

The *Euchologion*, or Prayer Book, attributed to Bishop Sarapion of Thmuis, Lower Egypt, appears to have been composed or compiled by the bishop himself from a variety of known and unknown sources, around 356 C.E. Sarapion was known as a friend and defender of Athanasius during the Arian controversy in Alexandria, and a staunch opponent of Manichaeism which was spreading widely in Egypt and Northern Africa in the fourth century. Thmuis at that time was probably one of the four major cities of Egypt (along with Memphis, Athribis and Oxyrynchos), but was not at the level of ecclesiastical importance of Athanasius's Alexandria, which was already a "patriarchate."<sup>1</sup> In Western terms, it would be a diocese, but not an archdiocese. The *Euchologion* represents one of the earliest "Orthodox" liturgical collections that can be attested with some certainty to be original to the mid-fourth century.

For our purposes, Sarapion's prayer book represents a departure from everything we have surveyed to this point. Its orientation is Eastern, rather than Syrian or Western. There is almost no hint of anything other than a vertical relationships between the people and God, and possibly theopolitical relationships between the people of God and the powers; interpersonal relationships are absent from its purview. Dismissals in this text are of catechumens and energumens, not of penitents or persons in conflict with each other. Most importantly, the word peace (εἰρηνῆ) never appears in the collection.

What does appear as a major theme throughout the prayers, however, is the idea of establishing communion with God, and, in the eucharistic prayers, the word "reconciliation" (καταλλαγῶσις, and cognates). In the Prayer Book, reconciliation always refers to the God-human relationship. An exploration of how Sarapion's prayers describe the process of establishing, maintaining, and renewing communion with God

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<sup>1</sup>Maxwell Johnson, "The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis" (PhD Thesis: University of Notre Dame, 1992), 1-4. Johnson's thesis represents the most comprehensive study of Sarapion's Prayer Book to date, and so will be used extensively in this study both as the basis for the Greek text and for matters of interpretation. Johnson has since published the thesis in book form in *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis: A Literary, Liturgical, and Theological Analysis*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 249 ( Roma: Istituto Orientale, 1995).

may reveal what he intended to teach about peace with God.

Generally speaking, we will proceed from the assumption that there are several layers of tradition represented in the “final form” we have in the Prayer Book, and seek to offer an interpretation that begins by seeking points of continuity rather than discontinuity. We will begin with baptism, move to a discussion of ordained ministry, and conclude with the eucharist.

### ***Baptism and Peace with God***

In the prayers concerning baptism (7-11, 15-16), there is a strong emphasis on establishing full communion with God through cleansing from sin, regeneration, and overcoming the power of sin through the Spirit. Prayer 15, “Prayer for the Oil of the Ones Being Baptized,” appears to provide a summary of the entire process and its theological meaning.

Master, lover of humankind and lover of souls,  
compassionate and merciful, God of Truth, we call on you,  
following after (you) and being obedient to the promises of  
your only-begotten who said, “If you release the sins of any,  
they are released.” And we anoint with this oil those  
drawing near or having drawn near to this divine rebirth,  
beseeching that our Lord Christ Jesus would work in it  
healing and strength-making power and that, on the one  
hand, he might through this oil reveal and heal from their  
soul, body, spirit every sign of sin and lawlessness or  
satanic fault, and, on the other hand, by his grace he might  
furnish them the release, so that, having no part in sin they  
will live in righteousness. And having been re-formed  
through this anointing and purified through the bath and  
made new again by the Spirit, that will be strong to conquer  
against the rest of the assaulting energies coming against  
them...<sup>2</sup>

If this pre-baptismal anointing prayer was used regularly, it seems to make clear that the order of the baptismal rite was first anointing with oil, then “washing” in water,

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<sup>2</sup>Translation mine from Johnson's Greek text, p. 68. Johnson's own English translation (p. 69) translates *αφεσις* as “forgiveness.” Given the power language of the context, I have chosen to use the more basic term “release” here. The issue here seems to involve a more active grant of “release” from the power of sin than simply forgiveness of sins.

and then another anointing. The first anointing was for “the release” from sin, which also amounted to a “re-forming” of the person being anointed. The washing, the baptism itself, was for cleansing. And the second anointing (the first post-baptismal anointing rite we know in the development of fourth-century Egyptian liturgy)<sup>3</sup> was for a renewing impartation of the Holy Spirit.

