

Minutes

Winnipeg Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue, Meeting No. 14

Meeting held on 19 January 2005
at McIvor Mennonite Brethren Church

Present: Elaine Baete, Adolf Ens, Irma Fast Dueck, Harold Jantz, Helmut Harder, Richard Lebrun, Henry Loewen, John Long, Luis Melo, Michael Radcliffe, and Linda Trenholm

Regrets: Elaine Pinto

1. **Helmut Harder** began the meeting by introducing and welcoming **Irma Fast Dueck** as a new member of our dialogue group (replacing Ardith Frey).
2. **Harold Jantz** led the opening prayer.
3. **Sharing recent ecumenical experiences.**
 - a) **Michael Radcliffe** spoke about a new book, *The Colonies and the Courts*, by Alvin Esau of the Faculty of Law of the University of Manitoba, which deals with the issue of the “power of expulsion” in religious groups like the Hutterites and a controversial case in which Michael himself had represented the Hutterite colony involved. The colony won its case, the court agreeing that the colony did have the right to expel. Esau argues that the colony, by abandoning its “inside law” (its private law) and taking the case to the secular course, had deserted its own religious tradition.

Michael also reported that he is currently directing two Mennonites in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercise program at St. Ignatius.
 - b) **Richard Lebrun** reported meeting old friends at Cambridge in early December. The husband, a long-time Anglican clergyman now dying of cancer, had just published a book entitled *Recognizing the Spirit Within Us: The Basic Goodness of Human Nature*. After ordering the book and reading it, Richard was saddened to discover that the author in developing his thesis had felt obliged to abandon belief in the divinity of Christ (having accepted uncritically the findings of the so-called Jesus Seminar) and the need for any organized church.
 - c) **Lynda Trenholm** reported attending the funeral of a friend’s father at a Lutheran Church, and being touched both by the homily and by the similarities between the Lutheran faith and her own Catholic faith. However, she was bemused that their version of the Apostle’s creed had substituted “holy Christian church” for “holy Catholic Church.” Her report of the singing of “In the Garden” at this event inspired the singing of a verse and chorus of this traditional song (about Mary Magdalene’s resurrection encounter with risen Jesus) by our whole group.
 - d) **John Long** reported a number of activities:
 - i) An ongoing one-on-one dialogue with a convert to Catholicism (from Anglicanism) for systematic discussion of issues of concern to this person.

- ii) Attendance at a meeting of the L.A.R.C. (Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic) group where there was discussion of document on justification by faith?
 - iii) Presentation of a paper at a panel at a meeting last spring at the Congress of Humanities and Social Sciences. This paper is now being published as a chapter in a book?
 - iv) John is scheduled to participate in a conference in St. Albert dealing with Catholic involvement in dialogue with the World Evangelical Alliance. (February 13–16, 2005)
- e) **Harold Jantz** reported that:
- i) He is bowling with a Chaplains' Curling League.
 - ii) That he is involved with the New Director For Life Ministries of Manitoba venture and the House of Hesed (which provides care for persons with HIV/AIDS). Harold chairs the board under which these two ministries operate.
 - iii) He is also involved in writing a series of opinion pieces for the *Winnipeg Free Press*.
- f) **Helmut Harder** reported two major activities:
- i) Work on the planning committee for the "Festival & Prayer: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" that is to take place January 23–30 in Winnipeg. In particular, he has helped organize the January 26th event at Charleswood Mennonite Church, "Meeting for Prayer in the Mennonite Way"
 - ii) At the request of the Bridgefolk board, he has prepared a summary of "Called to be Peacemakers" to be used at a large Mennonite meeting at Charlotte, NC, next summer. He is also involved (with two others) in the preparation of a Study Guide, as well as Questions for use with the Study Guide, for congregations wanting to discuss the "Peacemakers" document.
- g) **Luis Melo** reported involvement in the following activities:
- i) He has been named the Catholic liaison person with the Ukrainian Catholic Church for the Archeparchy of Winnipeg, which will be sending a priest to study ecumenical topics at a university in Rome.
 - ii) He noted that the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), for budgetary reasons has somewhat curtailed its commitment to ecumenical activities by absorbing its Christian Unity office into the Office of Theology (which means a change from 100% of one officer's time to 80%).
 - iii) Luis was pleased to report at attendance of some 250 people at the Joint Lutheran-Catholic Worship on Sunday, 14 November 2004, celebrating the 5th anniversary of signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. Very important was the collection of 12,000 food dollars for Winnipeg Harvest.
 - iv) In connection with its 40th anniversary, the Canadian Council of Christian and Jews is working on a Schools Interfaith Program that will involve taking high school students to three different places of worship where art and architecture as well as lectures will help the students appreciate

