

The Church as the Fellowship of Persons

An Emerging Pentecostal Ecclesiology of *Koinonia*

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I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.

– John S. Mbiti¹

God has, however, willed to make men [and women] holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness.

– *Lumen Gentium*, # 9

The Body of Christ is nothing other than a fellowship of persons. It is ‘the fellowship of Jesus Christ’ or ‘fellowship of the Holy Ghost’ where fellowship or *koinonia* signifies a common participation, a togetherness, a community life. The faithful are bound to each other through their common sharing in Christ and in the Holy Ghost, but that which they have in common is precisely no ‘thing,’ no ‘it,’ but a ‘he,’ Christ and His Holy Spirit.

– Emil Brunner²

Pentecostal soteriology and pneumatology point . . . unmistakably in the direction of an *ecclesiology of the fellowship of persons*.

– Miroslav Volf & Peter Kuzmic³

INTRODUCTION: PENTECOSTAL ECCLESIOLOGY – IS THERE ANY?

The notion of *koinonia* and communion ecclesiology is a hot topic in current ecumenical conversations and studies.⁴ Building on the long biblical and patristic tradition of communion theology as well as the work of contemporary theologians such as the Eastern Orthodox John Zizioulas and his idea of communion as the primary mode of existence of personhood, whether divine or human,⁵ churches from all Christian persuasions have come to adopt the paradigm of *koinonia* as their ecclesiological self-understanding.

What is the Pentecostal take on this issue? On the one hand, there is no denying the fact – noted at the significant ecumenical encounter between the Roman Catholic Church and Pentecostals

– that ‘Pentecostal soteriology and pneumatology point ... unmistakably in the direction of an *ecclesiology of the fellowship of persons*’ (Kuzmic & Volf 1985:2; emphases in the original). Pentecostals speak of the church as a fellowship; theologically put, for Pentecostals the church is a charismatic fellowship, a fellowship of persons, the body of Christ (see Kärkkäinen, 2001a:100-121).

On the other hand, as my subheading indicates, many wonder if there is such a thing as Pentecostal ecclesiology, and if so, does it even make sense to speak of any kind of *Pentecostal* communion ecclesiology? A well-informed Roman Catholic theological observer of Pentecostal ecclesiology, Paul D. Lee (1994:15), raises the question of whether it is reasonable to speak about a distinctive Pentecostal ecclesiology at all:

“... if Pentecostalism is a movement, is it useful or valid to talk about ecclesiology at all? What does ecclesiology mean to a Pentecostal? At first, Pentecostals were so busy spreading the ‘good news’ of the fresh outpouring of the Spirit ‘in the last days’ that they became unconcerned about forming a denomination. The premillennial urgency of the imminent Kingdom made Pentecostals focus on their readiness, through personal conversion and regeneration, thereby rendering any ecclesiological deliberation rather irrelevant or at least secondary.”

Indicative of this ecclesiological lacuna among the Pentecostals is the book written by the Assemblies of God theologian M. L. Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission: A Pentecostal Perspective* (1977); it was hardly anything more than a practical approach to the doctrine of the church in the service of the mission. Until recently, a major way most Pentecostals have approached the topic of ecclesiology is to reiterate some key biblical perspectives from the New Testament, often echoing more general Evangelical viewpoints.⁶ It is ironic – if not so illustrative of the endless desire among Pentecostals to borrow from other theological (re)sources – that the entry ‘Theology of the Church’ in the *Dictionary of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* was authored by a Roman Catholic theologian! (Hocken 2002:554-51). Understandably, Pentecostal ecclesiology is of an *ad hoc*-nature which leaves much room for improvisation; it is often practical rather than systematic in nature, and is strongly restorationist. Pentecostals exhibit all forms of church structures from congregational to episcopal to all kinds of independent models.⁷

The Pentecostal theologian from Singapore Simon Chan laments that Pentecostalism suffers from individualism: ‘My relationship with God is primary, while my relationship with others is secondary’ (Chan 2000:180). He suggests that Pentecostals need an ecclesiological pneumatology as a corrective (Chan 2000:196-208).

