In search of something more
A sacramental approach to life and worship

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In our congregation, people are confused, ambivalent, and even angry about communion and baptism. Many remember their baptism, if they remember it at all, as traumatic or as a matter of some grievance. Several years ago when seven dedicated youth were baptized, some prominent members responded with apathy to this important moment in our church life. Some young adults do not want to be baptized but dearly want to participate in communion and keenly resent their "exclusion."

Our congregation's experience represents a wider Mennonite ambivalence. Sixteenth-century Anabaptist suspicion about sacraments now blends with a modern rationalist mentality: "Under the influence of a scientific worldview in the nineteenth century, the Lord's Supper came more and more to be seen as a rational act of human memory, almost a 'real absence' of Christ."[1] Many Mennonite churches practice communion infrequently; this echo of pre-Reformation understandings of exclusionary holiness is a point of frustration for some communicants. Another source of ambivalence about communion is its connection in Mennonite history with enforcing discipline and conformity.[2] Some older members still expect me to deny communion to parishioners they deem unworthy. Yet another factor may be a Mennonite tendency to over-emphasize communion as a memorial of Jesus' suffering and death. Mary Oyer says that in her childhood, communion "always seemed like a funeral."[3] Little surprise that people are not eager to celebrate it often! Our ambivalence about baptism is evident

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in these extremes: some of us press youths to be baptized by a certain age (in effect, postponing infant baptism by a few years), while others de-emphasize baptism and fail to encourage people to choose it.

When John Rempel began his landmark study of the supper, he made a startling discovery: Anabaptists had written little on the subject.[4] What does this paucity show? Is communion not important enough to merit serious sustained reflection? The practice of communion predates the New Testament: "It…trained and sanctified apostles and martyrs and scores of thousands of unknown saints for more than a century before the New Testament was collected and canonized as authoritative 'scripture.'"[5] Scriptures were interpreted through the supper.[6] The Scriptures in turn reinforce the significance of the supper as "a central act of worship."[7]

Signs or symbols?

Our language is impoverished. We often speak of baptism and communion as "ordinances," i.e., commands. This can move us toward empty legalism (as distinct from "empty rituals," for which we criticize others). If we are not sure what—if anything—happens when we observe ordinances, the only reason to do so is that Jesus commanded it. In our day, when suspicion of authority is almost automatic, ordinances have as much chance of being taken seriously as do parents when they rebuke a child with "Just because I say so."

Such is the power of gesture and action. No matter how good our sound system, words do not speak loudly enough.

The new Mennonite confession of faith uses the richer language of "signs." Sign language has biblical roots but is not strong enough. It tempts one to think that signs are merely representational and do not accomplish anything. Yet the confession says, "As Christians eat the bread and drink the cup, they experience Christ's presence in their midst. The Lord's Supper both represents Christ and is a way in which Christ is present again ('re-present') in the body of believers."[8]

Signs have a clear one-to-one meaning; they do not participate in the reality they portray but point to it. A stop sign is a clear signal, internationally understood, that drivers should stop. It is

not the act of stopping. Symbols, in contrast, have multiple meanings and are part of what they represent. Baptismal water means many things (cleansing, birth, death and resurrection) and is intrinsic to the act. One cannot have a baptism without water. "Signs" is too limited a term for our central rites. "Symbols" is more suggestive of their full, complex reality.

I presided at the funeral of a senior. His elderly sister-in-law wanted to comfort the widow, but words, by telephone or letter, were not enough. She made the trip from Texas, citing the cliché, "Actions speak louder than words." And she was right. The moment she arrived at the funeral home, the nearly catatonic widow began to speak! Such is the power of gesture and action. The same applies to worship: no matter how good our sound system, words do not speak loudly enough.