- different religious traditions. Luis, along with Rabbi Neal Rose, is involved in the planning of this activity.
- v) Luis has been invited to be participant in a long-standing Manitoba Inter-faith Roundtable.
 - vi) He and Fr. Dave Creamer from St. Paul's College have been asked to become involved in a University of Winnipeg initiative (led by Dr. Lloyd Axworthy) in inter-faith dialogue. They will attending a planning meeting on Wednesday, January 26th.
 - vii) He will be representing the Archbishop of St. Boniface at the funeral of Ukrainian Orthodox Archbishop Wasly Fedak on Saturday, 21 January.
 - viii) Luis reported that it was a time of pause in Anglican-Catholic ecumenical activity, largely because of internal tensions with the Anglican community over the Windsor Report.
 - ix) Involvement on the planning team for a Winnipeg event with Franklin Graham (son of Billy Graham) scheduled in 2006.
- h) **Elaine Baete** reported:
- i) Attendance at a worship service at the Church of the Rock, where she admitted to feeling like “a fish out of water.” The homily seemed a strange mixture of the history of the early church and an exhortation to be wary of controlling church structures. She also described a rite called “reception of the elements.” She attended because many students at St. Paul's College have questions about this church.
 - ii) Attendance at a lecture series at Shaary Zedek Synagogue. Elaine regretted being unable to attend the Shabbat dinner this year (away at a meeting).
- i) **Adolf Ens** reported
- i) An ongoing dialogue with a Russian Orthodox woman who grew up under the Communist regime in the USSR.
 - ii) Being intrigued by an art exhibit currently at the Mennonite Heritage Centre (January 14–February 26) of paintings by a Winnipeg artist, Bob Haverluck, a minister at John Black Memorial United Church. The exhibit is entitled “Jonah and the Cow, John of the Wild Bees, Jesus and the Healing trees: God's love letter to the Earth.” He referred especially to a piece called “A Little Sparrow Watches God Fall,” which for him tied into a book called “The Providence of a Sparrow,” which narrates the story of a house sparrow kept for eight years, with the bird becoming a kind of therapist for the author, who was under psychiatric treatment. Helmut noted that the gallery director, Ray Dirks, has scheduled an exhibit of his own photo collection, opening in the second week of March, with a title something like “In God's Image: A Global Anabaptist Family.”
- j) **Henry Loewen** reported:
- i) How the decision of a nephew to become a Catholic had been discussed and accepted within the family in a positive way that was very different than it would have been a generation ago.
 - ii) Attendance at a presentation by Bishop Bernard Felley (Society of St.

Pius X) on 15 November on “Modern Ecumenism.” He found it a time to practice “compassionate listening,” and a time when he felt “the power of the Church.” He sensed the speaker’s passion for the unity of the church and reflected that there are similar people in the Mennonite communion who want to keep the church as it came to them and want to pass it on unchanged.