In the midst of this bewildering variety and mix of views, there are, however, some significant theological developments taking place in the Pentecostal family of churches upon which I want to build my presentation of a tentative outline and discussion of Pentecostal ecclesiology of *koinonia*. First, I will revisit the ecclesiological contributions of the oldest and so far most important ecumenical dialogue for Pentecostals, namely, the Roman Catholic Pentecostal encounter, started in 1972 and still going on. The topic of *koinonia* was the theme for the third quinquennium (1985-89), out of which came a highly significant ecumenical document, ‘Perspectives on *Koinonia*.’ Communion ecclesiology was also discussed in the fourth round of talks (1990-97) in relation to mission and social justice.⁸ It would only be to the detriment of Pentecostals and the present dialogue process with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to ignore these insights even when the encounter with the Reformed family of churches may highlight somewhat different issues in communion ecclesiology. Second, some leading Pentecostal systematic theologians such Frank Macchia, Amos Yong, and Simon Chan have recently produced theologically and ecumenically noteworthy reflections on the meaning of *koinonia* in relation to key Pentecostal topics such as pneumatology, Spirit-baptism, charisms, especially speaking in tongues, and some ecclesiological topics.

My presentation will proceed along these lines: first, I will delineate the understanding of the church as a charismatic fellowship as the particularly Pentecostal way of understanding *koinonia*. Second, I will take a self-critical look at the challenges posed by older churches on the limitations of the Pentecostal view of *koinonia*. Third, in light of newer Pentecostal contributions to communion ecclesiology, I would like to point to some important contributions to an ecumenical understanding of communion ecclesiology. Those themes may help the dialogue process move forward in the spirit of healthy self-criticism and mutual affirmation.

THE CHURCH AS CHARISMATIC FELLOWSHIP

One of the main reasons the notion of *koinonia* has appealed to Pentecostals is its strong biblical basis. The Catholic co-chair, Kilian McDonnell, aptly summarizes the biblical outlook in the book of Acts, the favorite book among Pentecostals (even though his statement also reflects the kind of sacramental tones foreign to most Pentecostals): ‘So, if one is true to the dynamics of Acts,

one would add immediately after the imparting of the Spirit, *koinonia*/communion, i.e., community formation together with its Eucharistic expression. The language of Luke is communion language' (McDonnell 1988:674). In its basic meaning, the term *koinonia* denotes sharing, participation, community, communion at the spiritual, social, even material level. There is both a Trinitarian and pneumatological dimension to the biblical notion of *koinonia*: 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship [*koinonia*] of the Spirit be with you' (2 Cor 13:14). The church is the communion of the Spirit.

The *koinonia* language resonates with Pentecostals who are used to speaking of 'fellowship' over 'institution' or 'hierarchy': 'In Pentecostal teaching, *koinonia* is understood as an essential aspect of church life as it relates to the Church's ministry to the world and to the relationships of Christians to one another.' Therefore, several Pentecostal and Charismatic communities prefer to call themselves by the name 'fellowship' rather than 'church' (*FR III*, 10).⁹

The Pentecostal understanding of the church as fellowship focuses on the personal rather than structural, sacramental, or ecumenical aspects of *koinonia*. Howard Ervin put it well in his Pentecostal position paper in the Catholic dialogue: 'Pentecostal insistence upon the new birth and the baptism in the Holy Spirit takes seriously a personal *koinonia* with the Son and with the Holy Spirit.' In fact, this personal accent might be a valuable and needed reminder to older ecclesiastical traditions: 'It may hardly be gainsaid, that the Pentecostal revivals of the present century have taken the *koinonia* of/with the Holy Spirit out of the cloistered mystical tradition of the Church and made it the common experience of the whole people of God' (Ervin 1987:8-9). Pentecostals need to be reminded of the fact that *koinonia* is to be lived out for the mutual enrichment of the members of the body (1 Cor 12:26). Acknowledging this and acting accordingly would counteract the rampant individualism of the West, often found among Pentecostals.