> *[Those who downplay symbol] should also avoid poetry, concerts and the theater, language, loving another person, and most…attempts at communicating with one's kind. Symbol is reality at its most intense degree of being expressed. One resorts to symbol when reality swamps all other forms of discourse. This happens regularly when one approaches God with others, as in…liturgy. Symbol is…as native to liturgy as metaphor is to language. One learns to live with symbol and metaphor or gives up the ability to speak or to worship communally.*[9]

Relationships often have much to do with how they symbolize other relationships; thus the intensity of projection, transference, and counter-transference. There is more to reality than what we experience on the surface. Those who devalue symbols may stress words, but even words themselves are "merely" symbols.

Even as we disdain symbols, they bombard us. Advertising's ubiquitous images seduce us. An Orthodox Christian notes: "In a world replete with the images that shower down upon us from billboards, pour from the television screen, adorn our cities and public parks, and inhabit our entire interior landscape, the religious image has little power of itself to claim its own dominion over the imagination."[10] We allow the media's symbols to convert and convince us but hesitate to use symbols to deepen our faith.

Margaret Loewen Reimer calls for a more sacramental approach to life and worship, reminding us that there is "something more."[11] A good word for "something more" is "sacrament," which Church Fathers used as a substitute for the New Testament *mysterion,* "mystery." "Mystery" means there is more meaning than we can comprehend. This is an affront to the modern mentality of control: "Mysteries never yield to solutions or fixes—and when we pretend that they do, life not only becomes more banal but more hopeless, because the fixes never work."[12]

May we have sacraments?

Mennonite suspicion of sacraments goes back to the sixteenth century. Baptism and communion were seen as automatic, mechanistic, even magical transmitters of God's grace and salvation regardless of the heart of the worshiper.[13] Anabaptists were concerned that God's sovereignty be honored: God cannot be manipulated.

Does anything happen in baptism or communion? Our confession certainly says so. And Rempel describes baptism as "an outward, visible sign of an inner, spiritual transformation made possible through the resurrected Christ."[14] This resembles Augustine's definition of sacrament: "visible form of an invisible grace." Anabaptists can recognize that actual "transformation… occurs in communion [but it] is that of people and not objects."[15] Communion "is not a sacred object in which Christ is contained; it is a sacred *event*."[16] It is not "mere memorial." Something actually happens. "When the church gathers in faith and love, open to the power of the Spirit, Christ is made present in the sharing of bread and wine."[17] We can add the testimony of pastoral experience. This is more than just rote rite. Transformations occur. I observe it in virtually every baptism or communion: people are affected. The Spirit's presence and movement are often palpable.

Our approach contains mixed messages. We give more performative power to wedding rites than to communion or baptism. We believe that when we perform a wedding, the couple has actually been married, whether or not their hearts were in the ceremony, whether or not they fully understood or meant their

vows. John Rempel remembers that his preparation for baptism put emphasis on what baptism and communion were not, yet at his baptism he remembers thinking, *"There is more going on here than they told us, more than what I have words for."* He observes, "Many Mennonites are taught early on that they better be serious about these ordinances or not participate in them."[18] If they are "mere" symbols, rituals, or ordinances, why do we fuss about who participates? Why their potent connection to church discipline and ethics?

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There are other traces of "more going on here." Infrequent communion goes back to pre-Reformation abstinence, from a context in which the Eucharist was seen as so holy that lay people rarely received it.[19] Some Russian Mennonites hold the bread in white handkerchiefs, not touching it with bare hands. This may also go back to pre-Reformation Catholicism, when "the actual presence of Christ in the bread and wine was a basic belief."[20] "Something more" is seen among the Swiss Mennonites who only observed it if a bishop presided, and the service was preceded by a service of inquiry, confession, and preparation. "Something more" is reflected in our tables designated for communion and given a prominent position, and in special dishes set aside for communion and baptism and displayed in places of honor. While we do not tolerate vestments on clergy (only on the choir!), most would be offended if a minister served communion or celebrated a baptism in shorts and tee shirt.

Early Anabaptists and sacraments

Early Anabaptists reacted against rites that set apart some people and things: sanctified bread and a special cup, offered by sacred persons in sanctuaries.[21] They opposed a privileged and exclusive "fencing in" and limiting of things sacred. They argued for using regular bread and ordinary cups, celebrating the supper in homes, with plain dress for those serving. They pushed for a deeper sacramental sense of all of creation. They reminded people to look for God in the ordinary.

