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The Journal of the Pentecostal Theological Association (JEPTA) is a peer-reviewed international journal which has a pedigree stretching back to 1981 when it began as the EPTA Bulletin. Despite its European origins, JEPTA has interests in Pentecostalism world-wide. It aims to promote and report research and scholarship in Pentecostal and charismatic studies, especially in relation to five fields of study:

- Theology
- Pentecostal/charismatic education
- Pentecostal history
- Charismatic history
- Missiology

The journal welcomes interdisciplinary debate and dialogue.

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Editorial

This, the first issue of 2006, provides you with a variety of articles from a variety of standpoints. Harry Letson gives us a good, reliable and much-needed account of the life and ministry of John Nelson Parr, who has more claim than anyone else to be the founder of British Assemblies of God. Tony Richie takes a line that some readers will want a contest - that Pentecostalism is essentially inclusivist and ecumenical rather than exclusivist and anti-ecumenical. This is not a new theme. Many years ago Donald Gee argued that true ecumenism centres on Christ through the Spirit rather than by means of anonymous committees edging their way towards ambiguous agreements. Anne Dyer approaches the theology of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements through their songs and provides us with a valuable analysis of the style and content of songs over the last 30 or more years. This is an innovative way of doing theology since it is in our worship that our theology is often most explicit. Ulrich Luz explores the meaning of empowerment in the Gospels of Luke, Matthew and John and argues that each of the Gospels provides a different perspective on the meaning of empowerment, a perspective in line with other themes within that particular gospel. Some of you might like to pen a reply to him since Pentecostal scholars have been much more inclined to see unity rather than diversity within the New Testament. Bradley Cooper and N B Woodbridge offer us hope for revival at the very point when secular forces appear to overwhelm us; they base their hope on God’s faithful commitment to his covenant. Finally William Atkinson in a detailed examination of the relevant literature, distinguishes between angels and the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts so as to throw theological light on the function of each.

We hope this mixture of old and new, of theology and history, of close examination of the biblical text and of equally close analysis of contemporary practice will provide something of interest and stimulus for you.

Meanwhile debates within Pentecostalism continue and the Society for Pentecostal Studies and the GloPent conference in Birmingham both draw upon the wealth of Pentecostal history which, by now, has attracted sufficient academic interest for diverging viewpoints to emerge. There are those who see Pentecostalism as essentially emanating from the post 1906 Azusa Street revival and the others who see it as coming from a variety of centres across the world but certainly not definable as a purely North American phenomenon. We hope to contribute to this debate within future issues.

Pentecostalism from its inception been committed to mission and, indeed, Michael Bergunder in a recent publication has argued that Pentecostalism...
William K Kay

expanded as fast as it did precisely because it worked through the established and extensive infrastructure of missionary agencies in existence at the beginning of the 20th century. But because mission is important this is the subject to which we are devoting the EPTA (European Pentecostal Theological Association) conference at Iso Kirja in Finland 18-20, 2006, July. Please write to Ann Dyer (e-mail library@matterseyhall.co.uk; http://www.epta.nu) for further information. She will be sending members an information pack shortly. Places are still available.

Finally, I had the unfortunate experience of being taken to task in a book review published in *Pneuma* last year. The reviewer appeared neither to have understood the book properly nor to have given sufficient time to read it. As a result his review was misleading and, frankly, foolish. *Pneuma*’s editor, however, accepted that it was reasonable to carry an authorial response. In the same way we would like to make it crystal clear that what we publish is open to feedback and debate. This is your journal.

*William K Kay*

*University of Wales, Bangor*
Serving His Generation: The Contribution of John Nelson Parr to the Pentecostal Movement

Harry Letson

Abstract
This paper is essentially a biography of John Nelson Parr (1886-1976) and the contribution he has made to the Pentecostal movement, particularly in Britain and to some extent globally. The paper sets out to paint a picture of the man himself and his achievements within a personal and ministerial context and the legacy he has left Pentecostalism in general.

Introduction
A number of biographies have been written about the early Pentecostal leaders notably E.C.W. Boulton’s life of George Jeffreys, published in 1928 and Stanley Frodsham’s book on the life of Smith Wigglesworth is another in this genre as is Edward Jeffreys on the life of his father Stephen Jeffreys. Articles were also appearing in magazines such as the Pentecostal Evangel and Redemption Tidings relating to Pentecostal origins and its leaders. In 1964 Donald Gee began a series in Redemption Tidings on men he knew that had died entitled: These Men I knew. These were later published in book form under the same title. In 1971 John Carter published a biography of his brother: Howard Carter: Man of the Spirit. John Nelson Parr followed this

1 Pastor of Sharon Tabernacle, AoG Moston, Manchester, UK. Email: harry@letson.fs-net.co.uk
in 1972 with the private publication of his own autobiography: Incredible. 6 1979 saw the publication of John Carter’s autobiography: A Full Life. All these works were a useful addition to a growing awareness of Pentecostalism within mainstream Christianity.

The Missing Link

All in all many of the Pentecostal pioneers had been written about in some form or another apart from one glaring omission – John Nelson Parr of Manchester. Admittedly, he is mentioned in numerous publications but only fleetingly. Donald Gee refers to him frequently in his book: The Pentecostal Movement 7 in relation to his work in getting the British Assemblies of God fellowship off the ground. Edward Jeffreys also mentions him when speaking of his father, Stephen Jeffreys, and his campaign with Parr in Manchester in 1928. 8 However, it was not until 1973 that Alfred Missen outlined some aspects of Parr’s life and work. 9 A fuller account of Parr and the crucial part he played in founding Assemblies of God is given by Richard Massey in his PhD thesis. 10 William Kay added to the work of these writers, writing an up-to-date account of Parr in his book: Inside Story 11 in 1990. David Allen’s PhD thesis also gives another perspective on it all in his treatment of Parr and Assemblies of God. 12 Strange as it may seem Walter Hollenweger makes no reference to the part Parr played in the formation of Assemblies of God preferring to emphasise Donald Gee’s role in furthering Assemblies of God. This may be due to Gee’s ecumenical tendencies which Hollenweger seems to espouse. 13

This seems to be a strange omission for so many years when for most of the history of Assemblies of God Parr’s church, Bethshan Tabernacle, was

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the largest Assemblies of God church in the country and for a time the largest Pentecostal church in Britain and Parr’s part in the formation of Assemblies of God. Others had tried before him, notably W.F.P Burton and A.E. Saxby, but to no avail. It was Parr’s energy and drive combined with his business and management skills which won the day. This was all fuelled, however, by his passion for evangelism and his concern for Pentecostal ministers who had suffered as a result of WWI. These qualities gave him an unrivalled edge amongst his peers. So it begs the question why no one saw the need for a serious study on the life of this unique man. This paper seeks to redress this imbalance as does the PhD thesis from which it is taken.14

Preparations for Ministry

In order to understand the man and his contribution to British Pentecostal origins we need to look at his life on a number of fronts. We need, first of all, to see the personal achievements in his life. This will help us assess his achievements as a minister within the Pentecostal movement and Assemblies of God. This will hopefully set the scene for his accomplishments within a larger global context.

Family Influences

Parr was born in Ardwick, a suburb of Manchester, in 1886.15 According to the 1901 census16 he had two brothers and three sisters. His father is noted as being: “a painter and paper hanger”. However, his relationship with his father seemed to have been strained to say the least. The statement in his autobiography hints at this saying: “drink impoverished my home”.17 Marjorie, Parr’s late daughter, subsequently confirmed to the writer in a questionnaire that his father was “a heavy drinker” and that he became very antagonistic to Parr after his conversion and this never ceased right up to his father’s death.18 Indeed, Parr says his father tried to “murder him”19 on one occasion. Perhaps this indicates the deterioration in their relationship exacerbated by Parr’s Christian commitment.

15 The 1901 Census shows the Parr family living in Derby St, Ardwick. www.census.pro.gov.uk
16 As his birthday fell on 11th November and the census in March he would not have reached his fifteenth birthday.
17 Parr, Incredible, p7.
18 Questionnaire by Marjorie Parr 23rd May 2003.
19 Attachment to Sermon Notes: “Sixty Years. 60 years of following Christ” Parr’s Archives, Donald Gee Centre, Mattersey Hall.
The impoverished nature of the home urged Parr to do what he could to help supplement the family income. He did this by becoming a newspaper delivery boy. When he left school he went to work in a textile engineering firm. However, Parr says he drifted from job to job, having about “nine jobs between 14 – 17” This may be nothing more than normal teenage readjustment to working life but it may also betray the inner struggles and frustrations of the young Parr and his difficult family relationship.

One way Parr found to work out his frustrations was sport. This may have been the means he used to vent the pent-up energies building up within his being. He engaged in football, swimming, cricket and cross-country running. Indeed, he says he saw no small measure of achievement in this,* having been almost chosen for ‘the English School Boys Team’. He further claims, on the same page, to have won the “batting and bowling prizes” for that year.

As can be seen Parr rose from a troubled background but the conflicts with his father brought out in Parr strength beyond his years. His sense of duty to his mother and his brothers and sisters gave him a feeling of responsibility and instilled within him maturity at a young age. The tussles with his father also served to put steel into his spine and fitted him for the cut and thrust world of big business and denominational organisation. These early years no doubt* formed the personality and character of Parr which would manifest themselves in his later life.

**Business Acumen**

Parr began his working life at thirteen years of age. This was the normal age at the time for young people to leave school and start work. He began his working life in a “textile engineering” firm which would have been around 1899 but by the time of the census in 1901, he worked as a clerk in a railway office. This position was gained, no doubt, on the merits of his intelligence and the good level of schooling he had attained. Parr claims he passed the examination for higher education at Ross Place School, Ardwick but could not avail himself of it due to the situation at home. After his conversion he states he learned Greek and Latin in order to gain admission to a theological college. However, he was dissuaded from entering this establishment by a

20 Parr, Incredible p7.
21 Parr, Incredible p8.
22 Parr, Incredible p9.
23 Parr Incredible p7.
24 Parr Incredible p7.
25 Parr claims this was Brighton Grove Theological Seminary Parr p45. This was a Baptist institution now known as Luther King House. See Letson Keeper of the Flame p86.
John Nelson Parr

minister in Star Hall as it may have detracted from his faith. Nevertheless, it does show his intellectual abilities at a young age and later on his ability to study and grapple with theological issues.

Parr had obvious abilities along with confidence in his abilities to begin to carve out a decent living for himself and no doubt begin to make up the short fall his father’s condition imposed on the family. As a result of his participation with the Lads’ Club at Crossley Mission Hall he was offered a job in Crossley’s engineering firm. This opened the door for him later on to work under Geoffrey DeHaviland at the Aircraft Manufacturing Company in Hendon as purchasing manager. With the slump in the demand for aircraft after WWI Parr returned to Manchester to Crossley’s factory again as the purchasing manager. A lucrative position by all accounts. He says he earned “nearly £1000” a year (almost £20 a week) at the time he left to enter full time Christian ministry.26 This was lucrative indeed considering the average wage for a minister at the time was thirty to forty shillings per week (£1.50-2.00).27

This is quite a step up for a working class boy from a troubled background now in command of a busy office with probably hundreds of pounds at his disposal. This too was to prepare him for his life’s work. The experience gained in the business world and the skills acquired in getting people on board for various projects certainly built within Parr the necessary acumen for running a large church and administrating a newly formed denomination.

**Spiritual Qualities**

Like most of us though Parr is much more complex than this. It was not merely his family life which influenced him, in spite of the difficulties with his father, nor indeed his working life. There were other forces at work in his life, spiritual forces hidden deep within the recesses of his inner being. Whether it was the influence of his mother is difficult to establish or truly the grace of God at work but the church at least figured somewhere in his life, as it did for many young people of Parr’s day. Parr was “confirmed”28 in the Church of England. This necessitated his being christened in an Anglican church first. He says he was “compelled” to attend Sunday School.29 This

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26 Sermon Notes “Thirty-four Years” Parr’s Archives held in The Donald Gee Centre Mattersey Hall.
was not unusual as many Victorians saw church and Sunday School as part of the educational process of young British people.\textsuperscript{30} However, Parr’s time at this Sunday School did not meet with much success as he says he was “continually in trouble” and was eventually “expelled for gross misconduct”.\textsuperscript{31} What exactly he did he does not say but certainly he must have been very disruptive indeed. Such behaviour is not inconsistent with children brought up in a home ‘impoverished by drink’. Yet it may also show his strong character and will manifesting themselves. This would stand him in good stead in years to come. The change came, Parr tells us, in April 1904 when, at seventeen and a half he gave his life to Christ.\textsuperscript{32}

As a result of his parents moving house from Ardwick to Bradford, Manchester, Parr came into contact with Crossley’s Mission Hall. The mission was established by Frank and William Crossley as a philanthropic venture to help the youth of the city. The Crossleys had made their fortune by developing the Crossley gas turbine engine and as they were both evangelical Christians they wanted to use their wealth and influence to reach out to those in need in the city of Manchester. Frank later bought the old Star Music Hall and turned it into a mission which came to be known as Star Hall.

However, Crossley Mission Hall seemed to have doubled up as a sporting venue attracting young people from the surrounding district. It was to this place the young Parr came because of his love of sport and through the witness of a fellow runner he was brought to faith in Christ. This was the turning point in his life. As Crossley Hall was built for evangelism and thrived on outreach, this evangelistic drive was to take hold of Parr becoming the overriding passion for the rest of his life. It was here he also met his wife to be, Laura France.

At some point during his time at Crossley Mission Hall Parr began to feel the need for something more of God and to find this he turned to Frank Crossley’s mission – Star Hall. The emphasis here was on holiness and total commitment. In his sermon on ‘Sixty Years’ Parr says he felt God was calling him to ‘full surrender’ and ‘complete 100% consecration’. This suited his personality because with Parr it was all or nothing and he expected no less from those who worked with him. As a consequence he gave up all his sporting activities and devoted himself wholeheartedly to the work of God. Consequently, he left Crossley with Laura and joined Star Hall.

Providentially, it was while he was in Star Hall that he came across

\textsuperscript{30} Henry Letson \textit{Keeper of the Flame} p79.
\textsuperscript{31} Parr, \textit{Incredible} p8.
\textsuperscript{32} Parr, \textit{Incredible} p9.
another likeminded individual in the person of Dan Parsley. Parsley had been holding meetings in his home in connection with Jessie Penn-Lewis’s search for revival. It was at these meetings that Parr began to experience the moving of the Spirit and, in line with this, reports started to come through about happenings in America. This was the Azusa St. revival under William J. Seymour. So the group began to seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This caused an adverse reaction from many people in Star Hall and they were forced to find fellowship elsewhere. They found it among some ‘Plymouth Brethren’, Parr says, who were “seeking the Pentecostal blessing”. These people were based in Stanley Hall in Stanley Grove, Longsight, Manchester. Stanley Hall was listed as a fellowship within the Brethren movement but it was eventually shunned by them because of its Pentecostal emphasis.

In time Stanley Hall came to be known as Manchester Pentecostal Church. It was here that Parr came to experience Spirit baptism on Christmas Day 1910. From that time on until 1914, Parr says, “…revival fire was burning with glorious intensity in our midst.” With this experience Parr was set on his life’s course. He became convinced of the rightness of Pentecostalism and he would not be shifted from it.

**Theological Developments**

Parr was also a thinker. He was not afraid to grapple with theological issues as can be see in his writings, preaching notes and studies and his recordings. He was thoroughly orthodox in his basic beliefs, holding tenaciously to beliefs in the trinity and the usual evangelical position on personal salvation as well as holiness principles; in practice if not in preaching.

Parr’s theology can be summed up on two fronts – Arminianism and Pentecostalism. He was convinced the believer’s security was conditional. He expressed this in his book: Conditional Security. This was undoubtedly his most controversial publication and it drew criticism from some in the British Assemblies of God, notably W. F. P Burton. Parr was influenced here by Star Hall. Frank Crossley had moved away from his Calvinistic upbringing to a more ambiguous position on the issue. Parr, however, knew nothing of such ambiguity and espoused the conditional element of eternal

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33 Parr Incredible p20
34 *Witness* magazine (Enlarged Series Vol 1) p168 I am indebted to Desmond Cartwright for the information here on Stanley Hall. Email from him 24th June 2005.
37 These are all held in The Donald Gee Centre, Mattersey Hall.
security. His book is not a theological treatise but merely a panorama of the biblical texts in support of his position.

