

THE WORLD IN A WAFER: A GEOGRAPHY OF THE EUCHARIST AS RESISTANCE TO GLOBALIZATION

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There is a great deal of confusion in Christian social thought over the phenomenon known as globalization. Many who write on the Church and politics carry on as if nothing had happened, preoccupied with the question of if and how the Church should enter “the public realm”, an imaginary national space where conflicts are settled. Globalization is left for those who deal in so-called “economic ethics”, either to decry transnational firms paying Salvadoran textile workers thirty-three cents an hour, or to hail the capitalist catholicity which is including those “currently excluded within the beneficent circle of fruitful practices”, as Michael Novak has it.¹ Those of us who have been critical of the nation-state as such are also confused. One would think that we would be pleased—or would at least find something else to do—now that the global economy has rendered national borders increasingly irrelevant. Africans and Minnesotans commune on the Internet, and the world has shrunk to proportions measurable by the click of a mouse. A catholicity undreamed by the original *Catholica* is now dawning. Ought we, like the Donatists in Augustine’s phrase, sit like frogs in our swamp croaking “We are the only Catholics”,² when a much broader universality is now within reach?³ Or is it a universality at all? MacIntyre and Lyotard conversely invoke images of fragmentation to characterize the situation of late capitalism. Has the possibility of true catholicity been defeated in the triumph of global capital?

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I was going to subtitle this essay “How to be a Global Village Idiot”, but “A Geography of the Eucharist” better captures what I hope to accomplish, for I believe that much of the Christian confusion over globalization results from a neglect of the Eucharist as the source of a truly Catholic practice of space and time. Globalization marks a certain configuration for the discipline of space and time; I would like to juxtapose this geography with another geography, a geography of the Eucharist and its production of catholicity. In the first half of the paper, I will argue that globalization is not properly characterized by mere fragmentation, but enacts a universal mapping of space typified by detachment from any particular localities. This is not a true catholicity, however, for two reasons: first, this detachment from the particular is actually used as a discipline to reproduce divisions between rich and poor, and second, it produces fragmented subjects unable to engage a catholic imagination of space and time. Globalism is a masternarrative, the consumption of which ironically produces fragmented subjects incapable of telling a genuinely catholic story. In the second half of this paper, I show that the Eucharist produces a catholicity which does not simply prescind from the local, but contains the universal *Catholica* within each local embodiment of the body of Christ. The body of Christ is only performed in a local Eucharistic community, and yet in the body of Christ spatial and temporal divisions are collapsed. In the complex space of the body of Christ, attachment to the local is not a fascist nostalgia for *gemeinschaft* in the face of globalization. Consumption of the Eucharist consumes one into the narrative of the pilgrim City of God, whose reach extends beyond the global to embrace all times and places.

I. The Dominance of the Universal

The “giant sucking sound” that Ross Perot heard in 1992 was the sound of “American” jobs being drained into Mexico as a result of NAFTA.⁴ “If he’s against it, I’m for it” would be a natural reaction for someone allergic to the kind of nationalistic particularism put forth by the likes of Perot and Pat Buchanan in opposition to NAFTA. What I hope to show in this section, however, is that globalization does not signal the demise of the nation-state but is in fact a hyperextension of the nation-state’s project of subsuming the local under the universal.

The rise of the modern nation-state is marked by the triumph of the universal over the local in the sovereign state’s usurpation of power from the Church, the nobility, guilds, clans, and towns.⁵ The universalization of law and rights would liberate the individual from the whims of local custom, thereby creating a direct relationship, or “simple space”, between the sovereign and the individual. As John Milbank uses the term, simple space contrasts with the complex space of overlapping loyalties and authorities in medieval society.⁶ Rights did not pertain to individuals alone; local

groupings were themselves possessed of rights and freedoms which were not simply conferred by a sovereign center. These associations overlapped in the rights and duties which individual persons owed to each other and to the different associations to which they belonged. Both the person and the local association were wholes to themselves, while each also constituted part of a larger whole. Otto Gierke's now classic work in medieval law shows how this complex conception of space was based on the Pauline theology of the body of Christ.⁷

The new configuration of space that arose with modernity is helpfully illuminated by Michel de Certeau's distinction between "itineraries" and "maps". Pre-modern representations of space marked out itineraries which told "spatial stories", for example, the illustration of the route of a pilgrimage which gave instructions on where to pray, where to spend the night, and so on. Rather than surveying them as a whole, the pilgrim moves through particular spaces, tracing a narrative through space and time by his or her movements and practices. A fifteenth-century Aztec representation of the exodus of the Totomihuacas, for example, displays what amounts to a log of their travels: footprints accompanied by pictures of successive events from the journey, such as river crossings, meals, and battles.⁸ By contrast, modernity gave rise to the mapping of space on a grid, a "formal ensemble of abstract places" from which the itinerant was erased. A map is defined as "a totalizing stage on which elements of diverse origin are brought together to form the tableau of a 'state' of geographical knowledge".⁹ Space itself is rationalized as homogeneous and divided into identical units. Each item on the map occupies its proper place, such that things are set beside one another, and no two things can occupy the same space. The point of view of the map user is detached and universal, allowing the entire space to be seen simultaneously.¹⁰ The type of mapping that Certeau describes is a corollary of the rise of the modern state, which depends on the ability to survey a bounded territory from a sovereign center and make uniform the relations of each particular unit of space to every other.