A modern Roman Catholic criticizes his own tradition: "It is ironic that the so-called 'high churches'…are thought to have a strong sense of 'the sacred' as it is encountered in ritual and symbol…because…the true nature of the liturgy does not lie in its being a 'sacred act of worship' radically distinct from our ordinary human activities. Rather, in the liturgy we recall the entrance of God in history. God incarnate abides with us in the most insignificant and mundane, even homely, circumstances. In Jesus Christ God embraced all of creation as a suitable abode for the divine."[22]

This taps into sacramental awareness about daily life that can be found throughout church history. St. Benedict in the sixth century commanded that monks "regard all utensils and goods of the monastery as sacred vessels of the altar."[23] According to the seventeenth-century Carmelite Brother Lawrence, "The time of business…does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament."[24] Anglican priest and mystical poet George Herbert (1593–1633) wrote:

> *Teach me, my God and King,*
> *In all things thee to see*
> *And what I do in anything*
> *To do it as to thee.*[25]

Liturgy is a place for the "transformation of all profane existence into the dwelling place of God."[26] It calls us to see the world differently and to transform it, as suggested by John Howard Yoder in "Sacrament As Social Process: Christ the Transformer of Culture."[27] Sacraments help us find the sacred in all of life or recognize where it is denied or demeaned: "Our engagement with the liturgical symbols and rituals, themselves drawn from daily life, break[s] open our daily lives and reveal[s] both the hidden possibilities for communion that can be found there and the obstacles that impede the life of communion."[28] Sacrament restores "the creation to its proper use in the service of God by offering it to God in a sacrifice of love and praise."[29]

Unfortunately, earlier Anabaptist reaction against misdirected sacramental approaches now plays into a secular misconception that nothing is sacred, which was not a danger in the Reformation. The Anabaptist point was not that nothing is sacred but that Catholic sacramentalism was too narrow. Anabaptists pushed for expansion: all words, objects, places, people, and days are called to reflect God's purposes and to be sacred. Thus to say Balthasar Hubmaier "was not a sacramentalist may be downright misleading—we might better say he rejected the current prevailing *theory* of the sacraments."[30] Similarly, Mennonites today can claim to be sacramental without embracing all theories of the sacraments.

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Early Anabaptists were not afraid of the idea of sacraments. "Unlike Zwingli, they did not refer to water, bread, and wine as 'mere' symbols; they called them signs or even…sacraments."[31] Menno Simons used the language of sacrament as well as institution, sign, ordinance, command, emblem.[32] He had a high view of the supper: "Oh, delightful assembly and Christian marriage feast…where the hungry consciences are fed with the heavenly bread of the divine Word, with the wine of the Holy Ghost, and where the peaceful, joyous souls sing and play before the Lord."[33] Dutch Anabaptists saw the supper as more than a remembrance: "In order to grow, this new creature [in Christ]…was nourished in the Supper, where Christ was really present when the faithful were gathered in unity and love, and where He was spiritually eaten by the believer as he received the material bread and wine."[34]

Neither Balthasar Hubmaier, Pilgram Marpeck, nor Dirk Philips viewed baptism or the supper as merely a "rational act of remembrance and humanly willed remaking of covenant."[35] Marpeck was concerned about the spiritualist dismissal of ceremonies and argued that ceremonies "are powerful and efficacious *vehicles* which lead others to the divine reality, and which lead believers to deeper lives of love, yieldedness, and obedience."[36] He believed that the "Great Physician's medicine" comes in "outward worship, in ceremonies and ordinances."[37] He "moved the Anabaptist discussion back again towards the

Catholic sacramental insight: the physical ordinances and ceremonies commanded by Christ and celebrated by Christians in communal worship are necessary means of grace, physical windows and doors that participate in and open the way to the divine, and without which the way to the divine will not be known."[38]

"According to Marpeck, God uses matter to communicate spirit. It is not the objects (bread and wine) that become Christ but the event that connects us with Christ. The symbol is not merely a symbol; it participates in the reality it symbolizes."[39]

Covenants are not one-way. Biblical covenants begin with God's gift, grace, and initiative. Our pledges are responses. Emphasizing *believers* baptism, we can easily overlook God's initiative. Like covenants, sacraments involve God's actions, which come first, and ours.

