

# We Remember

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Your body broken  
The bread is torn apart  
Your life blood flowing  
The wine within the cup

This food you've set before us  
This fruit of field and vine.  
Recalls to us your mercy  
They are to us a sign

For the bread and wine  
Present to us  
The one who for us died  
We meet him at his table  
And receive his gift of life.  
His Spirit is at work  
Within the hearts  
Of those who dine

As we remember,

Your body broken  
The bread is torn apart  
Your life blood flowing  
The wine within the cup

Captive to your glory  
Aware of sin and shame  
Now cleansed, restored, forgiven  
Children of God our name

For you are the king of Glory  
yet we feel you close inside  
The taste of bread and wine  
Renews the passion in our lives  
The mystery of this meal  
assures God's gift, eternal life.

And we remember,

Your body broken  
The bread is torn apart  
Your life blood flowing  
The wine within the cup

This time we spend together  
A taste of things to come  
When Christ returns in glory  
His Kingdom we pray to come.

But till then we live upon the earth  
As servants of our Lord  
Our Christ who sends his Spirit  
Urges "Spread my word abroad"  
"Hold on to what you have in me"  
"And take them my good news"

As, we remember  
Remember  
Remember our Lord.

# Mood of the Song

The mood of “We Remember” is one of reflection and contemplation, as we remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross and commune with him. In the final verse, the mood changes to one of empowerment and urgency as we are moved from the sacrifice to our hope for the future and our response for the present.

This song is a communal song. It is written as “we”, “us” and “our”, rather than “I”, “me” and “my”. This has been done on purpose, for the Eucharist is a communing between the community and Christ, rather than the act of an individual.

## Commentary

Your body broken  
The bread is torn apart  
Your life blood flowing  
The wine within the cup

These words are, at the same time metaphorical language, and represent much more than a metaphor. Baillie quotes, “*P.T. Forsyth maintained that in the original ‘Last Supper’ it was not so much the bread as the breaking, not so much the elements as the actions, that were symbolical.*”<sup>1</sup> The words of this verse seek to portray the symbol of not just bread and not just wine. Nor do they symbolise just the body, or just the blood. But in the taking of the bread and its tearing apart and in the flowing of the wine, we have the symbol. The symbol is that of the sacrifice of Christ.

Baillie adds that the “*‘sensible signs’ in this sacrament consist..... also of the actions, including the words spoken*”. These words, which form part of this symbol, are well represented throughout this song. We keep returning to them as we remember, in order to contextualise what the rest of the song presents.

This food you’ve set before us  
This fruit of field and vine.  
Recalls to us your mercy  
They are to us a sign

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<sup>1</sup> Forsyth PT. 1953 in Baillie DM. 1957. *The Theology of the Sacraments*. London: Faber & Faber. (p. 94)

These lyrics make clear that this sacrament is one which was instituted by Christ. It is Christ who has set these elements before us. The fruit of the vine is reminiscent of Luke 22:18 For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. As such, it gives us a hint of the return of Christ, which is addressed more explicitly towards the end of the song.

This song takes a position somewhere in the middle of the debate of the local presence of Christ in the elements. The language of “sign” and “present to us (found in next verse)” certainly draw a boundary which prevents us from entering into an understanding of transubstantiation. I have taken the position that they are signs, but that they are not limited to signs. Baillie describes it as “*But if they were not signs, they could not be more. It is through being signs, through their symbolism, that they come to be more*”<sup>2</sup>

These signs enable us to recall the mercy of God. Also, it is through these signs, that we commune with Christ.

For the bread and wine  
Present to us  
The one who for us died  
We meet him at his table  
And receive his gift of life.  
His Spirit is at work  
Within the hearts  
Of those who dine

This verse draws thoroughly on Calvin. The words “present to us” draws the theology of the song away from a memorialist view of the Eucharist. “*Through the signs of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus presents to us his Body and Blood.*”<sup>3</sup> The ‘substance’ of the bread and the wine do not actually become flesh and blood as is the Aristotelian Roman view. Nor do they remain merely signs. The bread and wine actually present Christ to us. We meet with Christ at His table and we feed on him in our hearts. This understanding is reflected in common reformed eucharistic liturgy.