The one aspect of his theology which was supremely important to him was his Pentecostal beliefs. His emphasis on Spirit baptism and evidentiary tongues was a crucial element in Parr’s theology. Yet here he departed from the usual orthodox concept of the indwelling presence of the Spirit in the life of the believer. Parr believed that a person was not indwelt by the Spirit until baptised with the Spirit which was evidenced by speaking in tongues. This comes out in many of Parr’s writings and sermon notes but more fully in unpublished notes on holiness in his archives. William Kay concurs with this saying: “Parr hammered out his conviction that only the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to be equated with the believer’s first reception of the Holy Spirit.”

However, Parr was also convinced of the rightness of the miraculous and the necessity for the Gifts of the Spirit in the life of the believer. Only in such a supernatural context could the gospel make progress. It is this conviction that gave Parr a passion for divine healing. He preached it and prayed for the sick regularly. He even wrote a book on the subject which was published by the American Assemblies of God.

Parr’s commitment to orthodox and Pentecostal theology is summed up in the first statement of faith drawn up by him at the formation of the British Assemblies of God. Admittedly, it may be based largely on the American model but it certainly has Parr’s imprimatur on it showing his stance on evangelical and Pentecostal truth.

Having surveyed some general aspects of Parr’s life and character we need now to see how he served the Pentecostal movement in his own generation.

**Serving His Generation**

Everyone who knew Parr or worked with him says he was a man ahead of his time. He was an innovator ‘par excellence’ in that he did things in his day that people either never thought of or attempted. However, it must be stressed that everything Parr did had evangelism at the heart of it. His driving passion was to bring people to faith, so all of the following achievements must be seen within that context.

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John Nelson Parr

Local Achievement

When Parr left Manchester in 1914 to work at the Aircraft Manufacturing Company in Hendon he left behind a thriving work under the leadership of his old friends, Dan Parsley and company. A few months before the war Parr married his sweetheart, Laura, in a civil ceremony with a blessing in the mission that evening, presumably Stanley Hall.\footnote{Questionnaire from Marjorie Parr 7th July 2003.} So his move to the south was as a young married man of 27 years of age. Parr worked alongside Geoffrey DeHaviland in developing the D.H. 4 fighter plane which was to devastate the German Fokkers. It entered service in 1916 whilst Parr was there as purchase manager. This seems a strange occupation for someone like Parr who was to take an antiwar stance sometime later. Perhaps it was his engagement with this industry which precipitated his crisis of conscience.

Whatever his motivation Parr claims he returned to Manchester as a result of an offer from Sir Kenneth Crossley, eldest son of William Crossley, to “a wonderful new post at a new factory in Manchester.”\footnote{Parr, \textit{Incredible}, p27.} This was in all likelihood Crossley’s Errwood site in Stockport.\footnote{Michael Eyre, Chris Heaps and Alan Townsin (2002) \textit{Crossley} (Oxford Publishing Co. an imprint of Ian Allan Publishing Ltd. Hersham, Surry. p26, 27.} His return filled him with excitement at being involved in his former church. Unfortunately, the church was in a sorry state. Parr claims a man was in charge that held to extreme Brethren views such as women keeping silent and no music, as well as questionable doctrines as far as Parr saw it. He became convinced that the man had to be removed for the church to make progress and he took steps to initiate this. The leadership vacuum this created was filled by Parr. He was now the pastor of a small struggling church.

Whatever may be the rights and wrongs of the situation concerning the removal of an apparently legitimate leader, Parr began to hammer the work into shape. He began with 15 people in attendance. The church at that time was meeting over a greengrocer’s shop on Stockport Road and Marjorie vividly remembers: “The all pervading smell of apples on Sunday morning.”\footnote{Questionnaire 26th October 2003.} This situation prevailed for ten years with some measure of success. By that time Parr says the numbers had grown to around forty.\footnote{‘Pentecost in Manchester’ Sermon Notes, Lectures A-E Parr’s Archives.}

It was in 1927 that Parr saw the breakthrough he was hoping and praying for. It came about through a campaign with Stephen Jeffreys in Levenshulme Town Hall. Parr was a busy man. Holding down a very responsible job at Crossleys as well as being a family man with a young daughter and a
part-time pastor did not leave him much time for leisure. On top of that he was now the Chairman and Secretary of the newly formed Assemblies of God and the editor of its magazine, Redemption Tidings, but more of that later. Now he felt pressed in his spirit that the time was right for an all out offensive with the gospel in Longsight and Levenshulme. It took all the church’s resources, provoking some criticism from members of the church, but Parr was not the kind of man to be diverted from his chosen path. The campaign began on Boxing Day 1927 and lasted into the first few weeks of 1928. In his sermon notes Parr says they had just enough money in the fund to hire the hall for three weeks.\footnote{‘Pentecost in Manchester’ Sermon Notes, Lectures A-E.}

The campaign began with not much success. The ‘arctic weather’ at the time may have accounted for this.\footnote{Parr, \textit{Incredible}, p34.} So might the opposition Parr says was taking place. He claims that ministers in the area had warned their people to have nothing to do with the campaign. In fact, Parr says: “The first ten days were hopeless”\footnote{Parr, \textit{Incredible}, p34.} with only about fifty people attending in a hall built for 600. Yet, in Parr’s words: “God broke through after two weeks”\footnote{Parr, \textit{Incredible}, p34.} with one or two significant miracles. The problem after that was fitting everyone into the venue.

It was out of this revival scene that Bethshan Tabernacle was born. At the first Members meeting there were 131 members in attendance.\footnote{Members Minutes dated 3rd June 1929. Parr’s Archives.} This steadily rose until in 1933 there were 260 members in attendance. Indeed, Parr says from 1928-1938 it was a time of “fantastic revival”.\footnote{Parr, \textit{Incredible}, p40.} The increase in numbers necessitated the building of a purpose-built church for the growing congregation. This was accomplished and the congregation moved into its own building on 7th November 1928. This was later extended in 1931. The present Bethshan was built in 1958 with the extension being regarded as the old building. The meetings were always lively with a vibrant musical programme. Parr introduced a thirty piece orchestra as well as other ventures such as choirs and singing groups. As a result the place was constantly packed with young and old. From here Parr reached out to the catchment area of Longsight and its surrounding districts drawing many people to the church. Many ventures were initiated in the furtherance of the gospel also. Not only did he hold further campaigns but engaged in massive literature distribution campaigns, marches of witness and even a
motorcade to promote the gospel. He also conducted campaigns himself in various venues and churches.

One of his greatest innovations occurred in 1941 with the formation of ‘YES’ (Youth Evangelistic Society) centres. Parr always had an interest in reaching children and young people perhaps recalling his own conversion. YES came about as the result of “a great burden”.52 The thrust of the vision was to find a way to reach out to the scores of young people who were not attending church or Sunday School as a result of the war and who lacked parental influence. What Parr did here was innovative and indeed ahead of its time. Not that doing things with the young was innovative but what he did. He hired the Manchester Hippodrome, a secular venue, to host the first youth festival of YES. This was greatly frowned upon by many sections of the Pentecostal movement and Parr came in for much criticism from friend and foe alike. However, he was made of sterner stuff and refused to be deterred from his chosen course. The programme was packed with musical and singing items and Parr would close with a brief gospel message.

In this way Bethshan began to make its mark on the community and the city of Manchester and became known in British Pentecostalism as a far-sighted church.

National Initiative

Parr was rightly proud of the part he played in forming Assemblies of God in Great Britain and Ireland. He styles himself as the ‘founder’ of Assemblies of God in his autobiography but this is debatable. He did not ‘found’ Assemblies of God in the way Wesley founded Methodism or Booth the Salvation Army. The fellowship Parr brought into being was already in existence in many disparate groups. Parr’s achievement was in bringing these many groups together in spite of their suspicion of organisation and denominationalism. Parr’s success is seen in the wise and skilful manner in which he got them together and in the way he was able to articulate their common ground as well as their misgivings. These skills were no doubt honed in the boardrooms of Crossleys and the Air Manufacturing Company.

Parr began by assessing the desire for such a fellowship and enlisted the services of a South African minister visiting the country at the time, Archibald Cooper. On receiving a positive response from Cooper, Parr proceeded very cautiously in getting a number of leaders on board first. He did so by drafting some proposals and a statement of faith then circulating

52 Parr Incredible, p51.
53 Parr Incredible, Preface.
these leaders, asking for their response. As their response seemed positive Parr proceeded to organise an initial exploratory meeting on 1st February 1924 in Birmingham. At this meeting Parr’s proposal was adopted and the formation of the British Assemblies of God had been established. Letters were sent out informing a number of independent churches of the first ‘General United Conference’, inviting them to apply for membership of the new fellowship. Parr’s influence here was crucial. Richard Massey calls him “the prime mover”\(^5\) in the whole affair.

However, Parr resigned all his offices in 1933 as the result of unfounded criticisms made against him. It transpired that the main instigator of this was Howard Carter who accused him of being “a lover of filthy lucre”. The whole affair was not finally resolved with the Executive Council until 1936\(^5\) but the argument with Carter rumbled on for another three years. In the end Parr was unconvinced of Carter’s sincerity and wanted nothing more to do with him. He was eventually forced to leave Assemblies of God in 1939 due to his relationship with Fred Squire’s Full Gospel Testimony. Assemblies of God passed a resolution that its ministers could not retain dual status. Parr was then in the anomalous position of being the pastor of an Assemblies of God church without being a minister of the denomination. He was eventually brought back in again in 1948.

**Global Success**

Alongside all these things Parr’s ministry took on a global aspect. Not only did he travel abroad on a number of occasions but he also influenced others to leave their homes and venture out onto the mission field. The first missionaries to go out from Bethshan were Mr and Mrs Ray Colley to Tibet in 1934. Interestingly, this was the place Parr had felt a calling to in his early Christian experience. Others followed to various parts of the world, many of them supported by Bethshan. Some of these folks testified to being prepared for their lifetimes work at Bethshan and stirred to do so by Parr’s burden for evangelism.

Parr’s most effective global achievement came in 1955 when he was asked to become the first radio evangelist for the Assemblies of God radio programme, Revivaltime, on Radio Luxembourg.\(^5\) Parr held this position for nearly five years. When he finished his ministry with Revivaltime he continued to broadcast from other stations both in Britain and other parts of

\(^{54}\) Massey p43.
\(^{55}\) Letson, Keeper of the flame p186.
\(^{56}\) Minutes of the Assemblies of God General Conference 31st May- 3rd June 1955.
the world. Parr and Bethshan had far-reaching effects not only in Manchester but the world at large as the many letters in his archives testify to.

Parr’s Legacy

What was Parr’s legacy to the Pentecostal church, particularly in Britain? Was it his strong self-assured personality or his boundless energy and gifted leadership? Perhaps it was his achievements in founding Bethshan or his part in the establishment of Assemblies of God? We may also point to his global achievement in sending forth missionaries or his radio work. Yet it has to be said that his legacy does not lie within any on these achievements specifically or in their totality. His legacy has to be the thing which drove him all his Christian life; his passion for evangelism and bringing people to Christ. The last booklet Parr wrote may well be described as his last will and testament: Soul Winning Success. It is, in fact, a reworking of a smaller booklet entitled: Soul Winning Simplified. For Parr the greatest occupation a Christian can be engaged in is evangelism and everything he did was to that end. His preaching, teaching and writing was intended to promote the cause of Christ in the nations. This is the legacy Parr has left the Pentecostal movement. Parr’s favourite expressions centred on fire: “keep burning”, “keep white hot” in commitment to Christ and evangelism. Parr’s last word to us in the Pentecostal movement must be to get back to our primary task of reaching out to the lost and win the nations for Christ. Let me leave the last word on this to Parr himself from his autobiography, Incredible.

Our God is the God of variety and we must be prepared to change our methods if we are not meeting with success in winning souls for Christ... He is able to show us new ways and methods of winning the lost and bringing them to Jesus Christ. Jehovah has a thousand ways of accomplishing the impossible.

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‘The Unity of the Spirit’: are Pentecostals inherently ecumenists and inclusivists?*

Tony Richie¹

Abstract

Inherent within Pentecostalism by virtue of the innate unifying agency of the Holy Spirit is an impulse toward ecumenism and inclusivism in relation to religious others which has often been neglected through over identification with anti-Pentecostal ideologies. Arguments and examples from the New Testament, historical precedents in early classical Pentecostalism, and contemporary practice of missions by the global Pentecostal movement support this thesis. Contemporary Pentecostals are therefore called upon to help bring healing to the brokenness of the Body of Christ and to exorcise demonic assumptions and tensions regarding non-Christian religions through the power of Pentecost. Relationship with religious others is nonetheless placed within the context of an uncompromising loyalty to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Doctrinal or organizational assimilation are not sought. Therefore, Pentecostals should enthusiastically embrace ecumenism and inclusivism in meeting today’s challenges of religious diversity and plurality with an uncompromising, all-encompassing stance faithful to Christ and his Spirit through the apostolic injunction of ‘the unity of the Spirit’.

1. Introduction

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, with other Pentecostal scholars such as Walter

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Hollenweger and Cecil Robeck, argues that Pentecostalism began as a movement open to religious others, later became sidetracked into exclusivism, but is today beginning to be restored to its original more visionary faith.\textsuperscript{2} Though the fact has often been forgotten, Pentecostalism has an inherent ecumenism and inclusivism that is particularly applicable for today’s religious environment. Though my own approach is more straightforward and less speculative, I agree with Amos Yong that the quest for Pentecostal identity and theological truth inevitably calls for involvement both with other Christians and other religions and also that ‘the interfaith challenge is related to the intra-Christian ecumenical challenge’ because of ‘the presence and activity of the same Spirit of God’ in both.\textsuperscript{3} Furthermore, I argue ecumenical and inclusive awareness is not a faddish development of the times, which have only drawn attention forcefully to preexisting dilemmas of religious unity, diversity, and plurality, but is intrinsic to Pentecostalism to the extent the movement is faithful to its own innermost identity and impulse.

In this essay ‘ecumenism’ refers to appreciation and cooperation with other Christians respecting real differences amidst seeking unity; ‘inclusivism’ refers to appreciation and cooperation with non-Christian religions recognizing radical differences without totally denying absolutely any divine influence.\textsuperscript{4} Therefore, ‘unity’ does not depict denominational affiliation among Christians or doctrinal assimilation with other religions. I propose that the Holy Spirit is the omnipresent Spirit of Life who enlivens and renews all the living (Pss. 139.7; 104.30; Rom 8.2) and, therefore,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{4} ‘Ecumenism’ is commonly used thus though sometimes also in reference to other religions. ‘Inclusivism’ describes a christocentric and pneumatic openness regarding the present state and eternal fate of the unevangelized or adherents of other religions. A more closed attitude, ‘exclusivism’ or ‘restrictivism’, posits that a conscious personal response to the preached gospel is not only normative but absolutely necessary, and ‘pluralism,’ on the other end of the spectrum, essentially equates all religions while denying superiority to any. A great deal of ambiguity and overlap often exist among these broad categories.
\end{itemize}
The Unity of the Spirit

establishes a point of contact with other Christians (especially) and also with the world and other religions (generally). Thus spiritual unity is inherent in the original ethos of classical Pentecostalism. ‘Unity’ is not a cut and paste word inserted into the Pentecostal document; rather, it was deleted from the original draft and needs to be restored. Pentecostals can and should play a prominent role in the major ecumenical and inclusivist movements seeking to facilitate dialogue and understanding among all people of faith. Accordingly, a great responsibility in the wider religious world now rests upon Spirit-filled shoulders.

2. Pentecostal Identity

Pentecostal identity has often been obscured or altered by its unfortunate, unequal association with ideologically anti-Pentecostal groups. Restoration of authentic Pentecostal identity tends to ecumenism and inclusivism. Pentecostalism is a multifarious movement and variety helps shape its identity. The current global condition of contemporary Pentecostalism adds even greater ‘variety and heterogeneity’ to the movement.