The flattening of complex social space by the modern state does not mean that local groups simply vanished with the rise of the state. Rather, local social groupings were recast as "intermediate associations" between state and individual, and such institutions have played an important role in mediating the state project. The universal is mediated by the local; the institutions of civil society, as Hegel saw, are educative, or as Foucault would later say, disciplinary. Parties, unions, churches, families, prisons, hospitals, and schools help to embody and produce the state project. Such institutions in modernity depend on a rational mapping of space, captured well by Foucault's famous image of the Panopticon, a prison space organized around a central surveillance tower. Space is made homogeneous and uniform; each particular unit relates directly to the center, which sees all but is not seen. Not knowing when one is being supervised, each individual becomes self-disciplining.¹¹

In the political economy which precedes globalization, then, the local is subsumed under the universal, but local attachments still play an important role in mediating the universal. The Fordist economic model which reigned from World War I to the early 1970s depended on strong attachment to nation, corporation, family, community, and union. Economic historians characterize this era by reference to Henry Ford's two-fold idea of production and consumption: 1) the concentration and discipline of labor through assembly line production in large factories, and 2) the cooperation of unions, families, and local communities in prioritizing mass consumption (the assumption being that mass production depends on the workers being able and willing to buy what they produce). The state did not simply overcome civil society, but rather the state was a diffused complex of power relations produced and reproduced in the institutions of civil society through the generation of consensus.¹²

The post-Fordist global economy currently emerging, however, goes farther than Foucault envisioned in subsuming local social groupings under the universal, to the point of detachment from any particular space. Foucault still depends on a strong account of the institutions of state and civil society. Those institutions, however, are everywhere in crisis.¹³ Governments have ceded or lost control over the transnational economy; through deregulation and computer transfers money has become virtually stateless. The disciplinary mechanisms of the factory and the factory town are no longer necessary for the extraction of surplus labor, and have given way to part-time labor, home labor, various forms of illegal labor, and global "outsourcing". The subcontracting operations of multinational corporations, such as Nike in Asia, no longer demand or even allow the direct oversight or disciplining of labor by the purchasing company. Labor is hidden, and the sources of production are constantly shifting location. Unions have consequently lost much of their power. With the loss of geographical stability, family, church, and local community have also given way to global monoculture and "virtual community". In sum

"The new order eschews loyalty to workers, products, corporate structures, businesses, factories, communities, even the nation", the *New York Times* announces. Martin S. Davis, chair of Gulf and Western, declares, "All such allegiances are viewed as expendable under the new rules. You cannot be emotionally bound to any particular asset."¹⁴

As is often remarked, the nation-state itself is apparently giving way before the free flow of global capital. The geographical flexibility of the transnational corporation under post-Fordism produces competition among nations and localities to sacrifice their own control over wages, working conditions, and environmental standards in order to attract business. Under the conditions of the Uruguay Round of GATT, nation-states have surrendered their sovereignty over trade to the World Trade Organization, which is

empowered to judge which laws enacted in any community of the signatory nations constitute a barrier to free trade. National or local laws governing such activities as pesticide use, clear cutting of forests, and hormones in meat are subject to revocation by the WTO, from which there is no appeal.¹⁵

And yet the nation-state perdures as an important factor in the neutralization of opposition to globalization and its acceptance as natural and inevitable. While the Commerce Department and USAID have spent hundreds of millions to encourage US businesses to move jobs overseas,¹⁶ the US congressional debate over NAFTA was conducted in such a way that nationalism wholly occluded the issue of class. The terms of the debate became "Is NAFTA good or bad for America?" Absent was the possibility that the agreement eliminating the last trade barriers between North American nations might be good for *some* Americans (or Mexicans)—namely shareholders and consumers with purchasing power—and bad for *some* Americans—namely workers.

GATT and NAFTA represent a voluntary loss of sovereignty for the nation-state. This apparent act of self-sacrifice is incomprehensible unless we see that these changes do not mean the end of the state project, but rather its generalization across space. If the state project is characterized by the subsumption of the local under the universal, then globalization hyperextends this project. Just as the nation-state freed the market from the "interventions" of local custom, and freed the individual to relate to other individuals on the basis of standardized legal and monetary systems,¹⁷ so globalization frees commerce from the nation-state, which, as it turns out, is now seen as one more localization impeding the universal flow of capital.

