

# The Spirit and the meal as a model for Charismatic worship: A practical-theological exploration

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The purpose of this article is to present one aspect of a larger research project. The Spirit tradition (Charismatic) and its liturgical rituals as well as the Meal tradition (Liturgical Movement) and its liturgical rituals through history were researched as well as the concomitant theology. The aim was to gain a better understanding of whether the future of Charismatic worship can benefit from a somewhat closer integration of aspects of the meal tradition, especially the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This article will mostly be focused on the empirical research done in this project within three Charismatic churches in Gauteng, South Africa. This research seeks to contribute to Robert Webber's model of bringing old and new together in synergy. In the end, this article poses a new model for Charismatic worship when liturgical-rituals of the Spirit are combined with the celebration of communion in a way that worshippers experience as being more meaningful.

## Introduction

The Spirit tradition<sup>1</sup> is a tradition with its essential focus on experiencing the Holy Spirit. This tradition has made its latest and most influential appearance during the Azuza street revival in Los Angeles in the early 1900s (Cox 1995:48). This revival has spread globally to most countries and has also influenced most church traditions (cf. Wepener 2010a:405–407). Along with a scholar such as Albrecht (1999:30–35), we see the Charismatic tradition as a more recent manifestation of the Pentecostal tradition which commenced with the Azuza Street Revival. The Charismatic tradition is a tradition fashioned by the needs of believers and the reality of experiencing the Holy Spirit. Thus as a relatively new worship tradition, the influence of the Spirit cannot be underestimated (cf. Albrecht 1999:34, 81).

Our focus within this research project was to look at the celebration of communion within Charismatic churches. Communion is celebrated all over the world in most Christian churches. It has been one of the most sacred liturgical actions of the church through the centuries and is therefore defined by most churches as a sacrament. Various sources point to the fact that the early beginnings of communion entailed a full meal (cf. the *Didache*, ch. 10, in Niederwimmer 1998:155; also Wepener 2004:256) but with many changes across history. Communion nowadays is a nip and a sip (Denny 2013:10) in many traditions. Sometimes the piece of bread is so small and the sip of wine or juice so little that it is difficult to taste anything. Also, the actual celebration is not necessarily part of the actual worship service when everyone who attended the worship service are still present, and thus communion is celebrated after the benediction. Is the partaker able to experience the full meaning of communion in this way? It seems to me that, in this way of partaking in communion, the rich symbolism of this sacrament has been minimised in various ways by negating for example the sensory, symbolic, didactic and theological potential this liturgical ritual has to communicate the message of the gospel in the worship service.

In order to explore the research question and to make a contribution to the *liturgia condenda* [the liturgy in the making] in the Spirit tradition, we endeavoured to determine the current situation with regard to and reasons for the celebration of communion within the Spirit tradition. This was in following of Osmer's (2008:1–31) first two questions: (1) What is going on (descriptive-empirical-descriptive task) and (2) why is this going on (interpretive task)? Can the liturgy of the Spirit tradition benefit from the meal tradition. Should the two worshipping traditions be brought closer together? Will a combination of the liturgical actions of the two be the future of Charismatic worship? Although final answers to these questions are impossible, we are convinced that an exploration of these questions will help to identify important ritual-liturgical qualities (cf. Grimes 1990:14) that can assist in developing an enhanced theory for praxis with regards to the celebration of communion in a Charismatic worship service. We finally want to make a contribution to Robert Webber's (1994, 2007) theory for the praxis of worship by bringing old and new together, what

<sup>1</sup>When referring to the Spirit tradition, we mean and include the Charismatic tradition. When referring to the Meal tradition, we mean and include the liturgical movement as Martin Stringer defines it in his book.

he calls blended worship (cf. also Van der Merwe 2013). Webber's work is well known in mainline churches, which in this research can be termed the Meal tradition. However the unique contribution of this research is almost the opposite, namely not an enrichment of the Meal tradition but an enrichment of the Spirit tradition with liturgical rituals that are more commonly associated with the Meal tradition.

