Notes for Contributors

Typescripts. Papers should not normally exceed 5000 words including footnotes. An electronic copy of the paper should be sent preferably in MS Word format to William K Kay, (wkay@bangor.ac.uk). Please do not send your file in a ‘text only’ format. A hard copy version of the paper is no longer acceptable since it means retyping it so electronic versions are preferred.

The real size of paper and styles should be A5, Top margin 1.9 cm, Bottom 2 cm, Left 1.6, Right 1.6 cm, with Palatino 9.5 pt font for standard text, and single spaced. No indents are needed for first paragraphs of sections or after indented block quotes or diagrams or tables. Other paragraphs are indented.

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Heading 1 Font 12 bold, centred Palatino, 18.45 pt before, 3 pt after.
Heading 2 is italicised 11 font Palatino, bold, centred, 18.45 pt before, 3pt after.
Normal no indent for first paragraphs font Palatino Linotype 9.5 pt and justified, single spaced.
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Book reviews are in 2 columns.

Footnote reference number superscript, font Palatino 9.5.
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Abstract: At the head of each paper should be summary of 100-500 (within the 5000 word limit) words and 3-4 keywords on a separate sheet.

Tables and captions to illustrations: Tables may not be printed with the text depending on size. The captions, tables and figures should be numbered by Arabic numerals.
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Editorial Addresses
Editorial Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor above. Books for review should also be sent to Dr Kay.
The Church as Eucharistic Fellowship: A British Apostolic Contribution toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology

Jonathan Black

Abstract

This article highlights one particular aspect of British Pentecostal ecclesiological thought, namely eucharistic thought within the Apostolic Church, and seeks to demonstrate the relationship which existed between thinking on the Breaking of Bread and wider issues of ecclesiology. An examination is also made of thinking on the relationship between the Lord’s Table and matters of particular interest to Pentecostal theology, namely the gifts of the Spirit and divine healing. These in turn both reinforce and are reinforced by a pneumatological understanding of the sacrament, which calls into question prevailing opinions of a Pentecostal approach to the interpretation of the significance of the Lord’s Supper.

Ecclesiology has come very much to the fore in theological thought across the theological spectrum in recent decades, yet Pentecostalism has been continually criticised for lacking an ecclesiology. In fact, such criticism comes not only from outside the movement, but increasingly from within the Pentecostal academy itself. Coulter, in seeking to redress this issue, notes that ‘Recent Pentecostal theologians attempting to forge a Pentecostal ecclesiology seem to agree that early Pentecostalism lacked any significant discussion of the doctrine of the church.’ Amos Yong, one of those aforementioned recent Pentecostal theologians, states simply that ‘Pentecostals have not generally given sustained thought to ecclesiology’; ‘if they have talked about ecclesiology at all, it is usually as an

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3 Amos Yong, The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 123
afterthought.’ It is likewise assumed that the Lord’s Supper has not received a
great deal of theological attention from Pentecostals. John Bond, a South African
Pentecostal theologian, has even gone so far as to write that, among Pentecostals,
‘the attitude to the elements of bread and wine betrays a doctrinal shallowness’.5

For the Apostolic Church, however, ecclesiology has always been of the utmost
importance.6 Contrary to Yong’s claims concerning Pentecostalism more
generally, for the Apostolics the doctrine of the Church was no mere afterthought;
rather it was their very raison d’être. Neither was the Lord’s Supper neglected
among the Apostolics; rather, the writings of the early British Apostolics
demonstrate that they did not fall into the trap of shallow eucharistic thought.

The Lord’s Table within the British Apostolic Context

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen has recently reflected on the role of the Lord’s Supper in
Pentecostal ecclesiology.

What about the ecclesiological ramifications of the Lord’s Supper for
Pentecostals? Although it is questionable whether Pentecostals have a
distinctive ecclesiology at all, it is also true that instinctively, without
intentional theological reflection, Pentecostals have aligned themselves with
the free-church ecclesiological tradition. Hence, for Pentecostals the
Eucharist is not constitutive for the being of the church.7

Yet, I would argue, that the issue is not quite so clear-cut as Kärkkäinen would
suggest.

