

Liturgical Speech Acts in the Lord's Supper

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What is being formed in hearers as we use language in corporate worship? Does it matter how we speak in and of the Lord's Supper? What is happening when the words "This is my body" are spoken in a congregation? Dan Block makes the bold statement, "The Lord's Supper is the defining ritual of the Christian community."² One approach to examining language in this defining ritual is by using the tools of speech act theory, especially the tool of the category of *liturgical* speech acts.

Though evangelical theologians have primarily used speech act theory (hereafter SAT) for hermeneutics, SAT has usefulness for examining the performative speech of corporate worship. SAT was originally conceived by J. L. Austin and further articulated by John Searle. Primarily, SAT focuses on the intentions of the speaker, or what one *does* with words. SAT is framed by the concepts of locution, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary effect. *Liturgical* speech acts are one way of construing SAT for examining the language of congregational worship.³

Following Searle's take on the theory, a locution is a phrase or statement. An illocutionary act occurs *in* uttering the locution, and it is given force by the intent of the speaker. A perlocutionary effect is performed *by* uttering, as the hearer responds (or not). Consider this simple illustration: I utter "It's raining outside" and a hearer responds in grabbing their umbrella. In this example, I ut-

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² Dan Block, *For the Glory of God: Recovering a Biblical Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 165.

³ Liturgical speech acts are multiple, simultaneous, irreducible acts that have formative potential over time as specific words are used and specific actions are performed in repetition. This argument is more fully formulated in David Calvert, "Liturgical Speech Acts: What We Do with Words in Worship" (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018).

tered the locution with the illocutionary force of asserting a fact, and the hearer responded with the perlocutionary effect of grabbing the umbrella.

Searle's original taxonomy of illocutionary acts consists of five ways of speaking. An Assertive act makes a claim about the world. A Directive act is a command that seeks to match the world with what is said ("Close the door"). A Commissive act is one in which the speaker commits to make the world match the words, such as in making a promise. An Expressive act simply expresses an internal state of affairs. Finally, a Declarative act brings about a new state of affairs to fit the words with the world ("I now pronounce you husband and wife").

The taxonomy of *liturgical* speech acts accounts for the multiple, simultaneous illocutionary forces used in the speech of corporate worship. Corporate worship is a response to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, and thus all of the language used is a response of praise that expresses internal realities of the worshiper (Expressive acts). A Celebrative act is simultaneously Expressive and Assertive. A Participative act is simultaneously Expressive and Commissive or Directive, inviting the hearer to participate in worship in some way. A Re-presentative act is simultaneously Expressive, Assertive, and Declarative. Re-presentative acts have the potential to bring about a state of affairs by their utterance or effect change by their utterance, and much of the language at the Table may be Re-presentative.

Using the tools afforded by liturgical speech acts, this paper will examine the language of the Lord's Supper and consider the various illocutionary acts occurring and their perlocutionary potential. This paper will draw on the insightful categories developed by James K. A. Smith and Nicholas Wolterstorff and the work of Mary Patton Baker as a means of understanding the formative power of liturgical speech acts and will conclude with several implications for the formation of worshipers through participation in the Lord's Supper. Using SAT and liturgical speech acts to examine the Lord's Supper provides new and helpful ways of understanding formation in the language of the Supper in corporate worship.

The Lord's Supper, or Table, is the third movement of the historical *ordo*—Gathering, Word, Table, and Sending.⁴ The Supper is part of a tapestry of liturgical speech acts and embodied actions in corporate worship. As David Power comments, both baptism and the Lord's Supper “are interwoven with institutions, lives, histories, personages.”⁵ Power's language aligns with two supplemental categories of speech act theory: “institutional facts” and “constitutive rules.” The Table elements are shaped by institutional facts, constitutive rules, and the denominational traditions that manifest these conditions of performance.

The Lord's Supper and the Christian Social Imaginary

In SAT proper, Searle explains the role of institutional facts in the Background of meaning that supports the intended meaning of a statement. Searle also explains the constitutive rules that construct these institutional facts—X counts as Y in context C.⁶ For example, an ordained minister (X) counts as one who may preside over the Table (Y) in the context of corporate worship (C). This rule then functions together with other doctrinal rules to establish the institutional facts that shape denominational traditions. The rules, facts, and traditions all constitute the Background assumptions that inform the meaning of language used in corporate worship.

