete actions – in conformity with the life of Jesus – from those who dine on God's good gift. The Supper is both a pledge and a witness that the Gospel has been accepted and made visible in and through the church.[12]

Interpreting the Pauline conception of the "communion of the body of Christ," Hubmaier claims that the bread broken "commemorates the communion of the body of Christ with us, that he is our own, for he gave his body for us through the drink of the communion of his blood which he poured out for the forgiveness of sin."[13] Through participation in the Supper, communion with the body and blood of Christ occurs. Yet, this communion is expanded to include not just Christ but one another. Hubmaier continues:

> As we now have communion with one another in this bread and drink of the Christ meal, so also should the body and blood of all of us be shared with each other, just as the body and blood of Christ is shared with us all. This is the meaning of the word *symbol* when we eat and drink together. . . . We conclude that the bread and wine of the Christ meal are outward symbols of an inward Christian nature here on earth, in which a Christian obligates himself to another in Christian love with regard to body and blood. Thus as the body and blood of Christ became my body and

> blood on the cross, so likewise shall my body and blood become the body and blood of my neighbor, and in time of need theirs become my body and blood, or we cannot boast at all to be Christians. That is the will of Christ in the Supper.[14]

Rempel comments that Hubmaier clearly maintains that the bread and wine "are outer signs of an inner essence here on earth. This essence is the Christian covenant of love."[15] The sacrament, Rempel argues, still maintains its formal sense insofar as it is an inward reality rendered visible by an outward act. This outward act is not merely participation in the act but is the binding of those who participate to a peculiar way of life. The Lord's Supper is more than just a symbol of love between one another, it is the constitution of the most ethical reality.[16] By participating, believers pledge to have their bodies broken and sacrificed just as Christ did. It is in the Lord's Supper that believers find the necessary resources to be capable of having their bodies broken and sacrificed. The Lord's Supper creates the possibility for Christians to fully imitate Christ.

The full imitation of Christ is, traditionally speaking, possible only in martyrdom. Hubmaier's "baptism of blood" intends to evoke images of this full imitation, as he assumes persecution and suffering are the logical outcomes of being a Christian. Yet Hubmaier is not primarily referring to martyrdom. When asked to define the "baptism of blood," he answers: "It is a daily mortification of the flesh until death."[17] As Arnold Snyder notes, Hubmaier is speaking "of the continuing path of yielding one's desires daily to the will of God. The 'baptism of blood' is a daily practice in the discipline of obedience." Nevertheless, Snyder continues, "the 'baptism of blood' could be much more than simply a 'mortification of the flesh,' or an ascetic exercise – it could be a call to accept the fact that one's own blood would be shed."[18] As Jesus was "distressed" until his third baptism (Luke 12:50), his believers also anticipate a final baptism: one that completes their participation in the Triune God. That a believer would be called to witness to the truth through martyrdom is always in the mind of Hubmaier (who was executed for his teachings). Therefore, preparation for this third baptism is made possible by daily disciplined obedience stemming from the grace bestowed on those who participate in the Lord's Supper.

Rempel comments that Hubmaier's theology of the Supper is attractive to a church of martyrs.[19] While the Supper's ethical importance need not

require the death of its participants, once persecution does occur, such an understanding of the Supper becomes intelligible. I must therefore examine what comprises an Anabaptist theology of martyrdom and look for any connection between martyrdom and preparation for martyrdom in the Supper.

Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom

> *The Anabaptist apocalyptic of martyrdom is the testimony of a theological realism to which God is more real than anything called 'world.' For this reason the fellowship of martyrs forms the race of the future, and therefore their persecutors must be shattered as soon as God's reality becomes manifest. For this reason the eschatology of the Anabaptists culminates again and again in the old triumphant phrase of the 'Theology of Martyrdom': 'They shall see whom they have pierced (Rev. 1:7)'.*
>
> – Ethelbert Stauffer[20]

> *To Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we have accorded the first place among the martyrs of the new covenant; not in the order of time, for herein John was before, and preceded with his death but on account of the worthiness of the person, because He is the head of all the holy martyrs, through whom they all must be saved.*
>
> – The Martyrs Mirror[21]

