
The ecclesiological literature has been enriched in recent years by a new and vital interest from scholars in the Pentecostal and evangelical traditions. This volume is an important contribution to that literature. It is solidly grounded in biblical scholarship, enriched by resources from history and contemporary theological discussions, and attentive to the urgent needs of the present world.

Vondey moves the discussion of bread, community, and church out of the often narrow, ritual framework developed in liturgical and sacramental studies over the centuries in the classical churches to a fundamentally biblical, relational, and world oriented theology that is both a challenge and resource for contemporary ecumenical discussions.

The volume includes seven chapters with introduction and conclusions. The introduction and first chapter lay out important methodological considerations, outlining the multiplicity of approaches to ecclesiology, to biblical uses of bread and community, and to the role of images in illuminating theological understanding. He clarifies his methodology as an offering to the churches and their theologians rather than a definitive and normative ecclesiological treatment.

Subsequent chapters treat the themes of companionship/koinonia, hospitality ethics, mission and outreach, the sacramental nature of the church including the Lord's Supper, eschatology, and the ecumenical vision of unity rooted in a theology of universal hospitality. The conclusions both synthesize the arguments of the volume and challenge the churches and theological community with his particular proposals.

Vondey is particularly skillful in surfacing a variety of meal, bread, and fellowship situations and texts from both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, bringing to bear the best of modern scholarship while using them to provide a fresh perspective on the theology of the Church and its mission in the world. His approach to mission transcends the narrow confines of evangelism, developing from an ethic of hospitality and ecclesiology of communion to a strong, active role of the Church in identification with the poor, transformation of the environment, and building an inclusive community in Christ by the power of the Spirit. He has a particularly fascinating development of discernment, and an active eschatology of engagement.

Vondey's own view of the role of the Lord's Supper is more central than in traditional evangelical and Pentecostal ecclesiologies, and more mission-oriented and hospitable than the more classical Orthodox and Catholic ecclesiologies. He draws creatively on a wide variety of Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic ecclesiological, missionary, and sacramental reflections to illuminate what is fundamentally a biblical and pastoral approach to the Church. Finally, he proposes a diversified community in solidarity around a common table:

> The table of bread is not formed by one universal ecclesiology but by a variety of ecclesial self-understandings and nuances that are theologically complementary and desirable since they are often born from and determined by the people's experience and praxis of faith rather than a division of doctrine. (304)

Reviewed by Jeffrey Gros, FSC