2.1 Biblical Upper Room Revival

The roots of authentic Pentecostal identity are evidenced in the unifying heritage of the biblical Pentecost. The New Testament reveals rich ecumenical content inherent in the primary Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism and the exercise of charismata. Even non-Pentecostals such as Lutheran theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg and New Testament scholar William Barclay notice the ecumenical and inclusivist energy in the Holy Spirit. Pannenberg especially stresses the significance of Pentecost as eschatological unification of all peoples. Barclay notes the scriptural stress on the unifying role of the Holy Spirit as the universal presence of God of which the Church is the divinely chosen channel to all humanity. The presence and activity

of the Spirit enables us to overcome our natural intolerance, particularism, and exclusivism, breaking down all barriers.\textsuperscript{10}

A contemporary Pentecostalism endeavouring to be faithful to the original Pentecost encapsulates essential elements of ecumenism and inclusivism. Pentecostalists should note that the very variety of experiences in the Holy Spirit testify to a broad reality of authentic spirituality. Dynamic diversity indwells pneumatic unity. Rich variety is inherent in Pentecostal-Charismatic experience of the Holy Spirit. Affirming rich relations within the family of faith does not at all undercut an essential commitment Pentecostals have to our own classic tradition; rather, it merely opens up avenues for loving and wise interaction with others.

Noting an inherent aspect of the Spirit’s work in bringing people together is essential to Pentecostal self-understanding and identity. Biblically, if we are people of the Spirit then we are, or should be, people of unity too. As Pentecostal biblical scholar Matthias Wenk ably argues, a primary thrust of the Spirit’s purpose in Luke-Acts is actually restoring and renewing community. Significantly, the community formed by the Spirit exists in the present dimension in manifestation of eschatological expectation through socio-ethical liberation and transformation.\textsuperscript{11} Among other things, this means holy unity is essential to the authentic identity of the Spirit-filled community!

Sadly, tragically, Pentecostals have been untrue to an innate biblical impulse to unity. Early on, however, Pentecostals leaders and thinkers such as Richard Spurling, Jr. and D. Wesley Myland stressed love and unity in the Spirit much more than later Pentecostals.\textsuperscript{12} An ‘ecumenical root’ may be seen in early Pentecostal leaders throughout the world, including Jonathan Paul in Germany, Alexander Boddy in England, and Louis Dallière in France.\textsuperscript{13} Contemporary Pentecostals can be comfortable that ecumenical

\textsuperscript{10} Barclay, pp. 43, 51, 55-56. Though it is beyond the scope of this paper, consideration of the biblical symbol of \textit{koinonia} reveals rich pneumatological-ecumenical implications. See Jeffrey Gros, FSC, Eamon McManus, and Ann Riggs, (1998), \textit{Introduction to Ecumenism} (New York: Paulist,): ‘The Theology of Ecumenism’ pp. 56-73 (pp. 60-62, 73).


and inclusivist implications of pneumatology being drawn out today are indeed amicable to our original spiritual and theological heritage. Thankfully, scholars today do tend to accent the ecumenical significance of Pentecostalism more so than before.\textsuperscript{14}

The point of the preceding is that Pentecostal Christianity is intrinsically ecumenical and inclusive by virtue of the variety of the Holy Spirit’s own activity. In the New Testament, whenever the gospel crossed racial and religious boundaries Spirit baptism and glossolalia often played a prominent role (e.g. Acts 10.1-48). The ‘unity of the Spirit’ (Eph. 4.3) is not peripheral wishful thinking but central to the Spirit’s nature and work.\textsuperscript{15} This scriptural feature of Pentecostalism has not always been adequately appreciated. Some classical Pentecostals, however, have observed biblical connections between Pentecost and the unifying work of the Spirit. Charles Conn suggests contrasting the biblical accounts of Babel (Gen. 11.1-9) and Pentecost (Acts 2) indicates the gift of tongues signals the unification of humanity in restoration to God in Christ through the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{16} Hollis Gause argues on the basis of 1 Corinthians 12-14 that the unity of the body of Christ and life in the Spirit are inseparably interrelated.\textsuperscript{17} Such insights paved the way for later Pentecostals to understand ecumenism and inclusivism as essential activities of the Spirit. Accordingly, Frank Macchia argues ‘tongues have ecumenical significance’, concluding ‘the story of Acts reveals that the people of God must struggle toward ecumenicity and catholicity.’\textsuperscript{18}

\section*{2.2 Initial Azusa Street Revival}

Authentic Pentecostal identity is evidenced in the initial nature of the Azusa Street Revival as a cross-cultural, inter-racial, and trans-denominational movement of the Spirit. Dale Irvin demonstrates the definitive ecumenical nature of the Azusa Street Revival, especially as it was conducted under the leadership of its African American pastor, William J. Seymour. Seymour’s vision for unity extended beyond abolishing racial barriers to cross gender,

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{conn} Charles W. Conn, (1979), \textit{Pillars of Pentecost} (Cleveland, TN: Pathway), pp. 41-45.
\end{thebibliography}
economic, social, and denominational lines. Seymour understood Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues are essentially ecumenical, primarily evidenced in the love and unity of its recipients. The Holy Spirit becomes a major force for uniting those full of his presence and power. Speaking in tongues came to signify the unification of all peoples surpassing manmade creeds and confessions.19 Sadly, even tragically, contemporary Pentecostalism has thus far failed to ‘realize the ecumenical implications of Seymour’s theology.’20 Perhaps the time has come for Pentecostals to reaffirm the central ecumenical emphasis of the Azusa Street Revival as indicative of our innermost identity.

Although sparks of revival fire were certainly in evidence prior to the Azusa Street Revival, for example, in Wales, few contest that Seymour’s mission congregation fanned the flames into a worldwide movement of the Spirit.21 The almost inestimable importance of the initial impetus the Pentecostal Movement drew from the Azusa Street Revival indicates that ecumenical theology and inclusivist spirituality (see below) tap into an important root of Pentecostal reality. Subsequent deviations from an ecumenical and inclusivist spirit are aberrations of the original Pentecostal impulse. Pentecostals today who move with the same Spirit who moved Pastor Seymour and his Azusa Street Mission move under a unifying impulse.

Efforts to force Pentecostalism into an ideological mould void of ecumenical interaction are contrary to the intrinsic nature of Pentecostalism. Kärkkäinen notes that, ‘from the beginning Pentecostalism has been characterized by variety,’ even suggesting we may need to speak in the plural, of ‘Pentecostalisms,’ rather than of Pentecostalism as a single phenomenon.22 Authentic Pentecostalism embraces and expresses a variety and diversity that can only be rightly described as ecumenical and inclusive. This is not surprising given Pentecostalism’s varied roots including formative influences from the Wesleyan-Holiness movements, Catholic spirituality and mysticism, and an African American enthusiastic, corporeal worship style.23 And early Pentecostalism grew some inclusive trunks and branches

out of these roots. Douglas Jacobsen points out that Bishop J. H. King, an important pioneer among classical Pentecostals, articulated an optimistic, inclusivist theology of religions. Other early Pentecostals such as Charles Parham and G. T. Haywood also advocated rather open attitudes toward adherents of other religions. My personal upbringing and background in Pentecostalism involved what I have called ‘an optimistic ambiguity’ regarding the unevangelized and other religions. Kärkkäinen laments that Pentecostals have succumbed to alien ideologies on theology of religions and ignored our own heritage, and calls for contemporaries to correct the deficit. Pentecostal origins clearly include ecumenical and inclusivist thrusts. Reaffirming our roots includes a return to that spirit of ecumenism and inclusivism.

2.3 Contemporary Global Revival

Authentic Pentecostal identity is evident in the inter-religious fluidity that is a prominent feature of the Spirit’s work throughout global Pentecostalism. Harvey Cox suggests Pentecostalism has an amazing capacity to incorporate and adapt. An ‘extraordinary synthesis’ or ‘folk syncretism’ of African spirituality and Christianity was a major impetus in the Azusa Street Revival and it resulted in a powerful resurgence of ‘primal spirituality.’ Pentecostalism exhibits the same tendency toward synthesis in its phenomenal global expansion encounters with the native cultures and religions in Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Cox concludes, ‘Pentecostalism’s phenomenal power to embrace and transform almost anything it meets in the cultures to which it travels is one of the qualities that gives it such remarkable energy and creativity.’ He insists, ‘This capacity

for absorption, as we have seen, is not unusual for Pentecostalism. In fact, it is one of the primary reasons for its spread.\textsuperscript{31}

Admittedly, syncretism can be a problem, as Julie Ma’s study of Santuala, a syncretistic group in the mountains of the Philippines that combines tribal animism and Pentecostalism, shows.\textsuperscript{32} Lynne Price points out, however, that Walter Hollenweger argues the Old Testament understanding of the Spirit and the experience of the Spirit in non-Western churches indicate the Spirit is at work in the world in some sense as well as within the Church. For Hollenweger the Spirit-led syncretism of the Old Testament and indigenous non-white churches of the Third World today suggest the Spirit’s presence to a degree in all cultures and religions.\textsuperscript{33} Careful synthesis without harmful syncretism seems possible and desirable as Pentecostals expand their witness in the world. Of course, missions is not a mix and match enterprise. Rather, the Spirit identifies and applies whatever is ‘in line with the truth of the gospel’ (Gal. 2:14 NIV).

Pentecostalism has achieved an exceptionally high degree of indigenous success in Africa. Kärkkäinen affirms Pentecostalism’s unique ability and fluidity in working with indigenous peoples in the Third World.\textsuperscript{34} Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality is particularly well adapted to the African context.\textsuperscript{35} The holistic integration of spiritual reality with the needs and challenges of daily life, including physical healing, power over demons, and miraculous interventions and answers to prayer, make for a potent combination vis-à-vis ultra-intellectual, anaemic versions of western Christianity. Jesus Christ is uncompromisingly presented as the Lord who is Saviour, Healer, and Deliverer.\textsuperscript{36} Though excesses or abuses undoubtedly occur, a successful synthesis of Christianity with existing cultural and religious contexts is evident in the effectiveness of Pentecostal missions in Africa. Similar results have been recorded in Latin America and Asia as well.\textsuperscript{37} Small wonder, then, that Byron Klaus describes Pentecostalism as ‘the quintessential indigenous religion, adapting to a variety of cultures’.\textsuperscript{38} But as Harvey Cox

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{31} Ibid: p. 222. Cox points out that Pentecostals are cautious lest synthesis be overdone, robbing Pentecostalism of its primary Christian character.
  \item \textsuperscript{33} Lynne Price, \textit{Theology Out of Place: A Theological Biography of Walter J. Hollenweger, JPTS\textsuperscript{sup}} (Sheffield, Eng: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), pp. 128-31.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} See Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, \textit{Ecclesiology}, pp. 77-78.
  \item \textsuperscript{35} Cf. Kärkkäinen, \textit{Ecclesiology}, p. 199.
  \item \textsuperscript{36} Ibid: pp. 199-201.
  \item \textsuperscript{37} Kärkkäinen, \textit{Pneumatology}, pp. 172-74.
  \item \textsuperscript{38} Byron Klaus, ‘Pentecostalism as a Global Culture: An Introductory Overview’, \textit{The Globalization of Pentecostalism}, pp. 127-30 (p. 127).
\end{itemize}
points out, religions and cultures are inseparably interrelated. Pentecostals are therefore challenged to ‘develop a critical theology of culture’.\(^{39}\) I agree and aver in addition that ecumenical and inclusive pneumatology is an absolutely essential aspect of just such a theology. The amazing indigenous success of Pentecostalists is in part related to (hitherto unexpressed) reliance on the Holy Spirit’s ability to integrate in Christ unifying elements of non-Christian religions.

Pentecostalism’s potent ability to synthesize the primal spirituality that lies at the roots of all real religious consciousness is to be considered its strength not a liability. After all, such primal spirituality is also at the roots of the biblical Judeo-Christian religions.\(^{40}\) Pentecostals may benefit from embracing both the inclusivism that Cox hints is part of our authentic identity and Hollenweger’s responsible syncretism. Elements of all religions should be set against the standards of Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Watchman Nee’s attitude is admirable: great varieties in religious experience can be complementary ‘provided Christ is their centre’.\(^{41}\) The centrality and primacy of Jesus Christ is always to be affirmed everywhere. Within such a context room remains to identify and exploit valid spirituality wherever it is found.

3. Pentecostal Possibilities

An ecumenical and inclusivist Pentecostalism can help bring vitality to the Church and harmony to people of faith throughout the world. Neither denominational affiliation with other Christians nor doctrinal assimilation with other religions is necessary in this quest, but reciprocal understanding and the ability to appreciate religious others and cooperate in tasks directed toward common goals.

3.1 Healing Schisms

Pentecostals place a high priority on the doctrine of and experience of divine healing for the human body. Is not division in the body of Christ a dreadful disease? But healing testimonies do exist. For example, George Carey notes


that the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement ‘is the only revival in history’ that has been able to unite traditions as diverse as Evangelicalism and Roman Catholicism. \(^4\) Pentecostalism does have a unique ability to bring about unity in the midst of diversity.

Tragically, many Pentecostals have traditionally operated out of fear in ecumenical relations. Fortunately, the fear has been at least partly overcome. Pentecostals now have national and international fellowships as well as being part of some other groups that are ‘ecumenical in spirit.’ \(^4\) Do not Pentecostals need to release our fear and embrace other Christians? Surely we can do so without compromising our convictions. Pentecostal ecumenicist Robeck tells us that among many Pentecostals and Charismatics exists a deeply ingrained inclination to view ‘virtually any move toward greater ecumenical understanding or cooperation’ ‘with extreme suspicion.’ \(^4\) But he argues the invitation to Pentecostals to be involved in ecumenicity ‘is a legitimate one that is consistent with the Gospel,’ calling for support from Pentecostals and Charismatics. \(^4\) Hollenweger has said that, ‘in the past our leaders led us astray by declaring one strand of biblical doctrine to be the only one.’ \(^4\) Yet he optimistically assures us that ‘the growing ecumenical commitment of many Pentecostals’ is a healthy indicator. \(^4\)

Pentecostalism is at a turning point. In Europe, America, and around the world many are beginning to see the ecumenical potential of the movement. \(^4\) Will we move forward in good faith in our relations with other members of the Christian family? Or will our fears overtake us before real progress is possible? Viewing ourselves as agents of healing in the body of Christ displaces fear with faith.

### 3.2 Exorcising Religions

Pentecostals often resignedly accept that other religions are totally the product

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43 D. J. Wilson, ‘Ecclesiastical Polity,’ *NDPCM*, p. 597.
of demonic activity. Unfortunately, as Yong observes, ‘fundamentalist-liberal hostilities’ contributed greatly to modern Pentecostals’ historical reticence on the religions. The inner inclusivist impulse of Pentecostalism occasionally shone forth nonetheless. For example, in the 1940s-50s the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) published efforts to understand and appreciate aspects of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, as well as expressing points of agreement with the lives and teachings of Gandhi and Buddha.49

Demonic inspiration in idolatrous worship and demonic distortion of even Christian worship are undeniable biblical facts (Deut 32.17; 1 Co 10.20; 1 Tim 4.1).50 Biblically, however, the true and living God is ‘the God of the spirits of all flesh’ (Num 16.22; 27.16) that is near to and at work in all peoples (Acts 17.27).51 Automatically relegating all religious experience beyond the borders of the institutional Church to the demonic realm, therefore, is unwise, possibly even blasphemous. Recognizing God is uniquely and ultimately revealed in Christ and by the Spirit is biblical (Jn. 1.14, 18; 14.9; 16.13-15), but so is regarding the other sheep of Christ as potentially one flock (Jn. 10.16).52 The Church as God’s instrument for bringing all under the headship of Jesus Christ (Eph.1.10) need not be a narrow idea.53

Exercise of the charismatic gift of discerning between spirits is called for when relating to religions (1 Co 12.10). Acceptance of an inclusivist paradigm does not entail uncritical acceptance of non-Christian religious mores. Yong advocates an approach in which the charismatic gift of discernment enables us to determine where and when, or whether, the Holy Spirit (or other spirits) is present or active in other traditions. Accordingly, Yong suggests what he calls a ‘pneumatological imagination’ or a Pentecostal-Charismatic experience of and orientation toward the Holy Spirit is needed. Openness to the fullness and variety of the Holy Spirit who pervades all creation and inspires Scripture, transcends the traditional theology of religions impasse concerning particularity and universality as the Spirit affirms and integrates

49 Yong, Discerning the Spirit(s), pp. 185-88. In ‘From Azusa Street to the Toronto Phenomenon’ Hollenweger opines that Pentecostals who understand themselves as fundamentalists misunderstand themselves (p. 6!)
both sets of verities or realities. Pneumatological imagination perceives
the plausibility of affirming that God’s Spirit is present and active in the
world, even in some way in non-Christian faiths, while carefully discerning
the presence or absence of God-or even of the demonic.\textsuperscript{54} Of paramount
importance for Pentecostals, as Clark Pinnock points out, is recognizing
inclusivism as simply an application of a strong pneumatological
hermeneutic in which the Holy Spirit is universally present and active.\textsuperscript{55}
Pentecostals, of all people, should not limit either the person or the power
of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostals then can be gracious and generous toward adherents of
other religions without compromising Christian values. For example, we
might honestly agree, at least in a limited sense, with the Dalai Lama that,
‘Since we should respect all human beings, we must also respect those
who are following different religious paths.’ We might even agree with
the famous Buddhist teacher that, ‘We must appreciate the potential in each
religion, and respect all those who follow them.’\textsuperscript{56} Yet we can still say with
C. S. Lewis that though we rightly recognize some divine reality in other
religions, ‘being a Christian does mean thinking that where Christianity
differs from other religions, Christianity is right and they are wrong.’\textsuperscript{57} We
may believe as John Wesley did of Jews, Muslims, and Heathen that, ‘No
more therefore will be expected of them, than the living up to the light they
had,’\textsuperscript{58} while also insisting with him that no one is saved apart from Jesus
Christ.\textsuperscript{59} We may not want to go quite so far as Karl Rahner in labelling
adherents of other religions as ‘anonymous Christians,’\textsuperscript{60} but may we not

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\textsuperscript{54} See Tony Richie, (2000), ‘Review of Amos Yong, \textit{Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-
Charismatic Theology of Religions’} (JPTSup) Sheffield: Sheffield, England) in \textit{The Pneuma
Review} 8:4 (Fall 2005), pp. 68-71.