The first to be mentioned in *The Martyrs Mirror* is Jesus. This gives the impression that the Anabaptists maintain that Jesus is a martyr. Such a notion, however, is quickly dismissed. Jesus is not a martyr; rather, as the *Mirror* claims, he is "the Head of all the holy martyrs [through] whom they and we all must be saved."[22] The "Head" of the martyrs is not a martyr because it is through him that salvation takes place. For Christ's disciples, martyrdom is predicated on a soteriological account demanding commitment to the way of Christ. As Christ offers his body to the Father, Christians must also offer their bodies to the Triune God. Livio Melina argues that "the body of the Christian

is a place for the expression and the realization of the will of the Father. . . . What is essential in Christian life is bodily matter."[23] Once Christianity has eliminated the need for martyrdom it has, in the words of Hans Urs von Balthasar, "unfleshed" the faith.[24]

Ethelbert Stauffer argues that there is a teleological necessity for martyrdom. Following the Gospel of John he states: "The seed must die in order that the wheat can grow."[25] This notion is carried through the rest of the New Testament as Stauffer argues that the Epistle to the Hebrews

> pictures the *via dolorosa* (path of suffering) of the true believers throughout history in the style of the apocryphical martyrs' summaries, and then describes the sufferings of Christ and his disciples by the old figure of the "agon", the ancient contest or race. The Book of Revelation finally places the fate of the martyrs of the early church into the great framework of cosmic happenings; the death of the Messiah means the first and decisive victory of the *Civitas Dei* (city of God) over the *Civitas Diaboli* (city of Satan). In consequence of this, the old dragon which had fallen from Heaven rages with doubled ferocity, and the prayers of the martyred saints rise up to heaven until the number of these martyrs shall be full.[26]

Stauffer notes that the early church continued this line of thought as the first Clement epistle, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* clearly show. The imitation of Christ becomes the dominant theme in the early church as the passion of Christ becomes the "prototype for the path of suffering of all loyal disciples, even to the smallest detail."[27] He continues:

> The church of the first centuries interpreted the work of Christ by means of a concept of the "Theology of Martyrdom", and vice versa understood the fate of the martyrs through the fate of the Master. However, Christ himself is *never presented as a martyr*; rather, all the martyrs stand under the sign of the event of Calvary. Christ is not a model in a moral or symbolic sense but he is the archetype in a genuine sense of destiny.[28]

A genuine sense of destiny is operative because the "true church of God has been a suffering church (*Martyrergemeinde*) at all times; this is the basic conception of the Anabaptist theology of history."[29]

The cross of Christ realizes this basic Anabaptist conception of history as well as renders Jesus "Head" of the martyrs – though not a martyr himself. This conception of history requires an understanding of what Jesus' cross signifies. For the Anabaptist, the cross signifies God's patience with God's creation. A patience that Christians, if they wish to be faithful, must also exercise.

Anabaptists understand themselves to be, to invoke the title of one of Menno Simons's books, the "Church under the Cross." As Jesus lived and died under the cross, the church expects to do the same. Since the cross gives meaning and order to suffering, it is the very center of the Anabaptist theology of martyrdom. The death of the Messiah is both the climax of the persecution of all the faithful (prior to and after Jesus) and the triumph over evil. Jesus' death is the turning point in history towards a new era. The cross, therefore, becomes the defining moment in the life and fate of all disciples. As Matt. 20:23 intimates, the disciples stand under the necessity of persecution. Can they drink the cup that Jesus drank? Can they accept the baptism of blood with which he was baptized? Can they face persecution and death?

By living as a church under the cross, Anabaptists are endeavoring to sustain an ethic that is intelligible only if Jesus is who he says he is. The ecclesial formation and ensuing practices of the Anabaptist church (including the Lord's Supper) are intended to produce lives that are unintelligible if Jesus has not been raised from the dead. Such formation must take the shape of the cross, because the way Christ becomes Lord is the through the suffering of the cross. As John Howard Yoder explains, the cross is not a romanticized description of hardship: "The cross of Calvary was not a difficult family situation, not a frustration of visions of personal fulfillment, a crushing debt, or a nagging in-law; it was the political, legally-to-be-expected result of a moral clash with the powers ruling his society."[30] The cross is thus "not a detour or a hurdle on the way to the kingdom, nor is it even the way to the kingdom; it is the kingdom come."[31] To follow Jesus is to claim that "the cross and not the sword, suffering and not brute power determines the meaning of history. The key to the obedience of God's people is not their effectiveness but their patience (Rev. 13:10)." Therefore, the "relationship between the obedience of God's people and the triumph of God's cause is not a relationship of cause and effect but one of cross and resurrection."[32]