## Research methodology and description of data collection

The way in which communion is celebrated in Charismatic churches is varied, as is the case in many mainline churches. In this section, empirical research that was conducted in this regard will be presented. Firstly, we provide a descriptive-empirical part regarding communion practice in Charismatic churches, and secondly, we investigate how the service is viewed by the worshippers, or put differently, how worshippers appropriate (cf. Post 2001) this part of the worship service in which they participated. Field research, and in this regard specifically participatory observation (Hermans & Moore 2004:67; Wepener 2005:109–127), allows one to generate knowledge that would otherwise not have existed. Innovative ideas can be developed based on printed and internet resources. Yet, interviewing others, developing questionnaires or making first-hand observations made it all more dynamic and more original and most importantly provided the study with information that is not obtainable in any other way (Denny 2013:123).

During the fieldwork, the researcher participated in and observed the worship services of the participating churches over a period of four months, and in this same time, worshippers were also interviewed. In the book *Qualitative research from start to finish* by Robert Yin (2011:66), he explains the process of fieldwork, which was followed in this research. As Osmer (2008:9) notes: 'It is worth noting in passing that gathering stories of the congregation's' past leads me back to the descriptive – empirical task.' When we understand what they are doing, we can begin to understand why they are doing it.

Our three main methods of research in the empirical part were that of participant observation, semi-structured focus-group interviews and questionnaires (cf. Thumma 1998). We will only focus on the participant observation and questionnaires in this article. The focus groups were informally selected. The purpose was to gather information from a wide array of persons, young and old, new believers and more mature. Our purpose was to select an array of persons in order for us to obtain as representative as possible insight into how the worshippers appropriate their participation in communion in Charismatic worship services. Members who were willing to complete the questionnaires were also randomly selected. With the empirical research, the process was as follows: data collection, data transcription, data analysis and interpretation and then formulating research findings (Osmer 2008:56).

In this article, we focus only on the questions that members completed.

Our overarching research question was:

- Can the Spirit and the meal be brought together in a more meaningful way and influence the future of Charismatic worship?

As sub-questions of this overarching question, we used the following questions in the descriptive-empirical part:

- In what manner is communion celebrated within the worship service?
- What are the responses from the worshippers when asked questions regarding communion.

The research will to a large extent follow the same lines as argued by Richard R. Osmer (2008) in his book *Practical theology: An introduction*. Osmer presents us with four questions or tasks, which will form the background basis of this research:

1. What is going on (descriptive-empirical-descriptive task)?
2. Why is this going on (interpretive task)?
3. What ought to be going on (normative task)?
4. How might we respond (pragmatic task)?

After this introduction and description of the process of data collection, we present the ritual-liturgical data that we collected by being observing participants. We also relate some of the answers to the questionnaires. In conclusion, a model is presented and elaborated upon.

## The celebration of communion in Charismatic churches

In this section, the manner in which communion is celebrated in the participating Charismatic congregations is presented by means of descriptions based on participatory observation. Firstly after permission was gained and ethical clearance obtained to do the research in the three congregations, 27 people were randomly selected after each church service. All 27 people completed the questionnaires, and three people from each church stayed longer for semi-structured focus-group discussions.

Three churches have been selected to conduct the empirical part of this research. These churches have not been selected randomly but have been selected with certain criteria in mind. The chosen churches were all Pentecostal or Charismatic in their beliefs and practices. They were also medium to large-sized churches<sup>2</sup> and all located in Gauteng in middle-class suburbs. The neo-Pentecostal churches that are to be found in townships all over South Africa nowadays were not included. Although not aiming to be representative of Charismatic worship in South Africa in general, the researcher is convinced that these participating congregations do represent, to a certain extent, Charismatic worship in middle-class suburbs in cities in South Africa, even though, as will be seen, all the worshippers do not necessarily come from a middle-class background. The three congregations and their worship are presented below.

2.The number of members of each church will be given when each church's worship is discussed.

## Church A

Church A is an independent Charismatic church in Brooklyn Pretoria. The church consists of approximately 1000 members. It is located in a middle- to upper-class neighbourhood, and most members of the church are probably economically fairly well off. The members are predominantly White South Africans, and the worship services are conducted in Afrikaans, but not only first-language Afrikaans speakers attend. It is very close to the University of Pretoria, which led this church to become a magnet for students and young adults.

To really comprehend the way of celebrating communion in this church, a worship service was attended on a Sunday. The researcher wanted to participate in the worship in order better to understand their liturgical praxis. This data are as follows.