\textsuperscript{55} Clark H. Pinnock, (1996), \textit{Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit}, (Downer’s Grove,
IL: InterVarsity Press), pp. 185-214. As Steve Land told me once, a pneumatologi-
cal approach should still affirm Jesus Christ as ‘the universal and absolute Saviour’
(quoted with permission).


\textsuperscript{57} C. S. Lewis, (1960), ed \textit{Mere Christianity} (NY: Collier), p. 29.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{The Complete Works of John Wesley}, (The Wesleyan Heritage Collection; Ages Software,

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{The Complete Works of John Wesley}, 5:120-21. On Wesley and other religions see Tony
(\textit{Asbury Theological Journal}, Fall 2003), pp. 79-99. Ecumenism and inclusivism in John
Wesley, the ‘grandfather’ of modern Pentecostalism, is further evidence of the inher-
ent existence of these qualities in Pentecostalism.

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. Karl Rahner, (1982), \textit{Theological Investigations: Volume VI}, (New York: Crossroad,
accept Hans Küng’s argument that ‘no salvation outside of Christ’ and ‘no salvation outside the Church’ are surely not synonymous propositions?61

The Pentecostal impulse toward ecumenism and inclusivism moves forward in continuity with a central stream of Christian spirituality and theology toward a certain mutual appreciation and cooperation by the Spirit of God and of Christ.

3.3 The Power of Pentecost

Pentecostals certainly affirm the power of Pentecost. That is who we are! We do not, however, always apply the power of the Holy Spirit evenly or extensively enough. An Evangelical challenges us to apply Pentecostal power to the category of religions. Sir Norman Anderson used the Peter-Cornelius in Acts 10 as a paradigm for inter-religious dialogue. He noted that both men benefited by the dialogue, that good dialogue may prepare the way for evangelism, or be a part of it, and that dialogue involves an element of risk but it is worth it when carried out with confidence in the lordship of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.62 If Jesus is Lord and if the power of the Spirit is trustworthy, then we can confidently confront other traditions and converse with their devotees at the dialogue table. We need not fear either compromise or condescension. Could it be fear of failure in the face of competing truth claims or their conscientious practitioners that complicates the issue of inter-religious relations for many Pentecostals? If so, let us remind ourselves that inter-religious relations is ‘“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the LORD Almighty’ (Zech 4:6 NIV).

What about vast doctrinal differences between Christians and those of other faiths? The power of Pentecost applies here too. In that context Yong says, ‘[M]y confidence is not in myself but in the Spirit of God, who is able to bring this work to completion.’63 Perhaps we might agree with Jonathan Edwards, giant of the Great Awakening, that there are revealed types in non-Christian religions which Christian revelation improves and perfects.64

With Pannenberg we can be tolerant of other faiths without being indifferent

63 Yong, Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh, p. 256.
Tony Richie

concerning ‘conflicting truth claims’. Inclusivism by no means necessitates even a nascent compromise of Christian integrity or of Pentecostal theology and spirituality; rather, it enables Pentecostals to witness with respect to everyone of the limitless love of God in his Son by the power of the Spirit.

4. Conclusion

I am privileged to be presently involved formally in two dialogue partnerships: a bilateral, intramural Pentecostal-Mennonite dialogue and a multilateral, inter-religious dialogue of Christians and non-Christians through the IRC. I have encountered various responses to my participation in interfaith activities from other Pentecostals. On the academic level I have encountered interest driven by understanding that this is an important and inevitable endeavour. At issue here seems more the way to do it well rather than whether it ought to be done at all. On the grassroots congregational level, I have generally encountered enthusiasm driven by experiences of actual inter-religious relations among family, friends, or in the work force. Issues here seem to be relational almost as much as theoretical. On the grassroots ministerial level, I have occasionally encountered anxiety driven by inferences about an ever-increasing encroachment of ideological pluralism. Here doctrinal rather than practical issues come to the fore. At the administrative level, I have often encountered intimidation driven by insecurity regarding possible political fallout. The predominant issue here may be about power more than about progress. These responses seem broadly representative of some of the basic concerns for many Pentecostals today.

My concern is that an inherent impulse of the Holy Spirit embracing unity in diversity not be neglected to the tragic detriment of our movement and possible forfeiture of our vision. The sound wisdom of an ancient Jewish sage seems applicable for us today: do not be found fighting against God (cf. Acts 5.33-42). If the Holy Spirit’s presence is an inherently unifying influence, should Pentecostal organizations issue injunctions against unity? Could we be guilty of quenching the Spirit here (cf. 1 Th 5.19)?

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66 Other Pentecostals on the former are Cheryl Johns and Rick Waldrop, and on the latter, Amos Yong.
As Kärkkäinen so rightly says, ‘The One Spirit of God opens himself into a myriad of experiences’ within a wide range of religious expressions that ‘testify to the endless bounty and richness of the Spirit’s agenda for God’s creation.’

I am convinced Pentecostalism can confront current challenges of religious diversity and plurality best by drawing fresh water—ecumenical and inclusive water—from our own wells dug early in the movement’s existence but still bubbling just beneath the surface. Assumptions that earlier Pentecostal resources are exclusively pessimistic regarding religious others are invalidated. The ‘compromisers’, albeit unknowingly and unintentionally, are those who depart from our original, authentic ecumenical and inclusive identity as Pentecostal Christians! This represents the most radical rationale of this essay. Inherent in Pentecostalism is a hitherto too often untapped ecumenism and inclusivism discernible in Scripture, early Pentecostal testimony and history, and the subsequent shape of global missions and ministry. Therefore, Pentecostals should enthusiastically embrace ecumenism and inclusivism in meeting today’s challenges of religious diversity and plurality with an uncompromising, all-encompassing stance faithful to Christ and his Spirit.

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Some Theological Trends Reflected in the Songs used by the British Charismatic Churches of 1970s-early 2000s

Anne E Dyer

Abstract
This paper has arisen from a major research project on the new ‘apostolic’ networks of churches that have arisen in Britain in the past 40 years. During the time that William K Kay and I undertook this project (2003-5), we realised that the songs these churches used to express themselves contain evidence of the way the new church networks developed their theological ethos. Therefore I undertook a survey of 2500 songs composed between 1970 and 2005 and categorised them to find the trends. The purpose here is not to define ‘worship’ or imply that songs alone are worship; they are evidence of the theological ethos of these churches. The article focuses on the background, the methodology, and four themes that emerge as significant – the Church’s triumphant status and outreach, the life of Jesus, and the individual’s intimacy with Jesus.

1. The Background
Charismatic Churches had become commonplace in Britain by 2000. However in the 1970s the ‘House’ or ‘New’ churches were still being viewed with suspicion both by the traditional denominations and the classical Pentecostals. What encouraged their popularity can be at least partially attributed to their contribution to songs for worship.

During the past 40 years songwriters in the charismatic churches have composed many songs. These churches range in their ecclesiology since their heritage is from varied denominational groups like Anglicans,
Methodists, Baptist or Brethren. Independent church networks grew up and have been labelled ‘Apostolic Networks’. They developed a different ecclesiology from Evangelicals or Pentecostals based on Eph 4:11’s ministry gifts and strict discipleship. They wished for a ‘restoration’ of all gifts in the church, recreating an ideal according to New Testament patterns. Andrew Walker (1998) designated these groups as R1 and R2 to make a distinction between Bryn Jones’ style of a more authoritarian and ‘exclusivist or puritan’ network (R1) of churches compared to those of Pioneer which relaxed a lot of ‘evangelical laws’ and stressed relationship not structural organisation or exclusivity (R2). During the later 1970s and onwards these new networks arranged Bible Week camps which became very influential in disseminating their teachings and indeed the new songs. These songs can provide an indicator of the themes that were believed to have had ‘prophetic’ importance for that time and how those themes developed and changed over the past thirty years or so.

These churches developed a new way of expressing their worship; all could participate in it from the congregation, an expression of the priesthood of all believers. It was not just corporately developed through the singing of a hymn or song but congregations had a desire to be ‘led by the Holy Spirit’ when praying or singing with a focus on God. It is almost a sacrament, a means of encountering God in his grace through the communal singing. Individuals began to compose songs as has happened in revivals throughout history and then some formed music groups to help lead congregations. The skills of a worship leader had to be musically inclined. In the end this led to worship being steered potentially by cultural, technological and even commercial drives.

Peter Ward has demonstrated how these drives affected the propagation of these songs in his book Selling Worship (2005). Here he shows how the media and technology have shaped our thinking and acceptance of many songs, in music book, tape and CD that have been marketed readily through networks and through major publishing corporations like Kingsway. Every revival has had its new songs as an expression of the heartfelt relationship renewed with God. The popularity of all the Bible weeks has also been the means of establishing many songs and their themes in local churches. Far more easily than any promotion of theology through seminary trained ministers’ sermons, songs have a way of infecting the every day Christian in the home. They help to create and maintain an intimacy with God for

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2 There are many more networks that need more categories than R1 and R2 especially since the 1990s.
individuals and then the local church and indeed eventually across the nation. Undoubtedly there are cultural aspects of these songs that show how contextualised they are for the late 20th early 21st Century church of Britain. However I do not intend to comment on the style of worship music, nor its technology or marketing.

Many of the British ‘Restoration’ churches’ songs are evident in the earlier years but New Zealand’s Scripture in Song from the Gaithers and the Fisher Folk from Church of the Redeemer, Houston, Texas competed in popularity. In the middle years of the 1980s, while songs from the Dales and Downs Bible weeks from the R1 churches circulated, Graham Kendrick, the British composer’s Make Way Music made the headlines of popular songs in the March for Jesus events: he was based at the Ichthus network of churches around London led by Roger Forster, an example of a R2 church according to Walker. Pioneer network had Noel Richards and Groundlevel Chris Bowater and teams; they all contributed many songs. In the 1990s more American influence came from the Vineyard Churches with John Wimber and then from the offshoot of that at Toronto Airport church, with Hillsongs Australia competing for worldwide attention.

Songs, along with other oral aspects of charismatic theology and praxis the world over, are means of conveying in encapsulated form the concepts that are important to forming the ethos of the movement. The belief is that the Holy Spirit gives the songs to the composer for a particular time and even situation for edifying the body of Christ; in that sense they represent the prophetic edge of the charismatic movement made available to wide groups of people. Chris Bowater, sometimes known as ‘a father of contemporary worship’, wrote this in an email to me, “My writing was birthed in a prophetic environment. I do not see this as a necessary emphasis of all of my generation or writers since. Kingdom & Restoration theology produces a prophetic edge. How and where a ministry is birthed is crucial. My ministry was never a career choice!” (Bowater, Email 13/4/2005). Bowater commented, “Initially, compositions were almost exclusively written out of the teachings/preaching of John Shelbourne & John Phillips. Often a song was written on the afternoon, following a morning message, and presented in the evening service (in the days we still had them!) – e.g. With Joy shall I draw waters, A dreamer for the Kingdom, The Lord has led forth, The Lord has chosen Zion, The Lord inhabits etc. Increasingly, the song led the way to a message being given by one of the John’s – e.g. The altar of the Lord, Reign in me, Here I am.”
Theological Trends in Songs

Songbooks were published for each new group, along with cassette tapes. Earlier songbooks like those by The Fisher Folk held to the kingdom of God being present in terms of the body of Christ serving the world. Stevens concurs, saying the 1980s’ Songs of Fellowship series shared some characteristics with the Fisherfolk’s songs favoured by Fountain Trust and used by many other emerging charismatic fellowships in the 1970s. They both reflected the notion of a restored kingdom of God, focusing on the Ascended King Jesus; there would be a restoration of a Theocracy almost according to an Old Testament Messianic style. Stevens points out the vocabulary used about the temple, land and kingship, cultic language (Stevens 2002:25 c.f. Ward, (2004:138). However the earlier Fisherfolk songs talked not of claiming land for the King but serving a needy world for the King as also do Graham Kendrick’s and Dave Bilborough’s songs during the later 1980s. In the 1980s books used by the broader spread of churches, there were no liturgical elements (owing to non-conformist origins). Yet Spring Harvest songbooks of the 1990s do have simple suggestions for prayers and readings.

A wealth of songs has been released to the church almost at the rate of Top of the Pops in their popularity and decline. Chris Bowater commented in his Believer’s guide to Worship (1986: 61) that there is tremendous pressure on ‘worship leaders’ to conform to the use of the newest songs. What started out as composing songs bearing ‘the word of the Lord’ for the time, became a rat race for Christian musicians trying to make a living by producing the next album; Ward considers that it dictated what the church used for worship (Ward, 2005:98ff). That overstates the case. So what did the various local churches imbibe of doctrinal emphasis through them?

2. Methodology and results

In order to discover if there are any major theological themes and if they come in any trends, or cycles of subject matter I categorised 2500 songs from a variety of songbooks available at the time (1970s-2004) into ten groups

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3 Coming from the Church of the Holy Redeemer in Houston Texas, under Graham Pulkingham, they had a lot of influence in the Anglican renewal as at York’s St Michael a Belfry church under David Watson and Fountain Trust under Michael Harpers’ initial lead and his wife Jeanne produced many of their songs as song books like Sound of Living Waters.

4 Bowater commented: “My philosophy has been to surround myself with the skills I do not have – let others complete my gifting. Do not be driven by technology – let it serve you – let it serve the vision.”

5 See bibliography for the list.
Some songs are inevitably repeated in different books but I tried to eliminate known duplicates. I discounted ‘Mission Praise’ songs as they were intended for a wider audience than the ‘charismatic spectrum’ and had far more traditional elements than warranted a solely charismatic ethos. The Bible Weeks at which many songs were introduced to the churches possibly meant one theme’s emphasis at the cost or at least the reduction of another; themes were treated as the prophetic word for the day.

The Spring Harvest books, targeting a wider audience, also included more hymns than did the New Frontiers International (NFI) network’s books for instance. The Networks’ songbooks only contained 8% hymns (i.e. songs with several verses, older than 1960s) and these reflected other popular themes like military ideas or of adoration as well as the death and resurrection of Christ. Many songs have more than one theme and many (36%) are categorised as ‘general praise’. Few during the 1980s teach doctrine or even the gospel story as in the old hymns except for Graham Kendrick’s and a very few others. Some relate to applied doctrine as with the ‘ecclesiological themes’, which give a picture of how they wanted to see the church; it was often as an army, sometimes a priesthood, occasionally as a bride or a family. A military attitude (only 5% overall) also gave way in the 1990s to an intimacy of adoration in worship (10% overall).