Advances in the management of time have made possible the extension of the universal mapping of space to a global level. The speed with which information and people can travel across space has overcome spatial barriers and shrunk the dimensions of the world. The metaphor of the "global village" is often invoked to elicit catholic sentiments of the world's peoples coming into communion with each other, overcoming the ethnic, tribal, and traditional barriers which have produced so much bloodshed over the centuries. Global mapping appears to make all the people on earth contemporaries, sharing the same space and time. And indeed, a universal corporate culture increasingly penetrates local cultures worldwide. If one were parachuted into a shopping mall, it would take some investigation to discover whether one had touched down in Cambridge or Fort Worth, Memphis or Medicine Hat, Dar es Salaam or Minsk.

Examples of the dominance of the universal—the "McDonaldization of Society", to quote the title of George Ritzer's study¹⁸—are too common to belabor. In corporate language, the vision is often presented as a beneficent catholicity which produces peace through the overcoming of division. Utopia, says the president of Nabisco Corporation, is "One world of homogeneous consumption ... [I am] looking forward to the day when Arabs and Americans,

Latins and Scandinavians will be munching Ritz crackers as enthusiastically as they already drink Coke or brush their teeth with Colgate."¹⁹ As I will suggest in the next section, however, the triumph of the universal does not simply overcome spatial barriers. Indeed, the attempt to map space as homogeneous and catholic, overcoming spatial divisions, is often itself a ruse to divert attention from the new forms of division that are being produced.

II. *The Discipline of Detachment*

The post-Fordist economy is marked by geographical flexibility and the overcoming of Fordist segmentation of space. Nevertheless, all this apparent decentralization and despatialization masks a different discipline of space which is in some ways "ever more tightly organized *through* dispersal".²⁰ Workers in one location will be much more compliant to the demands of management if the company has the capability to close the plant and move operations somewhere else where wages and other standards are lower. The domination of space becomes detached from any particular localities and becomes a matter of the abstract and universal potentiality of *any* space to produce profit. Domination of space relies less on direct supervision and more on information, an accurate and up-to-the-minute mapping of labor markets and exchange rates worldwide which gives the corporation mobility.²¹ Now the Panopticon does not simply characterize the discipline of space within a particular location, such as a factory. It characterizes the gaze spread over the entire map of the globe.

Gilles Deleuze's concept of the "line of flight" is often invoked as an image of resistance to highly segmented and disciplined spaces. One creates "nomad spaces" of flight from territorialization, the surveillance and control of space. The irony here is that in the globalized economy direct discipline over a particular locality has given way to the discipline of sheer mobility, the ability to flee. The transnational corporation's flight to another location on the map is based on the mapping itself, and only serves to increase control over the workers. Deleuze and Guattari do acknowledge the inevitable reterritorialization of flight; they ask rhetorically "Do not even lines of flight, due to their eventual divergence, reproduce the very formations their function it was to dismantle and outflank?"²² In the post-Fordist economy, however, reproduction of these formations is not a divergence; the whole *point* of flight is to reproduce these formations. Globalization has complicated any dichotomy between the oppressive mapping of a fixed space, and a nomadic resistance to that mapping. In globalization, flight is facilitated by the universal mapping itself, and flight reproduces the segmentation of space.

Far from yielding peaceful flight, the compression of space in the "global village" has not only exacerbated but produced insecurity and conflict in the late twentieth century, since global mapping brings diverse localities into competition with one another.²³ Globalization increases potentially deadly

competition among nation-states, since free trade is paradoxically put forth as a competitive development strategy for particular countries. Through transcending spatial barriers, capital is able to map and exploit even minute spatial differentiations, unleashing an economic war of all against all.²⁴

Competition produces an apparent attachment to the local, for in an effort to lure capital, diverse places must emphasize what is unique and advantageous to their location (cheap wages, weak unions, good resources and infrastructure, lax regulation, attractive environment for management, etc.). Yet at the same time, competition paradoxically increases detachment from the local, as for localities compete for capital, the supposed uniqueness of each local place is increasingly tailored to attract development, modeled on those localities that have previously been successful. David Harvey puts the paradox in these terms: "the less important the spatial barriers, the greater the sensitivity of capital to the variations of place within space, and the greater the incentive for places to be differentiated in ways attractive to capital."²⁵

An ephemeral particularity is therefore merely the flipside of a dominant universality. Mexican food is popularized in places like Minnesota, but its dominant form is the fast-food chain Taco Bell, which serves up a hot sauce that a native Minnesotan could mistake for ketchup. Nevertheless, just as the food must be universalized and made bland enough to appeal potentially to the taste of *anyone anywhere*, to compete there must be a simultaneous emphasis on its unique qualities; advertised images must be rooted in a particular location, for example, the traditional Mexican culture of the *abuelita* before the clay oven, sipping *pulque* and shaping tortillas in the palm of her hand. Anyone who has stood at a Taco Bell counter and watched a surly white teenager inject burritos with a sour cream gun knows how absurd these images are, not just because Taco Bell does not conform to the Mexican reality, but because the *abuelita* herself is a manufactured image. Today's Mexican woman is more likely to wash down her tortillas with a can of Diet Coke, while sitting before dubbed reruns of "Dynasty". The more "muy auténtico" a place claims to be, the more it exposes itself as a simulacrum, a copy of a copy for which there exists no original.²⁶