James K. A. Smith offers a rich category for describing the Background of meaning for the language of corporate worship—the Christian social imaginary.⁷ The Christian social imaginary is “a dis-

⁴ The explanation of the four historical movements of Gathering, Word, Table, and Sending are drawn from Clayton Schmit, *Sent and Gathered: A Worship Manual for the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009); Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009); and Robert Webber, *Worship, Old and New: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

⁵ David Power, *Sacrament: The Language of God's Giving* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1999), 87.

⁶ John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 33–35.

⁷ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 65.

tinctly Christian understanding of the world that is implicit in the practices of Christian worship.”⁸ This idea is adapted from Charles Taylor’s “social imaginary,” or the way we implicitly understand the world to be. As a central element of corporate worship, the potential of the Lord’s Supper to shape the Christian social imaginary cannot be overstated.

One cannot develop the liturgical speech acts of the Supper without first acknowledging the Background of meaning that operates in the Supper. Block refers to the institution of the Lord’s Supper as “a glorious helix blending at least three First Testament liturgical traditions: the Passover meal, the covenant ratification ceremony, and the sin offering.”⁹ Similarly, Melvin Tinker takes care to explain the Passover meal as background before exploring the use of illocutionary acts in the Supper.¹⁰ These biblical precedents function as points of reference for the liturgies of the Supper that have developed out of the New Testament accounts of institution and practice. When the Lord’s Supper is practiced in corporate worship, the liturgical speech acts shape and are shaped by the Christian social imaginary in a kind of “Background spiral.” The meaning of what is said is shaped by the Background, and what is said may also have the perlocutionary effect of reshaping or forming the Background or Christian social imaginary of a worshiper.

Words of Institution

The Table presents complex agency in the language of corporate worship. The phrases of the words of institution are recited directly from Scripture in a context of utterance that resembles reading the Scripture, but the words of institution are intended to be directly accompanied with an embodied response of participation. SAT helps us explore this agency in terms of illocutionary force. Mary Patton Baker highlights the distinction of agency with a specific verb, noting, “As deputized speaker, the minister *invokes* the

⁸ James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 109.

⁹ Block, *For the Glory of God*, 157.

¹⁰ Melvin Tinker, “Last Supper/Lord’s Supper: More Than a Parable in Action?,” *Themelios* 26, no. 2 (2001): 20.

Son's illocutionary intent: for an invitation holds a particular kind of illocutionary force." ¹¹ Baker continues, "Each participant hears Christ's invitation in the present moment—to commune with him at his Table—just as he once eagerly and with great love invited his disciples: 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer' (Luke 22:15)." ¹² The minister does not only re-illocute the Son's illocution; rather the original illocutionary intent is *invoked* or Re-presented, situating the efficacy of the illocutionary point in the communicative act of God. Accordingly, the agency of the liturgical speech acts of the Table is clarified by Wolterstorff's "deputized agency." Wolterstorff articulates his own position on sacramental agency by describing what the minister does and what God does. He claims, "By the appointed minister of the Church uttering the words and performing the actions of sacrament, God presents the promise made in Jesus Christ and assures us that the promise remains in effect." He concludes decisively, "The minister does not do it; God does it. God is the agent." ¹³ Wolterstorff also implies that the minister re-presents (on God's behalf) the promises made in Christ, which may be described as Re-presentative speech acts.

Understanding God as the primary communicative agent in the Table elements of the *ordo* provides perspective on the efficacy of the communication. Tinker posits that God achieves all of Searle's five illocutionary points (Assertive, Directive, Commissive, Expressive, and Declarative) in the Lord's Supper. ¹⁴ God's full linguistic activity is efficacious because of the Trinitarian nature of God's communicative acts, in which the Spirit brings about the perlocutionary effect of what the Father has communicated in the Son, an analogy used by both Kevin Vanhoozer and Michael Horton. ¹⁵

Baker and Tinker each lean on the reflections of Calvin with regard to the language of the Lord's Supper. Calvin claims, "We

¹¹ Mary Patton Baker, *Participation in Christ and Eucharistic Formation: John Calvin and the Theodrama of the Lord's Supper* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2015), 130–31. Emphasis added.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Sacrament as Action, not Presence," in *Christ: The Sacramental Word*, ed. David Brown and Ann Loades (London: SPCK, 1996), 114.