[Later in the meeting, **Luis Melo** observed that Felley’s group (SSPX) is technically schismatic, and that its bishops, followers of Archbishop Lefebvre, were ordained without authorization by the Vatican. Luis attended this lecture, at the request of the Archbishop of St. Boniface, and found it tedious and simplistic, with much material out of context. This kind of ecumenism might be called “you come in-ism.”]

- k) **Irma Fast Dueck** spoke about:
- i) Her ecumenical experience as a student at the Toronto School of Theology, which she misses.
 - ii) Her experience teaching courses at Canadian Mennonite University on “Church” and “Worship,” where interactions with students from different faith traditions challenge her to think about “church” in new ways.
 - iii) Her involvement in organizing “Refreshing Winds, a Conference on Worship and Music” where the featured presenters include persons from diverse Christian traditions—Thomas Traeger (Presbyterian), Eleanor Daly, and Steve Bell (Evangelical).
 - iv) Her new project of “collecting Marys,” starting with a special gift from her eight-year old of a statue of a blond, blue-eyed Mary.

4. Discussion of assigned paragraphs of “Called to be Peacemakers.” Participants were all asked to read paragraphs 111–144 of the document, and to take the following directions into account: “Highlight a few significant points in your assigned paragraphs. Offer your reflections on the points. What is significant for *your* tradition.” “What should have been said, but wasn’t.” Any new learnings? What questions remain for you?

- a) **Paragraph 111.** Introductory paragraph to the section B. “Sacraments and Ordinances.” **Helmut** indicated that he would pass on discussion of the Introduction at this point.
- b) **Paragraphs 112–114.** “A Catholic Understanding of Sacraments.” **Luis** distributed two documents, his own “Commentary and Analysis” of these paragraphs, which he then spoke to, and an article by Thomas Finger entitled “Are Mennonites Sacramental?” from *The Mennonite* (September 21, 2004). He emphasized how and in what way sacraments are a “defining feature” of Catholicism, and cited the title of a book by Edward Schillibeeckx, *Christ, the Sacrament of Encounter with God*. There was one element of the Second Vatican Council’s treatment of sacraments that he thought was not as evident in the document as it might have been—that purpose of the sacraments is to make people holy, and allied to this, the teaching that holiness is never entirely a private matter, but rather a corporate matter in Catholicism.

- c) **Paragraphs 115–116**, on Catholic understanding of Baptism. **Adolph Ens** made the following comments on these paragraphs:
- i. Mennonites, who have formed their understanding of Catholic sacraments too much from those 16th century reformers who broke away from the Church, need to pay close attention to these articles. There may have been justification for Luther’s critique of the practice of the sacramental system of his time as “mechanical” Christianity. That is, because the sacraments were deemed efficacious “in their doing,” the place of the faith of the **recipient** seemed secondary. It was after all, God doing what God had promised, through sacraments mediated by the church. Paragraph 115 begins with a very strong affirmation of both faith and grace: “Baptism for Catholics is above all the sacrament of that *faith* by which, enlightened by the *grace* of the Holy Spirit, we respond to the Gospel ...” The faith and grace prior gifts of the Holy Spirit to the “recipient” of the sacrament.
 - ii. The Catholic understanding of the significance of baptism includes a response to its understanding of the human condition *at birth*. Following St. Augustine and other theologians, a doctrine of the effects of original sin meant that its inherited character itself places the new-born infant outside of “God’s life.” Hence an emphasis on washing “away every stain of sin.” [Luther, an Augustinian monk, retained this understanding after he left the Catholic Church and thus retained infant baptism and most of the Catholic theology associated with it. Zwingli, arguing for something like “original righteousness” on the basis of Jesus’ saying of children “for of such is the kingdom of God,” had to use less convincing reasons for continuing the practice.] Zwingli’s radical followers and other Anabaptist-Mennonites discontinued infant baptism.
 - iii. In Catholic understanding, “confirmation ... completes baptism” as a kind of final step incorporating the baptized child into the church. The time lag between the two stages (baptism and confirmation) [and especially of “first communion” in between] are puzzling to non-Catholics who don’t know of or hold the same view of original sin.
 - iv. The idea of confirmation as issuing a vocation—“to spread and defend the faith by word and deed”—was strongly present in early Anabaptist teaching but has been largely lost in Mennonite circles (at least in America-Europe). Mennonites could relearn it from the Catholic understanding.
 - v. Infant baptism takes seriously the notion of “solidarity” as used by St. Paul in Romans 5. Mennonites, not sure what of their theology of “child dedication” which many congregations practice in lieu of infant baptism, might profitably study and learn from this understanding.