The language describing the pre-baptismal anointing is dramatic and physical. “Our Lord Christ Jesus” is called upon to act in the anointing with “healing and strength-producing power.” Here the healing is for “every sign of sin and lawlessness or satanic fault” to be removed from “soul, body, spirit.” The outcome of the anointing is described in two ways, release and “re-plasmation.” The release appears to be simply another way of referring to the healing already mentioned. “Re-plasmation” may be an echo of texts such as Psalm 139:13-16, a kind of “re-forming” of the “uncompleted being” in the mother’s womb.<sup>4</sup>

“The Prayer of the Sanctification of the Waters” (prayer 7) describes way is the baptism itself understood as a cleansing.

And as your only-begotten Word, having descended upon the waters of the Jordan, rendered them holy, so also now let him descend among these (waters), and let him make them holy and spiritual, to the end that the ones being baptized may no longer be flesh and blood, but spiritual and capable of worshipping you, the ungenerated Father through Jesus Christ in holy spirit...<sup>5</sup>

The cleansing in question, then, is ontological, a cleansing from the fleshly being, a bath in the waters of the Word which transforms the “re-plasmated” flesh and blood into a spiritual being capable of direct fellowship with the Father in the worshipping

3Johnson, 370.

4The word in Greek is αναπλασθεντες, “having been formed again.” Johnson translates it as “remolded.” The LXX of Psalm 139:16 (138:16) uses the verb πλασθησονται, referring to “the days that were formed for me,” rather than to the “forming” of the “substance” (υποστασις in v. 15) of the person. So the link to Psalm 139 here, if any, appears to be more associational than directly verbal. However, in the NT the verb πλασσω does appear twice (I Timothy 2:13 and Romans 9:20) in both cases with the sense of physically forming/creating a person.

5Johnson, 56. Translation mine.

community. Baptismal water is able to be a channel of this ontological change because Jesus' own baptism, through his incarnation, makes baptismal water a channel of this salvation to all who may receive it, allowing them to participate in the same spiritual nature he himself has as incarnate Word.

Before entering the water, however, the baptismal candidate must still offer a personal renunciation of "the mischievous and wicked one" and confess God's "only-begotten word" as the sole guide for the rest of life.<sup>6</sup> After renunciation of the evil one and embrace of the only-begotten Word, a rite of welcoming would take place, though what that rite entails is unknown.<sup>7</sup> The prayer connected with that rite asks for God's presence and empowerment "to scare off and cast away every temptation."<sup>8</sup> It is a prayer that anticipates the empowerment in the Spirit that would be given in the post-baptismal anointing.

The empowerment given in the that anointing involves the promise of victory in ongoing spiritual warfare.

O God of powers, helper of every soul turning to you and being under the ruling hand of your only-begotten, we call upon you, that through your divine and unspeakable power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, divine and heavenly energy might work in this chrism, [for] the ones baptized and (now) chrismated in it with the impression of the sign of the salvation-giving cross of the only-begotten, through which cross Satan and every opposing power was overturned and triumphed over; so let the ones reborn and renewed through the bath of regeneration also become sharers in the gift of the Holy Spirit, and, having been sealed in this seal, let them thoroughly remain steadfast and immovable, unharmed and safe from violence, not spitefully treated and free from being plotted against, being a citizen in the faith and knowledge of the truth until the end, awaiting the heavenly hopes of life and the eternal promises of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Johnson, 58, translations mine.

<sup>7</sup>Johnson (p. 175) suggests this may refer to the candidate having moved from the "outer court" of the baptismal font to immediate periphery of the font itself.

<sup>8</sup>Johnson, 60. Translation mine.

