

UNION WITH CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

*João Paulo Thomaz de Aquino**

ABSTRACT

This article contends that some aspects of the doctrine of the mystical union of Christ with the believers are found in the gospel of Luke. There is an identification between Jesus and his followers as children of the Most High. Besides that, Jesus applies to them many features of his relationship with the Father. The readers of the gospel are challenged to imitate Jesus's ministry in the same power of Jesus, i.e., the Holy Spirit. Also, in the Lord's Supper and in the manger, Jesus Christ is presented as the bread which the disciples must eat in order to have spiritual life.

KEYWORDS

Synoptic gospels; Mystical union; Theosis; Cruciformity; Identification; Participation; Metaphors; Bread.

INTRODUÇÃO

This number of *Fides Reformata* is in commemoration for the 150th anniversary of the Mackenzie Presbyterian Institute. I will not deal with a subject intimately related to the history of Mackenzie, but I wanted to pay my homage to an institution which contributed a lot to the history of Brazil. Besides, considering that the founding cornerstone of the Mackenzie College dedicates the institution since its foundation in 1894 to the divine and human sciences (*às sciencias divinas e humanas*), then it is not a nonsense to contribute to this number with a theological article, especially one which deals with one of the most important doctrines in the Christian encyclopedia.¹

* Doctor in New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (2020), D.Min., Reformed Theological Seminary/CPAJ (2015), ThM in New Testament, Calvin Theological Seminary (2009) and M.Div. in Old Testament, CPAJ (2007); professor of New Testament, CPAJ and JMC Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and pastor at JMC Presbyterian Church in the city of Jandira-SP. Editor of the websites issoegrego.com.br and yvaga.com.br. The original version of this article is published in Portuguese and can be found in cpaj.mackenzie.br/fides-reformata-25-n1.

Union with Christ has been defined as “an intimate, vital and spiritual union between Christ and his people because of which he is the fountain of their life and power, of their bliss and salvation². In the words of Hermann Bavinck, “Christ lives and indwells the believers and the believers live, move and exist in Christ, Christ is their life”³. Although this doctrine is completely fundamental and essential to the Christian life, it does not have received the due attention in the Brazilian theological academy as it has in international theological circles.

One area, however, that union with Christ is not receiving much attention even abroad is on its presence in the synoptic gospels. Peterson, for example, affirms that compared to the gospel of John and the Pauline epistles the Synoptics do not refer much to union with Christ. He suggests that the reasons for that are that, first, the Gospels focus more on telling the story of Jesus than on explaining its implications; second, the Gospels focus on a phase of redemption-history prior to Jesus’ death and resurrection, essential elements for the union with Christ; third, the Synoptics aim to present Jesus kingdom and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.⁴ Thus, for Peterson, instead of presenting a robust doctrine of union with Christ, the Synoptics “establish the theological foundation for union with Christ” and “establish the redemptive-historical foundation for union.”⁵ Peterson first presents what the Synoptic Gospels speak in terms of Jesus as Immanuel, Bridegroom, and covenant Mediator, and about the discipleship as a model of participation in the story of Jesus. After a brief treatment Peterson concludes: “this brief survey reveals that union with Christ as a doctrine is not present in the Synoptics. Instead we find a picture of union presented in a redemptive-historical sense.”⁶

I. Howard Marshall agrees that the theme of spiritual relationship between believers and the risen Jesus is not raised in the Synoptic Gospels, “except briefly in Matthew,” and it is “adumbrated” in Luke when the risen

¹“Nothing is more basic or more central to the Christian life than union with Christ”. WILBOURNE, Rankin. *Union with Christ: The Way to Know and Enjoy God*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2016, p. 16.

²BERKHOF, Louis. *Teologia Sistemática*. Campinas, SP: Luz Para o Caminho, 1998, p. 451.