Global mapping produces the illusion of diversity by the juxtaposition of all the varied products of the world's traditions and cultures in one space and time in the marketplace. Mexican food and tuna hotdish, mangoes and mayonnaise all meet the gaze of the consumer. For the consumer with money, the illusion is created that all the world's peoples are contemporaries occupying the same space-time. It is important that the other be "different", but it is equally important, as Ken Surin puts it, that the other be "merely different".²⁷ The production of the simulacrum, difference at the surface only, precludes engagement with the genuinely other. So the conceit is advanced that my consumption contributes to your well-being through mutually beneficial global trade; my eating slakes your hunger.²⁸ The consumption

of others' particularity absorbs them into a simulated catholicity while it simultaneously hides the way that space remains rigidly segmented between the Minnesotans who enjoy mangoes in the dead of winter and the Brazilian Indians who earn forty cents an hour picking them.

While globalization markets the traditions of the local culture, the people who inhabit the latter space are often losing their own traditions to the universal culture of Coke and Colgate. Historical continuity is difficult to maintain in the whirlwind of flexible accumulation. Local attachments are loosed by the centrifuge of ephemeral desire, which is fueled by global capitalism's ever accelerated need for growth. The post-Fordist economy has pursued ever increasing rates of turnover, most significantly by developing markets addicted to quickly changing fashion, and by shifting emphasis from goods to services, which have a much shorter "shelf-life". Short-term planning is endemic. Disposability, not simply of goods, but of relationships and particular attachments of any kind, is the hallmark of consumption in the new economy.²⁹ The result is not merely the dominance of a few name brands; the search for demand mandates a proliferation of specialized and exotic products (for example, bottled water for dogs or gourmet coffee beans recovered from Sumatran luwak dung³⁰). The local and particular are prized precisely because of their novelty. The ideal consumer, however, is detached from all particulars. Novelty wears off, and particulars become interchangeable; what is desired is desire itself. The global economy is characterized by the production of desire as its own object, or as Fredric Jameson says, "the consumption of sheer commodification as a process".³¹

In this economy images themselves have become commodities, and are prized as commodities precisely because of their ephemerality. Images are not only subject to a very rapid turnover, but they also easily transcend spatial barriers in a way that goods cannot. The depthlessness of these images obeys the logic of the simulacrum. The logic of exchange value has almost entirely extinguished the memory of use value.³²

As a result, the subject is radically decentered, cast adrift in a sea of disjointed and unrelated images. If identity is forged by unifying the past, present, and future into a coherent narrative sequence, the ephemerality and rapid change of images deconstructs this ability. The late capitalist subject becomes "schizophrenic", in Lacan's terms, and experiences only "a series of pure and unrelated presents in time".³³ But this new construction or deconstruction of subjectivity is inaccurately described as pure heterogeneity, the triumph of the particular. For the subject created is the Nabisco executive's universal homogeneous consumer, whose "catholic" tastes preclude it from attachment to any particular narratives. Yet this by no means signals simply "the end of masternarratives", as Lyotard would have it. It is instead a new catholicity, or, to quote Jameson, "the return of narrative as the narrative of the end of narratives".³⁴

III. The World in a Wafer

Does the Eucharist offer a counter-narrative of global proportions? Surely the Eucharist is to be done so that *from east to west* a perfect offering might be made to the glory of his name. Aquinas defines the catholicity of the Church in the broadest possible terms, as transcending all boundaries of space and time, as well as natural and social divisions among people.

The Church is Catholic, i.e., universal, first with respect to place, because it is everywhere in the world, against the Donatists ... This Church, moreover, has three parts. One is on earth, another is in heaven, and the third is in purgatory. Secondly, the Church is universal with respect to the state of humanity, because no one is rejected, whether master or slave, male or female ... Thirdly, it is universal with respect to time ... because this Church began from the time of Abel and will last to the end of the world.³⁵

The true catholicity produced by the Eucharist, however, does not depend on the mapping of global space. The church gathered in the catacombs, after all, was as catholic as the church that would ride Constantine's chariots to the ends of the known world.³⁶ I will argue in the second half of this essay that the Eucharist overcomes the dichotomy of universal and local. The action of the Eucharist collapses spatial divisions not by sheer mobility but by gathering in the local assembly. The *Catholica* is not a place, however, but a "spatial story" about the origin and destiny of the whole world, a story enacted in the Eucharist.