<sup>9</sup>Johnson, 70, 72. Translation mine. Johnson notes serious translational problems in the section

The sign of the cross, which is the form by which post-baptismal anointing in the Holy Spirit is imparted, is the sign of Jesus' victory over "the opposing powers." The final bidding of the anointing is almost a commissioning speech to a citizen-soldier of the heavenly realm, who, having received his training and initiation, is now being sent forth by the "God of powers" into the fray with the best hopes for complete defeat of the enemy, and the best wishes for no harm, either spiritual or physical, to come to that soldier in the process.<sup>10</sup>

The newly anointed-baptized-chrismated Christian thus stands poised for a life of successful spiritual warfare. Participation in the life of God through Christian initiation, places the Christian in a new polis that is at war with the "opposing powers." The establishment of peace with God empowers the Christian for war with the powers of the world. What we do not know is the form this warfare may have taken. Did it involve Christians in pro-actively engaging the evil powers in their culture? Or was it more a defensive war of overcoming the temptations that culture would afford in their own lives? And what would Christians in mid-fourth century Thmuis label as temptations or Satanic influences to be overcome?<sup>11</sup> Could violence by Christians, including military violence, be seen as compatible with this spiritual warfare? Until answers to such questions as these are forthcoming, there is little more we may responsibly say about the initiatory

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referring to the sign of the cross. My translation has taken Johnson's translation into account. <sup>10</sup>It would be interesting to see actual commissioning speeches to military officers in Thmuis in this period to see whether some of the language in this post-baptismal anointing prayer is not derived from or similar to such a military context. There does not appear to be any precedent for such language in near-contemporary post-baptismal anointing prayers, such as the Ethiopic version of Apostolic Tradition (cited by Johnson on p. 185).

<sup>11</sup>Though there does not yet exist a social history of Thmuis, Victor Saxer's classic *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage vers le Milieu du IIIe Siècle* (Vatican City: Pontifical Institute for Christian Archaeology, 1969) might provide some clues. Saxer indicates that for Cyprian's church in Carthage in the mid-third century, there was indeed a spiritual warfare going on. That sense of warfare was heightened by the two persecutions the church endured in the third century (Decius in 250 and Valerian in 258). Its main form was in separation/segregation from "pagan" culture, including a total separation from the religious life of Carthage, a rejection of pagan-Christian marriages, and separate burial places. In daily life, Christians were forbidden to go to the forum, to spectacles, to the baths, and many "normal" social, professional, and family functions (Saxer, 335-336).

rites' teaching of peace.

### ***Ministry and the Peace of God***

There does appear, however, to be somewhat more we may responsibly say about the role of ordained ministry in sustaining peace with God. Four prayers in the Prayer Book are especially instructive in this regard: Prayers 12-14 (at the laying on of hands for the appointment of deacons, presbyters, and bishops, respectively) and Prayer 25 (for the Bishop and the Church).

We begin with the deacon. As we have seen in other liturgical traditions, the deacon as an officer of the church has been involved primarily in four kinds of functions: distributing to the poor and sick (Justin, Apostolic Tradition, Didascalia), functioning as gatekeeper/bouncer at the Sunday worship (Didascalia), assisting elders and bishop baptism and eucharist (Apostolic Tradition, Didascalia), and being involved in the process of interpersonal peacemaking (Didascalia). In the Prayer Book, however, the function of the deacon is specifically defined only as a liturgical office. Prayer 12 ("Laying on of Hands for the Appointment of Deacons") recalls the election of the original seven deacons to whom was given "holy Spirit," and then goes on to bid:

Establish also this (man) as a deacon of your catholic church, and give in him a spirit of knowledge and discernment, so that he can serve as a deacon purely and blamelessly in the midst of your people in this liturgy.<sup>12</sup>

Prayer 25 specifies the liturgical role of the deacon even further.

And make holy also (the) deacons, so that they may be pure in heart and body and be able in a pure conscience to serve (in the liturgy) and stand alongside the holy body and the holy blood.<sup>13</sup>

Already we have seen in Didascalia at least one deacon who would take up at station at

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12Johnson, 62. Translation mine. Johnson renders the words "this liturgy" as "this service." The word in Greek, though, is *λειτουργία*. Though Prayer 25 clearly represents a different historical tradition than some of these prayers, it likewise mentions only a liturgical role for the deacon.