Elsewhere Kärkkäinen examines the eucharistic ecclesiology of Eastern
Orthodoxy as represented by John Zizioulas, noting that Zizioulas makes the
point that when Paul and the early church fathers speak of the church, they are
referring ‘primarily to the concrete eucharistic community. So the local eucharistic
gathering is the church of God.’8 Some of Kärkkäinen’s comments on the
pentecostal theology of the eucharist explain why he claims that, for Pentecostals,

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4 Yong, The Spirit Poured Out, 121
6 The Apostolic Church is an indigenous British pentecostal denomination which, although small in its homeland, numbers over 6 million members around the world. Note that the first series to be printed in Riches of Grace (the doctrinal magazine of the Apostolic Church) was entitled ‘Eglwys Iesu Grist’ (‘The Church of Jesus Christ’). See Riches of Grace, Vol 1.
8 Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002), 97
‘the Eucharist is not constitutive for the being of the church’; ‘most often it is a rather short part of the worship service’, he writes, and ‘[a] general rule of thumb is that it be celebrated monthly’. While these observations may be true of the American and Finnish varieties of Pentecostalism with which Kärkkäinen is most familiar, they are in no way applicable to traditional British Pentecostalism in any of its three forms, and certainly not to the Apostolic Church. Hollenweger’s comment that ‘the service of the Lord’s Supper is the central point of Pentecostal worship’ would resonate much more with Apostolics and other traditional British Pentecostals than would Kärkkäinen’s opinion that the sacrament is usually no more than a short part of the worship service. Historically the Apostolics (as well as Elim and AoG) have met each and every Lord’s Day morning for a service called simply ‘The Breaking of Bread’; thus the sacrament was not only the central aspect of the service, it was the service, the entire meeting being spent around the Lord’s Table with all that was done or said either flowing into or out from the sacrament. The Apostolic theologian W.A.C. Rowe notes that ‘this service is the centre of the greatest and most important expression of Church activity. The Lord’s Supper takes an absolutely central place in congregational worship.’ While allowing that ‘the Lord’s Supper as a particular act of obedience and spiritual exercise in itself may follow any other service’ Rowe proceeds to point out that ‘the greatest blessing is obtained usually when a full service is given to it.’ Rowe continues by describing the nature of a Breaking of Bread service:

Time should be given for spiritual exercise in spontaneous, collective worship by prayer expression, thanksgiving, praise and in other ways glorifying to the Lord … chief place will be given to the wonder of His grace (Romans 3:24) and for the resurrection power that ratified the work of the cross (I Corinthians 15:20)… The actual participation in the Breaking of Bread should take the main place of honour. This vital part should not be

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9 Kärkkäinen, ‘The Pentecostal View’, 122
10 Kärkkäinen, ‘The Pentecostal View’, 122
11 See David Allen, *Neglected Feast: Rescuing the Breaking of Bread* (Nottingham: Expression, 2007). This is a book solely about the Breaking of Bread written from a British classical Pentecostal perspective. David Allen is a member of AoG and was formerly a lecturer at Mattersey Hall.
15 Rowe, *One Lord*, 213
pushed to some odd corner of the time available and be gone through in a hurried or perfunctory manner, as if it was merely a duty to be accomplished. Given the climactic place of importance, all else should flow toward it, or if experienced earlier in the gathering everything that ensues should flow from it.¹⁶

1 Corinthians 14:26 has traditionally been seen as a key verse for the nature of the Breaking of Bread service¹⁷: ‘How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.’ Thus there is an expectation among Apostolics that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be manifested at the Breaking of Bread service. This accords with the observation of Eastern Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas that, in the early church, the spiritual gifts were in operation during eucharistic gatherings.¹⁸ In fact Zizioulas even goes so far as to say that ‘all charismatic manifestations... took place during the eucharistic gatherings’.¹⁹ In the Apostolic Church, the use of the gifts is doctrinally linked to ‘the edification, exhortation and comfort of the Church, which is the Body of Christ’²⁰ and are therefore ‘only to be exercised in the Assembly ... under the supervision of the local presbytery’²¹. Due to the fact that the gifts of the Spirit were not to be used at the Lord’s Day evening service (as it was a Gospel Service at which non-believers were expected to be present)²², as well as the association of 1 Corinthians 14:26 with the Breaking of Bread, the exercise of Spiritual Gifts was closely (although not exclusively) linked with the eucharistic gathering.²³ Certainly then, we must conclude that eucharistic piety and practice has historically played a key role in the Apostolic Church.