Cross and resurrection, coupled with the virtue patience, are the only legitimate responses to persecution. Armed violence suggests that it is possible to take control of history and do God's work for God. It rejects the patience God practices with sinful creatures and denies the normativity of Jesus. A hymn attributed to Michael Sattler opens with this stanza:

> When Christ with his true teaching
> gathered together a little band
> he said that everyone with patience
> must follow him daily, carrying the cross.[33]

The cross is the event that centers all history and guides God's people through history.[34] This is the basis underwriting the Anabaptist recognition of the necessity of persecution. For it is here that the martyr becomes a sign of divine election; an election that begins with baptism.[35] Prosperus states:

> Sanctify, baptism will indeed;
> But the martyr's crown doth all complete.[36]

The idea that baptism is the beginning of those whose end is martyrdom has deep roots in Anabaptism. 1 John 5:6-8 states that Jesus came by water and blood, and the Anabaptists took this to mean that the "right" baptism entails the cross.[37] Baptism is understood as a pledge of faith (1 Peter 3:21) to follow the master even unto death. Those who are baptized must expect martyrdom. It is what is assumed to be true election. These martyrs are chosen to serve God's purposes, which means the building of God's Kingdom. Tertullian's famous dictum, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," has been empirically confirmed. To suffer martyrdom is understood to be an honor, as it creates a people on the way to the Kingdom.[38]

As a suffering people on pilgrimage, they meet persecution with a very peculiar response: nonviolence.[39] The starting point for this response is located in what Dutch Mennonites called "lijdzaamheid" (readiness to suffer), and what the German and Swiss brethren labeled "Gelassenheit" (yieldedness).[40] The readiness to suffer is a given for those who are to be disciples of Christ. In a letter before his execution, Hendrick Alewijns warned his children to prepare themselves for imminent persecution. Their response to persecution, he adds, is critical to who they are. As Children of Christ they are

> denied and forbidden all revenge, and commanded to commit all vengeance unto God; not to resist evil . . . and to turn to him that smiteth thee on thy right cheek the other also, and the like; yea, to love one's enemies, to pray for your persecutors, and to flee from them from one city into another.[41]

Followers of Christ, like Alewjins, are sent out like sheep among wolves (Matt. 10:16) that are prohibited from retaliation. They suffer the hostility of the world according to the example of their master and are not allowed to return violence for violence (Romans 12:17). Rather, they shall love their enemies and pray for their persecutors (Matt. 5:44).

Such a theology of martyrdom necessitates an understanding of suffering and patience that has a teleological base: it appears as a "causal necessity in the struggle between the divine and the satanic orders. History could not be understood without suffering."[42] Through suffering, history moves toward its ultimate fulfillment. It is just this conviction that led martyrs, as well as non-martyrs like Menno Simons and Conrad Grebel, to denounce the violence of the early years of Dutch Anabaptism. "Not revolution and armed might but its very opposite – suffering – holds the key to the future."[43] Martyrdom, because it is the way of the cross, is necessary for the coming of the kingdom. "It had always been thus," writes Dyck. "Persecution and suffering were to be expected as natural and inevitable."[44] Suffering is not understood to be an end, but is the teleological means to the ultimate goal of eternal victory.[45]

Martyrs are understood as imitators of Jesus, who, by their imitation of his life and death, participate in his resurrection and glory. Imitation and participation necessitate each other, though neither comes naturally. One must be trained to imitate Christ. Such training, William T. Cavanaugh argues, "is not reducible to some principle such as 'love,' but is rather a highly skilled performance learned in a disciplined community of virtue by careful attention to the concrete contours of the Christian life and death borne out by Jesus and the saints."[46] The account of the Supper espoused by Hubmaier, though himself discredited as a martyr because of his refusal to accept nonviolence as constitutive of discipleship, provides the kind of training that makes martyrdom possible. The Supper makes martyrdom possible because persecution makes such an account of the Supper possible.

Whose Flesh, Which Supper?