According to the Pentecostal position paper by Peter Kuzmic and Miroslav Volf, there are three basic models of the church: first, the traditional Protestant 'lecture room' setting where the focus is pulpit and preaching; second, the Catholic church as a 'theatre setting' where the emphasis falls on the dramatic elements in the worship; third, the Pentecostal 'fellowship,' which places the emphasis on the community gathered together for mutual edification. Without wanting to exclude the elements of preaching and sacraments, they suggest that in the New Testament the fundamental characteristic of worship is mutual sharing in the fellowship. God communicates himself to Christians through more than just written or proclaimed word or ritual cultic activity, '[h]e does so

more by the Spirit *through one another*' (Kuzmic & Volf 1985:15; emphasis theirs).¹⁰ Quoting Lesslie Newbigin, they say 'that a real congregational life, wherein each member has his opportunity to contribute to the life of the whole body through gifts which the Spirit endows him, is as much part of the *esse* of the church as are ministry and sacraments'(Kuzmic & Volf 1985:16).

The dynamic of the fellowship is concretely lived out through the charismata. 'As fellowship should be the unalienable modus of the Church's existence, so the charismata should be a permanent feature of its life' (Kuzmic & Volf 1985:16). Consequently, worship experience with the deep desire to 'meet with the Lord' stands at the heart of the Pentecostal church life. Even when spiritual manifestations such as speaking in tongues, word of wisdom, or healings are missing, there is both openness to and expectation of those tangible signs of the presence of God in the communion of the saints.¹¹

CHALLENGES TO PENTECOSTAL UNDERSTANDING OF *KOINONIA*

The term *koinonia* as the way of understanding the nature of the church is useful and appropriate because of its many meanings and various facets such as spiritual, social, and material sharing. It can thus be appropriated in more than one way; different ecclesiological and ecclesiastical traditions may find their unique and complementary ways of living out the communion with God and fellow Christians. At the same time, in its long theological pedigree there are also some core convictions about what the term *koinonia* means. While the Pentecostal self-understanding as an eschatological, charismatic fellowship of persons represents a genuinely biblical view, it also has been challenged by ecumenical counterparts to consider some other equally relevant and significant aspects of what it means to live out *koinonia*. Since in this paper I can only begin to touch some of these issues, let me present them briefly with the help of a lengthier quotation from my earlier study. Differences in the understanding of *koinonia*

“. . . had to do with four basic issues, the first being the most substantial: sacraments, local vs. universal church relationship (including relationship between local churches), charismatic vs. hierarchical structure of the church, and oneness of the church. The basic difference in the view of sacraments had to do with the Catholic claim that sacraments (baptism, Eucharist) are constitutive of the church. The Pentecostal side opposed this claim. For Pentecostals, preaching of the word and conscious faith response of the individuals are constitutive of the church. The other divergence related to the question of the priority of and relationship between the local church and universal church. Quite naturally, Catholics place more emphasis on the universal, while for Pentecostals the local church is the most important, almost to the

exclusion of the other. However, Catholic theology, after Vatican II has come to appreciate more and more the role of the local church, although a definitive standpoint is still lacking as to their precise relationship. When it comes to charismatic vs. hierarchical structure of the church, Catholics emphasize the role of hierarchy, church authority, and structures, and see them as ‘God given’ which in themselves express *koinonia*. Pentecostals opt for greater ‘freedom’ of the Spirit and see structures as subordinate to, although important in guaranteeing order. The difficult question of Christian unity was also discussed during the third quinquennium in relation to *koinonia*. The question of the oneness of the church still remains a substantial point of contention. For Catholics, there is only one visible church of Christ. All divisions in the church are regarded as deviation from this basic unity. For Pentecostals, the existence of denominations is for the most part a legitimate development. Pentecostals think primarily in terms of spiritual, i.e., invisible unity (only). They have several misgivings about the structural/visible unity, e.g., the compromise of doctrine, the demise of evangelism, etc.” (Kärkkäinen 1998: 109-10)

Pentecostals do not understand *koinonia* either in terms of certain church structures¹² or sacramentally. While all Pentecostals do sacraments, their theology is not sacramental (*FR III*, 96). Often there is a prejudice against too much reliance on sacraments, since in the Pentecostal suspicion this leads too easily into nominality or a human-made religion without a true conversion. A significant countervoice to the typical Pentecostal understanding was offered by Cecil M. Robeck and Jerry L. Sandidge in their position paper titled ‘The Ecclesiology of *Koinonia* and Baptism: A Pentecostal Perspective.’¹³ They admit freely that ‘most Pentecostals fail to take as seriously the witness to an individual’s identification with Christ in this act as the testimony it contains to identification with the Christian *koinonia*’ (Robeck & Sandidge (1990:525-26).¹⁴