13Johnson, 90. Translation mine.

the table to assist at the eucharist. The role of the deacon here is clothed in the language of purity, blamelessness, and holiness, the sort of language one readily associates with those who are to participate as an offerer or assistant at sacrifices. The “knowledge and discernment” sought in Prayer 12 seems to refer here to an understanding of the meaning of these “holy mysteries” and his precise liturgical role in attending to them.

The role of the presbyter appears to be that of ruler, teacher and, reconciler of the people to God. Prayer 13 bids:

We extend our hands, Master, God of the heavens, Father of the only-begotten, upon this man and pray that the spirit of truth might dwell upon him. Gift him with understanding and knowledge and a good heart. Let divine Spirit come in him so that he might be able to rule this your people, and to be an ambassador of your divine words and to reconcile your people to you, uncreated God. You who have given holy Spirit through the spirit of Moses to your elect ones, divide also to this (man) holy Spirit from the spirit of the only-begotten for the grace-gift of wisdom and knowledge and right faith, so that he might be able to serve you in a pure conscience...<sup>14</sup>

The service of the presbyter is teaching and leadership in the church. He is pictured as an authorized intermediary of the words of God to the people of God. It is possible from this prayer that the form of reconciliation between God and people that the presbyter carries out is precisely that of teaching them what God's words are so they can fulfill them.

Prayer 25 seems to move in a similar vein, though no specific mention of the reconciling role of the presbyter appears.<sup>15</sup>

Finally we come to the bishop, who almost without doubt was the primary presider at eucharist, and thus would have occupied an explicitly priestly role as the chief offerer of the eucharistic sacrifice. That priestly role, however, is nowhere specifically

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<sup>14</sup>Johnson, 64. Translation mine.

<sup>15</sup>“And we beseech you also on behalf of the co-presbyters, make them holy, give them wisdom and knowledge and right teaching. Make them ambassadors on behalf of your holy teachings rightly and blamelessly.” Johnson, 90. Translation mine.

described either in the Prayer 14 or Prayer 25. Instead, the bishop is connected to the apostles. Prayer 14 asks that he be “a living bishop, a holy bishop of the succession of the holy apostles.”<sup>16</sup> The prayer continues:

... and give to him grace and divine Spirit, which you gifted to all your genuine servants and prophets and patriarchs. Make him to be worthy to shepherd your flock, and let him yet continue both blamelessly and without stumbling in the episcopate.

The bishop here looks much more like “holy man” than priest, more guide than ruler. Prayer 25 seems to confirm the “holy man” image in its petition, “Make this bishop holy, and preserve him from every temptation, and give him wisdom and knowledge; prosper him in your disciplines.”<sup>17</sup> Exactly what “your disciplines” are is left unspecified. These may refer to his priestly skills, or possibly to special spiritual disciplines he may be expected to undertake as bishop. His intended role in sustaining peace with God, then, appears to be as a representative of the Spirit-sent ministry of apostles, patriarchs and prophets, in both in the holiness of his life and in his shepherding ministry, perhaps including his specifically priestly ministry, before the people.

These three offices thus represent and sustain the peace of God in three different, but complementary, ways. The bishop represents the presence and mission of the Spirit in his own life and in his liturgical intercession on behalf of the community to draw them closer to God. The presbyters represent the teaching ministry by which Christians can know the decrees of God and fulfill them. And the deacon functions perhaps as the representative of the people assisting at the central reconciling rite of the community's worship, the eucharist.

### ***Eucharist and Reconciliation with God***

An historical-critical reading of the eucharistic prayers in the Prayer Book would

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<sup>16</sup>Johnson, 66. Translation mine.

<sup>17</sup>Johnson, 90. Translation mine.



leave one in a state of confusion about reconciliation with God. Maxwell Johnson sees in the eucharistic prayer at least very two different understandings of the eucharist corresponding to different layers of tradition the Prayer Book preserves. In the older tradition, corresponding with the theology of the baptismal prayers, the eucharist is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God for having reconciled God's people and seeks God's power through the participation in the body and blood to re-equip God's people for their spiritual warfare. In the more recent layer, the eucharist is a material propitiatory sacrifice of bread and wine, offered as a re-presentation of the death of Jesus, in order to obtain reconciliation with God again. If the layers of tradition concerning ordained ministry in Sarapion's Prayer Book may lead to confusion about the role of ordained ministers in the church and their roles in the theopolitics of reconciliation, the layers of liturgical tradition in the eucharistic prayer make matters even more confusing.