Unanswered question: Has our emphasis on Eucharist/Lord’s Supper led us to concentrate more on Atonement than on Incarnation? Cf. F. D. Maurice.

Break: meal prepared by Betty Fleck.

- d) **Paragraphs 117–119**, on Catholic understanding of Eucharist. **Henry Loewen** was greatly struck by the first sentence in 117 to the effect that “The Eucharist is not simply one of the sacraments but it is the pre-eminent one.” He followed up the references to the documents of Vatican II that developed this theme and found this indeed to be the teaching contained in them. Henry then developed the theme as some length, to show the richness contained in the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist.

He found many similarities between this Catholic understanding of the Eucharist and Mennonite understanding of the Lord’s Supper. He highlighted the emphasis on unity—for Mennonites in the stress on achieving “rightness” with other members of the congregation and with God before celebration of the rite.

Given the great convergence between Catholic and Mennonite teaching on the Eucharist/Lord’s Supper, the question remains, how can this most sacred of sacraments divide us? Could there not be a Eucharistic celebration in which we both could participate?

Commenting on Henry’s reflections, **Helmut** wondered if the Catholic Church had perhaps put too much emphasis on the Eucharist, had not made it too exclusive, had not made it too protected? And he wondered if this theology was truly based on Scripture—or whether it wasn’t based more on tradition than revelation?

Irma recalled a conversation with Tom Finger (author of the article that Luis had distributed) who wondered if a strong emphasis on a sacramental understanding would lead to a weaker emphasis on discipleship. **Luis** wondered how frequency of celebration might impact on discipleship, recalling the old saying that you become what you receive. **Lynda** recalled caring for her dying father in last months, and how reception of the “bread of life” had been a transforming experience for him—the experience had “concretized” the meaning of the Eucharist for her. **Adolf** wondered about the appropriate balance between the theology of the death and resurrection of Christ vs. the theology of the incarnation, by which God identifies himself with all of humanity.

- e) **Paragraph 120**. Introductory paragraph on Mennonite understanding of “Ordinances.” **Helmut** had no comment on this paragraph of which he was the author.
- f) **Paragraphs 121–124**, on Mennonite understanding of Baptism. **Lynda Trenholm** checked all the scriptural references in these paragraphs describing the Anabaptist-Mennonite understanding of baptism, and to her mind these references seemed in tune with the practice of infant baptism—with the parents, godparents, and community affirming the faith of the child brought for the sacrament. Working in a parish, she does not feel it is her job to “police” the motives of parents who bring their children for baptism; rather, she presumes a modicum of faith on their part, and provides education for them on the meaning of the sacrament and on their responsibilities for the education in the faith of the child.

g) **Paragraphs 125–127**, on Mennonite understanding of Lord’s Supper. **John Long** reflected on these paragraphs from a Catholic perspective. He was particularly struck by the notion of “ordinance”—as something that Christ had “ordained” for our good, and by the way paragraph 125 stressed the New Testament basis of Mennonite understanding of Lord’s Supper as 1) a meal of remembrance whereby participants recall that Jesus suffered, died, and was raised on behalf of all of us; 2) a meal that is a sign bearing witness to the New Covenant inviting participants to renew their covenant with Christ; 3) a sign of the Church’s corporate sharing in the body and blood of Christ; and 4) a proclamation of the Lord’s death and celebration of hope in his coming again—a foretaste of the heavenly banquet of the redeemed.