*“Receive this holy sacrament  
Of the body and blood of Christ,  
And feed on him in your hearts*

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<sup>2</sup> Baillie DM. 1957. *The Theology of the Sacraments*. London: Faber & Faber. (p. 93)

<sup>3</sup> Calvin J, *Corpus Reformatorum XXXVII* (p. 769) in Gerrish B. *The Lord’s Supper in the Reformed Confessions. Theology Today Vol. 23 No.2 July, 1966.* <http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/jul1966/v23-2-article6.htm>

*By faith with thanksgiving.*<sup>4</sup>

The signs of bread and wine represent to us a reality. Torrence says, “*The important thing is not the sign, but the reality signified.*”<sup>5</sup> And in this case, the reality is a heavenly memorial. Christ “*Constitutes himself the eternal memorial for all his creatures before God*”.<sup>6</sup> To Torrence, we do not remember simply by ourselves, but Christ reminds us, through the power of the Holy Spirit in this act of communion. The entire efficacy of the Eucharist is due to the grace of God.

As we remember,

The song does not let the participants forget. The participants are constantly invited to remember. Torrence says “*At the Lord’s Supper, he brings his passion to our remembrance and draws us into wonderful communion - holy communion - with the Father, with himself and with one another*”.<sup>7</sup> The song leads us through the actions which were just described above, and then reminds us that this happens as we remember. The words, “As we remember” are sung, but the music continues to play “Our Lord”, as the lyrics remain silent. It is only at the end of the song where the lyrics say, “As we remember our Lord”.

Captive to your glory  
Aware of sin and shame  
Now cleansed, restored, forgiven  
Children of God our name

When humanity meet the risen Lord at his table, we cannot help but be awestruck and captivated by his majesty. In comparison to this, we become aware of our unworthiness, and this is where Calvin would say that the Lord’s supper becomes “*profitable to us*”. Our own consciences are ample mechanism to convict us of our sin, but “*the supper invites us to the promises of salvation.*”<sup>8</sup>

Salvation is not dependant upon participation in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a sign and a participation in the salvific act of Christ. Therefore, while our participation in the Eucharist may highlight our awareness of our sin, much more than this, it highlights, the saving act of Christ. Torrence distinguishes a two fold ministry of Christ: “*(a) the once and for all earthly worship and self offering of Christ....; (b) his continuing heavenly ministry of worship and intercession inaugurated by his*

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<sup>4</sup> McGinlay H (ed.). 1998. *Uniting in Worship Leader’s Book*. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press(p.128)

<sup>5</sup> Torrance J. 1996. *Worship, Community & The Triune God of Grace*. Illinois: Inter Varsity. (p. 74)

<sup>6</sup> Torrance J. 1996. *Worship, Community & The Triune God of Grace*. Illinois: Inter Varsity. (p. 86)

<sup>7</sup> Torrance J. 1996. *Worship, Community & The Triune God of Grace*. Illinois: Inter Varsity. (p. 74)

<sup>8</sup> Calvin J. *Short Treatise on the supper of our Lord*. MDXL. (Par. 7-9)

*resurrection and ascension*".<sup>9</sup> In the Eucharist, we participate in the former of these, through the latter. It is through this participation that we are reminded that: We are cleansed; we are restored; we are forgiven. So much so that we are called children of God.

For you are the king of Glory  
yet we feel you close inside  
The taste of bread and wine  
Renews the passion in our lives  
The mystery of this meal  
assures God's gift, eternal life.

Jesus Christ has been glorified through his death and resurrection (John 12). And yet we can still feel the presence of this glorious king in our own lives. Of the Eucharist, Calvin says "*I rather feel than understand it*"<sup>10</sup>. Often in the study of theology, feeling can be set aside. This is not the case for the Eucharist. The relationship between Christ and his earthly community is often closest at the sharing of communion, and this closeness is manifest in feeling.

As already addressed, the Eucharist becomes "*profitable to us*". Calvin defines such profit as "*redemption, justification, sanctification, eternal life, and all the other benefits which Christ bestows upon us*".<sup>11</sup> All these things renew a passion within the lives of those who commune. The Eucharist remains a mystery, but these promises are assured<sup>12</sup>.