¹⁴ Melvin Tinker, "Language, Symbols, and Sacraments: Was Calvin's View of the Lord's Supper Right?," *Churchman* 112 (1998): 146.

¹⁵ This analogy is adapted from Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 614.

ought carefully to observe that the chief, and almost the whole energy of the sacrament consists in these words, It is broken for you; it is shed for you."¹⁶ Calvin situates the "energy" of the sacrament in the speech act of the words of institution that precede the partaking of the elements. Tinker clarifies, "What is required is not only an understanding of the meaning of the statement and the sacramental act, 'My body which is given for you, take and eat this in remembrance of me' but the force with which the sacrament and statement is to be taken—that it *counts* as promise, persuasion, assurance and unification."¹⁷ The energy or force of the words of institution is an illocutionary force, or rather the simultaneous illocutionary forces of Celebrative and Participative acts that can account for the combination of promise, assertion, and expression together.

"This is My Body"

There is no more potent speech act in corporate worship than "This is my body." A full examination of the weight of this phrase and its impact on the Christian social imaginary is beyond the scope of this work. Provided here is a launching point, by conceiving of the language of the Lord's Supper as liturgical speech acts. Speech act theory assists in determining the speaker's intent, and in the case of the phrase "This is my body," it is clear that Jesus was certainly *doing* something with these words.

This first phrase of the words of institution, which brought about so much difficulty in interpretation during the Reformation, is a powerful *metaphor* regardless of interpretive conclusions. While discussing the language of liturgy as metaphor, Mark Searle claims,

The [power of] metaphor occurs when it is not simply the context, but the juxtaposition of a second irreconcilable literal meaning, which creates the explosion of insight. When Christ took bread and said "This is my body," two significant units, one an object and the other a verbal phrase, were

¹⁶ John Calvin and Henry Beveridge, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1845), 391.

¹⁷ Tinker, "Language, Symbols, and Sacraments," 146. Emphasis original.

set in uncomfortable juxtaposition, forcing the disciples to move beyond the literal meanings to a new kind of seeing.¹⁸

Jesus's use of this particular metaphor leverages the illocutionary forces of an Assertive and a Declarative, otherwise summarized as a Re-presentative liturgical speech act. As Jesus asserts "This is my body" while holding bread, the Assertive act combines with a Declarative act that creates the new state of affairs for the act of partaking of the bread. As presiders over the Table continue to re-illocute this utterance, they also Express their own faith in the promises of God as they speak these Re-presentative acts.

"This is My Blood . . ."

"This is my blood of the covenant" often receives less direct attention than "This is my body," but the phrase is no less powerful. As Jesus holds the cup and makes this statement, the utterance has the force of an Assertive and a Declarative, reframing the state of affairs for both the cup of wine and the covenant context for the disciples who are sharing the meal.¹⁹ When leaders of worship use this phrase as a liturgical speech act, they Express their response, Assert the state of affairs, and Declare the truth. The Re-presentative force of this one phrase has potent influence on the Christian social imaginary for those who hear the words of institution and participate in the Lord's Supper.

"I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day."

Though not regularly included in liturgies of the Table, Jesus's statement following the Declarative act of the cup is a Commissive act, a promise, with an eschatological perspective.²⁰ Baker

¹⁸ Mark Searle, "Liturgy as Metaphor," *Worship* 55, no. 2 (March 1981): 108.

¹⁹ The context of utterance for the Last Supper is described in Matt 26:27-28.

²⁰ This utterance is recorded in Matt 26:29, "I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

summarizes the impact of this utterance saying, “Through speaking these words, Jesus is placing this meal and his actions in the context of Israel’s eschatological hopes for a new kingdom.”²¹ The liturgical speech acts in the Lord’s Supper are connected to the eschatological perspective anchored in the Christian social imaginary that informs *how* worshipers remember and frames *why* they participate at the Table.

Words of Delivery

The recorded liturgies of the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship* and Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* (hereafter BCW and BCP) provide instructions for specific words to be spoken by ministers while serving the elements to the congregation. Ronald Byars references the second of the available options in the BCW, “The body of Christ, the bread of heaven” and “The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation” and notes their biblical significance.²² These specific words reference themes from Scripture and the Christian social imaginary, connecting the bread to Christ’s body, the manna provided to Israel, and the petition for daily bread from the Lord’s Prayer, which is prayed corporately during the liturgy of the Eucharist in the BCW and BCP. The implied verbs in these phrases shape them as Re-presentative speech acts, bringing about the state of affairs in the awareness of the communicant. The minister uses liturgical speech acts to frame the way the congregant receives the elements.