It was decided to visit a Sunday-evening service, which is predominantly attended by students. Many people attend the church. The researcher was welcomed by friendly faces at the door. The researcher entered the church, and the vibe was so alive. Music was playing, and people were chatting. The pastor was around greeting people. As the researcher made her way to a seat, the service started. The service started with praise and worship music in what can be described as typical Charismatic style, and the members joined in with joyous celebration and clapping. After about 40 minutes, the pastor came up to preach. This particular sermon was about relationships and how we should respect and always forgive each other. After the sermon, the pastor invited everyone to partake of communion. There were big tables set at the front of the church. On the tables were jugs of grape juice and big loafs of bread. Worshippers were invited to get up from their seats and go to the front, break off a piece of bread and pour some grape juice in a cup. Worshippers could stand by the table or go back to their seat for more privacy whilst eating and drinking. Nothing was really said about the communion or why we are partaking. It was assumed that everyone knew what to do and for what reason. As the people were observed, it looked as if some people really experienced their participation as meaningful and did spend some time in prayer. The service was ended with a closing song.

Some additional observations are needed with regards to the celebration described above. The pastor who led the sermon introduced the part of the service where communion would be celebrated directly after he had finished preaching. There was no formulary or any specific words in order to explain the theological meaning of communion. He merely invited the people to go alone or as friends and family to the tables where the bread and juice were placed and to partake and to pray for one another. People looked around, trying to see who would go first. Many people did not get up to partake, but some did. The band came up and played a slow song, and the lights were also dimmed, which created an atmosphere of worship as it is called in the Charismatic tradition. The band played one song which gave the congregation approximately

five minutes to spend time in reflection. When the time was up, someone else in the church came to the stage and read the church news.

## Church B

Church B is also an independent Charismatic church and located in Midrand, Gauteng. The church is in the centre of a very wealthy neighbourhood and close to a very poor township. People of all races and languages attend this church although the predominant language used in the worship service is English. We can define this church as multicultural with regard to race and language whilst level of income is an obvious difference. This church has approximately 800 members of which around 300 attend the worship service on any given day.

I decided to go to their Friday-night service. The age group of the worshippers was similar to that of church A, predominantly young adults. On entering, some people greeted me at the door and invited me to have a cappuccino. The atmosphere was very relaxed. After a brief countdown,<sup>3</sup> the service started with praise and worship. The praise and worship seemed as if it touched some people as I looked into the crowd and saw hands raised, some kneeling and some crying. As researcher, I judged the music of this particular church to be of an exceptional high quality. After the worship, everyone took their seats, and the pastor stood up and started preaching. The specific sermon was part of a series of sermons called 'F-Bomb – Forgiveness sake'. After the sermon followed the altar call,<sup>4</sup> and people who wanted to 'accept Jesus' were called to the front and prayed for. Then, as a closing announcement, it was said that whoever wanted could partake of communion after completion of the worship service. On the tables in the front of the worship space were jugs and a few loafs of bread. The sermon closed and people started filing out of the church. A few worshippers stayed behind and made their way to the communion table. Similar to church A, worshippers could stand at the table or return to their seats and thus partake as they prefer. Throughout the celebration of communion, loud music was playing, and people were talking in loud voices. When people were done, they were free to leave.

Reflecting once again on the part of the service during which communion was celebrated, it is interesting to note there was no communion-sermon, formulary or any explanation to explain the meaning and/or benefit of participating in the celebration of communion. It was thus taken for granted that people know the meaning of communion. In the light of the larger structure of the worship and the fact that communion is celebrated only after most people have left the worship space, it seems that communion is liturgically speaking seen as less important than the worship service that preceded it. Also, the loud and fast music that was playing and the fact

<sup>3</sup>The countdown is a typical element in Charismatic churches of the type included in this research and basically entails a countdown on the projection screens on the stage.

<sup>4</sup>The altar call is another typical element in Charismatic worship.

that everyone talked and laughed and carried on with their normal conversations communicated a certain approach to and understanding of communion. Only 20 participants in the worship service partook of communion. Not even all the leaders in the church partook, and for the researcher as participant observer, the celebration of communion seemed like an afterthought.

## Church C

Church C is another independent Charismatic church and located in the east of Pretoria. The church is situated in a wealthy and fast-growing part of Pretoria. This means that many members fall in the middle class or higher bracket. Whilst people from all races attend the church, the worship is conducted in English.