These signs, through which we participate, bring an assurance of eternal life to the human. McGrath says "*For Calvin, sacraments are gracious accommodations to our weakness. God, knowing our weakness of faith, adapts to our limitations*".<sup>13</sup> In our weakness of faith, God has been gracious enough to give us something we can touch, feel and taste, in order to prop up our faith. It 'assures God's gift, eternal life.' Calvin himself says it "*gives us certainty and assurance*"<sup>14</sup>.

This time we spend together  
A taste of things to come  
When Christ returns in glory

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<sup>9</sup> Torrance J. 1996. *Worship, Community & The Triune God of Grace*. Illinois: Inter Varsity. (p. 83)

<sup>10</sup> Calvin, Institutes Ch 17.32

<sup>11</sup> Calvin, Institutes Ch 17.11

<sup>12</sup> Calvin, Institutes Ch 17.4

<sup>13</sup> McGrath A. 1993. *Reformation Thought*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

<sup>14</sup> Calvin J. *Short Treatise on the supper of our Lord*. MDXL. (Par. 6)

His Kingdom we pray to come.

This verse points to the eschatological nature of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is but a foretaste of the heavenly banquet which is prepared for us. This understanding is reflected in a closing paragraph of common reformed eucharistic liturgy.

*“We thank you, Lord,  
that you have fed us in this sacrament,  
united us with Christ,  
and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet  
prepared for all people. Amen”*.<sup>15</sup>

Torrance puts it, that as we remember, *“it means remembering in such a way that we see our participation in the past event and see our destiny and future as bound up with it.”*<sup>16</sup> He also goes on to say:

*“The end is not yet. Now we are the children of God, enjoying real communion with Jesus Christ, the whole Christ. It does not yet appear what we shall be, but when he appears we shall be like him, and enjoy endless communion with him.”*<sup>17</sup>

It is for this moment in the world’s history that the Christian longs, and for which they pray, “Your kingdom come”.

But till then we live upon the earth  
As servants of our Lord  
Our Christ who sends his Spirit  
Urges “Spread my word abroad”  
“Hold on to what you have in me”  
“And take them my good news”

From the tradition of the Uniting Church of Australia, ‘The service of the Lord’s day’ has notes on ‘The Sending Forth of the People of God’. *“Having been nourished, we are drawn into Christ’s mission in the world, and God sends us forth in the power of the Spirit to love and serve all people”*.<sup>18</sup> This concluding verse of “We Remember” is the sending forth of the people of God, with a word of mission to be carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is virtually saying “Right. We’ve been fed, and now there’s work to be done.”

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Methodist Rite of Holy Communion’ <http://www.oremus.org/labarum/booklets/hcmethtrtf>

<sup>16</sup> Torrance J. 1996. *Worship, Community & The Triune God of Grace*. Illinois: Inter Varsity. (p. 85)

<sup>17</sup> Torrance J. 1996. *Worship, Community & The Triune God of Grace*. Illinois: Inter Varsity. (p. 93)

<sup>18</sup> McGinlay H (ed.). 1998. *Uniting in Worship Leader’s Book*. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press(p. 77)

This missional aspect of the Eucharist has not only grown out of tradition, but also springs from an exegesis of Mark. Senior notes that by means of the Markan feeding miracles, “*Mark has related the universal mission to the Eucharist*”<sup>19</sup>. This has been done out of a need to address table fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Of this same matter, Moloney writes,

*“Mark has told his story of the two miracles of feeding the multitudes to teach the members of his community that they were to share in the universal mission of Jesus... At the heart of that mission was eucharistic table fellowship...”*<sup>20</sup>

Moloney points out that the second of the Markan feeding miracles represents mission to the gentiles. Thus, the linking of these feedings to the Eucharist, brings the Eucharist into the field of mission, and for the disciples, mission to those least deserving – gentiles.