John was also taken by the way paragraph 126 insists on the “effectual power” of the ordinance to bring change to the participants and the congregation, that the notion that the key lies not in the elements as such, but in the context of the whole, where the spiritual presence is suggested and re-presented with appropriate symbols and liturgy.

The crunch issue for Catholics, **John** felt, comes in paragraph and its discussion about who may be invited to participate in the Lord’s Supper. While noting the absence of the term “Eucharist” he thought the tone and concepts included in the paragraph sounded “very Catholic.” He was struck, however, by the way the New Testament references could be interpreted in different ways by our two traditions. He thought that we need more thought and reflection on our Catholic understanding of “real presence,” which is not a question of scientific fact or “magic” but a matter of faith. He also wondered why we can’t work out a way towards concelebration between the two communions.

In commenting on these reflections, **Helmut** observed that Mennonites do believe in the “real presence” of Christ in the community (the body of Christ) that comes together to celebrate the Lord’s Supper. He also suggested that the language in paragraph 13, which speaks of divergences in understanding of the presence of Christ at the Eucharist/Lord’s Supper, was weak. **Harold** wondered if the Catholic practice of frequent celebrations of the Eucharist might not lead to boredom, and lack of appreciation of the wonder of the rite.

Unanswered questions: Why is it said that “confirmation completes baptism”? Is baptism not complete in itself? What is the role of the presider in the Anabaptist-Mennonite ordinance of the Lord’s Supper?

h) **Paragraphs 128–131**, on Convergences between Catholic and Mennonite understandings of Baptism and Lord’s Supper. **Harold Jantz’s** comments were as follows:

I’d like to pick up on the commonalities in our understandings, convergences in our belief about baptism and the Lord’s Supper which represent elements that are right at the core of our faith and practice as Christians.

The section begins with the statement that whether we think of baptism and the

Lord's Supper as sacraments or ordinances (#128), we agree that "they have their origins and point of reference in Jesus Christ and in the teaching of Scripture." They are, as the paragraph states, "extraordinary occasions of encounter with God's offer of grace revealed in Jesus Christ." That's a wonderful statement!

That rooting of these two elements of our Christian life in an encounter with **Jesus** Christ as discovered through the Scriptures and experienced within the context of a believing and confessing body is, I am certain, fundamental to a Mennonite understanding. It ought to stand right at the beginning of a statement about baptism and the Lord's Supper, as it does here. On this foundational understanding, we can indeed say that we are together. There is only "one Lord, one faith, one baptism..." and this surely affirms that whatever our differences, our faith rest on Jesus Christ.

That affirmation continues in the statement of the essential meaning (#129) of baptism, which has to do with the notion of "dying and rising with Christ" as well as signifying the "outpouring of the Holy Spirit and promised presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and the Church." We share these convictions with the Catholic Church, though I would have to note that the first statement tends to be heard more in the Mennonite Brethren church, where immersion baptism is practiced, while the second tends to be heard more in Mennonite Church (and EMC or EMMC) settings, where sprinkling or pouring are practiced.

Mennonites also share with the Catholic Church the conviction (#130) that baptism should not be repeated and that it is a public witness in which faith in Christ and identification with Christ is given public expression. Baptism then becomes a moment in which incorporation into the visible body of Christ becomes a reality. The statement at this point, however, carries a suggestion of baptismal regeneration ("baptism is...the occasion for the incorporation of new believers into Christ..."), something which I don't think Mennonites generally would say. We would instead say that saving faith precedes baptism and baptism is the public witness to that faith. Incorporation into the mystical body of Christ takes place first when saving faith is exercised, while incorporation into a visible community of faith takes place when the public act of confession through baptism occurs within the context of that community of believers.