While Pentecostals emphasize the role of the local church – at times to the virtual dismissal of the universal church or the relation of the local church to other churches – their understanding of *koinonia* is not opposed to the ecumenical consensus according to which the *koinonia* is rooted in the life of the Triune God, which is the archetype of the unity of the church. The section titled ‘The Holy Spirit and the New Testament Vision of *Koinonia*,’ with the subtitle ‘A. *Koinonia with the Triune God*,’ in the Final Report ‘Perspectives on *Koinonia*’ opens with this mutual affirmation:

“Both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics believe that the *koinonia* between Christians is rooted in the life of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.¹⁵ Furthermore, they believe that this trinitarian life is the highest expression of the unity to which we together aspire: ‘that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ’” (1 Jn 1:3)’ (*FR III*, 29)

With this affirmation, *koinonia* is inseparably linked with the doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁶ The divine triune communion is the highest expression of unity for Christians, the ‘deepest meaning of *koinonia*’ (*FR III*, 70). The Pentecostals agreed with the Catholics that ‘the Holy Spirit is the source of *koinonia* or communion. The Church has been gathered in the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 13:13)’ (*FR*

III, 30). There is also a christological concentration since no one can confess the Lordship of Jesus except in the Holy Spirit (*FR III*, 36).

Most Pentecostals do not make the connection between the *koinonia* and the visible unity. The typical Pentecostal understanding of unity, if any, focuses strongly on the invisible unity. In the words of the British pioneer Donald Gee, unity is ‘a personal matter’; therefore the Lord’s prayer ‘that they all may be one’ was about the unity among ‘the individual disciples – not [about] denominations and churches.’ In this understanding, Christians ‘do not come together to ‘make’ unity, for it already exists by the grace of God. It only needs to be cherished. Its test is mutual acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Its energy is the one baptism in the Holy Spirit that He bestows. Its aim is that ‘the world may believe’ (Quoted in Kuzmic & Volf 1985:7).

This of course creates a major inner tension in Pentecostal ecclesiology and ecumenism; with all the enthusiastic embrace of fellowship language, emphasis on the church as the body of Christ, and the need for daily empowering of the Holy Spirit, the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches’ life has been an experience of endless divisions and splits; furthermore, Pentecostals and Charismatics have caused a number of divisions in relation to other churches. This is not to put blame on one party: the opposition to and harassment of Pentecostals by older churches in various parts of the world is too well known a fact to be ignored. Rather, this is a call to mutual repentance and self-examination.

PENTECOSTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO AN ECUMENICAL COMMUNION ECCLESIOLOGY

The developing *koinonia* ecclesiology holds great potential for helping Pentecostals embrace the paradigm in a more faithful and genuine way, as well as helping other churches to pay attention to some neglected or underdeveloped features. Let me first mention them here and then add some brief comments:

- the dynamic nature of the *koinonia*
- *koinonia* as the call to holiness
- mission and social justice in a *koinonia*-ecclesiology

- charisms and *koinonia*, and
- *koinonia* as an eschatological reality

One of the most fruitful aspects of *koinonia* language is its dynamic and dialogical nature, which may help us overcome the typical juxtapositions in maintaining *koinonia* along the continuum of collective *versus* individual responsibility and divine *versus* human initiative.¹⁷ Older churches tend to emphasize both the divine initiative in terms of the sacraments administered and the word preached and thus the collective element. While the disposition and behavior of the individual church member is not irrelevant, it cannot itself ground communion, which is a ‘God thing,’ that is, the mediated understanding of Christ’s presence. For Pentecostals the maintenance of *koinonia* tends to be primarily a human effort, and the individual’s responsibility is at the forefront. There is a need to compare notes: being a divine initiative does not exclude but rather entails a personal – even though not necessarily individualistic – participation and commitment. Think of biblical passages such as Philippians (especially chapters 2 and 3) where the prisoner Paul exhorts his readers to conduct a proper Christian walk by referring to the *koinonia* in Christ’s suffering he himself is sharing in. The great Christ-hymn in the beginning of the chapter, as a profound expression of the divine initiative, is a powerful call to both maintain unity in the midst of divisions and submit their lives in the service of the Gospel.