The prayer begins as a pure sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving:

It is worthy and just to praise, to hymn, to glorify you,  
uncreated Father of the only-begotten Jesus Christ. We  
praise you, uncreated God, unattainable, inexpressible,  
unknowable to every created substance...<sup>18</sup>

And the praise goes on for several more lines, before starting anew with a different form of address (another tradition?):

Lover of humanity and love of the poor, you who are  
reconciled to all and are drawing in all things to yourself  
through the coming of your beloved son to dwell [among  
us]. We pray, make us a living people; give to us spirit of  
Light, so we may know you the true [God] and Jesus Christ  
whom you have sent. Give us holy Spirit, so we may be  
able to speak out and describe your unspeakable mysteries.  
Let the Lord Jesus speak in us, and holy Spirit also hymn  
you through us.<sup>19</sup>

So far, what we are seeing in this prayer is very compatible with the understanding of

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<sup>18</sup>Johnson, 42. Translation mine.

<sup>19</sup>*ibid.*

God's activity in baptism. What is sought here is not forgiveness or propitiation; indeed, reconciliation with God appears here already to be a given. What is sought is the ability to worship God truly and fully by being lifted up in praise to the Father through a fresh work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in and through them.

And that appears to be exactly what proceeds to take place. The bishop continues in the prayer to describe the heavenly court of God with its "thousand thousand and myriad myriads of angels, archangels, thrones, lordships, rulers, authorities" standing around the throne of God, along with the seraphim and cherubim, and joins the people's prayers with the heavenly Ἅγιος Ἅγιος Ἅγιος to the Lord. Then he adds, "Full is the heaven, full is the earth of the great magnificence of your glory, Lord of powers."<sup>20</sup>

But then, at this high point of communion and insight through praise, the bishop adds a petition that seems out of place. "Also fill this sacrifice full of your power and of your participation, for to you we have offered this living sacrifice, the unbloody offering."<sup>21</sup> What is "this sacrifice"? It does not appear to be the praise and thanksgiving of the people that has just been offered, but something else. Yet this seems very odd. If the people have been reconciled to God, if they have been made alive enough to fulfill the hopes of their baptisms that they could worship God aright in Spirit, if they have indeed joined the very heavenly chorus praising and hymning God, what else does God need to do for them? What other sacrifice do they need to offer?

We have offered to you this bread, the likeness of the body of the only-begotten. This bread is a likeness of the holy body, that the Lord Jesus, on the night in which he was handed over took bread and broke and gave to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body which is broken on your behalf for the forgiveness of sins." For this reason also we, making the likeness of the death, have offered the bread, and we beseech you through this sacrifice to be reconciled to all of us and propitiate us, God of truth.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Johnson, 44. Translation mine.

<sup>21</sup>ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Johnson, 46. Translation mine.

This prayer appears to represent the earliest known instance of the elements of the eucharist being presented as a material, propitiatory sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God.<sup>23</sup> Maxwell Johnson sees two very different understandings of sacrifice-- praise and thanksgiving for a reconciliation already completed versus material, propitiatory sacrifice to obtain reconciliation-- at work in this moment in the liturgy.<sup>24</sup>

I would suggest that we are witnessing here something like the fault line of the seismic collision of two very different and incompatible eucharistic theologies. In this theological earthquake the earlier, non-propitiatory (or, put positively, euchological) model which corresponded to the theology of the baptismal rites has gone at least temporarily underground, while the newer propitiatory theology, already embodied in the solely liturgical role of the deacon, is being raised like a new mountain. The propitiatory model now stands, though not without some cracks, on the foundation of the euchological model, and uses language from the former model for its own ends.