³ BAVINCK, Hermann. *Teologia sistemática*. Santa Bárbara D’Oeste, SP: SOCEP, 2001, p. 436. Wayne Grudem, defines union with Christ in the following way: “Union with Christ is an expression used to summarize several distinct relations between the believers and Christ, through which the believers receive all benefits of the salvation. These benefits include we are in Christ, Christ is in us, we are like Christ, and we are with Christ. GRUDEM, Wayne. *Teologia sistemática: atual e exhaustiva*. São Paulo: Vida Nova, 1999, p. 704.

⁴ Robert A. Peterson, *Salvation Applied by the Spirit: Union with Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 33–34.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

Jesus eats bread with the disciples.⁷ J. Todd Billings, without further explanation, comments that union with Christ is apparent, albeit not completely visible, in the call of the Synoptics for discipleship and bearing of fruits.⁸ Horton, on another hand, is stronger in this respect—he sees union with Christ present in a narrative form in the gospels:

However, the crucial elements of the Pauline understanding of union are also evident in the Gospels, though of course in a more narrative form, as Jesus—in his words and deeds—redraws the boundaries of Israel around himself. He takes the seat of Moses in delivering his own Sermon on the Mount, and when he is transfigured on the mountain, with a face reflecting a greater glory than that of Moses when he descended Sinai, again he is the center of attention as Moses and Elijah testify about him (Mt 17:1–8 and parallels).⁹

In the other end of the spectrum, Fulton J. Sheen overstates the case affirming that the Synoptic Gospels most frequently use “kingdom” to describe union with Christ and regenerated humanity.¹⁰

There is, therefore, a major understanding that the synoptic gospels do not or only very indirectly contribute to union with Christ. A constant in the previous treatments is the overview on the gospels texts themselves. This paper aims to investigate what, if anything, the Gospel of Luke presents on union with Christ, or alternatively at least what antecedent information might be present in the Jesuanic tradition for the posterior development of this doctrine.

1 JESUS, THE FATHER, AND THE BELIEVERS: A LUKAN VERSION OF THEOSIS

The first aspect of union with Christ in the gospel of Luke is related to the union between Christ and the other members of the Trinity. The

⁷ I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 588.

⁸ J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 35. On that see also Houston: “Christian spirituality is Christocentric. The apostle Paul frequently describes the life of the believers as ‘in Christ’ to emphasize the union Christians enjoy with Jesus Christ. This is a dynamic union which the Synoptic writers describe as following Jesus, the Johannine writings as union in love, and Hebrews and 1 Peter as a pilgrimage. These and other metaphors imply the growth and dynamism of the life of Christ in the believer”. J. M. Houston, “Spirituality,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 1139.

⁹ Michael Scott Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 590.

¹⁰ Fulton J. Sheen, *The Mystical Body of Christ* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1935), 53 (fn 2).

announcement of Gabriel to Mary is foundational for what happens in the Gospel of Luke. The angel announces (Luke 1:32–35) that Jesus would be: (1) μέγας; (2) called υἱὸς ὑψίστου; (3) the heir of τὸν θρόνον Δαυὶδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ; (4) king ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰακώβ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας; and (5) υἱὸς θεοῦ by generation of the Holy Spirit. The stressed point is that Jesus would be son of God, who is also called the Most High.

This special filiation of God appears again when Jesus is still a child and answers his worried parents: Τί ὅτι ἐζητεῖτέ με; οὐκ ᾔδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου δεῖ εἶναι με; (2:49). In his baptism God confirms Jesus' special filiation (3:22) and Jesus' genealogy presents him both as the Second Adam and Son of God (3:23–38). Satan referred to the filiation of Jesus in his temptations (4:3, 9) and the demons acknowledge Jesus as Son of God (4:41; 8:28). From chapter 5 onward, the title Son of Man is evident. Jesus' filiation, however, was already well established.¹¹ The many references of Jesus to God as his Father, both in discourse as in prayers also point to this Lukan emphasis in Jesus' filiation to God the Father (9:26; 10:21–22; 11:13; 22:29, 42; 23:34, 46; 24:49).