In keeping with the dynamic nature of the concept, communion ecclesiology is also a call to holiness. Pentecostals are often critical of older churches’ perceived complacency toward those church members who presumably live in conscious sin and yet are considered members in the church. This seems to Pentecostals to undermine the concept of Christian discipleship and to call into question the meaning of *koinonia* as seen in the New Testament.¹⁸ While traditional churches may too easily dismiss this call as a Donatist bias – let alone those cases of Pentecostals’ own lack of moral integrity being a far cry from their calls to holiness – this is a legitimate and needed reminder to align the church’s life according to the will of God. Of course holiness is a gift to the church because her Lord is holy. Yet, precisely because of the receipt of this gift and in keeping with the purity and holiness of the Lord, there is a constant call to repentance and to maintaining church discipline (1 Cor 5).

Being a dynamic concept, the *koinonia* is also a reminder to all Christian churches about the need to be empowered with the Spirit. Pentecostals speak of this dynamic empowerment in terms of

Spirit Baptism. As the work of the Holy Spirit, there is a definite communal element to Spirit Baptism:

“The life of *Koinonia* is empowered by the Holy Spirit; in recent times many have experienced that power through ‘the baptism in the Holy Spirit.’ This presence of the Spirit has been shown in a fresh activity of biblical charisms, or gifts (cf. 1 Cor 12:8-11) reminding all Christians to be open to charisms as the Spirit gives to everyone individually, whether these gifts are more or less noticeable. Some of the charisms are given more for personal edification (cf. 1 Cor 14:4a), while some provide service to others, and some especially are given to confirm evangelization (cf. Mk 16:15-20). All of them are intended to help build up the *koinonia*” (*FR IV*, 27).¹⁹

In his *Baptized in the Spirit*, Frank Macchia constructs *A Global Pentecostal Theology* (2006) based on the category of Spirit Baptism. Macchia freely acknowledges that Pentecostals ‘with their individualistic understanding of Spirit baptism . . . have lacked the conceptual framework in which to understand its connection to the church’s communally gifted life’(Macchia 2006:203).²⁰ Thus, there is a need for a communion understanding of Spirit baptism: ‘The Spirit is the Spirit of communion. Spirit baptism implies communion. That’s why it leads to a shared love, a shared meal, a shared mission, and the proliferation/enhancement of an interactive charismatic life’ (Macchia 2006:205). Spirit baptism is personal but not necessarily an individualistic experience (Macchia 2006:219). Even speaking in tongues, the most distinctive gift for many Pentecostals, is not unrelated to the *sanctorum communio*. Since no believer compasses the wholeness of *charismata*, the fullness of God can only be experienced in solidarity, *koinonia* with others in the church body: ‘If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the smelling be? ([1 Cor] 12:17)’ (Macchia 1992:65).

Early Pentecostals were onto something significant when without much theological sophistication they turned to the book of Acts for their paradigm of the church. According to Macchia, ‘Luke’s theology of Spirit baptism has a certain ‘charismatic’ and missiological focus (empowerment for gifted service). Indeed, Luke is also concerned with reconciliation between peoples and the quality of community life through Spirit baptism’ (Macchia 2006:9).²¹

The church as the fellowship of persons, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is not a communion for its own sake. It is ‘open to the world’ (see further Moltmann 1981:64, 89-90). The living out of *koinonia* makes it possible for the church to become ‘a servant gift and sign to the world’ (*FR IV*, 26) ‘a prophetic sign toward divided humankind (cf. Jn 17:21)’ (*FR IV*, 14). ‘As the new people of God, the Church is called both to reflect the reality of God’s eschatological kingdom in history and to announce its coming into the world, insofar as people open their lives to the in-breaking of the

Holy Spirit' (*FR III*, 94). Part of the church's life as a sent communion is to share in the sufferings of the world and alleviate poverty, injustice, and other social ills. The Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue made several significant statements to this effect and issued a call to all churches to consider the integral link between *koinonia*, mission, and social justice:

"Clearly, any striving for social justice in which our faith communities engage needs to be rooted in the life of God/Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." (*FR IV*, 59)