The description of the public witness practice at baptism (#131) followed by Mennonites and Catholics (both Latin and Eastern rites) depicts well what we are doing, I think. While the statement emphasizes the convergence in terms of the public aspect of the witness, I would say that many within my part of the Mennonite church family see a significant difference between a witness made by a person about their own faith and the witness made by someone else on behalf of a child. In my Mennonite conference, up to this time we have not been able to accept the public witness made at confirmation when a young person appropriates his/her baptism as an infant. This is an issue about which we are in debate. I suppose the reality is that for virtually all of us in the Mennonite church, at some point in our history, we have come from backgrounds in which we had been

baptized as infants and then chose to be rebaptized as adults. We were Anabaptists. So to accept that as a valid baptism is difficult.

While we may not have experienced as much convergence as Para. 131 seems to imply, the essential point in Para. 128 must be underscored: both baptism and the Lord's Supper derive their meaning because of "God's offer of grace revealed in Jesus Christ." This is the core truth we embrace and confess. It stands before and above everything else.

Let me end with a story. Last week I attended a funeral of a man who died at the age of 85 after an extremely difficult life. He was born in the Soviet Union and in the early 1940s he married his sweetheart from the Mennonite village in which he had grown up. The war that was waged in his part of the Ukraine allowed them to flee west as the German army retreated in 1943 They reached Poland and there their first child, a girl was born. Four months after her birth, he was drafted into the German army. He managed to survive but he was captured by the Russians and taken back to the Soviet Union. His wife, miraculously, managed to reach the West and came to Canada with her child. He also survived the prison camps and after ten years they found each other through relatives here in Canada.

For the next twenty years he tried one means after the other to gain permission to leave the Soviet Union and be reunited with his wife. Finally in 1976, after 32 years of separation, they were reunited. What impressed one about this man was his gracious, grateful spirit, the sense of peace and serenity he communicated. Without being sentimental. I think I could say I've seldom met a man with a sweeter spirit. In Russia, where this always had consequences, he openly confessed his faith through baptism and became active in the church as song and youth leader. He was able to encourage and inspire many young people.

When he came to Canada he continued to serve actively in the church. I think I heard about him first because of the attention he gave to his wife when she had to be placed in Donwood Manor because of her aging. To me he represents someone whose public confession through baptism and continuing confession through his life were indivisible and seamless.

That's what the life of the baptized ought to represent, declaring a faith and setting a direction that makes clear that Christ is Lord of one's life. It certainly was clear in him.

- i) **Paragraphs 132–134**, on more on Convergences between Catholic and Mennonite understandings of Baptism and Lord's Supper. **Elaine Baete** commented as follows:

As indicated, we converge in our understandings in these points. Perhaps only to highlight some points:

- To be "church" in the RC Church is to be inherently, implicitly and explicitly sacramental.

- A problem that the history of the Church might reveal is that the Church seems to have allowed the sacraments to take a life on of their own independent of other aspects of Church life and practice., e.g. private baptisms versus communal baptisms.
- Having infants baptized in terms of “getting them done” when there is no real commitment in the church as regards practice and for example social justice within the body of Christ.

#132: Baptism: For both denominations, baptism is a public celebration, not private, which is still very much an issue for some people in the church who wish it to be private. Note: In the RC Church baptism can be performed “conditionally” by nurses in the hospital or in other emergency situations.

#133 Eucharist: As gift of grace the Eucharist is the nourishment par excellence of the Christian Catholic and Mennonite. Catholics tend to or like to emphasize (or overemphasize) the dimension of the “real” presence of Christ. It is a faith-communal celebration integrated in the liturgy where the People of God gather to worship in response to the Word of God that is proclaimed, and all are sent forth to live and serve the building of the reign of God at the conclusion of the celebration.

As much as we have these sacraments developed with theological understandings in the RC Church, they remain to be part of the mystery of our faith, while also being reality lived.

