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## Review of *Radical Christianity and the Flesh of Jesus, The Roots of Eucharistic Living* by Arthur A. Vogel

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*Radical Christianity and the Flesh of Jesus, The Roots of Eucharistic Living.* By Arthur A. Vogel. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995. vi + 143 pp. \$17.00 (paper).

In this compact volume Arthur Vogel articulates a radical commitment to living the reality of Christ's life and personal presence *in the flesh*. We are to know and engage Christ present as personal subject, not as object. Relationship with Christ is to be living, dynamic, intersubjective, and unfolding and developing. The facts about Christ are important, but we need so much more than facts about Jesus. We cannot "confine" Jesus to the past or the

future (p. 79). We are not saved by what we know about Jesus, we are saved through participation in Christ's life in loving relationship with him. We are to know Christ present in the specifics and particularities of life, relative to our senses, our experiences, our location, our time, and our decision-making. We are to know Christ present most especially in the eucharistic community that we share in his name. Our participation in Christ through the life and sacraments of the community is to be formative of all that we are and do, and not restricted to church activities as such.

Vogel's presentation is concise, original, and moving. It will be accessible to readers who do not have specialized theological training. He notes the scriptural emphasis on the flesh and blood existence of Jesus, whose life and death make possible our Christian life. Vogel's illustrations and analogies are often anecdotal, and they are certainly wide-ranging (mentioning at one time or another portrait painting, the effect caused by marching bands, quantum physics, and much more). The focus of his attention is also wide-ranging, but *Radical Christianity* is powerfully unified by his commitment to incarnational theology and incarnational living. He presents the Christian life as a process of transformation, and a reality expressed in the vocabulary of our decision-making and the way we spend our time. Living membership in eucharistic community therefore means an ethic for daily living, by which we share and participate in Christ's mercy, vulnerability, generosity, and availability.

Vogel states that the Eucharist is a means by which the action of Jesus' life may enter our lives (p. 93). Vogel's emphasis on participation and experience in the Christian life is certainly stated in his own terms, but he is firmly in line with Anglican theologians such as Hooker and DuBose who have emphasized the saving role of participation. Vogel presents Christ's presence as vividly and powerfully available for relationship with us today. Christ's presence is not to be isolated either in history, or in words about Christ, or in church practices that are disconnected from the rest of the life we live. Eucharistic living and eucharistic community are for all our time, not just Sunday morning. In this life and community we may spend time with Christ, and share a subject-to-subject relationship that transforms us. Also through this relationship it is possible for Christ "who now lives" to "extend his living in the world through us" (p. 124). The Church's vigor and definition is thus the life of eucharistic community, the life of Christ, which we may share daily in the flesh. Vogel articulates a powerful theology of Christ present in ways that are vividly active, loving, and transformative for the life we live.

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