In the BCP, the words of delivery are longer-form paragraphs that include Celebrative and Participative liturgical speech acts in addition to the Re-presentative acts:

The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving. The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy

²¹ Baker, *Participation in Christ and Eucharistic Formation*, 187.

²² Ronald P. Byars, *What Language Shall I Borrow? The Bible and Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 158–59.

body and soul unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.²³

The phrase "which was given for thee," is a Celebrative act, asserting a state of affairs from the gospel. The phrase, "preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life" is a Re-presentative that seeks to bring about what is uttered over the element, with a specifically eschatological perspective. The verb forms for the second sentence for each element are imperative, Directive verbs, "Take and eat . . . Drink this . . .," thus constituting a Participative act that necessitates the participation of the hearer/communicant by partaking of the elements. The response of partaking of the elements is also an illocutionary act by the participant. The participant intends to communicate their belief by partaking. The Lord's Supper is a moment for both verbal and non-verbal illocutionary acts performed by the minister and the communicants.

Non-verbal Illocutionary Acts in the Supper

As Nicholas Wolterstorff has introduced, sometimes one does things with illocutionary force without uttering a word.²⁴ Wolterstorff illustrates, "One can say something by producing a blaze, or smoke, or a sequence of light-flashes."²⁵ In the context of the Lord's Supper, the participants "say something" by partaking of the bread and wine. This is especially evident in the verbal and non-verbal illocutionary acts of the Lord's Supper, in which "successful" liturgical speech acts are accompanied by specific embodied actions.

The Table, though shaped by liturgical *speech* acts, is the *embodiment* of what has been uttered in the gospel. Anthony Thiselton expresses the relationship of speech action and embodied action by

²³ *Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 338.

²⁴ Utilizing the "counting as" notion, or the form of a constitutive rule, one may use a gesture to communicate, such as a turn signal on the highway; see Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 83. In *Participation in Christ and Eucharistic Formation*, 122, Baker notes that Austin extended conditions for a successful speech act to "non-verbal acts and symbols, not simply the right words."

²⁵ Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, 13.

claiming, "Each participant declares, proclaims, or preaches in the breaking of the bread that 'Christ died,' and in eating the bread and drinking from the cup that 'Christ died for me.'"²⁶ The participant in the Lord's Supper performs non-verbal illocutionary acts that bear considerable weight of meaning in the context of corporate worship.²⁷

Just as Baker and Tinker interact with Calvin as an interlocutor for the illocutionary potential of the Lord's Supper, Wolterstorff references Calvin on the signification of the elements of the Supper in the context of the non-verbal illocutionary acts of the minister or presider. Wolterstorff observes,

Calvin affirms that the bread signifies (represents, stands for) Christ's body and that the wine signifies (represents, stands for) Christ's blood. But the bread and the wine do not possess their signifying functions independently; they possess them within the context of the signifying function of the presider's actions of offering bread and offering wine and the signifying function of the congregants' actions of eating the bread and drinking the wine.²⁸

The *function* of the presider's and the congregants' actions may be helpfully clarified in terms of their illocutionary force. The signifying function of the bread and wine is inextricably connected to the non-verbal illocutionary acts of eating and drinking and the ways these acts inform and derive meaning from the Christian social imaginary.

There are communicative, illocutionary forces in the actions performed at the Table. Kevin Vanhoozer describes the *drama* of the

²⁶ Anthony C. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 185.

²⁷ Mary Patton Baker has laid groundwork here in her research utilizing speech act theory as a tool for understanding the Christian's participation in Christ and formation in the Eucharist. Baker interacts with Calvin's theology of the sacraments and draws on the work of Vanhoozer and Austin. Baker chooses to use an overly-simplified version of Austin's framework for speech act theory, even claiming that mixing Austin and Searle is "ill-advised" (*Participation in Christ and Eucharistic Formation*, n. 94, 127).