3. Four Theological Themes in Focus

For the purposes of this article I wish to focus on songs that show beliefs about the church’s expectations eschatologically and therefore in outreach, and how Jesus is central and how all that relates to the individual believer’s experience of God in the Holy Spirit.

i. Jesus – His life death, exaltation…

There are few songs that ‘tell the story’ of Jesus until the 1990s (9.1%). Many general praise songs contain praise to him as King and as friend. The resurrection/ascension victory is more emphasised than the suffering and death of Christ in the 1980s but trends balance out in the 1990s (8% pre 1990, 2% post 1990 on His exaltation). NFI songbooks representing an ‘almost R1 group’ seem to have a slightly higher percentage of these exaltation/

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6 I have since discovered that Tiller made four categories, Begbie six and J Leech had three ‘i’s – immediacy, intimacy, involvement: see M Bonnington’s unpublished paper 1997 for Cranmer Hall, Durham.
victory songs than do Spring Harvest or Grapevine books (representing an R2 relational yet autonomous churches’ network). The death, not life, of Christ comes more to the fore during the early 2000s (in pre 1990 less than 1% specifically on his death: 4.4% post 2000). Is there a swing away from his exaltation to his atonement, or maybe upon the love and compassion shown in the cross against the world’s ethics that cause suffering?” Perhaps in the early years of renewal the Holy Spirit needed to encourage the church in their identity with Christ in the heavens before they could reach out in true compassion in the suffering world.

ii. Triumphant Ecclesiological themes

In the later 1970s and early 80s there was some evidence that the Charismatics who left the denominations mainstream like Baptist or Anglican or were already in independent churches, thought themselves to be THE Chosen ones who would form the new community of God’s People. At the Dales, Wales and Downs Bible Weeks (R1) of the 1970s-80s the R1 songs showed the concept of the ‘gathered out’ or more exclusive church was important to them; the old churches would never be renewed sufficiently for a true restoration of ‘the bride of Christ.’ Chris Bowater used Isaiah 35 along with the theme of the nations in his song ‘The Lord has led forth his people with joy, His chosen ones with singing, singing … He has given them the lands of the nations, To possess the fruit and keep his laws and praise, praise his name.’

There is an evangelistic ‘Kingdom now’ theology that comes out alongside the hope of the coming of the Lord to reign, as songs declaring the ‘enthroned’ God, exalted, honoured, extolled for action here and now. First the church has to be prepared to be priests and mediators of God’s kingdom. Praise was a duty of Israel’s priests, and in terms of prophetic declaration: Charismatics take it as part of their remit such as D. Richard’s ‘For I’m building a people of power, and I’m building a people of praise, That will move through this land by my spirit and will glorify my precious name…’. Again the R1 worship leader D.J. Hadden wrote, ‘We are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation belonging to God… you have called us out of darkness.

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7 c.f. G Birtill’s 2004 song ‘When I stop at the cross, all I see is love love love.’ and the verses speak against the pride, prejudice… that the cross counters.
8 These are no longer as simple as R1 and R2 but for the present article we will not investigate the range of church too closely.
9 C. Bowater, (1982) ‘The Lord has led forth his people with joy’, (Dales & Wales Bible Weeks 1985) Enthroned on high No. 76 (Springtide/Word Music UK); permission to use songs granted.
to declare you praise…’ The confidence in belonging to the special redeemed group of people exudes from praise songs like Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne…. And we the redeemed shall be strong in purpose and unity…”

Again these appear to be more in the R1 realm than R2 but many groups ended up singing them as a result of the Dales & Wales and Downs Bible Weeks’ tapes! Somehow they envisioned the church as being one even though they were separating themselves from the ‘traditional denominations’: ‘That we should love and serve our God as one, The Spirit won’t be hindered by division, In the perfect work that Jesus has begun.’

They literally sought to restore what they held to be the New Testament style of church, the bride of Christ or at least thought that was what the Holy Spirit was doing. Bowater commented on his origins in the Assemblies of God with strong links to the newer networks: “We were believers in most aspects of Restoration Theology without becoming a Restoration Church by identification. The emphasis of the Kingdom was central to all that was happening. .... We always tried to position ourselves as ‘bridge builders’ carrying a spirit of reconciliation. Love for THE CHURCH was central.”

During the late 1970s – early 80s the exaltation of Christ with the church seated alongside brought a triumphalist understanding for fulfilling the destiny of a renewed, restored, warrior Church had an eschatological purpose now. Old Testament warrior themes such as Dale Garratt’s Through our God we shall do valiantly, It is he who will tread down our enemies…!

This undergirded their interpretation of the New Testament’s portrayal of Christ’s resurrection and ascension providing the church with spiritual victory. In Graham Kendrick’s songs war was a major theme just as the concept of ‘spiritual warfare’ was becoming more well known: ‘Now is the time for us to march upon the land, Into our hands he will give the ground we claim, He rides in majesty to lead us into victory, The world shall see that Christ is Lord!’ Again the power of the risen, ascended Christ is emphasised over sin, death and sickness. Dave Bilborough joined in: in 1981 he combined the

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11 D. Hadden, (1981), ‘We are a chosen people’, (Springtide/Word music).
12 Adrian Howard and Pat Turner (c) (1985) Enthroned on high No.69, Restoration Music Ltd. in Dales & Wales Bible Weeks 1985.
13 R. Wilson, (1985) Enthroned on high No. 32, (c) Dales & Wales Bible Weeks Originally published (c) (Thank you Music PO Box 75 Eastbourne BN23 6NW 1978)
14 His emphases in an email 13/04/2005.
15 Dale Garratt’s ‘Victory Song’ (1979 Scripture in Song Thank you Music).
Theological Trends in Songs

cancept of community and with a sense of prophetic fulfilment in *An army of ordinary people, a kingdom where love is the key*. Steve Fry’s ‘We are more than conquerors, and who can separate us from the love, the love of God’ also combined scripture with the popular victorious battle theme. Two other popular songs, one early (1976) and one later (1992) were based on the victory song of Moses in Exodus.

During the 1970s Charismatic leaders, like Derek Prince and Selwyn Hughes, taught that the believers are seated with Christ in the heavenlies, looking down on circumstances, overcoming all obstacles. Was this an answer to western cultural dualism (c.f. Hiebert, 2000:240-256)? Was it a hope to replace the dismal sense of present events worldwide? It was for the individual believer and the community of believers to be more than conquerors in life here on Earth. However direct songs of victory provided just 5.9% of 1970-89 songs with outreach to others arising in the 1990-99 decade (7%) as a consequent result. Notably these songs are out of the same family connected with R1 churches. These themes recur from time to time as, after a period of devotional songs, the church becomes aware of its task and urges its people to ‘war’ again; this was noted in the songs from Kingdom Faith camps during the 1990s. However there is a distinct reduction in this category of songs from 5% to 3% to 2% over the three time slots noted -1970s-89, 90s, 2000-2004.

Percy noted that even Wimber’s Vineyard songs of the 1980s had little emphasis on suffering or endurance due to triumphalism and so lost authenticity in life’s reality (Percy, 1996,p 81). Graham Kendrick’s Make Way songs for the Marches for Jesus (1985-2000) however, show a realism that is in opposition to this triumphalism. They also provided a response to spiritual warfare theology; outdoor songs were a declaration of war the ‘powers of the heavenlies’. This illustrated the outcome of a triumphalist theology of the cross and ascension. Noel Richards with Gerald Coates in *Great is the darkness* (Coates: 1992) narrates the black situation of the world first and then brings a prayer and finally an assertion of great celebration to come. This combines the two aspects

18 Dave Bilborough (c) 1981 Thankyou Music  
19 *Spring Harvest* 92 No. 126 Steve Fry Birdwing Music Word Music  
20 Ex 15 theme- Anon- 1976 Scripture in Song Kansas c.f. ‘For the Lord is marching on and His army is ever strong’ (c)Bonnie Low 1977/85 /92 in *Spring Harvest* 92 no 22.  
21 J. Cooper, ‘Mighty warrior, Majestic in Power, you have scattered the enemy’, (1992), (c) Kingdom Faith Ministries  
22 e.g. D. J. Hadden’s ‘Awake Awake O Zion…’ (Springtide /Word Music UK 1981), or Nathan Fellingham’s ‘Awake O sleeper and rise from the dead’, (Kingsway’s Thankyou Music, 1999).
of triumphalism and realism with a certain eschatological hope. This turns into an appeal to God for revival again in the sense of the gospel impacting the nation[s]. Songs of prayer for the nation such as G Kendrick’s *Shine Jesus Shine* (1987 Make Way Music) to Trish Morgan’s *Heal our nation* (1986 Thankyou Music) also became popular. Songs popular around 2000, in Stoneleigh (NFI) and Grapevine (Groundlevel) books seem to stress requests for purposeful ‘revival’ again more than purely stating the church in victory – *Touching heaven, changing earth*\(^{23}\) shows how requests for revival had hope of transforming life in the world; it was no longer for the church alone; outreach became more central after Make Way marches.

Many songs were for exhorting the church to do the job of evangelism. An illustration of this is seen in Chris Bowater’s 1981 song, *Here I am, wholly available*\(^ {24}\) when he declares that ‘the time is ripe in the nation for words of power and authority’. The emphasis on reaching out from the church into the community increases slightly in the 1990s (4% 1980s 7% 1990s and again 7% after 2000). Significantly it is songs from NFI that have a higher percentage of songs of outreach (11% compared to total average of 6%); they were aiming, more than any other group, at church planting across the nation in the light of a prophetic word concerning a bow and arrow drawn back across Britain to aim at the nations overseas (Virgo, 2001:183ff & Tape c.1996).

### iii. Individualism, Intimacy and Experience

While there have always been hymns of dedication and surrender, the charismatic songs veered towards a more intimate, lover, understanding of relationship with Jesus through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. A new generation of songwriters and singers introduced new themes often on an individual basis [I…] more than a corporate [we] and so individual testimonies to God’s blessings and requests for more became prominent. Many of these appear after 1994 onwards which may be due to the influence of the Vineyard (USA), and the Toronto Blessing’s influence followed by productions from the Hillsongs’ composers like Geoffrey Bullock and Darlene Zchesch (Australia). During the 1980s if we include the theme of ‘commitment to Christ’ they could claim 5% of the songs and in 1990s it became almost 20%. This subtracted a large percentage from the category of ‘general praise’. It is in the nature of charismatic churches to desire that more intimate relationship of experience than the more doctrinally based evangelicals, or indeed older Pentecostals. Interestingly as the Toronto focus declined, the songs for intimacy were mixed with testimony, commitment

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24 In Dales & Wales Bible Weeks 1985 *Enthroned on High* No.23.
and surrender in a greater way and thus intimacy songs count only for 10% in the post 2000 years. Perhaps this shows that warnings given as seen in Marva Dawn’s and Peter Ward’s critiques of the whole scene have been heeded. By the later 1990s the theme of intimacy had realised that worship did not have to depend on the music and instruments or worship leaders; Mat Redman’s song, *When the music fades*, reflected his ‘ban the band’ phase and Jarrod Cooper emphasises the wrong dependence of the leaders on technology in his own life and how that changed. Ward does note that Soul Survivor’s worship leaders did ‘ban the band’ in 1997 (Ward, 2005:172) as also did Jarrod Cooper in order to focus back on basics: Jesus himself (Cooper, 2003: xix, 1996 events!)

Often these songs request the Spirit to empower, to fill individual worshippers with God’s love, peace and even refining fire; (e.g. Chris Bowater’s ‘Come Holy Spirit come just as you are... water... fire... wind...’ or peace as in John Watson’s ‘Peace like a river... let your fire fall’. Overall the telling statistic is that the believers of the 1980s and 2000s did not request the Holy Spirit’s power or love as much as the 1990s churches (3% 1980s, 5% 1990s 2.9% 2000s). This may reflect a sense of need. The triumphal feeling gained from initial experience in the Spirit had died down; the churches may have felt in need of further power. Another generation of people had arisen since the 1970s to compose the songs and with Wimber’s teaching in the 1980s and the 1990s ‘Toronto’ experience there was a new emphasis on needing the Holy Spirit. From 2000-2004 there is more evidence of individual’s testimony songs recording blessings received (10.4%).

**Conclusion:**

Songs and hymns have always been modes of conveying doctrine and I also noted that the NFI’s books (85 songs each) had higher doctrinal and evangelistic content. However generally songs in popular use seem to have less and less doctrinal content – except maybe for 1980s songs by Graham Kendrick. His songs are far less popular in the younger generation who prefer Soul Survivor stars like Mat Redman. Songs have gone away from theological or doctrinal knowledge content to practical and personalised worship; a relational theology has developed which could be seen as a swing from or a correction to an intellectualised evangelicalism. That shows how

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25 Marva Dawn, (1999), and P. Ward, (2005). She favours a more liturgical approach so as to include an element of educational catechism, especially in the post-Christian era of the Western world.

26 Chris Bowater, (c) (Sovereign Music 1981/1995).

27 John Watson, Vinesong (c) (Ampelos Music 1989).
much charismatic influence has implicitly changed general ecclesiology.

Bible Weeks like the Spring Harvest conferences over Easter since 1979 and the March for Jesus events extended the concepts nurtured in networks especially of R2 nature (Pioneer, Ichthus…) into the evangelical, not-so-charismatic world. Classical Pentecostals were also catching on by the mid-1980s and across the world songs spread rapidly. There was a worship, not teaching focus. However the 1980s’ triumphalism now has a balance from songs of lament concerning the state of the world. No compromise with worldly cultural mores is necessary; songs teach that action is possible as a church.

Worship became far more experiential than cerebral. The charismatic congregation joins in as individuals but has little specific input since the band leads from a pre-arranged programme. Occasionally the whole congregation takes on the worship and free worship ensues.

Apart from Peter Ward’s analysis concerning the marketing of worship he criticizes the whole experiential aspect of the worshipper as over romanticizing Jesus in the believer’s thinking. He thinks it is in danger of being tantamount to idolatry of the experience, not at all ‘all about Jesus’ (Ward, 2004:145 & 210). He balances this in his conclusion that the overall diet in churches must bring facts into the picture, facts of the historical Jesus. This is happening!

However the experience of this sort of worship and its heart communication relates to the post-modern world. The confidence that the praiseful songs convey, the prayerful compulsion they stir up, and the declarative profession of faith they proclaim are highly characteristic of the ethos of these charismatic networked churches.

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### Table i: Songs used in Charismatic Churches 1970s -2004 by theme

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28 These are not labelled but indicate the highest statistic.

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48 The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association
Empowerment and Commission in the New Testament

Ulrich Luz

Abstract
This article presents a survey of the concepts of power, empowerment and mission in the gospels of Luke, Matthew and John. There is some synthesis of the individual gospels’ ideas on this but on each gospel has its own colouring.

I Introduction
In the following I would like to present three New Testament models of empowerment, namely the Lukan, the Matthean and the Johannine. In doing so, my own understanding of the Bible will become visible. I am convinced that in the Bible there is no uniformity. Rather the Bible resembles a bouquet of flowers: yellow, red, blue, pink and so on. Together with the green leaves in between all these flowers constitute the harmony of the one Bible. The Bible resembles also a choir with different voices: sopranos, altos, tenors and basses. It is only together that all these voices can sing the praise of God. Since the single flowers or voices are different, the reading of the Bible has to be dialogical. In our dialogue with the Bible, we have to listen carefully to its single voices. We also have to introduce ourselves, to say who we are and to lay open our own background and our own situation in order to confront it with the colours of the biblical flowers. Like this we have to redefine our own Christian identity in the light of the biblical texts, maybe to change or strengthen it, maybe even to repent. But we also have to ask pertinently our own questions to the biblical texts, even our critical questions, without being silenced by the authority of the Bible too quickly. Such a dialogue of the church with the Bible should happen in harmony, but not in uniformity.

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Ulrich Luz

It should happen with a clear knowledge that all our interpretations are only human interpretations and therefore it should be a dialogue without condemnation[s]. For me this dialogue includes the knowledge that also the authors of the Bible were human, with their specific personalities and contexts and also with the limits given to each specific person.

I want to select three different biblical witnesses in order to present to you at least a significant part of the biblical bouquet. I will proceed in this way: each time I will select a model text, from which base I will depart. The questions I pose to the model texts are the same each time, namely:

• What is the (situational) context of a text especially with its biblical book?
• In what does the empowerment consist?
• What is the commission connected with the empowerment?
• Who is empowered?
• What is the relation between Christ and Spirit?
• What is the vision of the Church behind this text?
• What are the specifics of each text especially each biblical concept?

In the end we will ask:
• Where is the unity among the different texts?

II Luke

I think that you, being Pentecostals, have a special affinity to Luke and that Luke is in a special sense your forefather in the New Testament. As a model text I do not chose the key-text Acts 1:8, but a text from the end of the gospel of Luke that has basically the same content but shows more about Lukan theology. My model-text is Luke 24:44-49:

44 He said to them: “These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you: ‘It is necessary for everything written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms concerning to me to be fulfilled’” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. 46 He said to them: “This is what stands written: The Christ is to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day; 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You (are) the witnesses of these things. 49 I am sending the promise of my Father upon you: you are to wait in the city until you are clothed with power from heaven” (tr. J. Nolland)³

This text looks like a summary of the Lukan view of salvation history.