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¹⁶ Rowe, One Lord, 213-214
¹⁷ see e.g. D. Kongo Jones, ‘The Apostolic Form of Christian Worship’, Riches of Grace (1926)
¹⁸ John Zizioulas, Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Press, 1985), 193
¹⁹ Zizioulas, Being as Communion: emphasis mine, p193
²⁰ Tenet 6
²¹ The Apostolic Church: Its Principles and Practices, 206
²² The Apostolic Church, 266
²³ Within the context of the local assembly, the gifts would also have been operative in the prayer meeting and ministry meeting; yet those who attended these two meetings would, as a rule, have been regular participants in the Breaking of Bread; thus they are a gathering of the eucharistic body, even if not gathered for the eucharist.
The Breaking of Bread & the Nature of the Church

The centrality of the Breaking of Bread can even be seen in the way in which the visible church is defined by the Apostolics. The catechism states it thus: ‘How is the Church on earth known? It was known after Pentecost as the body of people who continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers (Acts 2:42).’ Here in the catechism, the Apostolic love of Sola Scriptura is seen in the theological answer being given in the form of a Bible verse. Acts 2:42 has always been considered of great importance in Apostolic ecclesiology. Yet in this verse we see the same three marks of the church as those put forward by the Reformers. The ‘Pure Preaching of the Gospel’ is signalled by the Apostles’ Doctrine, the ‘Right Administration of the Sacraments’ is indicated by the Breaking of Bread and the ‘Exercise of Church Discipline’ is an aspect of the Apostles’ Fellowship. Thus the Apostolic Church is in essential agreement with the Reformers as to the marks of a true church. What is essential here for our present purpose is the necessity of the Breaking of Bread as a mark of a true church. The choice of Acts 2:42 as the definition of how the church on earth is known as opposed to the traditional Reformation formula only serves to highlight the importance of the eucharist for the Apostolic understanding of the church.

This importance can also be seen in the nature of church membership among the Apostolics. New members were only to be given ‘the right hand of fellowship’ at a Breaking of Bread service and the rules to be accepted by all members include: ‘Your presence in the meetings of the Church and abidance in full communion; that is not to absent yourself more than three times from Communion without sufficient reason given for your absence. (Heb. 10:25).’ Thus the eucharist and membership of the church were closely linked and abiding in full communion was demonstrated through participation in Communion, i.e. the Breaking of Bread. W.A.C. Rowe explains this by writing that ‘there is no personal option whatsoever, hence the Scriptural insistence upon regular observance of this command as a principle and condition of Church membership.’ Thus participation in the eucharist undergirds church membership.

25 See e.g. Scots Confession, XVIII
26 The Apostolic Church: Its Principles and Practices, 254
27 The Apostolic Church, 252; this rule also appears on the membership card of every member of the Apostolic Church.
28 Rowe, One Lord, One Faith, 201
membership; non-participation in the sacrament negates membership. Hence the Church is seen as a eucharistic fellowship.

D.P. Williams, the founder of the Apostolic Church, explains this intimate link between church membership and the Breaking of Bread whilst referring to the link between the Cup and the New Covenant. ‘To neglect and disregard the Holy Sacrament is to disregard the very Covenant itself.’29 Thus clearly it is not simply the external rite of attendance at the eucharist and the external status of church membership which is of concern to Williams, Rowe, and the membership rules. Rather it is the covenantal reality. Hence we must turn to look at the meaning of the sacrament.