Mennonite use of sacramental language did not disappear overnight. In the nineteenth century, North American Mennonites of Swiss background had two kinds of worship services, "preaching services" and "sacramental meetings."[40]

Anabaptists were appropriately concerned about over-inflated views of the mechanical efficacy of sacraments. In reaction, some radically devalued sacraments and argued that the outward and visible forms had virtually no worth. Some even abandoned baptism and communion. Rejection of sacraments may derive "from incipient Gnosticism" or be "based upon an absolute separation between matter and spirit after the manner of Origen. The first is a denial of the goodness of creation. The second is in a sense a denial of the possibility of the Incarnation, that is, of the material being a vehicle for the communication of the spiritual."[41]

We need no longer react against the sixteenth-century misunderstandings. We may explore and articulate an Anabaptist approach, without falling into either the mechanistic/magical or the disconnected, disincarnate, spiritualistic extreme of the past.

To recover the early Anabaptist sense of universal sacredness, Mennonites must become more sacramental. When we call church buildings "meetinghouses," we can interpret the term functionally: a meetinghouse is a place where people gather. But

we can also understand it sacramentally, as in the Original Testament the "tent of meeting" was a place to meet God. Similarly when we name churches after streets or cities, we may be acting prosaically, or we may also be expressing a claim that God is at work in this very location. An Anabaptist sacramental approach could insist that "everyday experiences of life have been windows that shed light on the presence of God in us and in our world."[42]

Mennonites are growing more sacramental. Marlene Kropf argues that communion can be a place where we experience healing.[43] She notes that Mennonites are celebrating communion more often, and attributes this both to an increased interest in ritual and to our awareness that the early church and many early Anabaptists celebrated communion frequently.[44]

Toward a Mennonite theology of sacraments

In its origins, "sacrament" derives from Roman practices of swearing oaths or pledges of loyalty or commitment, often in the military. Tertullian saw sacraments as two-way: "From God's side, the sacraments are the pledges of God, who wills salvation; from the faithful's side, sacraments are the occasion for the complete response of confidence and commitment to God in Christ."[45]

Anabaptist Reformers followed this usage. Hubmaier wrote that a sacrament is "a commitment by oath and a pledge…which the one baptized makes to Christ, our invincible Prince and Head, that he is willing to fight bravely unto the death in Christian faith under his flag and banner."[46] Marpeck also used the term in this way.[47]

A sacrament commits our allegiance to God's reign and God's means, not the world's. Because sacraments involve commitment they must be entered into freely and with conviction and are not extended automatically to all (e.g., to children and others who have not yet publicly made a faith commitment). To be baptized is to join God's reign. Communion renews kingdom loyalties first expressed in baptism. Both celebrate God's rule and our commitment to it and strengthen us to live into God's future. "A valid sacrament…always leaves the situation different from what it was before. By means of the natural needs and actions of [people], it effects a communication of the Wholly Other…; and

it is a fundamental part of worship, because it is an acknowledgment of the presence and priority of the divine, and is directed towards the sanctification of life."[48]

Sacraments are intended for sanctification. Sacrament is "like any other coinage, it may and often does become debased: yet still it is representative of the spiritual gold."[49] Sacraments should change and challenge us. "Fruitful sacraments always have one practical and visible result: people's lives are profoundly changed because God's purposes for life and time are gradually being appropriated."[50] Hence the saying: "The water of baptism is not embalming fluid."

In Jewish worship, one remembers by reliving the past and bringing it into the present. Sacraments re-enact and re-present salvation history, making it real in the believer's life. They commit us to God's future and draw us into deeper commitment and involvement.