Rightly considering the references of Jesus as the Son on the Most High and Son of God as the background for the injunction in Luke 6:35, Kuecker contends that this text is an evidence for a Lukan version of theosis.¹² After defending this, Kuecker abandons the Gospel of Luke and goes to Acts 9 to secure his findings. I think we can profitably stay in Luke and still find developments of this theme. The missing element of Luke 6:35 is the role of Jesus in this “theosis”. Theosis in Luke 6:35–36 is imitation of the character of God, but Luke's gospel has more to say about that. It is only after 6:35 that Jesus starts using “Father” also in relation to his followers (6:36; 10:22; 11:2, 13; 12:30, 32; 15:11–32; 22:29). Some of these references are very important for the Lukan concept of adoption and union with Christ.

The first text we will look at, Luke 9:46–48, does not use the word Father, but in it is possible to find a “Johannine” interplay between Jesus and “the one who sent me”. The disciples were discussing who was the greatest and Jesus placed a child by his side and told them: “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.” There is

¹¹ Aaron J. Kuecker, “‘You Will Be Children of the Most High’: an Inquiry into Luke's Narrative Account of Theosis,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 8, no. 9 (2014): 216–217.

¹² Kuecker, “‘You Will Be Children of the Most High’: an Inquiry into Luke's Narrative Account of Theosis.” He summarizes his findings in Luke: “Jesus is the Son of the Most High by virtue of the life-giving work of the Spirit. Jesus shares in fully human life (he experiences death) and he receives human worship along with the Father. Followers of Jesus can share Jesus' identity as son of the Most High as they follow Jesus into enemy love and radical generosity, for to adopt that pattern of life is to be conformed to the life of the Most High.” (219). Mikeal Parsons in another end of the spectrum see not more than an imitation injunction in the phrase ‘sons of the Most High’. See Mikeal C. Parsons, *Luke*, ed. Baker (Grand Rapids, 2015), 110–111.

a relation between receiving that child in Jesus' name, receiving Jesus himself, and receiving the one who sent Jesus.¹³

The identification between Jesus' followers and himself becomes very explicit in Luke 10:16 (cf. Matt 10:40; John 13:20), and his union with the Father is the model for it: “Ὁ ἀκούων ὑμῶν ἐμοῦ ἀκούει, καὶ ὁ ἀθετῶν ὑμᾶς ἐμὲ ἀθετεῖ· ὁ δὲ ἐμὲ ἀθετῶν ἀθετεῖ τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με.” The context relates to the authority to do ministry comprised of proclamation, cures, exorcisms, and eschatological condemnation, i.e., a supernatural power would be upon the seventy-two. Receiving the disciples, in this context, was believing their message about the kingdom of God with Jesus as the center of it. It is possible to speak here, therefore, about an identification between Jesus and his disciples on the one hand, and between them and the Father through Jesus on the other.

In Luke 10:21 Jesus rejoices in the Spirit and thanks the Father because he revealed his will to little children. Then, in the next verse, Jesus explains that the Father handed over (παραδίδωμι) everything to him, that nobody knows the Son except the Father, and that nobody knows the Father except he himself (the Son) and “ὃ ἂν βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψαι”. (10:22). The Son, here, assumes a fundamental role of being the one who decides who will know the Father.¹⁴ The same Johannine interplay is present again in Luke 22:29, where Jesus promises to give the kingdom to his disciples in the same way his Father gave him his kingdom.

Thus, although not completely developed, we have in Luke this idea of adoption as children of the Father because of Jesus and reproducing the character of the Father. The Son figures as both the model and mediator of this union of the believers with himself and with the Father. Jesus chooses those who will know the Father and gives the kingdom to them.

2 JESUS, THE SPIRIT, AND THE BELIEVERS

It is widely acknowledged that the Holy Spirit has a leading role in the third Gospel. His operation is both in Jesus and in people. It is the Spirit who comes over Mary (Lk 1:35). There is a reference to the Shekinah glory in this text (Ex 40:34–35; Num 9:15). The same Spirit who hovered over the

¹³ The references to doing something in the name of Jesus in Luke are 9:48, 49; 10:17; 21:8, 12, 17; 24:47. Note also that Jesus comes in the name of the Lord: Lk 13:35; 19:38.