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Exegetes have found that in its formulation it is entirely Lukan and there is almost no tradition behind it. Luke therefore has formulated himself words of the risen Christ. He can do this, because for him Christ is no dead person, but living. He speaks not only in the past but also in the present. Historically these words of the risen Christ are clearly not-authentic words of Jesus, but Lukan formulations. Theologically these words are very important, because they testify the early Christian faith into the risen, living Jesus who makes possible the so called not-authentic words of Jesus in the Bible.

The Lukan concept of the church is that of God’s chosen people, marching on the path of salvation history and reaching new lands under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The gospel of Luke and the book of Acts narrate about important turning points in this history. In the beginning of Luke’s gospel we are in the midst of Israel: in David’s city of Bethlehem (Luke 2:1ff), in the temple of Jerusalem, where Jesus is presented according to the Torah and where the twelve years old Jesus starts his teaching (Luke 2:22ff.41ff; cf. 1:5ff). In the end of Luke’s second book, the book of Acts, we are in the capital of the world, in Rome. Large parts of the Torah are no more kept, particularly the ritual laws. For half a century the missionaries of Jesus had made the experience that their message was rejected by the majority of the Jews, while it was accepted by many gentiles. Paul, preaching in Rome to the Jews first, as he did everywhere according to Acts, finally turns to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28). Naturally this raises the question, if this new religion, Christianity, a religion of mainly Gentiles which abrogated parts of the Torah, a religion whose centre was no more Jerusalem but Rome and the pagan world, is more than a new invention and can still have claims to the God of Israel and to Israel’s Bible. This is one of the main questions that Luke wants to answer in his two books.

And this also is the reason why Scripture is so much emphasized in our text in v. 45f: Jesus opens his disciples’ minds to understand Scriptures, as he did it already with the two disciples in Emmaus in 24:26f. He opens them, as we would say today, towards a new reading of Scriptures which was not possible before Christ: The Torah, the Prophets and the Psalms are testimonies for Jesus, and in particular for his death and resurrection.

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They testify that God has been faithful to his own words exactly at these turning points of salvation-history. It was no question at that time if this reading corresponded to the so-called original meaning of the biblical texts. Neither Jews nor Christians at that time did know what the ‘original meaning’ of Scriptures was. This is a modern concept, possible only after the Enlightenment. It was natural at that time for everybody, Jews as well as Christians, to read the Bible in the light of their own present religious experiences. It was natural for Christians to read them with the minds opened by Jesus Christ and for Jews in the light of their own understanding of the Torah. In this lies also a problem: people of different basic beliefs never could come to the same readings, because they were reading with different basic points of views. The history of Jewish Christian disputes about the Bible through history till the times of Enlightenment can document this. And this also shows where the chance of today’s scholarly reading and the chance for the original meaning of biblical texts could be: It is the chance of a common reading of the same Bible by people who have different basic beliefs. I think, today both ways of reading the Bible are important: the search for the original meaning by the biblical scholars and the search for the spiritual meaning in the light of our faith into Jesus Christ.

Not only the suffering and death of Christ, but also the commission to the disciples is predicted in the Scripture. This is said in v. 47f. According to Luke, empowerment is always combined with commission. The most important commission is mission, the proclamation of repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the nations. Naturally this is not very popular today. We are living in a time where tolerance, freedom of belief and respect towards other religions are basic values and where being “missionary” or “proselytising” has a negative connotation. This is largely the result of a burden in our history that we carry with us. Christian mission often was a mislead mission, a mission combined with violence, conquering other people or with colonialising. We also carry the burden of self-absolutising claims of Christian churches that tended to confuse their own doctrines with God’s absolute claim. But whatever the burdens are, there remains the testimony of the Bible, that the missionary proclamation of the Gospel is the most important commission that Christians have in the world, maybe even more important than social engagement and charity. When Christians hide or privatise their identity and do not say any more what is the basis of their life, there is something wrong with them. It is our task to find a way of giving testimony for the gospel in a dialogical, non-imposing way, which remains respectful towards the basic beliefs of Non-Christians.

V. 49 finally closes with the announcement of the “promise of the father”,
which is for Luke a “power from above”. The Spirit⁶ is frequently called a “power”, for example also in the important parallel Acts 1:8. For Luke the Spirit is a charismatic religious experience which comes upon the disciples and which is not produced by their own power (cf. Luke 4:14; Acts 1:8; 10:38). It is such an obvious and visible charismatic experience, that for instance in Acts 10:44 Peter cannot deny baptism to Cornelius and his people because they have received the Spirit. The close relation between commission consisting in missionary preaching, and empowerment by the Spirit, is evidenced in Acts by the fact that frequently Christian missionary preaching happens in the Spirit (e.g. Acts 9:31; 13:9; 18:25; 28:25). In Luke 9:1 the power of healing and expelling demons is in the foreground, similarly in Acts 9:17; 16:18. Frequently prophecy is associated with the Spirit (Acts 11:28; 21:4; 28:25). If we add to this speaking in tongues (Acts 2:1ff) the list of the Lukan charisms comes close to the Pauline catalogue in 1Cor 12. A Lukan speciality is that it is the Spirit is the instrument of divine intervention in the course of the history of salvation. Through the activity of the Spirit pagans are admitted to the church (Acts 10:19.44f; cf. already Philip Acts 8:29.39).

It is the Spirit that opens a new praxis of the Torah for the pagans (Acts 15:28f.). It is the Spirit that decides about the travelling route of Paul (Acts 16:6) and it is the Spirit that has installed the elders as “bishops” of their churches (Acts 20:28) – there is no antagonism between Spirit and ministry in Luke-Acts. The Spirit therefore is the instrument of God’s guidance of the church in new situations and to new decisions and positions.

In this respect the Spirit is replacing Jesus after his ascension into heaven. In the same time the Spirit is already the power of Jesus himself, who was given the Spirit in a bodily way (Luke 3:22), who was guided by the Spirit (4:1.14) and was preaching (4:18) and praying (10:21) in the Spirit. That means, that the Spirit, which leads the church her way beyond Jesus is in the same time a principle of continuity with Jesus, because both Jesus and the church are guided by the Spirit. Like this the Spirit is the instrument of the free and salvific creativity of the biblical God. The Spirit prevents Jesus from becoming a formal and dead authority and it prevents the church from becoming an institution oriented exclusively towards the past. The Spirit is an experience of God as a living God, and at the same time the biblical testimonies and the prophecies of Jesus testify, that this living and creative God is faithful to his promises.

Ulrich Luz

A last question is still open: who is commissioned and empowered according to Luke? In our text the addressees are the eleven disciples and the two disciples who had encountered with Jesus on their way to Emmaus. In Acts 1:8 only the eleven apostles are the addressees. But in the lifetime of Jesus the same commission is given to the twelve (Luke 9:1f) and to the seventy disciples (Luke 10:1). Acts 2:1 and the prophetic word in Acts 2:17f make it finally clear, that everybody, young and old people, slaves and freeborn, women and men will be recipients of the Spirit.

III Matthew

Matthew’s gospel has no continuation in a second volume which narrates the ways of God beyond Jesus and he rarely mentions the Spirit at all. The empowerment of the disciples is not interpreted pneumatologically. Our second model text is Matt 10:1-16 (selections):

1 And he called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority over the unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every sickness and every weakness. 2 But these are the names of the twelve apostles…

5 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them:… 7 Go and proclaim: The kingdom of God has come near. 8 Heal the weak, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received freely, give freely. 9 Do not take gold, silver or small change in your girdles, no bag on the way, no undergarments, no shoes and no staff, for the labourer is worthy of his food… (transl. U. Luz / J. Crouch).

The selected text-bits are from the second of the five discourses of the gospel of Matthew, the so-called mission-discourse. All of these discourses are meant as a permanent legacy of Jesus for his church. They have their function not within the narrative about the past history of Jesus, like the speeches of great military or political leaders in Greek historiographical works. They do not advance the history of Jesus, but rather interrupt it. They are spoken out of the window of history to the present readership of Matthew’s gospel. This is important, because for Matthew the disciples of Jesus have to follow the commandments and rules Jesus formulated in this discourse also in his own times. When Jesus says in his last address to the disciples in the Great Commission at the end of the gospel: “Teach them to keep all things what I have commanded to you” (28:20), then he refers back

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to the five discourses which contain the for ever valid teaching of Jesus, especially to the Sermon on the Mount. But the same is also true for our sermon: everything what Jesus has said remains valid for the church, with one single exception: The commandment in the beginning: “Do not go to the way of the Gentiles and do not enter into a city of the Samaritans, rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (10:5f.) is explicitly retracted by Jesus in the last pericope of the Gospel. Then the risen Lord says to his disciples: “Go and make all the nations to become disciples…” (28:19).

What Jesus commands here is meant as a permanent model of what the church should be. It is understandable that this model was not liked by everybody. In the history of interpretation many theologians living in wealthy churches or in churches where the practise of healing had disappeared attempted to relativise the importance of these embarrassing commandments of Jesus: miracles are not very important, because the greatest miracle is the forgiveness of sins, says John Chrysostom.9 Miracles were particularly important for the beginnings of the church, because the apostles were simple and uneducated people, says Jerome.10 Indeed in the course of time a good theological education seems to have replaced charismatic activity and gifts of healing in many churches! According to Calvin V 8 does not speak about the poverty of the disciples of Jesus who follow the model of poverty of their master, but the verse is only an advice to the travelling disciples to leave their bags at home:11 “Travel light” is the advice of Jesus, because the disciples would live from the hospitality of other people anyway. How much money they have at home is then not the problem – that is somehow a good message for the state-paid ministers of many established churches!

Mentioning these examples one can easily see for whom this text was intended and for whom it was an important text: It was a central text for the poverty-movements of the late Middle Ages, the disciples of St. Francis of Assisi and Petrus Walde. It was an important text for the misleadingly so called “side movements” of the Reformation, the early Anabaptists for instance. They too understood themselves as “disciples of Jesus” and followed his model of life. They understood Matthew well. For him the model of the Church is that of discipleship and the disciples of Jesus have to live according to the model of their Master. “There is no pupil above

9 Commentarius in sanctum Matthaenum evangelistam 32,6-8 = PG 57.384-388.
10 Commentariorum in Mattheum libri IV = CC.SL LXXVII p. 65.
his teacher and no slave above his master. It is sufficient, when a disciple becomes like his teacher…” says Jesus in the centre of the Matthean sermon in V 24f. Conformity with Jesus – that is the model of Christian life.\textsuperscript{12}

Let me now turn to the details of the text. V. 1 speaks about the empowerment. Jesus conveys to his disciples power over the unclean spirits to expel them and to heal all the sicknesses. This corresponds to the mission of Jesus himself who has healed all the sicknesses and expelled demons during his activity among his people Israel, as Matthew narrated in chapters 8 and 9. The church thus shares and continues the charismatic power of Jesus himself. It is neither the empowerment with a theological education on university level in order to proclaim the word of God nor a good liturgical education, which helps to administer the sacraments properly which are mentioned here! Jesus himself was an exorcist and a healer and his proclamation of the on-breaking kingdom of God was full of prophetic power – and this same power he gives to his disciples.\textsuperscript{13}

When we continue with the commission which is formulated in v. 7 the impression is similar: The task of the church is to proclaim the imminent kingdom of God (not, as in Luke, forgiveness of sins, and not the justification by grace alone!). The coming of the kingdom of God includes the end of this world, reversal of its power structures and a new creation. This message is far away from what is proclaimed normally in most churches today which has much more to do with our life in the world than with the end of it. The content of the proclamation of the imminent kingdom of God is something that probably many of us rather wish it would not happen too soon! Naturally one can ask many questions here, including if the message of Jesus was not somehow illusionary and what it means for us that the kingdom of God did not come for almost two thousand years. I do not discuss that now, but I just want to indicate that there is a problem here for all of us.

The whole of v. 8 is devoted to the healing mission of the disciples. This is no minor part of their mission, but rather a fundamental one, because for Jesus exorcisms and healings were a sign that that the kingdom of God really has come (cf. 12, 28). The kingdom of God is nothing abstract and theoretical, but very concrete with consequences also in human bodies.

Jesus continues with the so-called equipment-rule in v. 9: It concerns primarily the acquisition of money through preaching and healing. “Give

\textsuperscript{12} Cf. also U. Luz, Discipleship: ‘A Matthean Manifesto for a Dynamic Ecclesiology’, in: id: Studies in Matthew (cf. note 7) XX

\textsuperscript{13} It is evident that this text as an extremely provocative and subversive message for established main-stream churches such as the Swiss Reformed Church to which I belong!
freely!” says Jesus. And: “A worker is worthy of his nutrition, his food”. In his source (Q = Luke 10:7) Matthew probably has read: “A worker is worthy of his salary”; he has deliberately changed this. Again this has to do with the content of the gospel. It is a gospel for the poor. It is the gospel of the poor son of man, who had no place where he could put his head” (Matt 8:20). Matthew wants the Christian itinerant missionaries to be radically different from other itinerant missionaries of other religions who used their proclamations and their gifts of healings as a source for personal income. Naturally it is a question how this can be adapted for today. Families, even of ministers, have to survive. But still it is very important to note that according to Matthew the lifestyle and the budget of one who proclaims the gospel has to correspond to his or her proclamation – or it has no credibility. Once more empowerment and commission are closely connected. Empowerment has to serve the commission, or it is nothing. The message must be incorporated in the life of the messengers. This conformity of life is called by Matthew, “to follow Jesus”.

What is the relation of Jesus and the Spirit in our text especially in Matthew’s gospel? The answer seems to be difficult, because the Spirit is not mentioned here and only rarely in the gospel. This seems to be on purpose. In the final pericope of the gospel, where we expect Jesus to announce to his disciples the gift of the Spirit for the time of his departure, the Matthean Jesus says something different: “I will be with you all days till the end of this world” (28:20). Why does Matthew not speak about the Spirit? This corresponds to the fact that according to him the content of the missionary preaching of Jesus is nothing else than the words of Jesus: “Teach them to keep all what I have commanded to you” (28:20a). Matthew lives in a situation where the Spirit has become ambiguous. Several times in his gospel he mentions pseudo-prophets (7:15-20; 24:4f.10f.23-28). He evidently has made clear that the experience of the Spirit has two sides: it is not only the experience of the living power of God, but also the origin of new messages which might destroy Christian identity. Divine Spirit and human spirit are difficult to distinguish. This is the reason why he goes back to the sole authority of Jesus. Only his preaching and his words can be what the church has to proclaim. His presence in the church alone can secure its identity.

Who is empowered in this text? The answer is not easy because Matthew’s second discourse is addressed to the twelve apostles only. Behind them the early Christian itinerant radicals become visible; they went from place to place and from city to city to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom. But in spite of this, for Matthew the answer is clear. For him, all Christians are disciples. All Christians are called to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom or even to join the mission of the itinerant radicals. Matthews’s church is a
church of sisters and brethren with no ranks and no hierarchies (23:8-12). The whole church is empowered and the whole church is commissioned.

IV John

Before I come to my third model-text I want to make some introductory remarks about how I see the question of authorship of the Fourth Gospel, because this is still a riddle in New Testament research. According to John 21:24, the disciple whom Jesus loved is the author of the fourth gospel. It is unlikely that this is true, for two reasons. 1. The preceding verses 21-23 seem to presuppose the death of the Beloved disciple; therefore he can be the author of the Fourth gospel only in an indirect sense, for instance in the generally accepted sense that a pupil can write in the name and in the spirit of his teacher. 14 2. Chapter 21, where the beloved disciple is said to be the author of the gospel, is very probably a later appendix to the gospel. John 20:30f seem to be the original ending. But be that as it may, in any case the beloved disciple, whose identity we do not know, is the great authority behind the Fourth Gospel.