Many Mennonites say "little…about God's action in the event: Jesus in his earthly ministry is invoked…but nothing is said of his presence."[51] We emphasize our side of the pledge, but fail to recognize God's. Yet pledges and oaths are two-way. Communion and baptism parallel covenanting.[52] Covenants are not one-way. Biblical covenants begin with God's gift, grace, and initiative. Our pledges are responses. Emphasizing *believers* baptism, we can easily overlook God's initiative. Like covenants, sacraments involve God's actions, which come first, and ours. A Christian sacrament is "an action of God together with the people of God, ritually performed to celebrate freedom and to hasten the liberation of the whole world."[53]

Summarizing Gordon Kaufman, Bernhard Lang suggests that the "the sacramental act has the same advantage a kiss has over a mere word of love; the advantage of touch, immediacy, and completeness."[54] Lang uses the term "transignification" rather than "transubstantiation"[55] to stress Christ's presence in the event, rather than emphasizing the elements. He gives an analogy:

> *Imagine being welcomed by a housewife who offers you a cup of tea and a biscuit. The tea…is nothing but tea and the biscuit does not change on being offered to you. Yet, they are different, redefined by the situation. Given the situation, they incarnate the woman's welcome. If we*

> *take a closer look, gifts serve as means of communication, and what is communicated is nothing else than the very person. The welcoming woman communicates as it were herself; she embodies herself in the tea offered. The gifts serve as an extension of herself. The woman might…have expressed her welcome in words only, but she feels that things cannot stop there.*[56]

Receiving a meal from someone is different from purchasing a meal in a restaurant; gifts "are an extension of the giver, even of a physically absent giver."[57] Such approaches can help us move toward sacramental theology.

The sacrament of remembering

Sacraments emphasize remembering. In the supper, we quote Jesus: "Do this in remembrance of me," "Do this as a reminder of me." Mennonites work the memorial aspect of the supper hard, focusing on Jesus' death. One effect, as noted above, is that we observe it infrequently. Second, we tend to think that it has little importance, that nothing happens. But remembering can be transformative. It re-presents events, and we re-live them; remembering does affect us. That is why we mark anniversaries, and why one spouse gets upset when the other forgets. For the same reason, we celebrate birthdays.

Even rote remembering can touch, transform, and heal. I know many people who felt unable to pray in crises but were able to do so, and to experience comfort and healing, through repeating prayers memorized in church. Remembrance is powerful.

Remembering has active implications. When our country memorializes war on Remembrance Day, Mennonites say: "To remember is to work for peace." There are different ways of remembering. Remembrance that does not change us and our relationship to the world is inadequate. The real thing affects how we live.

When I attend or perform a wedding, I recall, relive, and re-witness my own wedding. As I witness the marriage of others, I examine my commitments and my fidelity. In a wedding, I often hear God's call to me to be more deeply attentive and faithful to my marriage and family. Remembering works deeply within us.

Remembering is important to Christians who value God's work in history. We do not remember simply because we enjoy stories or genealogies. Rather "remembering is constitutive of faith itself and not a mere elaboration of beliefs already held."[58] Remembering creates faith. Abraham Joshua Heschel noted: "Much of what the Bible demands can be comprised in one word: Remember."[59] In Jewish worship, one remembers by reliving the past and bringing it into the present. Sacraments re-enact and re-present salvation history, making it real in the believer's life. They commit us to God's future and draw us into deeper commitment and involvement.

Remembering can connect us to people. "When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind although countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that if we meet again, you will know me. It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart."[60] When we remember Jesus and act in remembrance of him, we carry him with us, are marked by him and changed by him.

Strengthening sacramental senses

Careful teaching, preaching, education, and preparation can expand vocabulary and terminology. The language of ordinances and signs has merit. More unfamiliar terms, "sacrament" and "eucharist," also have merit. But more important than using these words is celebrating in sacramental ways.

Some suggestions:

First, celebrate with care and attention. Do not race through or perform perfunctorily. At a Mennonite conference with thousands of delegates, I saw communion celebrated in ten minutes. Sacramental fast food, MacCommunion, detracts from sacramental appreciation.