**The Meaning of the Sacrament**

Kärkkäinen writes that ‘[it] is safe to say – and this is generally acknowledged by Pentecostal theologians – that the theological understanding of most Pentecostals is basically in keeping with the Zwinglian understanding.’30 He writes further that ‘the Pentecostal view of the Lord’s Supper can thus rightly be called a ‘memorial’ view.’31 Hollenweger makes the same observation, writing that the sacrament is viewed ‘on Zwinglian lines as a memorial of Jesus’ death.’32 Yet, once again, a perusal of the early British Apostolic writings belies this assessment, demonstrating that Zwinglian memorialism was, for them, an inadequate conception of the sacrament. Something more than Zwinglian memorialism was needed to explain the importance which they attached to the Breaking of Bread and its link with the New Covenant.

An elder from the Tygwyn assembly in Llanelli points briefly to the early Apostolic understanding of the eucharist in an article for the *Riches of Grace* in 1932; he writes of the Breaking of Bread as ‘the time for us to feed on Jesus, to banquet with Him, the only true nourishment of our souls, the Bread of Life.’33 Although this statement may be brief, it is clearly alluding to something more than mere Zwinglian memorialism. D.P. Williams himself demonstrates the Apostolic understanding of this feeding on Christ, describing how the elements, although ‘no means of grace in themselves’ (i.e. not working *ex opere operato*), become means of grace through being joined with the faith of ‘all them that partake of the Sacrament’ and thus Christ’s ‘invisible grace is imparted mediately and directly

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29 D.P. Williams, ‘Editorial Note: The Lord’s Table’, *Riches of Grace*, Vol. iii No. 7 (May 1928), 275
30 Kärkkäinen, ‘The Pentecostal View’, 122
31 Kärkkäinen, ‘The Pentecostal View’, 123
32 Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 385
from His Person to His worshipping Saints.’

Thus, for D.P. Williams the sacrament is no mere memorial, but rather a true means of grace. This is high Calvinism, not Zwinglianism. Williams continues: ‘through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and the blessing of Christ, the effectiveness of the Finished Work on Man’s behalf is spiritually experienced and appropriated by them who have entered within the bonds of the Covenant of Grace.’ Here we see the link he draws between participation in the sacrament and membership of the Covenant, thus explaining his prior comment that ‘To neglect and disregard the Holy Sacrament is to disregard the very Covenant itself.’ The explanation that it is through ‘the agency of the Holy Spirit’ that grace is mediated in the sacrament not only takes the eucharist in a pneumatological direction (à la Calvin) which would appear particularly appropriate within a Pentecostal ecclesiology, but also serves to avoid the ideas of transubstantiation and consubstantiation, so abhorrent to Pentecostal theology, while still allowing communicants to feed on Christ. As an editorial written by the presiding apostle, the eucharistic teaching contained here would appear to carry the weight of official teaching. This is confirmed by the fact that later that year ‘Fundamental Truths Believed by the Apostolic Church’ were printed on the inside cover of Riches of Grace. The combination of the position, the title, and the fact that these were unattributed all serves to suggest that they were being printed as official teaching. Either they were written by D.P. Williams himself, or heavily based on his writings, as the same ideas found in his editorial on the Lord’s Table are present, and sometimes even the same sentences word for word. In these ‘Fundamental Truths’ we read that, in the Breaking of Bread ‘each believing saint partake[s] by faith of the virtue of [Christ’s] Own Body and Blood, as substantial sustenance to the spiritual Life’