"... *koinonia* as lived by the early Christians (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37) had social implications. Their communities did not act from a concept of social justice. The concern they showed for the poor, widows, and strangers was not seen as an entirely separate activity but rather as an extension of their worship." (*FR IV*, 57)

"Conversion and incorporation into the community of faith cannot be seen apart from the transformation of society. The person filled by the Spirit of God is impelled by that same Spirit to cooperate with God in the work of evangelism and social action in the anticipation of the new creation." (*FR IV*, 59)

"In the life of the community, Pentecostals have found a new sense of dignity and purpose in life. Their solidarity creates affective ties, giving them a sense of equality. These communities have functioned as social alternatives that protest against the oppressive structures of the society at large. Along with some social critics, Pentecostals have discovered that effective social change often takes place at the communal and micro-structural level, not at the macro-structural level." (*FR IV*, 43).

For early Pentecostals, a fervent, intense eschatological hope at times blurred the meaning of this-worldly efforts: Why invest in a world that was passing? (see Kärkkäinen 2001b:387-404). Notwithstanding these theological errors, Pentecostalism since its inception has embraced something that is at the heart of the biblical vision of *koinonia*, namely, the presence of the Spirit in the church and in an individual's life as an eschatological reality. The presence of the Spirit as the Spirit of *koinonia* and the *eschaton* makes the church's existence to be essentially an eschatological community (See further, Chan 2000:194). While a present reality, communion with the Triune God is also a long-awaited consummation yet to come, in the words of the Pentecostal Steven J. Land:

"Pentecostals who are moved deeply and powerfully by the Spirit will laugh and cry, dance and wait in stillness. In the spirit they 'already' participate in the marriage supper but also live in the 'not yet' of a lost world. ... [T]he Spirit acts as a kind of 'time machine' via the Word, enabling the believer to travel backward and forward in salvation and to imaginatively participate in the events that have been and are yet to be." (Land 1993: 98).

The groanings of the Spirit, too deep for words (Rom. 8:20-22), are an eschatological sign of the coming fullness of the *koinonia*. (von Balthasar 1987:384-85)

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Mbiti (1969:106).
- ² Brunner (1953:10-11).
- ³ Kuzmic & Volf (1985:2).
- ⁴ For an important current ecumenical statement, see *The Nature and Purpose of the Church* (1998:ch. III).
- ⁵ Zizioulas (1985:15, emphasizes his): ‘From the fact that a human being is a member of the Church, he becomes an ‘image of God,’ he exists as God Himself exists, he takes on God’s ‘way of being.’ This way of being . . . is a way of *relationship* with the world, with other people and with God, an event of *communion*, and that is why it cannot be realized as the achievement of an *individual*, but only as an *ecclesial* fact.’ For important early Protestant contributions to emerging communion ecclesiology see the two classic works: Bonhoeffer (1963), which describes the essence of community as ‘the complete self-forgetfulness of love’ (p. 123) and Brunner (1953:17) as ‘a pure communion of persons’ (p. 17).
- ⁶ A representative example is Dusing (1994:525-50). Pentecostalism shares with the wider Evangelical movement the difficulty of defining its ecclesiology because of the lack of a unified ecclesiastical and theological tradition characteristic of traditional churches such as the Roman Catholic and Reformed Churches. On the other hand, a number of Pentecostal movements can be called a ‘denomination’ in the sense that there are number of established Pentecostal movements such as the Assemblies of God that have developed a discernible ecclesiastical and theological identity. For Evangelicalism, nothing like that exists for the simple reason that Evangelicalism represents a transdenominational movement. See further, Stackhouse (ed., 2003).
- ⁷ For a presentation of Pentecostals’ views of the church, see Kärkkäinen (2002:ch.6).
- ⁸ ‘Perspectives on *Koinonia*,’ hereafter abbreviated as *FR III*. For a theological analysis and discussion, see Kärkkäinen (1998:234-330) and idem (1999:109-17, 176-81 especially).
- ⁹ In some European languages, e.g., German, the term *Gemeinschaft* catches the meaning. In my home country of Finland, Pentecostal ‘churches’ seldom, if ever, call themselves by the name ‘church’ (*kirkko*), because it has for them too institutionalized connotations; instead they prefer the term *seurakunta*, which can be translated ‘church’ in English, but which has nothing of the meaning of institution (the Greek term *ecclesia* being the best translation of the word).
- ¹⁰ They refer to the idiom of their home country of (former) Yugoslavia, mentioned in n. 17, where Pentecostals frequently use the expression ‘going into fellowship’ when referring to church attendance. ‘In a sense it, of course, is incorrect to say that one *goes* to or into the fellowship. Christians *are* (or *should be*) a fellowship with a lively, personal communication going on between the members whether they are gathered at one place where the fellowship aspect of the church is experienced and expressed in a special way’ (p.16; emphasis theirs)
- ¹¹ There is obviously a connection here with the sacramental principle of traditional churches: whereas sacramental churches consider sacraments as the preferred way of securing the divine presence, along with the preached word, for Pentecostals the emphasis is on the gifts of the Spirit. There have been attempts by some Pentecostal theologians to find commonalities between Pentecostal spirituality, especially its emphasis on *glossolalia*, speaking in tongues, as a way of ‘securing’ the divine presence and sacraments as ‘signs’ of the divine presence. While there are some