The researcher attended a worship service on a Sunday morning which was held in a big white tent. As was the case in the previous two descriptions, the worship service started with praise and worship which in this particular service could be described as being fast and loud with worshippers raising their hands, dancing and singing as if no one was watching. After the praise music, the music was toned down, and slow music started for the worship part of the praise and worship. As the praise and worship drew to an end, the pastor took the massive stage and started his sermon. On this particular day, the sermon was focused on personal finances, and he explained that the way in which you give your money is a direct reflection on your relationship with God. To the researcher, it sounded more like a motivational speech<sup>5</sup> than a sermon. When the sermon was over, the pastor made an altar call which meant that people could come to the front of the church where there would be prayer for them to meet God personally.

One important observation with regard to the main focus of the research is that this church seldom uses communion together as a group during the worship services on Sunday. The celebration of communion usually takes place within small groups during the week. This means that those who commit to be part of a small group (also known as a cell group) have the opportunity to celebrate and partake of communion regularly. According to one respondent, communion might be celebrated in the church only once or twice a year.

For the sake of the research, the researcher visited a cell group to experience and to describe how they celebrate communion in the small group. Firstly, members discussed the sermon that the pastor delivered the Sunday before. When it was time for communion, the group leader casually stood up, and chatting commenced. The leader returned with a piece of bread and grape juice. The bread was broken off into smaller pieces and handed out to everyone. Then everyone received a glass of grape juice. They all sat quietly and partook as and when they wanted, meaning that some knelt and others just sat quietly and prayed. Soft worship

5.A sermon would be coupled with the text and context. In other words, correct exegesis. A motivational sermon would be one not necessarily coupled with a text or any hermeneutics.

music played in the background as everyone prayed by themselves and spent some quality time with God. Some even stood up and started singing to the music that was playing. This celebration can be compared to the celebration in the first church, which the researcher experienced as more intimate seeing that there was no disturbance such as the loud music. Also, there was no specific person who handed out the elements and all members could partake in the way they wished, namely taking bread and juice as they wished. Furthermore, there was no teaching explicitly aimed at the celebration of communion or no discussion about the celebration. When it seemed that everyone was finished with their participation of communion, the meeting was closed with prayer.

## The appropriation by worshippers of the celebration of communion in Charismatic churches

The above so-called thick descriptions (Geertz 1973:10; Stewart 1998:6) of how communion is celebrated were augmented with data pertaining to how worshippers appropriated their participation in the celebration of communion (cf. Post 2001). Information was gathered by making use of the following questions in order to better understand the ways in which worshippers participate of communion in these churches and also how they appropriate (cf. Stringer 2005; Wepener 2009:22) their participation:

1. How frequently do you celebrate communion at your church?<sup>6</sup>
2. Do you have communion in small groups during the week or at church? Explain.
3. When communion is served, does the sermon revolve around communion as well?
4. What elements are used for communion in your church? Bread or wine?
5. Do you think it should be more or less frequent? Why?
6. Do you experience communion as meaningful? Explain:
7. What stands out to you, if anything, about the communion service in the church where you worship?
8. What if anything would you desire more from a communion service? Explain.
9. Explain the mood in the church when partaking of communion.
10. Are you aware of how other churches celebrate communion? How does it vary from your church?

The researcher wanted to discover the way in which Charismatic churches celebrate communion, how worshippers appropriate their participation in communion and whether there is a need for a deeper understanding and thus also a different way of celebration.

The average age of the respondents who completed the questionnaires (Denny 2013:135–149) was 30 years. The youngest person was 21 and the oldest 58 years of age. Of

6.The aim of these questions was to attain data with which we could augment our description obtained from the participatory observation.

those participating, 12 were White males, 14 White females, and one was a Black male.

Most of the selected members came from other denominations before joining their particular Charismatic church. Eight respondents grew up in either an Apostolic Faith Mission or other independent Charismatic church. Eighteen respondents grew up in another church of which seven were from the Dutch Reformed Church, four from the Reformed Church, two from the Methodist Church, two from the Presbyterian Church, two from the Baptist Church, one from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and one respondent did not comment. This shows a move from the more traditional mainline churches towards the Charismatic churches amongst this group. This information is important, seeing that previous worship experiences in other churches can indeed influence the way in which respondents appropriated their participation in the celebration of communion.