¹⁴ “No one can really understand the Father or what God is about without listening to the Son and his revelation.” Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 1012. “Here Jesus takes up the role of the Son of God, and claims to stand in an exclusive relationship to him and to be the sole mediator of knowledge of God to men.” I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 438. Sousa affirms that the context of John 10 is Apocalyptic and that the absence of an otherworldly being confirms the identification of Jesus with God. Mathew E. Sousa, “The ‘Johannine Thunderbolt’ in Luke 10:22: Toward an Appreciation of Luke’s Narrative Sequence,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 7 (2013): 97–113.

waters in Creation (Gen 1:2) and the same God who inhabited the tabernacle will work together to bring forth Jesus.

The result of the action of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High on Mary is a child who will be called holy and son of God, as we saw. The text makes reference to the Davidic Messiahship and to Jesus as representative of the human race before God, a second Adam (cf. Lk 3:38).¹⁵ Besides this direct reference to David, this text is written in a very similar way to 2 Samuel 7.¹⁶ The connection between Jesus and David—fundamental throughout Luke’s works and one of the main elements of Lukan Christology—clearly appears here.¹⁷ The last verse of the first chapter concludes with a remark that Jesus was growing up and became strong in the Spirit.¹⁸

The Spirit is also mentioned in relation to Elizabeth (1:41), Zechariah (1:67), and Simeon (2:25–27). Right before the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, John the Baptist announces that Jesus is the one who will “baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Lk 3:16). Just a few verses later Jesus is the one who is baptized with the Holy Spirit descending upon him in the bodily form of a dove (Lk 3:21–22) and, as a result, Jesus begins his ministry “full of the Holy Spirit” (4:1). Luke makes very clear that Jesus’ ministry happens under the influence of the Holy Spirit’s power (4:14, 18; 10:21).

In Luke there is a similarity between the role of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus and in the believers. This was first made clear by John the Baptist; Jesus himself makes this clear in Luke 11:13, where he assumes the responsibility of giving the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.¹⁹ As Jesus was empowered by the Spirit, his disciples will likewise be empowered in speaking (12:12) and in power (24:49), since the Father will fulfill his promise of sending the Holy Spirit. This will become clearer in Acts, but independently of Acts it is possible to detect the way Jesus is the pattern for the ministry of his disciples in what concerns the Holy Spirit. It is possible, therefore, to speak about an identification of Jesus with his disciples through the work of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁵ Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 121 et seq. By similarity this text is connected to Judge 13:2-7, which possibly places this child in the position of a liberator as Samson.

¹⁶ Raymond Edward Brown, “The Annunciation to Mary, the Visitation, and the Magnificat (Luke 1:26-56),” *Worship* 62 (1988): 249–59. On the order of events presented on the annunciation, see David T. Landry, “Narrative Logic in the Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26-38),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114 (1995): 65–79.

¹⁷ Other texts with references to the David Messiahship of Jesus in Luke are: 1:27, 32, 69; 2:4, 11; 3:31; 18:38-39; 20:41-44 (greater than David); Acts 1:16; 2:25-36; 13:32-37; 15:15-17.

¹⁸ Considering the emphasis of Luke in the Holy Spirit I think it is better to translate this verse as a reference to him.

¹⁹ See more details about this text in Riku Pekka Tuppurainen, “The Contribution of Socio-Rhetorical Criticism to Spirit-Sensitive Hermeneutics: A Contextual Example--Luke 11:13,” *Journal of Biblical and Pneumatological Research* 4 (2012): 38–66.