The "quotation" from Didache 9:4 which precedes the offering of the cup and the epiclesis to the Logos that follows it are two good cases in point. The Didache paraphrase reads:

And just as this bread has been dispersed upon the mountains and having been gathered together became into one, so also may your holy church be gathered from every nation and every region and every city and every village and home and make one living catholic church.<sup>25</sup>

Johnson has reviewed the scholarship on the presence of this prayer from Didache in the Prayer Book and concluded that it was part of an ancient traditional setting of bread

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<sup>23</sup>This is the opinion of Paul Bradshaw, with whom I have discussed this text at some length.

<sup>24</sup>Johnson, 272. On 272-273, Johnson also makes the argument that within the propitiatory model, the word for "likeness" ὁμοιωμα, reflects two different and not altogether compatible usages as well, "one (perhaps more primitive) which refers to the entire eucharistic action as "making" the image or likeness of the death of Christ; and a second which is more concerned with the precise sacramental relationship between the eucharistic elements and Christ's presence in them" (273).

<sup>25</sup>Johnson, 46. Translation mine.

words/Didache words (possibly with an agape meal)/cup words.<sup>26</sup> The larger issue for our purposes is to see how Didache's vision of the eucharist is modified in its new, propitiatory setting. Didache 9:4 reads

Just as this broken [bread], having been thoroughly scattered upon the mountains and gathered together became one, so may your church be gathered from the corners of the earth into your kingdom.<sup>27</sup>

In Didache, the bread in question is only bread. There is no connection between the bread and the body of Christ in any way. "This broken [bread]" refers to a piece of bread that was to be eaten at the meal of thanksgiving. There was nothing mystical or sacrificial about it at all. Instead, it was used as a symbol of hope that God would gather the church from all over the world into God's kingdom.

The domain is rather different in the Prayer Book. Here, "this bread" has already been named "the likeness of the body of Christ" which was given for the remission of sins, and is being offered back to God in hopes that through it God will remit the sins of the people. "This bread" is sacrificial, indeed is a critical element of the sacrifice itself. Further, while Didache hoped for the church to be gathered from "all the corners of the earth," those corners are in the Prayer Book given political boundaries and names (nations, regions, cities, villages, houses), names that reflect the kingdoms of this world. And the ultimate gathering place of the church in the Prayer Book is no longer God's kingdom, but rather "one, living, catholic church." And the oneness of that church is achieved in the Prayer Book through an "all-minus-one"-ness, the propitiatory sacrifice, albeit technically "unbloody," of an innocent victim (bread in the likeness of Jesus) for the sins of the people. The language from Didache looks almost the same as Didache, but in its new environment it does not sound the same at all.

The epiclesis of the Logos, which follows the offering of the cup, also puts earlier

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<sup>26</sup>Johnson, 299-301.

<sup>27</sup>Rordorf, 324. Translation mine.

language, this time language from an earlier part of the eucharistic prayer itself, under a set of transformations.

Let come to dwell, O God of truth, your holy Word upon  
this bread, so that the bread may become body of the word,  
and upon this cup, so that the cup may become blood of  
truth.<sup>28</sup>

“Let come to dwell” borrows from the lines of praise earlier in the eucharistic prayer, where God was praised for *having* reconciled us by the coming of the beloved son to dwell among us. Here, though, things look substantially different. The outstanding plea is for reconciliation to happen now, apparently because whatever previous reconciliation had happened at some ontological level was insufficient. God is addressed not as “lover of humanity and lover of the poor” but as “God of truth.” The one to come to dwell is not “beloved son” but “holy Word.” And what the one to come is intended to dwell in is not first of all the people, but the material elements of the people’s sacrifice offered by their bishop. Reconciliation by divine participation in a material propitiatory sacrifice here replaces the baptismal and earlier eucharistic understanding of reconciliation initiated in the incarnation by offering persons participation in the divine life.

But then the scene shifts suddenly again. The final two sections of the eucharistic prayer seem to return in language and substance to the kinds of concerns we saw in the baptismal liturgies and earlier in this prayer. There is no more pleading for reconciliation, but rather more simply “mercy.” The meal is not for reconciliation, but for “a medicine of life for the healing of every sickness and for the empowerment of every advancement and virtue.” And the powers have returned as well. “Let angels be dispatched to be present with the people for the destruction of the wicked [one] and the firm grounding of the church.”<sup>29</sup> While reconciliation had seemed to be about getting forgiven for sins by the

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<sup>28</sup>Johnson, 46. Translation mine.