The Greek adjective *katholikos*—derived from *kath' holou*, "on the whole"—in antiquity was commonly used as an equivalent of "universal" or "general". The earliest patristic application of the term to the Church, however, is not univocal; by "catholic" some imply "universal" or "total", but others imply "authentic". By the middle of the fourth century, the term had taken on more precise meaning as that which distinguishes the great Church as a whole from dissident or heretical Christian groups.³⁷ Although we continue to use the word "catholic" in English as an equivalent of universal, as Henri de Lubac points out, the terms in some senses diverge. "Universal" suggests spreading out; "catholic" suggests gathering together. In modern English "universal" indicates a reality prevalent everywhere. According to de Lubac,

"Catholic" says something more and different: it suggests the idea of an organic whole, of a cohesion, of a firm synthesis, of a reality which is not scattered but, on the contrary, turned toward a center which assures its unity, whatever the expanse in area or the internal differentiation might be.³⁸

The center toward which the true *Catholica* is turned is the Eucharist which, in de Lubac's famous phrase, makes the Church. However, the Eucharist is

a decentered center; it is celebrated in the multitude of local churches scattered throughout the world, with a great diversity of rites, music, and liturgical spaces. It is precisely this fact that complexifies the calculus of particular and universal within the Church catholic. As Hans Urs von Balthasar puts it,

The *Catholica* is in fact a region whose middle point is everywhere (where the Eucharist is celebrated); and (structurally) she can theoretically be everywhere: geographically, her periphery extends to “the very ends of the earth” (Rev. 1:8), a periphery that in any case can never be far from the midpoint.³⁹

As Balthasar goes on to say, however, the normal condition of the *Catholica* is not Christendom—a permanent place with borders defensible by force—but diaspora. Although the Church is catholic in its missionary imperative to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth, catholicity is not dependent on extension through space.

The Eucharist celebrated in the scattered local communities is, nevertheless, gathered up into one. From the early Church, this principle was expressed by the participation of at least two bishops, as heads of local eucharistic communities, in the ordination of another bishop.⁴⁰ In the ancient Roman liturgy, at the papal Mass, a particle of the host was set aside for the following Mass. Other particles were sent out to priests celebrating Mass in the various localities.⁴¹ In such practices the Body of Christ is not partitioned, for the whole Body of Christ is present in each fraction of the elements: the world in a wafer.

By the same liturgical action, not *part* but the *whole* Body of Christ is present in each local Eucharistic assembly. In Romans 16:23 Paul refers to the local community as *hole he ekklesia*, the whole Church. Indeed, in the first three centuries the term “catholic Church” is most commonly used to identify the local Church gathered around the Eucharist.⁴² Each particular church is not an administrative division of a larger whole, but is in itself a “concentration” of the whole. The whole Catholic Church is qualitatively present in the local assembly, because the whole Body of Christ is present there.⁴³ Catholic space, therefore, is not a simple, universal space uniting individuals directly to a whole; the Eucharist refracts space in such a way that one becomes more united to the whole the more tied one becomes to the local. The true global village is not simply a village writ large, but rather “where two or three are gathered in my name” (Mt. 18:20).

The transcendence of spatial and temporal barriers does not depend on a global mapping, therefore, but rather on a collapsing of the world into the local assembly. It is crucial to note that, for the early Church, the Eucharistic assembly would be the only one in a particular city. The Eucharist would therefore unite all the members of the Church in a particular location, regardless of age, race, sex, language, or social class. As John Zizioulas notes,

gathering in solidarity and love was not a Christian innovation. Members of Roman *collegia* addressed each other as brethren and often held goods in common. What distinguished the Christian eucharistic community was the way that it transcended natural and social divisions. In Christ there is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female (Gal. 3:28).⁴⁴ This remarkable collapsing of spatial barriers is what makes the local community truly catholic.

IV. The Eucharist as Spatial Story

I have tried to show how the Eucharist breaks down the dichotomy of universal and local, but the suspicion may arise that Eucharist as antidote to globalism is simply a retreat into a place-bound theocracy or sect. Certainly the Eucharist—as in some medieval Corpus Christi rites—can be used to reinforce a fixed social hierarchy within a certain location, and to exclude others, especially the Jews, from that space.⁴⁵ Are not all Christian attempts to privilege the local similarly subject to the fascist temptation, or the temptation of “sectarianism”, the very antithesis of a catholicity which seeks to unify rather than divide?