3 JESUS AND THE BELIEVERS: IDENTIFICATION, PARTICIPATION, CRUCIFORM LIFE

In the light of the end of the gospel, Luke 9:22–24 and 14:26–27 can be read in the sense of identification with Christ and possibly participation. Discipleship and imitation of Christ even to the point of the cross result in the blessings of the kingdom promised in Daniel 7. Michael Gorman defines cruciformity as “conformity to the crucified Christ;” that, in his view, summarizes the spirituality of Paul.²⁰ David Garland attributes a similar idea to 14:25–35: “Discipleship requires the uncompromising sacrifice of a cruciform life, the ready acceptance of possible martyrdom, single-minded devotion, and dogged tenacity.”²¹

In Luke, Jesus invites his disciples to join him (11:23), to let themselves be persecuted by his name’s sake (21:12, 17) and he guarantees them that he would give them mouths and wisdom to give testimony (21:15). In this last text in particular there is something explicitly supernatural happening. The disciples, without being present with Christ, will receive wisdom and speaking skills to give witness to the gospel in the context of persecution. This context of persecution and suffering connects these texts with Luke 9:23–27 and Luke 14:26–27 and together their teaching can be called a supernatural identification with the crucified Christ both in works as in suffering.

4 METAPHORS OF THE UNION WITH CHRIST

The metaphor of the wedding feast or the marriage was a very common image in the Old Testament to refer to God’s relationship with Israel (Isa 54:5–6; 61:10; 62:5; Jer 2:2; 16:9; Ezek 16; Hos 2:14–23). Matthew 25:1; Ephesians 5:31–32, and Revelation 21:2 use this metaphor to refer to a spiritual union between Christ and the church. Luke 5:34–35, however, do not load the metaphor with quite the same spiritual sense, but employ it with a “purely metaphorical and not messianic” gist.²²

Jesus affirms that he is the bridegroom and his disciples are the guests of the wedding feast. For this reason, it was not proper to fast, for the bridegroom was still present, albeit not forever. This figure makes “an

²⁰ Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 4–5.

²¹ David E. Garland, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011). “Cross-bearing is rather an expression of the basic idea of putting oneself aside in order to make room for Jesus. [...] Perhaps an affinity with the Synoptic cross-bearing logia can be found in Paul’s idea of a co-crucifixion with Christ... [...] Thus cross-bearing expresses a readiness to *surrender* one’s entire life to Jesus, both in the Lukan and Pauline expressions. Sverre Bøe, *Cross-Bearing in Luke* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 225–226.

²² Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, 225.

allusion to the intimate relationship his disciples have with him.”²³ It speaks about the union of Jesus, the bridegroom, with his disciples, the friends of the bridegroom, but this union is physical more than spiritual. Jesus even speaks about a day when the bridegroom would be taken from them.

Thus, it is possible to affirm that this metaphor refers to the union of the disciples with Christ during his earthly ministry, with no reference to the spiritual union of Jesus Christ with his church. On another hand, it is easy to see how this same saying could be expanded and developed in the sense that Jesus is the eschatological bridegroom who would make himself one with his followers after his resurrection.

Another metaphor used by Jesus is also loaded with familial connotations. Jesus made this metaphor from an event that involved his family. His mother and brothers come to see him (Luke 8:19). When this is announced to Jesus, he downplays the blood relations and says: “Μήτηρ μου καὶ ἀδελφοί μου οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀκούοντες καὶ ποιῶντες” (Lk 8:21).²⁴ Hearing and doing the word of God are presented as prerequisites to enjoy a special relationship with Jesus, a union similar to the familial one. Bock notes that although he does not use the term technically, the aspect of union with Christ in evidence here is identification.²⁵ Those who hear and practice the word of God will identify with Christ as if they were his relatives. The bonds of the Christian family are those emanated from the Word.

There are, therefore two metaphors in Luke that relate to union. The first is the wedding and it refers to the physical location of Jesus and his disciples before his death and departure from them. This is related to the doctrine of union with Christ only as an antecedent idea. The second metaphor points the identification aspect of union with Christ when he affirms that his mother and brothers are those who hear and do God’s word.

5 JESUS AS THE BREAD

In John one reads several times that Jesus said to be the bread of life (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51). The contention here is that Luke presents the same message, but in a subtler way. It is necessary to capture this sense in the flowing of the narrative. Food is one of the important themes in the gospel of

²³ Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 517.

²⁴ “Kinship in the people of God is no longer grounded in physical descent, he contends, but is based on hearing and doing the word of God (cf. 3:8).” Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 330.