When asked how frequent communion is served in their church service, the answers were varied. This is strange as there were only three churches involved in the research. One respondent suggested three times a year, another respondent said once every three months, two respondents said every Sunday, three respondents said once or twice a month and the majority, namely 16 respondents, said that communion was celebrated once a month. This might suggest that people are inattentive when going to church or when partaking of communion. The leaders of each of the three churches also filled in the forms, and two of them indicated that communion was celebrated weekly whilst the other one indicated that it was celebrated once a month.

The next question was whether or not the respondents celebrated communion during the week in small groups. One person said yes, 11 people said no, and 13 people said yes and sometimes. Two persons were not in small groups. More than half of the people thus said yes and sometimes. It shows that these groups do not celebrate communion every week, but they do celebrate it outside of church, and people do desire it even in small groups.

It was also asked whether the sermon focuses on or touches upon communion whenever communion is celebrated on a particular Sunday. Eleven people indicated that the sermon never revolves around the subject of communion. Two people indicated that it does always. Four people indicated that it does sometimes. Nine people said that it does not, but they qualified their answers by saying it is explained briefly at the end of the worship service or just before communion is celebrated. One person did not comment. Based on these answers by respondents, it thus seems that the sermon mostly does not focus on communion when communion is celebrated during that worship service. Based on this information and taken together with the already described participatory observation and the place of communion in the worship service, it can be concluded that little or no teaching or sermon is provided to help the members understand the meaning of the sacrament or to encourage them to partake of it.

The next question on the questionnaire was whether or not respondents thought that communion needed to be celebrated more often. Nine respondents said yes because it gives them time to care for one another, and it helped them to partake as a unity and help new people to understand it. One respondent said yes and no, and 17 respondents said no. Four of the respondents who said no indicated that the frequency would detract from the event being special, and it will thus just become a ritual. One respondent said that if they did it more frequent, it would scare away new people. Five respondents said that they do not expect a more frequent celebration although, in their opinion, communion should be celebrated more frequently in small groups or personally.

When asked whether they experience the celebration of communion as meaningful, all of the 27 respondents answered yes. The reasons respondents provided included the following:

- Participation convicts and challenges them.
- Participation also reminds them of the sacrifice of Christ.
- Participation reminds them to love and be caring.
- Participation is also an affirmation that they are free from sin and forgiven.
- Participation reconnects them with Jesus.

Furthermore, during the celebration, they experience how God loves them and that the enemy has been defeated. Lastly, a few respondents said that participation in the celebration of communion is part of the centre of their faith and as such very important.

Respondents were also asked what, if anything, stands out for them about the celebration of communion in which they participate. Six respondents indicated that nothing stood out. Twenty one respondents mentioned the following aspects which they thought stood out. They sense a freedom to express what they feel. They feel an attitude of gratitude. For many, this is a time to focus on Jesus and to reflect on how Jesus loves them and on the strong symbol of sacrifice, namely that Jesus died for them and others. For some, it is a time to surrender to God's presence and a time to pray. Some notice how the celebration of communion brings the church, families and friends together in a sense of unity. The majority of answers point to people being reminded of the cross and its true meaning, the sense of unity with and reconnection to God.

People were asked what more they would desire from a communion service. Eleven were happy with their communion service and would not want to change anything, and 16 commented that they desired more of the service. The responses of the latter group can be summarised as follows. There still seems to be a need for a greater involvement from the congregation as people desire everyone to partake together. Worshippers wanted to have more time available to spend time in meditation and prayer. Many people felt that communion was too insipid (wishy-washy) and that much more attention should be given to the celebration of communion during the service, which includes an

explanation of the meaning and significance of the cross so that people can understand and celebrate, knowing what is happening without allowing it to become a routine. This can also include the sermon to revolve around communion. Some felt that more space should be created for worship afterwards. One person desired it to be more frequent.

The responses above show that most people have a desire for something more. The data from the responses suggest that they want to spend more time with God and that they desire unity and need more teaching on the meaning of communion. The overwhelming response is that communion deserves more attention.