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34 D.P. Williams. ‘Editorial Note: The Lord’s Table’, 276
36 D.P. Williams. ‘Editorial Note: The Lord’s Table’, 276
37 D.P. Williams. ‘Editorial Note: The Lord’s Table’, 275
38 As W.A.C. Rowe notes, ‘that which is spiritual is spiritual; that which is physical and material remains the same.’ (One Lord, One Faith, 205; emphasis original)
39 Riches of Grace was the Apostolic Church’s official denominational doctrinal periodical.
40 ‘Fundamental Truths Believed by the Apostolic Church’, Riches of Grace, Vol. iv No.1 (September 1928), inside front cover; see also ‘Fundamental Truths Believed by the Apostolic Church’, Riches of Grace, Vol. iv No.2 (November 1928), inside front cover. Cf. Calvin, Institutes, 4.17.10
This high eucharistic theology is also evidenced by a collection of eucharistic hymnody. The three main British Pentecostal denominations have historically shared a hymnbook compiled by a committee composed of representatives of the three churches, namely *The Redemption Hymnal*.\(^{41}\) In 1974 a new small hymnal was produced as a supplement to *The Redemption Hymnal*, called *Hymns at the Holy Table*.\(^{42}\) As the name suggests, this collection of 70 hymns was devoted entirely to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. It was compiled and edited by an Apostolic minister, Ian Macpherson, with a second Apostolic minister, Omri Bowen, selecting appropriate tunes to go with the words. Interestingly both of these ministers served at one time as principal of the Apostolic Church Bible College in Penygroses and thus were known within the church as theologians. The *Redemption Hymnal* already contained fifteen hymns under the heading of ‘Breaking of Bread’ and a further 20 under ‘The Lord Jesus Christ – His Sufferings and Death’, yet the eucharistic piety of British Pentecostalism required more explicit hymnic attention to the sacrament. The hymns in this new eucharistic collection came from a wide variety of sources, some new and some old. No. 67 was taken from the Diadache, no. 47 dated from the 7th century, whilst nos. 29 & 44 were written by Thomas Aquinas. Some hymns were contributed by Pentecostal hymn-writers, including Ian Macpherson himself. Macpherson’s hymns make clear the insufficiency of mere Zwinglian memorialism. Christ is said to be present ‘*not in memory alone*’\(^{43}\), ‘*but with resurrection power*’\(^{44}\). ‘Yet are the holy bread and wine / more than mere symbols to my soul … And as the emblems are dispensed / more than a memory is sensed.’\(^{45}\) These hymns\(^{46}\) are a remarkable achievement in articulating the Calvinistic eucharistic doctrine of the Spiritual presence in a popular fashion; Macpherson strongly rejects the Roman Catholic doctrine of the physical presence, without falling into mere memorialism. He gives an excellent, yet popular contrast between transubstantiation and the Spiritual presence, making very clear how far apart the two doctrines really are.

**Healing in the Cup**

A high Calvinistic view of the sacrament (and thus being considered a means of grace, it is definitely the word *sacrament* rather than *ordinance* which is appropriate) also helps account for a theme, common in various strands of

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\(^{41}\) Joint Redemption Hymnal Committee, *The Redemption Hymnal* (Bradford: Puritan Press, 1951)

\(^{42}\) Ian Macpherson, ed. & comp., *Hymns at the Holy Table* (London: Evangel Press, 1974)

\(^{43}\) Ian Macpherson, ‘In the Breaking of the Bread’, *Hymns at the Holy Table* No. 25, emphasis mine

\(^{44}\) Macpherson, ‘In the Breaking of the Bread’

\(^{45}\) I. Macpherson, ‘Why should I to a biscuit bow’, *Hymns at the Holy Table*, No. 66

\(^{46}\) Particularly Hymn No. 66
Pentecostalism, which is often found in the Apostolic literature: namely the idea that ‘there is healing at the Table.’ Kärkkäinen discusses this feature of Pentecostal eucharistic thought, whilst also noting how this idea of ‘divine contact point’ sits uneasily with Zwinglian memorialism. D.P. Williams doctrine, that ‘through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and the blessing of Christ, the effectiveness of the Finished Work on Man’s behalf is spiritually experienced and appropriated’ in the sacrament as a means of grace, would serve to ease this tension.

Edwin Williams uses the link between the Lord’s Supper and Healing, along with the idea of the sacrament as a means of grace through which we feed on Christ and His benefits to argue against the use of individual communion cups and for a single common chalice.

We cannot see how any true Christian can see danger (in the members using the same cup) at the Lord’s Table. We are partaking of and communing with Christ, Who is Life and Health. How can we partake of Life and Health and Death and Sickness at the same time, from the same source? It is impossible. It is either Health or Sickness, one of the two, and to say that there is a danger is nothing more but to belittle the value of Christ’s Atonement.