> *A true Lord's Supper is held and should be seen as a true sign of the memorial of the death of Christ and a true participation in the suffering and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
>
> – Pilgram Marpeck[47]

What does this account of martyrdom have to do with the Lord's Supper? Are these two separate practices, or do they have a direct bearing on one another? Is it possible to have one without the other? If so, what difference does it make?

Rempel claims that because the Lord's Supper is the embodiment of the church's outward life, it is the *sine qua non* of the church.[48] He argues that Hubmaier's emphasis on the outwardness of the church is not borne of leisurely reflection but arises as a direct result of the possibility of martyrdom. Hubmaier's understanding of the covenant made in the Supper "helped him to find a theology . . . adequate to the needs of a persecuted church threatened with martyrdom. This he achieved by making the focus of the theology and liturgy of the Lord's Supper the living memorial in which the church remembers Christ's sacrifice surpassingly in its pledge to do likewise."[49] Such a theology prepares the Christian for the possibility of martyrdom, as it arises directly from a persecuted people who understand what it means to have their flesh and blood spilled for the truth.

Such a theology of the Supper assumes no dichotomy between the earthly and the heavenly, the spiritual and the physical, or the body and the soul.[50] It assumes that the physical is the mode of the spiritual, and, therefore, that the Supper invites Christians to a bodily communion. This communion is fully realized only as it takes the shape of an eschatological banquet. Though the feast here may prepare one for martyrdom, or, perhaps martyrdom prepares the way for the feast, it also – given the transitory nature of our bodies here on earth – readies one for a glorified version of the body. Therefore, martyrdom is properly understood only in light of the resurrection. The gift of the Lord's Supper is that it helps us to remember not only the death of Christ but his being raised from the dead. This is why Hubmaier said, "Truth is unkillable."[51]

Cavanaugh argues, and I think Anabaptists will agree, the Eucharist loses its eschatological import precisely when the church comes to feel at home in the world. He continues:

> Threat of persecution helps keep this in focus; in the early church the Eucharist was explicitly connected with martyrdom. Many early martyrs regarded the Eucharist as the essential preparation and sustenance for their ordeal. During the fierce persecution under Diocletian, the martyrs of Abitinae adopted the motto *sine dominico non possumus*, for they would have seen the Eucharist as an invitation to, and the beginnings of, the heavenly banquet of which they were about to partake in full.[52]

The early martyrs viewed the Eucharist as a participatory event in the passion of Christ. In like manner, the sixteenth-century Anabaptists also saw it as a participatory event that makes possible the radical imitation of Christ. The threat of persecution Cavanaugh is discussing produces the kind of people (martyrs) required to recover what it means to receive the bread and wine. Christ is not present in the eucharistic elements; rather, he is in the visible body of believers.

In all this, the basic contention is that praxis precedes theory. This "fleshly" understanding of the Lord's Supper is made possible due to the immanent persecution the early Anabaptist church faced. Once Anabaptists are tolerated, what it means to partake in the Supper begins to take on a more symbolic (symbol as merely representative, not participatory) understanding. This is not to suggest that it ceases to form Anabaptists into a people incapable of either sharing their goods or laying down their lives; rather, with the toleration of the Anabaptists comes a very substantial loss of what it means to live eucharistically. The Lord's Supper has to mean something other than the literal giving of one's life, because this is no longer demanded.[53]

Truthful accounts of martyrdom cannot be separated from the Lord's Supper because that division assumes our imitation of Christ can be separated from participation in the divine life.[54] Participation occurs precisely where our flesh becomes Christ's flesh, and this requires eucharistic participation. Hubmaier's conception of the Supper stresses *being* rather than *receiving* the body of Christ. In his account, we *are* the bread; we *are* the body. If our

understandings of the Lord's Supper become too sentimental, or *if* it becomes a table that invites both the committed and non-committed alike, then all formative capabilities in this feast are likely to be lost. Rather than strip ourselves of a valuable resource for resistance to the world, our lives should once again be shaped by the memory of those martyrs discovered every time we remember Christ in the Lord's Supper.