What can we say about him? He appears only in the Passion narrative and seems to be a Jerusalemite; according to John 18:15 he is acquainted with the high-priest. That he was a Jerusalemite is confirmed by the fact that the fourth gospel has its geographical centre not in Galilee, but in the south, particularly in Jerusalem, and contains a lot of topographical and other details which are accurate and in several cases confirmed by archaeological findings. In the same time, the beloved disciple is not only a real, but also an ideal figure: He is extremely close to Jesus. In the last supper he is lying besides him (13:23). He is entrusted to take care of Jesus’ mother (19:26f). He is often juxtaposed to Peter: In the last supper he acts as a mediator of Peter’s questions (13:24ff); on the Easter morning Peter and he are running to the empty sepulchre (20:3ff). The beloved disciple arrives first, but gives to Peter, the future shepherd of the church (21:15-19), the honour to enter the sepulchre first. However it is not Peter, but this unknown “other disciple”, who – after entering the sepulchre and seeing the linen – “sees and comes to faith” (20:8). Thus the beloved disciple is both a real figure as eye-witness and guarantor of the tradition of the fourth gospel, and an ideal figure as representative of the true and deep faith of the Johannine community. Definitely, the Johannine community has a quite particular, deep insight into the mysteries of the Divine Logos Jesus Christ. It is representative of a

14 In this way Plato did write most of his dialogues with his teacher Socrates as main speaker.
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depth, mystical piety of those who are branches of the true wine Christ and remain in his love (15:1.9).

On the other side there is Peter. In the Fourth Gospel he is the main representative of the entire Church and the other disciples are representatives of the Church as well. Their role in the fourth gospel is on the whole not very positive: The main thing they do is to ask rather silly questions. They belong to those who misunderstand, fail, have fear, are scattered and need miracles and signs like Thomas. The last question of Jesus, if they have faith (16:31), is a very real question. The difference between the beloved disciple and the other disciples is tremendous.

After these introductory remarks I turn to our model text John 20:19-23:

19 Now on the evening of that first day of the week, when, for fear of the Jews, the disciples had locked the doors of the place where they were, Jesus came and stood in front of them. “Peace to you”, he said. 20 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and side. At the sight of the Lord the disciples rejoiced. 21 “Peace to you,” he said to them again. “As the Father has sent me, so do I send you”. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, with the words: “Receive Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive men’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you hold them, they are held fast”. (transl. R. Brown)15

Our text is the penultimate scene of the original gospel. At first glance, the short narrative seems to have very little of the typical characteristics of the Fourth Gospel. Indeed, it is a traditional appearance-story, maybe a parallel to Luke’s story of the appearance to the twelve (Luke 24:36-43). At its end in v. 23 the evangelist transmits the logion about the power to forgive and retain sins, which is also known in the gospel according to Matthew in two versions: Once this power is given to Peter (Matt. 16:19), once to the whole church (Matt. 18:18).16 The Johannine version of the saying in verse 23 comes close to Matt 18:18: The power to forgive or retain sins is given to all the disciples, not only to Peter.

Let me make some exegetical remarks to the text: In v. 19 John does not say who of the disciples is present. From the beginning of the Thomas-story, v. 24, we could conclude that he might have thought of the twelve, but the Fourth Gospel has no real interest in the “twelve” and never gives a list of them. Probably the readers will rather think of the disciples mentioned in the gospel: Peter, Philip, Andreas, Nathanael, and the other Judas etc. The resurrection of Jesus is thought about very concretely: Jesus can enter

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16 There is no contradiction between these two versions of the logion on the level of Matthean theology, because for Matthew Peter functions as a type of every disciple.
through closed doors. But he still has his body, because the disciples can see his hands with the marks of the nails and his side-wound. The risen Jesus thus retains the marks of the crucified. His words are the normal words of Jewish salutation: “Peace be with you!”. But this greeting has an extraordinary depth in the fourth gospel, because the readers remember that Jesus will give them his peace, “not like the world gives it I will give you” (John 14:27). It is a peace that transcends worldly dimensions and worldly fears and tribulations, an inner peace, which is grounded in the reality of the risen Jesus alone. The peace-blessing is repeated in v. 21a; the repetition is a literary technique to remind the readers this special depth of the peace Jesus gives. The empowerment Jesus gives thus consists in this inner peace, which allows the disciples to overcome the anxieties and tribulations of the world, because Jesus is victor over the world (16:33).

As in the other model-texts the empowerment is connected with a commission in v. 21b. Just as Jesus has been sent by the father, he sends the disciples. The disciples will be Jesus’ representatives. The evangelist does not say exactly, what “sending” means. Earlier references in the gospel, especially 4:38 (harvest), 13:16.20 (itinerant mission) and 17:18 (sending into the world) lead to the conclusion that the readers will have associated primarily with their missionary task of being witnesses to Jesus. In all our three model texts the mission is the most important commission and definitely one of the most important characteristics of the church in the world.

V. 22 speaks about the gift of the Spirit. It is the gift of life, which is blown into the disciples in a way that reminds of God’s creation of humans in Gen 2:4. The gift of the Spirit is closely related with the gift of peace of v. 19.21. The Spirit is something like the inner foundation of the life of a Christian. In the Johannine gospel, different from Matthew and Luke and also from Paul, no specific charismatic experiences are mentioned, no healings, no prophecies, no gifts of tongues etc. All this might have existed in the Johannine community, but we know nothing about it. However the readers of the gospel already know a lot about the Spirit, particularly after the different sayings about the “Paraclete”, the “comforter” or better “advocate” or “defender”. The Paraclete will come after Jesus’ departure and after his glorification (14:16; cf. 7:39). Three times the Paraclete is called “Spirit of truth” (14:17; 15:26; 16:13). His primary function is on the level of spiritual knowledge. The Spirit will give testimony for Jesus (15:26) and remind the faithful of all what Jesus has said (14:26). He will disclose to the believers the full truth about of sin, justice and judgment (16:8ff). He will lead the believers into the whole of truth also about things coming. In this he is going beyond Jesus, but in the same time he will glorify Jesus and
take what he is teaching “from the mine” (16:13f). As in Luke, the Spirit connects the believers with Jesus and represents the ongoing revelation. But differently from Luke, the latter is not concerned with the continuation of salvation history, but the mystical depth of the revelation of the Logos Jesus.

The pericope closes in v. 23 with the traditional word about forgiving and retaining sins. It is important that this does not allude to an empowerment of special people, for instance priests or ministers, but to a power of the whole church. The first Johannine epistles speaks about forgivable sins and the unforgivable sin (probably of apostasy) leading to death (1 John 5:16-18); this might indicate what kind of church-reality we have to think of. Again there is a Johannine depth in this saying, because for those who have deep knowledge of Christ there is no sin but unbelief and no other judgment but the victory of Christ over the Lord of the world (16:8,11).

But I have not yet mentioned what is the most important point in this pericope. It does not become evident through itself, but only in the context of the whole gospel. I mentioned already that the portrait of the disciples is rather ambiguous in the fourth gospel. They follow Jesus, but the never reach the full insight. They believe that he is Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world, but they do not reach the depth of the one who is the resurrection and the life (11:26f). They remain full of anxiety and fear; they misunderstand and are scandalized (e.g. 13:36-38; 14:4.8; 16:17.32). They believe, but they have to touch the wounds of the crucified first (20:24-29). Such are the disciples. And to these disciples the gift of Christ’s peace is given and these disciples receive the life-giving Holy Spirit. These disciples are empowered and commissioned. This is, as I think, the deepest message of this text, when we read it in the context of the whole gospel. I think it is impossible to say that the Fourth Gospel is a book for an Christian elitist group, such as Gnostics felt themselves to be an elite, and later, under different circumstances, some mystics, monks, protestant theologians, fundamentalists or maybe Pentecostals as well, had an elitist self-understanding and thought themselves to be better, truer, deeper, more faithful, more biblical or more radical than other Christians. The Fourth Gospel is a book for the whole Church.

V Conclusion

Looking at three flowers in the multicoloured bouquet of the New Testament I think that the convergence between the different flowers is great, in spite of their different colours. Or maybe I had better speak about a prevailing harmony in the New Testament just on account of its different colours! Each of the three models we have looked at had its own colour, its own depth and
provided answers to specific problems and questions in specific situations. But there were a lot of common features between the different flowers: I mention some of them again:

- Empowerment and commission always belong together.
- Mission always seems to be the central command of the commission.
- Every Christian is empowered, not only elites, or theologians or ministers or priests.
- The Spirit both connects with Christ and leads beyond the earthly Jesus into new territories (Luke, John). In Matthew it is, with other words, Jesus himself, who remains with his church till the end of history.

Thus the Spirit is the presence of the living Jesus Christ. Only through the Holy Spirit is Jesus more than a great religious figure of the past. At the same time the Holy Spirit is nothing else but his presence, the presence of Jesus of Nazareth. Only when Jesus remains the guideline and the criterion for the Spirit, is the Holy Spirit different from a self-elevation of our own human spirit by wishful and illusionary thinking.
The Coming Revival in the Desert: Expecting God to move outside of the Traditional Church setting

Bradley Aron Cooper and NB Woodbridge

Abstract

It is the position of this paper that signs of secularisation, though accurate, are being misinterpreted by today’s Church. As such, this paper will introduce the Revival in the Desert concept (model), which will allow for and encourage a reinterpretation of these current events. This concept will be supported by Biblical and historical evidence, and will conclude that these social trends may actually be harbingers of a coming revival.

Introduction

The Church in America is growing increasingly alarmed by two current social trends: the growing secularisation of the nation, and a marked decline in church attendance. Ravi Zacharias quotes from social analyst Os Guinness in describing secularisation as “the process by which religious ideas, institutions, and interpretations have lost their social significance” (Zacharias 1997:24). In other words, the church is observing an exodus on two fronts, as individuals are forsaking the traditional Sunday service, and as the nation as a whole abandons its traditional Christian worldview.

The God of Hesed

Recent scholarship has revealed that the Genesis 1 account of creation is composed in the form of a second millennium covenant (Niehaus 1995). This type of document was used to record a suzerain, or king, giving a grant of land to one of his vassals. As part of the covenant, the

1 South African Theological Seminary; email: bradleyaroncooper@msn.com
2 While Mendanahall and Weinfeld are the acknowledged groundbreakers in this field, this study will be following Niehaus’ more recent work. While his structural analysis only extends from pp.143-146, he has convincing support for this argument extending throughout the study.
king would acknowledge his own responsibility to defend and restore the individual’s land should it come under attack. The use of this literary form in Genesis reveals that Creation itself was placed within this covenantal context. “Covenant suzerainty and covenant faithfulness are therefore essential attributes of God and are manifest in God’s dealing with all Creation” (Niehaus 1995:147). Consequently, this covenant with Creation obligates God to defend and restore creation just as any suzerain would be responsible for defending and restoring one of his vassals (Niehaus 1995:148-149).

“The faithfulness of God is a major Biblical teaching, with its roots in the concept of the covenant. He is a God who keeps covenant…Therefore He is called a God of hesed” (Milton 1965:17).³

This concept of covenantal faithfulness is strengthened later in the Genesis narrative. In Genesis 15, God initiates a covenant with Abraham by instructing him to gather various animals, cut them in two, and lay them out opposite each other. While these instructions may appear odd to modern readers, the covenantal implications of such a ceremony would be impossible for Abraham to miss. When a covenant was made in that day, animals were often cut into pieces so that the parties making the covenant could walk between the pieces as if to say “let this be my fate if I break the covenant.” In fact, this practice was so common that it became customary to call the process of forming a covenant karath berith or “cutting a covenant” even if no animals were utilized in the ceremony.⁴

However, when the time came to walk through the pieces, Abraham fell into a “deep sleep”, and God passed alone between the animal pieces, and in so doing, took on all of the responsibility for maintaining the covenant.

“And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces” (Gen 15:17, NKJV).

The reality of what failure in this type of covenant meant is captured in an Assyrian writing in which one such covenant breaker is thrown “on a skinning-table and slaughtered…like a lamb” (Niehaus 1995:176).⁵ This historical reference is particularly relevant, as it points out that God, by

³ Milton goes on to define hesed as covenantal faithfulness (1965:17-18).
⁵ Niehaus is himself quoting from: Piepkorn A.C. (1933), Historical Prism Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
walking through the pieces alone, is saying that He will submit Himself to being “slaughtered like a lamb” in order to maintain the covenant. The significance of this can hardly be escaped once one looks forward from Abraham’s time to the cross, where the Lamb of God was pierced and torn to uphold His covenantal oath.

With this covenantal understanding in place, it becomes clear that God’s responsibility to make man in His image is no longer limited to the one-time act at creation. God has “implicitly committed himself by covenant to intervene and restore” (Niehaus 1995:149). The decision of Genesis 1:26 to form man must accordingly be understood now as a commitment to re-form fallen man, as the Creator is bound by His own covenant to restore humanity. However, throughout Church history, many have either failed to understand the covenantal faithfulness of God, or they have simply failed to rely upon it. As a result, religious performance has often replaced covenantal relationship.

One example of this is found in the evolution of the boundary markers of the Early Church. Initially, faith and baptism served as the societal markers that helped to identify those in the Christian community. However, over time, faith in Christ evolved into a complex set of “right beliefs” about Him (orthodoxy). Alongside this development came the introduction of religious practices and behavioural standards (orthopraxy) that also served to mark out who was or was not a Christian. Over time these boundaries came to be seen not as simply community markers, but as standards that one must adhere to in order to maintain salvation.

“The definition of a Christian increasingly became more a matter of who intellectually conformed to the creeds and councils and less a matter of who trusted in God and Jesus…” (DeArteaga 1996:65).

This type of confusion, however, is not unique to the Church. In fact, from the very beginning in the Garden, man has shown the tendency to attempt to cover his own failings rather than trust in God’s Covenant to re-form or restore him. As a result, God has repeatedly stepped into history to fulfil His obligation to restore man by confronting and condemning the religious activity of His people. The Biblical record shows that this covenantal renewal has been accomplished through the self-revelation of God’s covenantal nature. Through this process, the God of Hesed removes man’s reliance upon religious observation, so that the proper reliance upon God Himself may be re-established through the ongoing relationship.

Also of note, is that throughout the Old Testament, these self-revelations of the God of Hesed are frequently located in the desert. Moses first encounters God through a burning bush in the wilderness, and later leads all of Israel out of Egypt and into the desert, so that the nation might worship the God
of covenant. Likewise, Elijah was led into the desert to be sustained by God during a season of drought, only to later call Israel out to wilderness of Mt. Carmel so that God might deliver them from their false worship of Baal. Therefore, while covenantal restoration in the Old Testament cannot be said to be limited to desert locations, there exists in the text numerous examples of God’s orchestrating just such a scenario.6

The Divine plan: imagery of Revival in the Desert in the Prophetic

Books

The concept of Revival in the Desert, however, is not merely a historical pattern. Going beyond the historical books of the Bible to the prophetic books, one finds that the prophets have also spoken on the subjects of revival, covenant relationship, and the wilderness. The book of Isaiah, for example, is filled with the imagery of revival in the wilderness.

“The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; It will rejoice greatly and shout for joy” (Is 35:1-2, NIV).7

Ezekiel furthers this concept by linking the imagery of a wilderness revival with the idea of covenant. “I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert…” (Ez 34:25, NIV, emphasis mine).

Yet perhaps the most compelling evidence placing covenantal restoration in the desert comes from the book of Hosea. In the second chapter of this prophetic book, God reveals that His people have been unfaithful, in that they have again left Him in order to worship Baal. Yet, while He initially speaks of punishing the nation, midway through the chapter He abruptly changes tone and says:

“Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her…I will remove the names of Baals from her lips…In that day I will make a covenant for them…so that all may lie down in safety” (Hos 2:14-18, NIV, emphasis mine).

Notice that God’s plan is to lead His people into the desert to speak to them, so that He might remove their religious confessions from them. This

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6 God’s covenantal faithfulness was even extended to Hagar and Ishmael. “The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert” (Gen 16:7, NIV); “God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert…” (Gen 21:20, NIV);
7 See also Is 35:5-7, where healing and restoration are also depicted in the wilderness.
preparatory action is, therefore, a necessary part of the covenantal renewal. The reason for this is made clear as the passage continues, for this covenant is to be an intimate one in which there is no room for unfaithfulness.

“I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love (hesed) and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness…I will say to those called ‘Not my people’, ‘You are my people’; and they will say, ‘You are my God’” (Hos 2:19-20, 23, NIV).

The word love used here is again the Hebrew word hesed, which is more accurately translated covenantal love or faithfulness. Yet this faithfulness is clearly to be viewed as springing from God’s covenantal nature rather than man’s good works, for He declares that He is pledging His love to those who are “Not my people”, a concept that is also raised in Isaiah.

“I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, ‘Here am I, here am I’” (Is 65:1, NIV).

Through His prophets, God presents His design for restoration and revival. Through their words He promises to draw people into the desert: people who are not yet in a full relationship with Him. They will be called there so that He might speak to them, and in so doing liberate them from the religion that consumes them. This will be done so that they will be able to receive His love and faithfulness, as He enters into a marital covenant with them.