Williams goes on to make an exegetical argument for a single chalice, followed by another theological argument, this time about the unity of the Body. ‘As we share the same cup, we realise that we have an equal share, a common interest in the same Saviour. We realise that we are all on the same level – just sinners saved by grace. There is a greater unity and sense of oneness.’

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47 See e.g. W.A.C. Rowe, One Lord, One Faith, 211
48 Kärkkäinen, ‘The Pentecostal View’, 126-128
49 Kärkkäinen, ‘The Pentecostal View’, 123
50 D.P. Williams. ‘Editorial Note: The Lord’s Table’, 276
51 Interestingly David Allen, writing in 2007, also argues for a Calvinistic eucharistic doctrine for Pentecostals. Allen, Neglected Feast.
52 Note the comment in Keith Warrington, Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 167-168 that ‘small goblets contained in communion trays’ are more common than a single chalice among Pentecostals. This is interesting in that Warrington is writing from a British (Elim) perspective. Although some British Apostolic assemblies now use individual cups on trays, it is still considered to quite some extent as ‘un-Apostolic’. Even many large assemblies (e.g. Dover) use several chalices rather than individual cups.
53 Edwin Williams, ‘The Lord’s Supper’, 214
54 Williams, ‘The Lord’s Supper,’ 214.
Communion and Unity

Edwin Williams was not alone in making the connection between the eucharist and the oneness of the Body. According to the ‘Fundamental Truths Believed by the Apostolic Church’ in the Riches of Grace, ‘Gathered at the Table, we realise that the Cross has abolished all enmity, eliminated all class-distinction and broken down all national barriers; that we are members of One Body, partakers of One Life’\(^{55}\). Rowe also connects this oneness specifically with the Cup. ‘The cup speaks of a great sharing … the thought and purpose is of a blissful communion between the Head and members and between the members and each other.’\(^{56}\)

Rowe takes this motif of the oneness of the Body even further, highlighting not only the unity of the members of the church, but also the source of that unity in the Head of the Body. Referring to 1 Corinthians 10:16 (‘The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?’), Rowe writes that in the Breaking of Bread we have ‘intimate communion in the Blood and Body of Christ and thus intrinsically with all of Himself and His great purpose.’\(^{57}\) Furthermore, Rowe argues that ‘fundamentally, our communion is certainly and essentially with the Head. Obviously there could be no fellowship between the members only because of and through the Head. But the one makes the other not only possible, but necessary’\(^{58}\). Hence for Rowe, the Cup is the sign and seal of ‘the living reality of exquisite and vital sharing, in fellowship and communion with the Lord and each other and all that essentially belongs to each.’\(^{59}\)

The Means of Grace & The Eucharistic Fellowship

The sacrament of the Breaking of Bread then becomes, in Apostolic Theology, much more than a mere memorial of Christ’s sacrificial death; rather it is that and much more. The sacrament, through the agency of the Holy Spirit is a means of grace to those who partake in faith. As a means of grace, through it, the faithful feed on Christ and all His benefits, including divine healing, and receive sustenance for their spiritual life. Furthermore, the sacrament is also a sign and

\(^{55}\) ‘Fundamental Truths Believed by the Apostolic Church’, Riches of Grace, Vol. iv No.2 (November 1928), inside front cover

\(^{56}\) W.A.C. Rowe, One Lord, One Faith, 207

\(^{57}\) Rowe, One Lord, 207

\(^{58}\) Rowe, One Lord, 207, emphasis original. Note the accordance with contemporary Reformed theologian, Michael Horton: ‘As we receive our Living Head by His Spirit, we are made one people.’ Michael Horton, God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 159.

\(^{59}\) Rowe, One Lord, 207
seal of the unity of the Body of Christ, both within itself and with her heavenly Head. As such the sacrament undergirds the life of the Church and hence the church is essentially, although not always necessarily a eucharistic gathering (the church also gathers for prayer, ministry and evangelism, and remains the church when not gathered), a eucharistic fellowship.