In conclusion, martyrdom is understood as the anticipated result of serious commitment to Christian discipleship. Liberation theologian Jon Sobrino is correct to argue that, at bare minimum, Christians who do not find themselves persecuted should at least question why they are not being persecuted.[55] Just as the church is the body of Christ, and Christ's body was persecuted, Christ is known by those Christians who give their bodies as he gave his. When Christians participate in the Lord's Supper they attest to this claim and pledge their bodies (that they may be broken as Christ's body was broken) so that the church is visible. This sacrament is, therefore, training in how to be the kind of people capable of producing visible witnesses. Truthful accounts of martyrdom are necessary in this world, not only because martyrdom should be anticipated but because such a witness is an argument for the existence of the Triune God.[56] The Anabaptist martyr Joos Kindt realized, at least against his persecutors, that verbal arguments bore little significance. It is only martyrdom that will seal his testimony. Hence he writes in a farewell letter: "I hope that the seal of this letter will be the putting off of my body."[57] It is this kind of witness that renders participation in the Lord's Supper an intelligible act.

Notes

[1] I am grateful to my Ph.D. advisor, D. Stephen Long, and an anonymous reviewer for their comments in regard to how I employ the word 'practice.' With the advent of his seminal work *After Virtue*, Alasdair MacIntyre has maintained something of a monopoly on the word. It would probably be more consistent with MacIntyre's infamous definition to argue that martyrdom is not a practice but is the fruition of other practices (such as the Eucharist, baptism, hymn-singing, etc.). However, I want to leave room for understanding martyrdom as a practice inasmuch as, at least in the first three centuries of Christianity, martyrdom is understood as a liturgical procession before the watching world. It is a highly cultivated skill that one must train for in order to perform it well. The training for martyrdom is not simply the constitutive practices that make it possible. The act itself takes on something of the character of a practice.

[2] The Lord's Supper signifies many things: it is an act of *anamnesis*; a memorial of Christ's death and sacrifice; a time for reconciliation and confession of sin; a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. I am not trying to lock the Supper down to one explanation. For a richer account of the various ways in which it is understood by current Anabaptist thinkers see *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* 2.1 (Spring 2001).

[3] H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder, eds. *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1989), 75.

[4] *Ibid.*, 354. This response is in the form of a catechetical dialogue.

[5] According to Hubmaier, Christ cannot be present in the elements because he has ascended to the Father: "If he were present, then we would hold the Supper in vain and against the words of Christ and Paul. For where a person is essentially and bodily present, there a remembrance is not necessary. However, where he is not bodily present, then one celebrates his remembrance until he comes." Insofar as the believer makes Christ present in memory, then Christ is present in the meal. In this sense, the church makes Christ present, and, therefore, the church becomes the real presence in the meal. *Ibid.*, 333.

[6] In "The Lord's Supper as Viewed and Practiced by the Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, and the Disciples of Christ," John Mills laments the use of the word "observe" and opts for the term located in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, "participation." *The Lord's Supper: Believers Church Perspectives*, ed. by Dale R. Stoffer (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1994), 198. The language of participation creates a particular experience shaping how Christians understand the concrete implications of remembering Christ's death.

[7] *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 70.

[8] *Ibid.*, 391.

[9] I thank an anonymous reviewer for correcting me on this point.

[10] John D. Rempel, *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism: A Study in the Christology of Balthasar Hubmaier, Pilgram Marpeck, and Dirk Philips* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1993), 48.

[11] *Ibid.*, 63. There remains a vital importance attaching to the act of each individual believer to respond. However, since each individual becomes the body of Christ, Hubmaier's use of church and individual seem, at this point, to conflate.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 75.

[14] *Ibid.*, 75-76.

[15] *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism*, 56.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 350.

[18] C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 1995), 93.

[19] *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism*, 222.

[20] Ethelbert Stauffer, "The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 19.3 (1945): 204.

[21] Thieleman J. van Braght, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians*, 2nd English Edition, 23rd printing (Scottdale: Herald Press, 2001), 67.

[22] *Ibid.*, 69. Liberation theologian Jon Sobrino argues for an *analogatum princeps* of martyrdom

based on the idea that Latin American Christians and non-Christians die *like* Christ because they die for his cause. Therefore, the content of their subjective holiness is never an issue because their objective holiness makes them martyrs. Sobrino argues for an expansion of the concept of martyrdom premised not on *odium fidei*, but on *odium justitiae*. Cf. his *Jesus the Liberator* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books), 265-71. His account is untenable because he assumes that Jesus was for a cause or for the truth: God's Kingdom. Anabaptists maintain that Jesus is the cause – Jesus is the Truth. This leads to differing starting points for how martyrdom is understood. If Rempel is adequately representing Hubmaier, then Hubmaier himself comes close to this problem: "What we now do is to eat in faith that the Lord's body was martyred for us." *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism*, 59.