When asked about the atmosphere in church when celebrating communion, some felt that it was too serious and sombre whilst others said that the atmosphere was gentle and at ease. Some felt the presence of the Holy Spirit, which was actually the first mention of the Holy Spirit in relation to communion. Mostly, responses were divided between being sombre and celebratory.

Gathering from the responses from the respondents, it seems as though the atmosphere varies from church to church. It seems that everyone had a unique experience and that no real atmosphere is created for the members. As we understand it, everyone is left to create their own atmosphere and experience. This is clearly depicted in two of the churches where tables with the elements are made available and one can partake as one wishes.

## History and theology of the Spirit and meal traditions in Christian worship

The aim of this research was not to discover what worshippers want and then just give them more of that. On the contrary, the information obtained from the descriptive-empirical probe must in the bigger research design be confronted with ritual qualities pertaining to theology and tradition and thus also adhere to the already-mentioned interpretative and normative tasks of Osmer (2008:1–31). We do not have the space here to present the historical and theological probes that were conducted. However, we shall in summary present the ritual qualities that were distilled from these probes (cf. Denny 2013:70–72). This approach can also be described as liturgical inculcation, that is, the research project serves the ongoing critical-reciprocal interaction between the liturgy or worship and its surrounding contexts or cultures (cf. Wepener 2009:36–42) in order to work towards a truly inculcated Charismatic worship service.

In brief, we want to relate the main aspects of the history and theological probes done within the greater research paradigm. Regarding the Spirit tradition's history and theology, we see that there was enough evidence to conclude that liturgical rituals of healing, exorcism and speaking in tongues continued even after Jesus' death (Denny 2013:71–72).

Whilst many thought that the gifts had ceased, it actually continued after the age of the apostles. Experiencing the Holy Spirit has always been part of the church and part of Christian worship through the ages. One interesting ritual that can be taken as an example of this presence is that healing rituals were performed during the celebration of communion (Daunton-Fear 2009:114). This means that healing occurred, and it was directly related to the fact that communion was celebrated. This liturgical ritual seemed to have ceased towards the end of the 20th century. The research also touched upon theological insights from the Spirit movement. It is clear that theologically speaking there is and was a strong focus on personal experiences of the Holy Spirit (cf. Clark & Lederle 1989:17) which had and has an impact on the worship expressions of the church. In this regard, Strauss (1999) describes Charismatic worship with the three P's of power, presence and praise. The church is the body of Christ, and collectively, they desire to experience and see him work in their lives. The operations of the Spirit are a vital part of the growth of the charismatic church.

The history and theology of the Meal tradition started with Jesus' own institution of communion as recorded in the gospels and witnessed by Paul (Erickson 2007:1117). It is believed that Jesus instituted this celebration at the Last Supper and commanded us to repeat it. This had significance within the Jewish sector of society that regarded meals and eating together as very important and significant (Van der Zee 2004:300). Since then, the celebration of communion has seen many changes. From being a full meal to where the bread and wine are *pars pro toto* of the full meal (Denny 2013:146), the elements and way of presenting this celebration have changed (cf. also Wepener 2010b, ch. 4). One important aspect is the fact that, throughout the history of the liturgy, the Lord's Supper was celebrated on a weekly basis as a standard part of the order of the weekly worship service. This order was changed for the first time in 1525 when Huldrych Zwingli changed this structure to a Word service only, and although his intention was a more frequent participation by worshippers than the mere annual participation as was the custom at the time (Wolterstorff 1992:294–295), it did indeed result in changing the order of some Protestant worship services to being mainly Word services.

With regard to the theology of the Meal tradition, we here only refer to the work of Brian Gerrish (1993) and his book *Grace and gratitude*. Taken together with the aforementioned history and the less frequent celebration of communion in some traditions, Gerrish (1993:149–149, 81) argues, based on the so-called Eucharistic theology of John Calvin, for a more frequent and meaningful participation in communion. He further argues that a more frequent communion will increase the experience of the grace of God through this sacrament, which will increase the gratitude of the worshippers.

## Conclusion

### The Spirit and the Meal model

We have seen in this research that there is a new phenomenon amongst the Charismatic churches, namely

that the celebration of the communion service is totally different from that experienced by the church through the ages. This phenomenon includes tables set out in front of the church and people allowed to partake as they wish, mostly when they wish and only if they wish. This creates the atmosphere and communicates to members that communion is of secondary importance and sometimes not even as important as the 'main' worship service. The empirical-descriptive data presented in this article confirms that a culture of consumerism and individualism has clearly entered these worship services (Stringer 2005:239).