- j) **Paragraphs 135–137**, on Divergences between Mennonite and Catholic understanding of sacraments and ordinances, and infant and adult baptism.

Michael Radcliffe noted the presence in paragraph 135 of the phrase “the grace proper to each sacrament” and observed that the meaning of the phrase was not spelled out. He also felt that paragraph 137 failed to stress sufficiently the extent to which Catholics take seriously the Church’s expectations with respect to the role of the parents and the congregation when they make a profession of faith on behalf of baptized infant.

With respect to the meaning and consequences of baptism, Michael wondered if we should not give more consideration to the idea of sin—cosmic sin and original sin.

Unanswered question: If the sacraments are sacraments of holiness, but not individualistic, what are the implications?

- k) **Paragraphs 138–140**, on Divergences Mennonite and Catholic understanding of Lord’s Supper, **Irma Fast Dueck’s** reflections on the three paragraphs follow:

How is Christ present in the Eucharist/Lord’s Supper? The Mennonite perspective

is not very inspiring in comparison to the Catholic “summit of the whole life of the Church.” Yet spiritually (if I can risk somehow weeding out the “spiritual” from the “theological”), the Lord’s Supper has deep significance both personally and communally. The words “sign” or “symbol” can easily seem to reduce the Lord’s Supper to a kind of intellectual “representation” that somehow the church is responsible for re-creating. Last year, I attended a conference on Mennonite and Rituals in the US, while there, one of the presenters set up two communion settings—one very ornate and festive with lots of symbols, and colour and life, and the other more simple—bread and wine on a pottery plate and goblet. The question the presenter was getting at was how different ways of “doing” communion, resulted in different theological emphases. I and John Rempel, with whom I sat, both expressed a discomfort, though it was difficult for either of us to name. Neither of us would disagree that “communion” can be done in many ways, resulting in many different understandings and emphases. However, I think the discomfort lay in somehow reducing communion to something that we can somehow conger up. I had to think, even when “Communion” was done poorly (if you can even say it that way), Christ always seems to “break through.” What is God doing through our human doings? Sadly, early Anabaptists were more interested in the nature of the human action with the sacrament, rather than the nature of the sacrament itself. John Howard Yoder defined sacrament something like “human action through which God acts.” Again, the risk is that God’s action can somehow be conjured up by the church (it is somewhat presumptuous, if not arrogant). Worship, holds together the human and the divine. It is about the relationship between these yet we struggle with how to meaningfully understand the nature of that relationship.

Christ is present to both Catholics and Mennonites in the Eucharist but that presence is experienced in perhaps different ways. I think Mennonites believe that Catholics believe that Christ is primarily present through the elements and the priest and it was helpful to hear that Catholics also experienced Christ’s presence in the community gathered (118). I believe Mennonites also deeply experience the presence of Christ, however perhaps the body of Christ is interpreted not so much as the body within the elements of bread (and blood in wine) but the body of Christ is experienced within the “body of Christ,” the church. Christ is present in the body, in that way and this is a profound experience for those gathered around the table

Having said that, what is to be thought about the elements? A number of years ago, I was teaching a youth Christian education class in Toronto (TUMC). We had communion in the worship service and later the left-over bread made its way into the youth class and the youth were tossing it to each other as a kind of snack, (one boy actually “nailing” another with a piece of communion bread). After all, it is just bread, isn’t it? There’s nothing particularly sacred about it. Yet I cringed deep inside, and I’m guessing that many other Mennonites would cringe as well, and it’s not because we’ve been influenced by the Catholic Church! This was communion bread and realized that perhaps the bread was more sacramental to us

Mennonites than we think. I also recall my own baptism, where my grandmother gave me a white hankie (embroidered), as a gift, to hold the bread at communion. No. Mennonites are not sacramental—bread is after all only bread, or is it?