In this final section of my paper, I will argue that the *Catholica* enacted by the Eucharist is not a place as such, but a story which performs certain spatial operations on places. I will draw once again on Certeau’s discussion of spatial stories, and his useful distinction between maps and itineraries. Stories organize and link spaces in a narrative sequence. They not only move from one space to another, but more accurately construct spaces through the practices of characters who trace an itinerary through the story. In contrast to the global and abstract mapping of space, medieval representations of space measured distance in hours or days, the time it would take to arrive at a destination on foot. These itineraries told stories about the way which was made by the pilgrims themselves as they walked towards their destinations.⁴⁶

The itinerary implies not seeing but going; the subject does not survey the space detached as from above but as immersed in the movements indicated by the story. A story is not simply told but performed; space is organized by a body in movement, its gestures and practices. As such, the spatial story is not simply descriptive, but prescriptive. Stories give us a way to walk; “They make the journey, before or during the time the feet perform it.”⁴⁷ As Certeau says, the story “opens a legitimate *theater* for practical *actions*”.⁴⁸

The spatial story is an act of resistance to the dominant overcoding of the map. And yet it does not depend on establishing its own place, its own territory to defend. Instead it moves on pilgrimage through the places defined by the map and transforms them into alternative spaces through its practices. The City of God makes use of this world as it moves through it on pilgrimage to its heavenly home. But this pilgrimage is not the detachment from any and all spaces, the sheer mobility of globalism. The Eucharist journeys by telling a story of cosmic proportions within the particular face to face encounter of

neighbors and strangers in the local Eucharistic gathering. In an economy of hypermobility, we resist not by fleeing, but by abiding.⁴⁹ The community may journey without leaving its particular location, because the entire world and more comes to it in the Eucharist. The Letter to the Hebrews informs the humble community that they are not alone at their Eucharist.

You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (Heb. 12:22–24).

Though the eschatological dimension of the Eucharist is only recently being reemphasized, the patristic writings and ancient liturgies are replete with the vivid transgression of spatial and temporal barriers at the Eucharist to unite the whole Church on earth with the Church of all times and places in eternity.⁵⁰ The Eucharist not only tells but *performs* a narrative of cosmic proportions, from the death and resurrection of Christ, to the new covenant formed in his blood, to the future destiny of all creation. The consumer of the Eucharist is no longer the schizophrenic subject of global capitalism, awash in a sea of unrelated presents, but walks into a story with a past, present, and future.

In the detached hypermobility of global capitalism, signs and locations become interchangeable, for what is desired is desire itself. Augustine's lament "I was in love with love"⁵¹ captures this condition. Augustine saw that one's true identity is only found in desire for God, who is beyond the fleeting things of this world. We might add that it is precisely God's transcendence of the world that allows liturgical difference, for where God cannot be fully grasped, a diversity of locations and practices is necessary to imply the transcendent.⁵² Nevertheless, liturgical difference is possible not because all particular signs are interchangeable. On the contrary, in the Eucharist the particular is of the utmost importance, for this particular piece of bread at this particular place and time *is* the body of Christ, and is not merely a pointer to some abstract transcendent standing behind the sign. In the Eucharist there is a hypostatic union between reality and sign, *res et sacramentum*. Christ saturates the sign, such that consumption of the Eucharist identifies the consumer with God.⁵³

In the Eucharist, the consumer does not stand detached from the consumed. Through consuming the Eucharistic bread we are in fact consumed by the body of Christ. Augustine reports Christ's words to him: "I am the food of the fully grown; grow and you will feed on me. And you will not change me into you like the food your flesh eats, but you will be changed into me."⁵⁴ It should be clear that calling the Eucharist a "story" by no means denies the reality of transubstantiation. It is the very body and blood of

Christ that organize the spaces into which we walk. It is Christ, not we, who tells the story. Each consumer of the Eucharist receives the whole body of Christ, though the body remains one throughout the whole world. This is only possible because the consumer is absorbed into the body. The consumer of the Eucharist begins to walk in the strange landscape of the body of Christ, while still inhabiting a particular earthly place. Now the worldly landscape is transformed by the intrusions of the universal body of Christ in the particular interstices of local space. Turn the corner, and the cosmic Christ appears in the homeless person asking for a cup of coffee. Space is constantly "interrupted" by Christ himself, who appears in the person of the weakest, those who are hungry or thirsty, strangers or naked, sick or imprisoned (Mt. 25:31–46).

Practicing the narrative of the body of Christ collapses spatial barriers, but in a way very different from globalizing capitalism. Globalization depends on a mapping which juxtaposes people from all over the world in the same space-time. This juxtaposition situates diverse localities in competition with one another. At the same time, the illusion is fostered that the world's people are contemporaries, different from each other, but *merely* different. In Eucharistic space, by contrast, we are not juxtaposed but identified. In the body of Christ, as Paul says, "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it" (1 Cor. 12:26).⁵⁵ This radical collapsing of spatial barriers accomplishes not competition, but says Paul, greater honor and care for the weakest member, who is identified with oneself. At the same time the other is not merely different but wholly other, for the suffering are identified with Christ himself (Col. 1:24), who nevertheless remains other to the Church.