We set out in this research with the working hypothesis that, by bringing worship elements of the Meal and Spirit traditions together in a more meaningful way, the current Charismatic liturgical praxis can be improved. We are of the opinion that our research can serve the *liturgia condenda* in the Charismatic tradition. This research project helped us to see how people worship and how they appropriate the worship when celebrating communion. In all three churches, it was observed that liturgically speaking, communion was celebrated as an afterthought and not as an integral part of the 'main service'. The focus of the sermon was not on the celebration of communion and was totally unconnected to this liturgical ritual. We noted that a new way of celebration was emerging, such as voluntary celebration only after the worship service and also in small groups, although the respondents clearly indicated that they experienced participation in the celebration of communion as very positive and that they would appreciate an enhanced liturgical praxis in this regard. Thus, the ritual-liturgical qualities distilled from the descriptive-empirical data, as well as the historical and theological probes, were integrated into a new model as an attempt to answer Osmer's (2008, ch. 4) pragmatic task. It is summarised under four headings; leadership, ecclesiology, liturgy and pneumatology.

### Leadership

The celebration of communion and its changes will have to start with the leadership. The worshippers are recognising that the liturgical ritual of communion is watered-down and seen as an afterthought. It is important to recognise that the way in which the pastors and leaders of the church view communion will trickle down to the members and become the way in which they view it. The renewed view should start with the leaders' understanding of the meaning and value of a more frequent as well as different way of celebrating communion in a Charismatic worship service. Only if the leadership is convinced of the value of this can they assist in changing the praxis. It will be helpful if they receive training or continued ministerial development or a short course on the importance and significance on the celebration of communion. This will hopefully lead to a renewed theological appreciation.

### Ecclesiology

Not only will a reassessment of the importance and value of the celebration of communion be necessary, but a

reassessment of the underlying ecclesiology in a church is also important. This ecclesiology should deliberately promote the community and building up of the community (Old 2002:5–6) rather than just the individual. In the words of Old (2002:5), worship takes place in die body of Christ. When communion is celebrated within the church service together with the rest of the body of Christ, it builds up the church. In the book *Ontdekking in die erediens*, Burger (2009:21) asks the question as to what happens within the service. He answers: '*Ons kom in die teenwoordigheid van die lewende opgestane Christus*' [We come into the presence of the living and risen Christ]. Moltmann (1993:243, 247) agrees that the celebration of communion goes hand in hand with the fellowship of the members. Within the church, we find the important aspect of *koinonia*. Burger (2011:185) furthermore explains that this includes loving one another and caring for one another. This also means taking responsibility for one another. To quote him again:

Ons moet bereid wees om mekaar te dien, mekaar se voete te was, ander se belang hoer as ons eie te ag – dit is: onself te verloen in die vertroue dat die Here en ander na ons belang sal omsien. [We have to be willing to serve one another, to wash one another's feet, to consider one another's needs above our own – this is how we give up our rights and trust that God and others will look after our needs.] (Burger 2011:186; [author's own translation])

This will only be possible when we actually have fellowship with one another, when we know one another and when we come together around the communion table. There we can be reminded of our responsibility towards each other. A renewed practice for the celebration of communion in Charismatic worship might involve a greater encouragement to partake of the sacrament together as the body of Christ (cf. also Wepener 2010b, ch. 5).

### Liturgy

When the church begins to see itself as the body of Christ and begins to operate within that paradigm, the celebration of communion will form one of the main aspects within the church's liturgy. Burger (2009) goes on to explore in more detail the importance of communion within liturgy and renewal. The question is not whether or not one can renew. It is not about what you wear or what music instrument is used. It is not about what technology or symbols like candles you use. It is not about any outward thing. We can change the outward or not, it will still not make any real changes to any given liturgy. These sorts of changes cannot be the renewal that we seek (Burger 2009:96). John Calvin (1991) referred to these aspects in his *Institutions* (4.17.43), also with regard to the worship service as *adifora* or *indifferentia*. The actual liturgy that we are seeking to reassess is not only the mere formal elements. Moltmann (1993:259) says that it is important that communion also takes precedence just as the preaching the word does: 'The Lord's Supper must be integrated into the service of worship. It must no longer be celebrated as a tail end to it.' We thus suggests a liturgical order for worship in Charismatic churches that goes back to a time before Zwingli, a worship service in which both the Word and the table form integral parts of one liturgical order of every worship service in Charismatic churches.