It is also important to realise that this work is not carried out in our own strength, but through God’s gracious gift of the Holy Spirit. It can be queried “Who sends the Holy Spirit?” and “Who’s is the Holy Spirit?”. The six words, “Our Christ, who sends his Spirit” do not seek to fully explain the whole nature of the Holy Trinity, nor to limit our understanding of the Trinitarian relationship. It is however, six words that have been carefully considered from a Trinitarian perspective. Christ does send the Spirit (John 16:7, 15:26), and as part of the trinity, The Holy Spirit is as much of the Son as He is of The Father (John 14:26, 15:26). In the context of the flow of the lyrics, the impact is that Christ is urging us to spread his word abroad. The fact that Christ has not left us alone in this matter is addressed by including His sending of the Spirit. This in no way denies the Father’s part in this same sending of His Spirit.

As part of this mission, “Hold on to what you have in me” is a direct link to the Letter to the church in Thyatira (Rev 2:18-29). As such it points to the eschatological promise. But even more so than this, we are to hold on to “love, faith, service and perseverance (2:19)”. Likewise, “take them my good news” is a direct link with ‘The Great Commission (Mat 28:19, Mark 16:15)’, where, once again, mission is carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit.

## Theological Weaknesses

When Noeleen Johnston and Michael Kane first saw the draft of this song, their comment was “Wow. He’s really tried to cover everything in one song hasn’t he.”, and were concerned that it may be too long. That is the problem with presenting something as

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<sup>19</sup> Senior D. 1982. “The Eucharist in Mark: Mission, Reconciliation, Hope” Biblical Theology Bulletin. Vol. 12. January 1982. (p. 69)

<sup>20</sup> Moloney F. 1997. A Body Broken for a Broken People: Eucharist in the New Testament 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Blackburn: Dove. (p. 43)

theologically complex as the Eucharist in the space of 3 or 4 minutes, whilst maintaining some kind of flow and musical impact on the audience. Had there been more room, I would have liked to have address a few more issues.

Firstly, I would have liked to have been able to present a stronger Trinitarian understanding of what occurs in the Eucharist. The whole relationship between Father, Son and Spirit is not explicitly expressed. The action of Christ and Holy Spirit in the Eucharist are addressed, but there is a lacking of tying this in to the Father.

Secondly, I would have liked to have grounded the song more in the whole Christ event. Torrence stresses the importance of “Who”, rather than “How”<sup>21</sup>. We participate, through the power of the Spirit, in the life of Christ<sup>22</sup>. If this song were to stand on its own and be our only form of worship, it would lack in this area.

Thirdly, I would have liked to have spoken more about what God receives in communion. This song has tended to concentrate on what it means for us in the Eucharist. Torrence, however points out to us the importance of understanding that “*in Christian worship, we worship God for God’s sake; we come to Christ for Christ’s sake, motivated by love.*”<sup>23</sup> This is an element neglected by this song.

## Acknowledgements

### Process

This is a song which is written via email. Michael Brumpton wrote the lyrics and sang a melody line into the computer. This was saved as an MP3 file and emailed to Noeleen Johnston. A basic indication of melody line notes was also emailed to her. Noeleen took this information and turned this simple idea into music manuscript. She has given the music feel through timing, chord structure and transitions within the music. Once the music was written, we then proceeded to record it.

At this stage, it is essential to thank Michael Kane for his invaluable expertise and effort during the recording phase. Michael Kane and Noeleen Johnston are both excellent arrangers of music and excellent musicians. Michael Kane is also an audio engineer and owns his own recording studio, “Miracle Studios”, located in Dalby.

The Recording proceeded over two days. The first day was experimenting with arrangements and practicing the song. The second day included recording and “mixing down” of the song.

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<sup>21</sup> Torrance J. 1996. *Worship, Community & The Triune God of Grace*. Illinois: Inter Varsity. (p. 69)

<sup>22</sup> Torrance J. 1996. *Worship, Community & The Triune God of Grace*. Illinois: Inter Varsity. (p. 81)

<sup>23</sup> Torrance J. 1996. *Worship, Community & The Triune God of Grace*. Illinois: Inter Varsity. (p. 71)

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Topic: Write a communion song and provide a Theological commentary  
Due Date: 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2002  
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Digital piano	Noeleen Johnston
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Base Guitar	Michael Kane
Rhythm Guitar	Michael Kane
Strings	Noeleen Johnston
Distorted Guitar	Michael Kane
Lead Guitar	Michael Kane
Vocals	Michael Brumpton

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