[23] Livio Melina, *Sharing in Christ's Virtues: For a Renewal of Moral Theology in light of Veritatis Splendor*, trans. William E. May (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 110.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] Ethelbert Stauffer, "The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom," 181.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.* "Imitation" can often be turned into legalistic obedience, and so many current thinkers use terms like "participation" to create the mood of "an eager entering into the very suffering of Christ himself." Cf. Cornelius J. Dyck, "The Suffering Church in Anabaptism," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 49.1 (1985): 15. Such a distinction between imitation and participation is, in the end, not very useful as it presupposes one can occur without the other.

[28] *Ibid.* The notion of archetype should not be confused with a Kantian account of the person of Jesus. In the Anabaptist understanding of martyrdom, there is a sense of destiny, a teleology at work that positions Christian martyrs after Jesus because of who Jesus is: the Son of God. Italics are mine.

[29] *Ibid.*, 187.

[30] John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 129.

[31] *Ibid.*, 51.

[32] *Ibid.*, 232.

[33] Cited in Brad Gregory's *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 203.

[34] *Ibid.*, 197.

[35] Brad Gregory, in his impressive work *Salvation at Stake*, helps us see how baptism is so easily linked to death – especially after fifteen hundred years of baptism understood as the initiation rite into society. He claims that even to "ponder becoming an Anabaptist was ipso facto to think about martyrdom" (198). Executions, for Anabaptists, were a part of everyday life. Therefore, just as the apostles risked their lives, baptism implies the willingness to risk one's life. Baptism was the preparation for death – a death that was the confirmation of the very meaning of being Christian (201). As Gregory remarks, "Those who became Anabaptists were preselected for martyrdom." (211)

[36] *Martyrs Mirror*, 190.

[37] Stauffer, *The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom*, 207.

[38] This does not necessarily imply that Christians are to seek martyrdom. On the contrary, the first task is to flee, for Christians do not desire for their enemies to commit the sin of murder. Nevertheless, when faced with the decision to be either faithful or unfaithful, Christians must accept that such faithfulness may either keep them on the run or land them on a stake.
[39] I realize that Hubmaier never advocated nonviolence and even wrote a polemic against the Swiss Brethren for their adoption of the Schleitheim articles – in particular, number six. Despite his execution not being accepted as martyrdom (because of his account of the necessity of killing), his depiction of the Lord's Supper nevertheless proves valuable for a martyrs' ethic.
[40] Stauffer, *The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom*, 212.
[41] *Martyrs Mirror*, 754.
[42] Dyck, *The Suffering Church in Anabaptism*, 17.
[43] *Ibid*.
[44] *Ibid*.
[45] *Ibid*., 22.
[46] William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*: *Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 62.
[47] Quoted in *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism*, 120.
[48] *Ibid*., 88.
[49] *Ibid*.
[50] Cf. Geoffrey Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981). If Hubmaier had held more of an understanding of the blending of heaven and earth, could he have conceded the real presence of Christ in the elements?
[51] *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 407.
[52] *Torture and Eucharist*, 225-26.
[53] An interesting topic for research would be to examine how Christian Peacemaking Teams and missionaries in hostile environments practice and understand the Lord's Supper.
[54] Hubmaier answers the question of what constitutes the church by including The Lord's Supper. *Balthasar Hubmaier*, 352.
[55] Jon Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness.* Trans. Paul Burns and Francis McDonagh (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988), 92. He says that persecution should be considered an "essential ingredient of the Christian life. If no persecution were at hand, in any form or any degree, Christians and their churches would at least wonder why, and they would regard the question as a basic one."
[56] Cf. Stanley Hauerwas's *With the Grain of the Universe: The Church's Witness and Natural Theology* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001). According to Hauerwas, faithful witnesses are not *evidence* for the existence of God, rather they are *arguments* for the existence of God. Leaning on the work of Bruce Marshall, Hauerwas adds that in the case of martyrs, their blood is not "proof" for themselves of God's existence, but their blood is a testimony for others of the existence of God. (210-15).
[57] *Martyrs Mirror*, 546.