It is difficult to talk about how the Eucharist/Lord's Supper without talking about what we mean by church and even what we mean by grace. Salvation is found in the church, for both Mennonites and Catholics. The expansive understanding of the Catholic Church is enviable. Mennonites, perhaps Mennonite Church, in particular (vs. MB) have reduced church primarily to congregation, to a gathered community of a particular people and have perhaps lost that greater sense of unity and community and "communion" that the Eucharist offers

How does the understanding that only Catholics participate in the Eucharist, compare to the Mennonite understanding that only those baptized as adults, can participate? Does this understanding for both traditions reflect a kind of boundary maintenance? Or is there something else at stake? Clearly, once again, it has to do with who we understand the church to be and the clear link between ecclesiology and the sacraments/ordinances.

The book *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* by William Cavanaugh is an example of Eucharist being critical to the church's survival in Chile and the eventual overthrow of the Pinochet regime and making the church visible ("reclaiming the body and the practice of an alternative imagination"). The book depicts the Eucharist and a theology of church which perhaps, more than any other book I've read, creates "a place" where I think both Mennonites and Catholics would be comfortable.

Unanswered questions: Is it not the case that the more we emphasize the sacramental character of the Eucharist, the more we weaken its connection with discipleship? How does the Eucharist empower living in the world? How does the frequency of celebration impact our living? Should Mennonites ask much more pressingly: What is GOD doing in the Lord's Supper? (Rather than concentrating overly much on what we are doing.) What is the connection between grace, ethics, and discipleship?

- 1) **Paragraphs 141–144**, on "areas of future study." **Richard Lebrun** had the following comments:

On re-reading all the paragraphs assigned for this meeting, and on reflecting on all the dialogues that our local group has had on Baptism and Eucharist/Lord's Supper, what strikes me is how thoroughly our group has done its homework. We have touched on and in most cases discussed in some depth almost all the issues treated in this international document.

Paragraph 141: Further discussion of our divergent view on the role of the faith as it bears on the status of infants and children could be rewarding, especially if it encompassed a comparative study of sin and salvation. I think we understand our

divergent views respecting the spiritual status of children and baptism.

Paragraph 142: It seems to me that the question of recognizing or not recognizing one another's baptism is something for further study by the authorities in both communions rather than for a group like ours.

Paragraph 143: We have already explored in some depth the origin and development of the theology and practiced of baptism. One area here that might be worth further exploration might be the development (and present status in both communions) of the doctrine of original sin.

Paragraph 144: Again, we have already compared in some detail the divergences in understanding between the Catholic understanding of sacraments and the Mennonite understanding of ordinances. It seems to me that our exploration led us to think that divergences were perhaps not as deep or significant as we had originally thought, and that many times differences were more a matter of vocabulary than fundamental teachings or experience. Perhaps here, future discussion might focus on convergence and deepening our understanding of the meaning of these rituals and practices.

Unanswered questions: What are our respective views on original sin?

m) In some "wrap up" comments, **Melo Luis** raised the question: so now what can we say to each other (Catholics and Mennonites)? He suggested that what seems to be needed is a stronger emphasis on convergence, that the "convergences," "divergences," "areas of future study" method has limitations. Perhaps something more like the method used in the Catholic-Lutheran statement on Justification is needed, where each side set down its understanding of the issue, but in a way that did not exclude specific aspects of the other side's understanding of the issue. **John Long** observed that some of the statements in the substantive paragraphs of "Called Together to be Peacemakers" were hard to reconcile with the statements in paragraphs 141–144 on "areas of future study."

5. Future discussions: Helmut noted that we have left un-discussed questions in our evening's conversations, and wonder if at some point it would be useful to have someone go through the minutes of all our previous dialogues and see what might be found for an on-going agenda.

6. The next dialogue was tentatively scheduled of Wednesday evening, 18 May, with 24 May as possible backup date. Participants are to advise **Helmut** and/or **Luis** of any difficulties with these dates before the end of February. Lynda Trenholm offered to have Christ the King parish host the May meeting.