²⁵ “[T]hose with whom Jesus identifies the most are those who respond to the word.” Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 751. Campbell defines this aspect of union with Christ as the shaping of the identity of the believers because of being placed in the realm of his rule as the Second Adam. Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 408.

Luke.²⁶ References to food total more than 50 occurrences.²⁷ Jesus and his disciples appear many times eating (4:39; 5:29–30, 33; 6:1–2; 7:34, 36; 10:7, 40; 11:37; 14:1; 22:14; 24:30, 41–43). Jesus taught several times that people should not be hungry and those who fear God should provide food to those who do not have (3:11; 4:25; 6:21; 8:55; 9:10–17) and there is also the image of the eschatological banquet (12:35–38; 13:29–30; 14:12–24; 15:2; 22:18).

The most important image for us here, however, is Jesus as food—food in general, or bread, specifically.²⁸ Jesus himself during the holy meal told his disciples: Τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν and also Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον (22:19–20). Because of this clear allusion of Jesus to himself as food, we can look back to his birth and conclude also that “Jesus in the manger is food for the world” (2:7, 12, 16).²⁹

The result is that the narrative plot of Luke presents another metaphor pointing to the union of the believers with Jesus. The union of Jesus with his believers is like their union with food, Jesus is the one who concedes spiritual nourishment for life. Ultimately, God is the one who provides food (1:53; 11:3) and consequently Jesus is the spiritual food provided by God.

CONCLUSION

This article aimed to show in an introductory fashion the possibility of finding the doctrine of union with Christ in the gospel of Luke. This union with Christ sometimes is natural and other times is mystical. In the first aspect, the third gospel speaks about a geographical union with Jesus in the sense that multitudes were drawn close to him during his ministry. Also, the third gospel presents the locational and emotional union of the disciples with Jesus and in this sense, they are presented metaphorically as the friends of the groom.

It is the contention of this paper however that the Gospel of Luke teaches mystical union with Christ. Out of the four aspects of union with

²⁶ “Food is one of the most striking themes of Luke's Gospel.” Barbara R. Rossing, “Why Luke's Gospel?: Daily Bread and ‘Recognition’ of Christ in Food-Sharing,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 37 (2010): 225. “Nowhere has the relationship between Jesus and food been explored more thoroughly than in the Gospel of Luke.” Jennifer Halteman Schrock, “‘I Am Among You As One Who Serves’: Jesus and Food in Luke's Gospel,” *Daughters of Sarah* 19 (1993): 20.

²⁷ Robert J. Karris, *Eating Your Way through Luke's Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006), 14.

²⁸ For the meaning of Jesus breaking bread, see Paul B. Decock, “The Breaking of Bread in Luke 24,” *Neotestamentica* 36 (2002): 39–56.

²⁹ Robert J. Karris, *Luke: Artist and Theologian Luke's Passion Account As Literature* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2009), 49.

Christ found by Campbell in his study of Paul, union, participation, identification, and incorporation,³⁰ two appear in Luke.

The union aspect appears in the fact that through Jesus the reader can become, like Jesus, a son of the Most High, emulating the character of God the Father. Also through him the reader can receive the Holy Spirit, as he himself received. The readers are called also to emulate Christ in his trial, suffering and sacrifice, metaphorically taking up their own crosses.

The metaphor of Jesus as the believer's bread points to Jesus as the strength for the new life of the readers and also fits the union aspect of this doctrine. The aspect of incorporation of the union with Christ appears in the metaphor of those who hear the words of God as Jesus' family.

The extant aspects, participation and identification, if not clearly presented by Luke, are seminally present in the discipleship calling to take the cross and in the fact that the believers can act in the name of Jesus.

³⁰ "Instead, I propose that this theme is best conveyed through four terms: union, participation, identification, and incorporation. *Union* gathers up faith union with Christ, mutual indwelling, Trinitarian, and nuptial notions. *Participation* conveys partaking in the events of Christ's narrative. *Identification* refers to believers' location in the realm of Christ and their allegiance to his lordship. *Incorporation* encapsulates the corporate dimensions of membership in Christ's body." Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study*, 413.