²⁸ Nicholas Wolterstorff, *The God We Worship: An Exploration of Liturgical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 150.

table, commenting, "The central actions—breaking and taking the bread, pouring and passing the wine—not only recapitulates what Christ has done but, as we do it in remembrance of him, *performs* it."²⁹ The breaking, taking, pouring, and passing are non-verbal liturgical speech acts that communicate in the context of corporate worship. In other contexts, breaking a piece of bread to consume may not communicate any propositional content with any illocutionary force. However, the constitutive rules and institutional facts of corporate worship create a specific context for the performance of liturgical speech acts and thus, as Wolterstorff observes, "institute a way of acquiring rights and responsibilities."³⁰ When a baptized believer takes the bread into their hand, they have communicated by that action that they have examined themselves (1 Cor 11:28) and by virtue of their profession of faith and baptism have the right to come by God's invitation to the Table. The actions of leaving one's seat to come forward, passing the elements, partaking of the elements, or abstaining from the elements all function as non-verbal illocutionary acts.

Re-presentative, Re-petition, and Re-enactment

Several of the liturgical speech acts of the Lord's Supper are overtly eschatological. Participation at the Table is observed in space and time, in the context of remembrance and anticipation that is cultivated by the Christian social imaginary.³¹ Christ is present because of the covenant he made, through the Spirit, until he participates with believers in the Kingdom. Smith explains that this meal "constitutes us as an eschatological people: while it recalls and recapitulates Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, the Supper also

²⁹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Pictures at a Theological Exhibition: Scenes of the Church's Worship, Witness, and Wisdom* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 199. Emphasis original.

³⁰ Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, 84.

³¹ According to Baker's understanding of Calvin's theology of the Eucharist, Christ's very presence in the Eucharist is framed "covenantally, pneumatologically, and eschatologically" (*Participation in Christ and Eucharist Formation*, 36).

looks ahead to the feast in the kingdom.”³² Participation in the Lord’s Supper, and the liturgical speech acts performed therein, has constitutive potential for the people of God as it both situates them in a moment and connects them beyond that moment.

The eschatological perspective of the Lord’s Supper is reinforced by Re-presentative liturgical speech acts repeated and reenacted over time. In rather strong terms, Wolterstorff claims that in the institution of the Lord’s Supper, “never has dramatic *representation* been freighted with such awesome import.”³³ The language and actions of the Supper re-present elements rich in meaning from multiple connections to the Christian social imaginary, making present again a moment for communion with God and believers at his Table. A Re-presentative *makes present* by bringing about the state of affairs it claims.³⁴

The liturgical speech *acts* of the Lord’s Supper in corporate worship *re-enact* as they re-illocute the speech acts of Jesus. As Baker frames it, repetition of the Re-presentative acts functionally “re-enacts the Son’s word-act at the meal on the night of his betrayal.”³⁵ Baker continues with this terminology, “This sacramental reenactment *presents the Son’s execution of the Father’s utterances of promises to redeem the world.*”³⁶ The repetition of reenactment contributes to the Christian social imaginary by reinforcing remembrance or *anamnesis*.

³² Smith sets up his conclusion by saying, “So the Lord’s supper is a foretaste of the feast in the kingdom which means that its meaning has to be situated within an eschatological horizon” (*Desiring the Kingdom*, 200).

³³ Wolterstorff, “Sacrament as Action, not Presence,” 121. Emphasis added.

³⁴ In a specifically Roman Catholic social imaginary, the significance of the Table can be understood in terms of the Mass being a “representation of the sacrifice of the Cross” and “a sacramental participation in the heavenly liturgy.” In these descriptions, Jean Danielou inadvertently illustrates the Re-presentative and Participative liturgical speech acts of the Mass. His theological Background affirms the Re-presentative acts or *making present* of Jesus’s sacrifice in the performance of the Mass, and the Participative acts emphasize the eschatological thrust of sacramental participation; see *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2002), 128.

³⁵ Baker, *Participation in Christ and Eucharistic Formation*, 124.

³⁶ *Ibid.* Emphasis original.

Anamnesis

The liturgical speech acts of the Lord's Supper constitute *anamnesis* for worshipers. Jesus's original command focused on the anamnestic character of *doing* the Lord's Supper—"Do this in remembrance." In language that supports the terminology for liturgical speech acts, Bard Thompson defines *anamnesis* as "nothing less than the 're-calling' or 're-presentation' of the passion of Christ so that 'it becomes here and now operative by its effects in the communicants.'"³⁷ Thompson draws this conclusion in part from the account of Justin Martyr, who conceives of the sacrament as "an anamnesis, a re-calling of Christ's passion."³⁸ Re-presentative acts, which make present again and bring into being a state of affairs, have anamnestic capacity.