Second, celebrate communion more often, as our confession of faith urges. I have never encountered anyone who moved to more frequent communion who then found it less meaningful. One person rebuts the fear that "familiarity breeds contempt" with this tongue-in-cheek analogy: "Don't make love to your spouse too

often, he cautions, or it won't be 'special' anymore. Four times a year, tops."[61]

Third, expand the ceremonies. Use preparation or inquiry services in connection with communion, or have regular anointings. We have several stages in our congregation, as people prepare for baptism. Early on, we introduce candidates and bless them, and the congregation promises to pray for them. Later, candidates and sponsors share testimonies. Because of this preparation, when the baptism happens, its meaning is deepened.

One caution is in order. Rituals are deepened by repetition. Beware of too much creativity.

Fourth, put more emphasis on baptism by recalling anniversaries. Our church publishes a monthly calendar with birthdays, but we should celebrate baptismal anniversaries. Truth to tell, many of us do not remember the date of our baptism. *The Mennonite* publishes births, deaths, marriages, and minister and service worker transitions, but it does not list baptisms. This seems bizarre for Anabaptists.

Fifth, expand supper themes. New Testament terminology has four aspects: resurrection, death memorial, community celebration *(koinonia)*, and thanksgiving *(eucharist)*.[62] Eleanor Kreider adds a fifth, "reconciling and making peace," and makes connections with the kiss of peace.[63] Other associated biblical themes include manna from heaven, inclusiveness, Beatitudes (Luke 6:21, Matt. 5:6), Jesus at table, the Lord's Prayer,[64] Passover, and messianic banquet.[65] Kreider discusses themes for church life (forgiving and restoring, healing, Christ's sacrifice and ours, making covenant, discipline, Christ's offering and ours) as well as mission themes (Christ the conqueror, following Jesus, serving one another and the world, making justice).[66]

One caution is in order. Rituals are deepened by repetition. Beware of too much creativity. "The congregation's attention is focused on the novelty, and the congregation might seem satisfied for a time, but the new quickly grows old, the entertainment subsides, and the central point is missed."[67] An elementary rule of liturgy is this:

> *Repetition and rhythm in the liturgy are to be fostered. No rule is more frequently violated by the highly educated*

> *and well-meaning, who seem to think that never having to repeat anything is a mark of effective communication. Yet rhythm, which organizes repetition, makes things memorable, as in music, poetry, rhetoric, architecture, and the plastic arts no less than in liturgical worship. Rhythm constantly insinuates, as propagandists know. It constantly reasserts, as good teachers know. It constantly forms individuals into units, as demagogues and cheerleaders know. It both shrouds and bares meaning which escapes mere words, as poets know. It fuses people to their values as Cato, Churchill, and Martin Luther King knew. It frees from sound and offers vision for those who yearn for it, as the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount knew. Liturgical ministers who are irreparably arrhythmic should be restrained from ministering in the liturgy.*[68]

Our observance of sacraments need not—should not—accentuate creativity and innovation.

Conclusion

"Sacramental Mennonite" is not an oxymoron. We need a more sacramental approach. Some Anabaptist writings display antipathy to sacraments but some also reveal important sacramental themes. All that remains is for sacramentally-inclined leaders to work with patience, love, and conviction. Perhaps we can overcome the anger and ambivalence. Joy and renewal might be the fruit.

Notes

[1] John D. Rempel, ed., *Minister's Manual* (Newton and Winnipeg: Faith & Life Pr.; Scottdale: Herald Pr., 1998), 61–2.
[2] Alvin J. Beachy, *Worship As Celebration of Covenant and Incarnation* (Newton: Faith & Life Pr., 1968), 44.
[3] Quoted in Gordon Houser, "Conversations around the Lord's Table," *The Mennonite* (February 28, 1995): 4.
[4] John D. Rempel, "Toward an Anabaptist Theology of the Lord's Supper," in *The Lord's Supper: Believers Church Perspectives*, ed. Dale R. Stoffer (Scottdale: Herald Pr., 1997), 243–4.
[5] Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (New York: Seabury Pr., 1982), 3.
[6] Don E. Saliers, *Worship and Spirituality*, 2nd ed. (Akron, Ohio: Order of St. Luke Pubns., 1996), 61.
[7] Walter Klaassen, *Biblical and Theological Bases for Worship in the Believers' Church*