In organization of space, therefore, the Eucharist does not simply tell the story of a united human race, but brings to light barriers where they actually exist. When Paul discovers that the Corinthians are unworthily partaking of the Lord's Supper because of the humiliation of the poor by the rich, Paul tells them, "Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine" (1 Cor. 11:19). This verse is puzzling unless we consider that the Eucharist can be falsely told as that which unites Christians around the globe while in fact some live off the hunger of others. Theologians of the southern hemisphere remind us that the imperative of "Church unity" is often a cover for exploitation of the worst kind. In the North American context, many of our Eucharistic celebrations too have been colonized by a banal consumerism and global sentimentality. The logic of globalization infects the liturgical life of the Church itself; Christ is betrayed again at every Eucharist. Where the body is not properly discerned, Paul reminds the Corinthians, consumption of the Eucharist can make you sick or kill you (1 Cor. 11:30). This might explain the condition of some of our churches.

I will close with an illustration of how the Eucharist can operate as a spatial discipline which suggests resistance to the pretense of one united world

advanced by globalizing capital. On February 13, 1977, Fr. Rutilio Grande of El Salvador gave a homily during Mass in the village of Apopa.

The Lord God gave us ... a material world for all, without borders ... "I'll buy half of El Salvador. Look at all my money. That'll give me the right to it." ... No! That's denying God! There *is* no "right" against the masses of the people! A material world for all, then, without borders, without frontiers. A common table, with broad linens, a table for everybody, like this Eucharist. A chair for everybody. And a table setting for everybody. Christ has good reason to talk about his kingdom as a meal. He talked about meals a lot. And he celebrated one the night before his supreme sacrifice ... And he said that this was the great memorial of the redemption: a table shared in brotherhood, where all have their position and place ... This is the love of a communion of sisters and brothers that smashes and casts to the earth every sort of barrier and prejudice and that one day will overcome hatred itself.⁵⁶

Less than a month later, Rutilio Grande was gunned down by a government-sponsored death squad. In response, Archbishop Oscar Romero took the extraordinary measure of declaring that only one Mass, the funeral Mass, would be celebrated in the Archdiocese that Sunday. All the faithful, rich and poor, would be forced into a single space around the celebration of the Eucharist. The elite reacted with outrage, but Romero stood firm.⁵⁷ He was drawing on the power of the Eucharist to collapse the spatial barriers separating the rich and the poor, not by surveying the expanse of the Church and declaring it universal and united, but by gathering the faithful in one particular location around the altar, and realizing the heavenly universal *Catholica* in one place, at one moment, on earth.⁵⁸

NOTES

- 1 Michael Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1993), p. 153.
- 2 See Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), p. 221.
- 3 Robert H. Nelson argues that global capitalism has replaced Christianity with a far more effective means of universal salvation. For his exposition of global capitalism as theology, see *Reaching for Heaven on Earth: The Theological Meaning of Economics* (Savage, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991).
- 4 The North American Free Trade Agreement, signed into law by President Clinton in 1993, eliminates all trade barriers among the US, Mexico, and Canada.
- 5 Robert Nisbet details this process in his *The Quest for Community* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 75–152.
- 6 John Milbank, "On Complex Space" in *The World Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1997), pp. 268–292.
- 7 Otto Gierke, *Associations and Law: The Classical and Early Christian Stages*, trans. George Heiman, (Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 143–160.
- 8 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 120.