connecting points, I also think the differences are so dramatic that at the most one can only point to some common underlying motifs behind *glossolalia* and, say, the Eucharist. See further Macchia (1993:61-76).

- ¹² 'Form and structure, hierarchical, sacramental or otherwise, are not, therefore, necessary expressions of the divine/human *koinonia*, for 'The Church as God's *koinonia* stresses the idea of "society" whose primary characteristics are unity and love'. (Ervin 1987:11).
- ¹³ For the published version, see Robeck & Sandidge (1990:504-34).
- ¹⁴ They admit that the *koinonia* perspective is rare in a nonsacramental environment much as that of Pentecostalism, which has inherited the Baptist/Anabaptist view (p. 526).
- ¹⁵ Footnote (# 6) is attached to the text: 'A segment of Pentecostals known as "Oneness" or "Jesus Name" Pentecostals are opposed to the trinitarian formulation of the faith. Their view of God tends toward modalism, and the baptismal formula which they pronounce is 'in the name of Jesus Christ' (Acts 2:38) instead of traditional trinitarian appeal to Matthew 28:19. Most Pentecostals, however, strongly disagree with this position.'
- ¹⁶ *FR III*, 72: 'Together with Roman Catholics, most Pentecostals [except for Oneness Pentecostals] have a strong commitment to the trinitarian understanding of God. They believe, for instance, that at baptism the trinitarian formula should be used because of Jesus' mandate: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Matt 28:19). The Pentecostals do, however, feel challenged by Roman Catholics to develop all the implications for faith and piety which their full trinitarian commitment implies' (a reference, before the last sentence, is made again to the above quoted footnote on Oneness Pentecostals).
- ¹⁷ Cf. *FR III*, 70: 'For Roman Catholics and Pentecostals *koinonia* in the Church is a dynamic concept, implying a dialogical structure of both God-giveness and human response.'
- ¹⁸ *FR III*, 78: 'Pentecostals recognize that while there is an emphasis on holiness in the Roman Catholic Church, they observe that it seems possible for some Roman Catholics to live continuously in a state of sin, and yet be considered members in the Church. This seems to the Pentecostals to undermine the concept of Christian discipleship. Though they are mindful of John's words that if "we say we have not sinned, we make him [God] a liar" (1 John 1-10), Pentecostals want to take seriously the warning of the same apostle concerning the unrepentant sinner, namely, "that one who sins has neither seen him [the Father] or known him" (1 John 3:6).'
- ¹⁹ '*FR IV*' stands for Final Report 'Evangelization, Proselytism, and Common Witness'.
- ²⁰ Simon Chan, 'Mother Church,' 180 agrees: 'A basic problem in Pentecostalism is that it is hardly aware of this communal context of Spirit baptism.'
- ²¹ What Macchia attempts for Pentecostals echoes the efforts of Miroslav Volf, who is onto making 'a contribution to the Trinitarian reshaping of free church ecclesiology' in critical dialogue with communion theologies of the Orthodox John Zizioulas, the Roman Catholic (then) Cardinal Ratzinger, and the ecclesiological vision of the first British Baptist John Smyth. Volf (1998:197).

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