To have communion often can have an enormous effect on church members. The practical theologian Burger (2011) explains what a more frequent Communion can bring:

Dit kan mense help om meer bewus te wees van Jesus se nabijheid by ons; dit kan ons help om meer van sy sorg en vir ons teervaar. Die brood en wyn is veronderstel om voedsel vir ons siele te wees waardeur Christus self ons laat groei en sterk word in die geloof. Die tekens is ook medisyne waardeur die Here self ons wonde balsem, ons pyn verlig en ons seer genees ... Deur die brood het ons toegang tot die werklike teenwoordigheid van Jesus ook hier by ons op aarde. [It can help people to become more aware of Christ's presence and to experience more of his care for us. The bread and wine is supposed to be food to our bodies through which Christ himself makes us grow and become strong in faith. The signs are also medicine through which Christ treats our wounds, relieves our pain and heals our hurts ... Through the bread, we have access to the real presence of Jesus with us on earth.] (p. 119; [author's own translation])

## Pneumatology

There furthermore needs to be a renewed realisation regarding God's presence in the liturgical rituals of the Spirit tradition. This realisation should specifically include the view that God is not only present through his Spirit in liturgical rituals such as praise and worship or preaching but also in a sacrament or liturgical ritual such as communion, a liturgical ritual the Lord Jesus himself instituted. A pneumatological reassessment thus needs to take place concerning the nature of God's presence through his Spirit in the liturgy as in Latin *praesentia realis Dei* (cf. Smit 2009:99–102). Burger (2009:21–26) also says that any church service revolves around the presence of God with us and the experience of God's life-giving power. Most people are searching for exactly this. Burger says that people perhaps feel that the service should function with another anthropological presupposition today. Burger (2011:83) continues by pointing out that Jesus is present during the celebration of communion. He also says that we are not always certain how and what happens, but we can be sure that Jesus is present. In Matthew 18:20, Jesus promised to be with us through his Spirit when two or more gather in his name. The Holy Spirit has many functions, but one that is important to us is that He brings us into a living relationship with Jesus. Burger (2011) writes:

Die Gees wil nie maar net die verhouding tot stand bring nie; Hy wil ons help om ook te groei en met vreugde en oortuiging in die verhouding te leef. Hy wil die verhouding verdiep; Hy wil dat ons al hoe meer met Jesus vereenselwig sal word. [The Spirit not only wants to bring into effect a relationship; He also wants to help us grow and to be able to live with joy and conviction in this relationship. He wants to deepen the relationship; He wants us to relate more closely with Jesus.] (p. 206; [author's own translation])

The celebration of communion brings us closer to the Holy Spirit, and He in turn can bring us closer to Jesus and the Father. Members of Charismatic churches are already part of the belief and culture that the Holy Spirit is present and wants the believer to experience the presence of the triune God. With this advantage, they stand to benefit much during the celebration of communion with the realisation of the power and potential experience that can come from the celebration of communion.

This model we present can lead to a deeper experience of God through his Spirit during the celebration of communion. Hopefully this research will help to contribute to a deeper understanding of communion and shed light on the potential of the Meal and Spirit-worship traditions coming together in a more meaningful way in worship services in churches from the Charismatic tradition.

The title of this article is 'The Spirit and the meal as a model for Charismatic worship'. What we thus present is not blended worship (cf. Webber 1994:1999; Van der Merwe 2013; Constance 2010:246–248), but it is indeed Charismatic worship enhanced by bringing the Meal and the Spirit tradition together in a new model. According to Martin Stringer (2005:238), a new round of worship renewal will come when the Meal and Spirit traditions can be reunited, and we are convinced that Stringer is indeed correct in his observation which we can now also augment with the ritual-liturgical probes as conducted in our research and presented in this article.

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### Authors' contributions

L.D. (University of Pretoria) conducted the research and C.W. (University of Pretoria) was the supervisor.

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