<sup>29</sup>Johnson, 48. Translation mine.

sacrifice of the eucharist, here it is about being fed to become powerful and advancing citizen-soldiers of God's kingdom against the kingdom of evil.

The prayers that follow the anaphora proper continue a pattern of bouncing between various eucharistic theologies. The Prayer "After the Announcement of the Names" of the dead continues in the vein of the baptismal prayers. The next prayer, "The Fraction after the Prayer and the Prayer during the Fraction" is somewhere in between. There is "participation in the body and the blood," sacrificial language, but the prayed-for effect of this participation is not forgiveness of sins, but "our bodies to receive purity and our souls understanding and knowledge." The "Laying on of Hands of the People after the Giving of the Fraction to the Clergy" asks the "God of compassion" to "give blessing to this people through your love of humanity and the surpassing mysteries,"<sup>30</sup> language that is very reminiscent of the beginning of the eucharistic prayer, and seems to lack sacrificial overtones. But the final "eucharistic" prayer proper, "Prayer after the Distribution of the People" closes with a veritable propitiatory chorus:

We give you thanks, master, for you have called those who have fallen and have made claim to those who have sinned and have placed aside the threat against us. In your love of humanity, you have given place, and in repentance you have wiped away [the threat], and in your knowledge you have cast [it] away. We give you thanks that you have given us fellowship of body and blood. Bless us, bless this people, make us to have a share with the body and the blood.<sup>31</sup>

And so one leaves the eucharist with the assurance that, this time, thanks to the sacrifice and the ability to participate in it, God's just wrath has been averted again. Relief, not joy, is the dominant note. God is reconciled again to God's people, at least for a while. Either that, or one leaves with a sense of deep confusion about the theopolitics of reconciliation, which seems here to operate by the rule, "now you see it, now you don't."

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<sup>30</sup>Johnson, 49, 51.

<sup>31</sup>Johnson, 53. Translation mine.

***Conclusion: A Text in Travail***

The Prayer Book cannot be said to offer a consistent teaching about peace, much less about the theopolitics of reconciliation. Baptismal practice, parts of the eucharistic prayers, and maybe the prayer for the appointment of presbyters point to a vision of reconciliation as re-creation and rebirth into the life of God, and correspond to those parts of the eucharistic prayers where the worship and praise of God for God's dwelling in creation through Jesus and in God's eternal dwelling, and petitions for empowerment and advancement, prevail. The heart of the anaphora, the role of the deacon, and the post-communion prayer, however, envision reconciliation with God as possible only through the re-presentation to God of the material, propitiatory sacrifice of the likeness of the body and blood of Jesus in the form of bread and wine.

Finally, these are not only two different and clashing visions of reconciliation, they are two different and clashing visions of God and of the possibilities and expectations for God's people and God's kingdom in the world. The Prayer Book is a text in travail, laboring vigorously under two incompatible theologies, offering signs of faithfulness to both. The "older" non-sacrificial tradition believes deeply in the possibility union with God and community in the divine life, and appears optimistic about the prospects of Christians receiving healing, release, and "every advancement in virtue," not to mention positively trouncing evil. God's kingdom is; its reality is true reality, its power, true power. The "newer" sacrificial tradition appears much less optimistic about humans being other than sinful and doomed to destruction unless they can offer a sacrifice that will propitiate God. There is no talk in the texts in these traditions about conquering evil, or even really being set free from its grip, but only of being made worthy enough, through participation in the sacrifice, to have the great accusation against them wiped away. Sin is; the kingdoms of this world are reality, and their power is very powerful. God has been good enough to provide a way for God's people to survive, if not thrive.

The Prayer Book is a valuable witness to the travails of fourth-century Christian worship and spiritual life because it expunges neither of the contending visions while clearly showing that sacrificial, atoning visions were on the ascendant.