(Newton: Faith & Life Pr., 1978), 9.
[8] *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (Scottdale: Herald Pr., 1995), 50–3.
[9] Aidan Kavanagh, *Elements of Rite: A Handbook of Liturgical Style* (New York: Pueblo Pub. Co., 1982), 103.
[10] Anthony Ugolnik, *The Illuminating Icon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 57.
[11] Margaret Loewen Reimer, *Mennonites and the Artistic Imagination* (Winnipeg: Canadian Mennonite Bible College, 1998), 48–9.
[12] Parker J. Palmer, "All the Way Down: Depression and the Spiritual Journey," *Weavings* 13, no. 5 (September-October 1998): 33.
[13] John D. Rempel, "Ordinances," *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottdale and Waterloo: Herald Pr., 1990), 5:658. Rempel notes that Mennonites have sometimes practiced "mechanical sacramentalism," e.g., baptizing automatically, "to bring people into the church without a response of personal faith" (ibid., 660).
[14] Rempel, *Minister's Manual*, 39. This is quickly qualified with the note: "Baptism is not itself a salvific act, but witnesses to the saving activity of God in the believer."
[15] Ibid., 60.
[16] Ibid., 62. Italics added.
[17] Ibid.
[18] John Rempel, "Mennonite Churches," in *The Sacred Actions of Christian Worship*, ed. Robert E. Webber (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pubs., Inc., 1993), 6:32.
[19] At the post-Reformation Council of Trent, Catholics mandated that the faithful take communion at least once a year, on Easter. Frequent communion is not "Catholic." Catholics only began receiving communion weekly in the last century. According to John D. Rempel's article on communion in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, 5:171, "By the 17th c. it had become usual for Mennonites in northern Europe to celebrate communion twice a year while Mennonites in south Germany and Switzerland celebrated it once a year (Mast, *Letters*, 69). There is no extant rationale for the establishment of this practice. The following is an interpretive hypothesis: added to the undercurrent of fear of unworthy communion and obligatory confession beforehand, common through much of Christian history, was the Mennonite stipulation that believers had to be reconciled not only to God but to fellow Christians before they could commune. As communion for Anabaptists was a celebration of the church as the body of Christ, it could be observed only when the whole community was together and of one mind. As persecuted believers went into hiding and differing factions solidified, there could hardly be communion."
[20] Cornelius Krahn, "Communion," *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing Hse., 1955), 1:653.
[21] Walter Klaassen, *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant* (Waterloo: Conrad Pr., 1973), 13.
[22] Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Transforming Our Days: Spirituality, Community, and Liturgy in a Technological Culture* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 2000), 111.
[23] Timothy Fry, ed., *RB 1980:The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes and Thematic Index* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Pr., 1981), 229.
[24] Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, *The Practice of the Presence of God: Being Conversations and Letters of Nicholas Herman of Lorraine, Brother Lawrence* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1958), 29.
[25] John N. Wall, Jr., introduction to *The Country Parson; The Temple*, by George Herbert (New York: Paulist Pr., 1981), xv.
[26] Gaillardetz, *Transforming Our Days*, 113.
[27] In *The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical*, ed. Michael G.

Cartwright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 359–73.
[28] Gaillardetz, *Transforming Our Days*, 120.
[29] Frank C. Senn, *New Creation: A Liturgical World View* (Minneapolis: Fortress Pr., 2000), 64.
[30] James Wm. McClendon, Jr., "Balthasar Hubmaier, Catholic Anabaptist," in *Essays in Anabaptist Theology*, ed. H. Wayne Pipkin (Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1994), 73.
[31] Klaassen, *Biblical and Theological Bases for Worship*, 12.
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