- 9 Ibid., p. 121.
- 10 Ibid., pp. 115–130.
- 11 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), §§ 256–257; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1977), pp. 293–308.
- 12 On Foucault's relationship to Hegel, see Michael Hardt, "The Withering of Civil Society", *Social Text* 45, vol. 14, no. 4 (Winter 1995), pp. 31–34.
- 13 On the disappearance of the conditions of possibility of civil society, see Hardt, pp. 34–40; Kenneth Surin, "Marxism(s) and 'The Withering Away of the State'", *Social Text* no. 27 (1990), pp. 42–46; and Antonio Negri, *The Politics of Subversion: A Manifesto for the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), pp. 169–199.
- 14 David Morris, "Free Trade: The Great Destroyer" in Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith, eds., *The Case Against the Global Economy* (San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books, 1996), p. 221.
- 15 Ralph Nader and Lori Wallach, "GATT, NAFTA, and the Subversion of the Democratic Process" in Mander and Goldsmith, eds., pp. 92–107.
- 16 The article "Losing our Shirts" in *The Independent* (Durham, NC), April 6, 1994, documents how, for example, USAID has spent over a billion dollars since 1980 on grants, loans, and advertising encouraging US companies to seek cheap labor in the Caribbean and Central America. US tax dollars have paid for USAID advertisements in trade journals, such as one that reads "Rosa Martinez produces apparel for US markets on her sewing machine in El Salvador. You can hire her for 33 cents an hour."
- 17 Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 148–171.
- 18 George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1993).
- 19 Quoted in Jerry Mander, "The Rules of Corporate Behavior", in Mander and Goldsmith, eds., p. 321.
- 20 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 159.
- 21 Ibid., 159–160, 233–239.
- 22 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 13. There is a difficulty in terminology here because Deleuze and Guattari use the term "map" in almost the exact opposite way that Certeau uses it. For Deleuze and Guattari, a "tracing" is a "competence" which homogenizes and captures space. A "map", on the other hand, is "rhizomatic" and productive of lines of flight; Ibid., pp. 12–20.
- 23 See, for example, Helena Norberg-Hodge, "The Pressure to Modernize and Globalize" in Mander and Goldsmith, eds., pp. 33–46. Norberg-Hodge traces the destructive influence of globalization on the traditional culture of the Ladakhi people of northern India. She argues that ethnic conflicts in India are produced largely by the competition, artificial scarcity, and unrealizable desires created by globalization.
- 24 Harvey, pp. 271; 293–296.
- 25 Ibid., pp. 295–296.
- 26 I have in my possession an illustration of a young man, arms spread wide, standing on a beautiful desert highway. Superimposed around him are the slogans, "discover difference", "seek the unusual", "take another road", "forget typical", "nothing ordinary about it", "leave ordinary behind". The illustration is printed on a paper tray liner from Taco Bell.
- 27 Kenneth Surin, "A Certain 'Politics of Speech': 'Religious Pluralism' in the Age of the McDonald's Hamburger", *Modern Theology* 7/1 (October 1990), p. 74.
- 28 The latter phrase is taken from Catherine Pickstock's brilliant exposition of the logic of the Eucharist in medieval Europe in her *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998), pp. 121–166. Pickstock adopts the phrase from a Reformation controversy over the Eucharist.
- 29 Harvey, pp. 284–286.
- 30 Unfortunately, I'm not making these up.
- 31 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), p. x.
- 32 Ibid., p. 18.
- 33 Ibid., p. 27.

- 34 Ibid., p. xii.
- 35 Thomas Aquinas, *Oposculum VII*, "In Symbolum Apostulorum, scil., *Credo in Deum, Expositio*", quoted in Avery Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 181.
- 36 See Oliver O'Donovan's comments on the charge of "sectarianism" in *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 216.
- 37 Dulles, p. 14.
- 38 Henri de Lubac, *The Motherhood of the Church*, trans. Sr. Sergia Englund (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1982), p. 174.
- 39 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology IV: Spirit and Institution*, trans. Edward Oakes, S.J. (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1995), pp. 65–66.
- 40 John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), p. 155.
- 41 de Lubac, p. 206.
- 42 de Lubac comments in a footnote that, while Zizioulas' claim that during the first three centuries the term "catholic Church" was used *only* for the local Church is a bit exaggerated, "it was nevertheless enough for the difference from 'universal' to become apparent"; de Lubac, p. 177, n. 23.
- 43 Ibid., pp. 199–202. de Lubac uses "local Church" to designate bodies such as the Uniate Churches which possess their own liturgical usage and disciplines. For the purposes of this essay, I use "local" and "particular" interchangeably to refer to the community gathered around the Eucharist in a particular place.
- 44 Zizioulas, pp. 150–152.
- 45 See Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), and Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture, and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993).
- 46 Certeau, pp. 115–130.
- 47 Ibid., p. 116.
- 48 Ibid., p. 125.
- 49 Frederick Bauerschmidt suggests that Certeau did not fully appreciate the way that resistance to certain practices often necessitates institutions such as monasteries and soup kitchens which, although appearing quite stationary, are a way of walking; see "Walking in the Pilgrim City", *New Blackfriars* 77, no. 909 (November 1996), pp. 504–517.
- 50 See Geoffrey Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1981).
- 51 Augustine, *Confessions* III, 1, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 35.
- 52 Catherine Pickstock makes this point in her "Liturgy, Art and Politics", forthcoming in *Modern Theology*.
- 53 Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 156; also Frederick Bauerschmidt, "Aesthetics: The Theological Sublime" in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, Graham Ward, eds. (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 201–219.
- 54 Augustine, (VII, 10), p. 124.
- 55 Jerome Murphy-O'Connor stresses that Paul had in mind much more than "fellowship", but a real "co-existence" in the body of Christ, that is, a common source of life. The community is one, and the community is Christ; "Eucharist and Community in First Corinthians" in *Living Bread, Saving Cup: Readings on the Eucharist*, ed. R. Kevin Seasoltz (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982), pp. 1–30.
- 56 Rutilio Grande, S.J., quoted in Jon Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), pp. 96–97.
- 57 An account of the debate over the single Mass can be found in James R. Brockman, *Romero: A Life* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), pp. 9–18.
- 58 Thanks are due to Fritz Bauerschmidt, Mike Baxter, Mike Hollerich, Steve Long, and Paul Wojda for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this essay.