The anamnesis of the Supper re-calls and re-presents while simultaneously anticipating and looking forward. Temporally, the Lord's Supper holds together in tension the past, present, and future experiences of Table fellowship. Regular practice of the Lord's Supper, with intentional reference to the fullness of meaning in the Christian social imaginary, helps worshipers remember rightly and anticipate rightly. As David Power observes, "Oral and ritual performance moreover express the lived connection with the past and with forebears, and with the future that the past promises."³⁹ The speech acts and embodied acts of the Lord's Supper *do anamnesis* with worshipers, connecting them with those who have participated before, and anticipating participation with Christ in his Kingdom.

Using the categories of speech act theory opens up the language and actions of the Lord's Supper to new vistas of understanding. Baker demonstrates this with a focus on the Holy Spirit's perlocutionary work in the Supper, significant to quote at length:

Our anamnestic [*sic*] performance consists of seeing, touching, and receiving the body and blood, while the Holy Spirit

³⁷ Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 17. Here he cites Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (St. Louis, MO: Westminster, 1947).

³⁸ Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 7. Thompson cites Justin Martyr's *Dialogue* chapters 41 and 70, and 1 *Apology*, 66.

³⁹ Power, *Sacrament*, 67.

joins the embodied *signum* to the *res* of Christ's body and blood. . . . The Holy Spirit brings the perlocutionary effect of a transforming encounter with Jesus Christ in the heavenlies and we are truly changed through our sacramental participation – whether it be comforted, given hope, a renewed energy to obey, or the profoundly deep knowledge that Christ suffered for us because God loves us and that we are therefore truly adopted children of the Father.⁴⁰

Baker initially lists the senses of sight, touch, and taste in connection with anamnestic performance, but prior to these, congregants have *heard* the speech acts of the minister that provide reference for the meaning of the embodied actions. The “sacramental reenactment” then *does* something, namely “seals” worshipers, which is a biblical description of the work of the Spirit. Because the Trinitarian God is a communicative agent in the speech acts of the Supper, the Holy Spirit is the one who brings about the effects of the illocutionary acts spoken by the Father in and through the Son.

Perlocutionary Formation at the Table

The liturgical speech acts of the Lord's Supper contribute to spiritual formation. This formation may be construed as a perlocutionary effect of the illocutionary acts performed. The Lord's Supper as thanksgiving may form worshipers “as a Eucharistic people, whose lives and whose common life exhibit a quality of gratitude to God.”⁴¹ If the Table is set as a place of thanksgiving, worshipers may orient their lives as thankful people.⁴² The regular participation in thanksgiving and fellowship with God and with God's people at the Table will shape the way the participant interacts with God's people away from the Table as well.

⁴⁰ Baker, *Participation in Christ and Eucharistic Formation*, 126.

⁴¹ Byars, *What Language Shall I Borrow*, 161. Byars suggests that this life of gratitude may “enable us, at least in some measure, to serve our neighbor, not with a sense of dreadful duty or oppressive burden, but with delight.”

⁴² As Baker observes, “We are formed by the habits of our way of acting and reacting to others” (*Participation in Christ and Eucharistic Formation*, 207).

Both individual and corporate formation occurs at the Table. Participation at the Lord's Supper expresses the inward reality of sanctification and formation and expresses the hope of the coming reality of the consummation of God's Kingdom. Baker claims that participation in the Lord's Supper contributes to corporate formation as each experience reminds, "In our ecclesial embodiedness we are the church being the church, making the church visible in communion with the invisible church of those who have gone before us."⁴³ It is through the liturgical speech acts that shape the Christian social imaginary that the fullness of ecclesial reality is given meaning.

The language of the Lord's Supper consists of rich liturgical speech acts that function differently than speech acts in other contexts. Using SAT and liturgical speech acts in particular provides new ways of understanding language and formation in the Lord's Supper. At the Table, Re-presentatives, Participatives, and Celebratives are all performed in a relatively brief temporal space in conjunction with embodied acts, all contributing to the formation of the Christian social imaginary and the spiritual formation of participants.

⁴³ Baker, *Participation in Christ and Eucharistic Formation*, 207.