**Necessary precursors to the coming Revival in the Desert**

**The receptiveness of the un-churched to revival**

Earlier it was observed that orthodoxy and orthopraxy had replaced faith as the salvation standard in the Early Church.

“In this way, Christ is replaced. What need is there for a personal relationship with Christ if the acceptance of doctrinal statements, the adherence to a moral code, or the subjection to ecclesiastical authority is sufficient?” (Schwarz 1999:26).

God’s will was no longer to be discerned by the individual believer through a living relationship with their Maker, but rather was to be determined and revealed solely by the institutional church. The church’s initial proclamation of grace became subverted by a reliance on performance, and one’s standing before God was determined by one’s relationship to the church.

Unfortunately, many of the same religious ideas dominate the institutional church today. In fact, the concept of linking one’s standing before God to one’s relationship to the church has become so reinforced, that today people
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are often referred to as either being *churched* or *un-churched*. And yet, while
these categories may be informative as to how one spends one’s Sundays,
these labels in no way accurately reflect whether a person is actually in a
covenantal relationship with God or not.

In the 1730’s, a revival known as the Great Awakening occurred in North
America. One of its most prominent evangelists was John Wesley, and in
a letter defending the revival he wrote the following regarding church
attendance:

“Does this attendance at church produce the love of God and man? I
answer, ‘Sometimes it does, and sometimes it does not.’ I myself thus
attended them for many years, and yet am conscious myself that during
that whole time, I had no more of the love of God than a stone! And I know
many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of serious persons who are ready to
testify the same thing” (Weakley 1987: 211).

By his own admission, Wesley was declaring that his being “churched”
had not in any way ensured or promoted a relationship with God. And yet,
even as many in his day, and many nowadays, would be ready to testify
to the same thing, a strong tendency remains to have new converts simply
submit to their surrounding Church culture until his or her behaviour and
beliefs are eventually conformed into matching those of the community. The
problem with this process of re-socialisation is that rather than engaging
in a covenantal relationship with God, individuals are taught to rely upon
religious observances and commonly held doctrines. In other words, the
new convert is subjected to a mechanism that replaces the original internal
boundary marker of faith with the external expectations of the community
standards.

Perhaps as an unexpected consequence of this re-socialisation, it appears
that the *un-churched* may actually be more receptive to revival, than the
*churched*. Evidence of this type of phenomenon, was recorded by Jonathon
Edwards during the 18th century revival in America. To begin with, Edwards
points out the state of many of the youth in his area prior to the arrival
of revival: “Licentiousness for some years prevailed among the youth of
the town…wherein some, by their example, exceedingly corrupted others”
(Edwards 1994:9). However, when revival does come, Edwards notices not
only a difference in the group, but also among the “worst” members of that
group. “Those who were wont to be the vainest and loosest…were now
generally subject to great awakenings” (Edwards 1994:13). Even those who
had in the past demonstrated the most immoral behaviour were now being
swept up in revival, as God again fulfilled His words to Isaiah the prophet:

“I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those
who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said,
‘Here am I, here am I’” (Is 65:1, NIV).
Revival in the Desert

The youth of Edwards’ town had not cried out to God. He had cried out to them, and within a short time, those youth had been completely overwhelmed by Him.

Edwards’ account of the revival shows a progression whereby the youth of his city, that seemed the least suited for the kingdom of God, were soon on its cutting edge. It is the assertion of this paper that during the next revival the same phenomenon will be seen: the un-churched will be more open to whatever God is doing, since they will have fewer religious barriers to hinder His work.

The de-churched and the abandonment of religion

Alongside the *churched* and the *un-churched*, a third group known as the *de-churched* is now being recognised by church leaders.

Hovestol (1997:43) uses the term *de-churched* to refer to those who:

“were once active church members...they have now, however, become burned out, bummed out, and in some cases, missing from the church... Some still long for a more meaningful religious experience; others simply do not care anymore.”

While the established church often regards these individuals as dropouts or backsliders, many of the *de-churched* claim to have left the church in order to pursue God apart from the religious culture.

In addition to the exodus of these individuals from congregations in America, the nation as a whole has found itself straying from institutional religion through the process of *secularisation*. And so, while the United States is still considered a “Christian nation”, the religious ideas that helped to form this nation are gradually losing their hold. Yet, is there something positive that can be taken from this situation?

When surveying the history of revivals, the following pattern emerges: “The majority of the revivals of the Bible, and the majority of those in the Christian era, have followed periods of religious decline...” (Baker 1988:39). In fact, those who write about revival often cite that a decline in religion is one of the primary indicators of a coming revival. For many, this fact might seem quite obvious, for without the decline, a revival would not be necessary. But what if, rather than viewing revival as a necessary successor to religious decline, religious decline was instead seen as the necessary precursor for revival? What if, instead of saying “a revival is sadly needed in this land...the religious life is low” (Baker 1988:29), the church came to realize that “a revival can happen now because the religious life is low”.

In a lecture entitled, “When to Expect a Revival,” Charles Finney, makes the following statement:

“What is growing in grace? Is it hearing sermons and getting some new
ideas about religion? No, not at all. The Christian who does this, and nothing else, will grow worse and worse, more and more hardened. Finally, it will be nearly impossible to rouse him” (Finney 1984:17).

Finney understood that religion actually hampered one’s response to a move of the Holy Spirit. Yet this barrier to restoration is not restricted to the lives of individuals. Historically, religious institutions have served as a roadblock to revivals, as religion’s feud with covenantal relationship expanded to the corporate setting.

“Early Methodism was a great charismatic revival that occurred outside the established churches and was opposed by most of them.” (Weakley 1987:13, emphasis mine).

“After an initial period of goodwill and support, most of the clergy turned against the Awakening as a dangerous deviation from sound doctrine.” (DeArteaga 1996:29, emphasis mine).

Fortunately, the Bible reveals that God has repeatedly acted to remove or circumvent those religious roadblocks. Before God covered Adam and Eve with His sacrificial animal skins, He stripped off their fig leaves. And today, in the same manner, God is stripping the American society of its religious notions so that it might be better prepared to receive Him. The secularisation of America, alongside the de-churching of individuals, can thus be viewed as fulfilling the imagery of Hosea in which religion was removed from the lips of the people as part of the covenantal renewal. Religion is being abandoned as, not only individuals, but also indeed an entire society is being drawn into the wilderness to meet with God.

That religion is losing ground in America today is an inevitable conclusion. But the church’s reaction to this news reflects its lack of recognition of God’s desire for a covenantal relationship with His people. Were America to continue to depend on “religious ideas,” it would never truly depend upon on the God of the covenant. However, as society becomes less concerned with religious performance, it becomes more prepared for a covenantal relationship with God. Therefore, as it is the assertion of this paper that religious decline not only precedes a revival, but is also a divinely ordained part of the necessary preparation for one, it appears that the roadblocks to revival are being removed and that this season is America’s prelude to a revival.

**Opposition from the Traditional Church**

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland” (Is 43:19, NIV, emphasis mine).

Unfortunately, if past revivals are any indication, many will see what
God is doing, but they will not perceive that God is doing it. As shown earlier, the most vigorous opponent of revival has consistently been the established religious system of the day. This is due in no small part to the fact that “too often Christians have tried to equate the church with the Kingdom of God” (Layman 1994:34). As a result, spiritual activities occurring outside of the institutional church setting are often condemned, as are those who seek spiritual nourishment from sources that lie outside of the church’s orthodox boundaries.

“Satan’s deception during a move of God is both subtle and powerful because the devil’s disguise is a religious spirit. He cloaks his activity by honouring what God has done, while fighting what God is doing.”

Yet, as history has shown, the effects of revival have rarely been restricted within the confines of the institutional church. Consequently, it is often the religious voices that cry out the loudest in opposition to any ongoing move of God. Looking back again to the revival of the 1700’s known as the Great Awakening we see that “the movement was abhorred and widely criticized by the established state Church of England” (Weakley 1987:14).

Unfortunately, history is not the only indication that points to the likelihood of the today’s Church missing or opposing the next move of God. Although historical sources have shown a pattern of revival happening to those outside of the traditional church setting, the institutional Church remains very clear about its views on those who step outside of its walls of conformity. In recent years, the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary adopted a “Declaration on Academic and Theological Integrity” in order to clarify its stance on theological and spiritual growth. It stated:

“We affirm the necessity of aligning ourselves with the enduring beliefs of Christian orthodoxy, the faith once and for all delivered to the church. We deny that distinctly Christian theological education and spiritual formation take place outside of such an alliance.”

Briefly summarized, their point is that one cannot grow spiritually without being aligned with the orthodox beliefs. In other words, they are engaging in the same mistake as the Early Church, as they maintain the superiority of a community boundary marker (orthodox beliefs) over a personal relationship with Christ. They do not call for one to be in alliance with Christ, but rather in alliance to their established beliefs about Him. And while it may be argued that a relationship with Him is presupposed, it remains clear in this statement that such a relationship is considered

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8 Quote is by Francis Frangipane, and is located in the opening recommendations of Quenching the Spirit, by William DeArteaga.
9 This Declaration can be viewed in its entirety at www.swbts.edu
insufficient for spiritual formation.

And yet, while the church organization declares that Christian life and spiritual growth are not supported outside of its institutional system, it remains abundantly clear that true life and growth are not always occurring within the conformist environments of Christian congregations. In his classic work *Why Revival Tarries*, Leonard Ravenhill points out this conspicuous lack of life in Christian fellowships that extends from the pulpits to the pews. “The tragedy of this late hour is that we have too many dead men in the pulpits giving out too many dead sermons to too many dead people” (Ravenhill 1992:18).

Unfortunately, while his book was written over forty years ago, the reality of the situation remains the same. In 2001, the *Houston Chronicle* reported the following remarks from pastor Jack Graham, as he spoke at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention: “Most Christians in our churches are nominal, carnal, and living in disobedience to God… Churches have become stumbling blocks into hell rather than stepping stones to heaven” (Vara 2001).10

And so Christians are left with a choice. They can either continue to listen to the voice of religious conformity, or they can choose to pursue religious abandonment. They can continue to follow the declarations of men, or they can instead learn to hear and obey the voice of God themselves. Biblically, only one of these paths leads to a covenantal relationship with God; only one of these paths leads to life.

### Final Considerations

One final example of the revival in the desert concept is found in the New Testament. As John the Baptist preached in the wilderness, his ministry was to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. When the Gospel writers sought to sum up this ministry, they quoted from Isaiah, and slightly modified it so that it said:

> “the voice of one crying in the desert: 
> ‘prepare the way of the LORD’” (Mt 3:3, NIV).

Perhaps this was done in order to make the quote seem to refer more exactly to John who was indeed crying out in the wilderness. The source of the quote however, is clearly an example of synonymous parallelism, a technique in Hebrew poetry where “the second or subsequent line repeats or reinforces the sense of the first line” (Fee and Stuart 1982:162). In contrast

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Revival in the Desert

to the New Testament quotation, the original words of Isaiah point more clearly to a man orchestrating and calling for a revival in the desert.

“A voice of one calling:
‘In the desert prepare the way for the LORD;
make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God’”
(Is 40:3, NIV, emphasis mine).

Consequently, John’s message must be understood as not merely “prepare the way for the Lord” but additionally, “do so in the desert”.

In the same way that Moses and Elijah had led the Israelites into the wilderness to meet with God centuries earlier, John now called out to Israel to join him in the desert. Yet, while the call was the same, the results were not identical. Rather than a mass deliverance from Egypt, or a national conversion at Mt. Carmel, John’s revival was one of personal conviction, as individuals responded to call to prepare.\(^{11}\) Consequently, it is important to note that not all revivals are identical in nature; a fact that may add to the difficulty in recognizing one when it does occur.

It is also of note that John’s ministry demonstrates continuity between God’s covenantal promises in the Old Testament, and His ongoing fulfilment of them in the New.

“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire will come…” (Mal 3:1, NIV, emphasis mine).

His call for revival in the desert was a call to prepare for the “messenger of the covenant.” Consequently, Jesus’ ministry must be viewed in a covenantal context. His death on the cross must, therefore, be viewed as not only the birth of the Church, but as the fulfilment of the oath made to Abraham when God walked between the torn animal pieces. Thus the Church has been “delivered” out of bondage through the same covenantal faithfulness that led God to deliver Israel out of Egypt.\(^{12}\)

Finally, while this paper asserts that a decline in religion necessarily precedes a revival, and that consequently the current religious decline may point to a coming revival, it is important to note an important caveat. While the Revival in the Desert concept points to biblical evidence to show that

\(^{11}\) This is not to say John’s revival was any less effective than the other two – “Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins” (Matt 3:5-6, NKJV).

\(^{12}\) See Revelation for future desert imagery. “The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God…” (12:6, NIV).  

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for restoration to occur religion must decline, it is impossible to assert that
revival must of necessity follow such a decline. The restoration of man is,
as noted repeatedly above, the covenantal responsibility of God. Therefore,
revival cannot be compelled by a societal trend, or by any other means. Thus,
the Revival in the Desert model is not to be seen as a formula for generating
revival, but simply as the recognition of how God has acted before, and how
He has promised to act in the future.

Conclusion

If the modern Church is going to participate in any coming revival, it too
should make the choice to once again follow the voice of God. As shown
earlier, the current religious culture of the church has, in some ways,
substituted itself for God: conformity to its standards has replaced an
authentic relationship with Christ.

“It is hard to escape the conclusion that today one of the greatest roadblocks
to the gospel of Jesus Christ is the institutional church” (Snyder 1977:15).

With this in mind, it becomes unlikely that the next revival would
be restricted to the established Church system; a conclusion that finds
additional support in both historical and biblical texts. Consequently, the
church should learn to look outside of its own walls for signs of God’s next
move. So far, the church has to a large extent ignored the above-mentioned
reality. It has misunderstood the secularisation of the society around it, as
well as the exodus of individual members from its congregations. Today’s
church should re-examine these revival-related phenomena in the light of
the evidence that supports the concept of Revival in the Desert, or else it
stands the risk of missing out on, or even condemning, the next move of
God.

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Abstract
This article will briefly review research conducted into Lukan pneumatology and angelology, before surveying the various ways in which angels are presented and promoted in Luke-Acts. This will be followed by a particular comparison between the role of angels and certain roles of the Spirit in Luke-Acts, considering first the similarities, and their potential consequences, and then the differences. This comparison will be conducted to clarify the extent to which Luke confuses or distinguishes the two. Finally, implications of the findings will be considered.

Introduction

It is widely observed that Luke has a noteworthy interest in the Holy Spirit and, thereby, an important and distinctive contribution to bring to New Testament pneumatology. Less scholarly comment has been offered about Luke’s interest in angels. Not only do they too receive frequent mention in Luke-Acts, but they are promoted there to a remarkable degree,

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2 ‘Luke’ is used to refer to the author/narrator of Luke-Acts. This use does not imply any particular viewpoint concerning the identity of the author. Neither does reference to ‘he’ indicate a view concerning the author’s gender. Similarly, use of ‘he’ both for the Holy Spirit and for angels is not to be taken as implying ‘gender’, but merely conformity to traditional designations.
3 The distinctiveness of Lukan pneumatology has been particularly recognised since the publication of Roger Stronstad’s The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984).
4 This word ‘angelology’ is not used to imply that Luke has a developed categorisation of angels as he writes. It simply recognises that the data concerning angels that he records is evidence his understanding of them.
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such that at times potential arises for confusion between their place and that of the Holy Spirit himself.

**Review of Research**

The difference between the amount of research conducted into Lukan pneumatology and that considering Lukan angelology is vast.\(^6\) In recent years, partially under the influence of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, the pneumatological output has accelerated, and the shelf is now well stocked. While there are unsurprising differences of emphasis and detail, scholars are widely agreed about the focus of Luke’s presentation of the Spirit. The Spirit is God’s divine agent enabling and guiding the mission that God has planned and now fulfils. Pivotal in and through Jesus, and later as the Spirit of Jesus in and through His followers, the Spirit acts on earth, enabling life with God and service to the world. The key concept of enabling is encapsulated by the references to ‘might’ or especially ‘power’ in the titles of a selection of recent works (in chronological order of publication): James B. Shelton’s *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts*;\(^7\) Robert P. Menzies’ *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*;\(^8\) Max Turner’s *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel’s Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts*;\(^9\) and Matthias Wenk’s *Community-Forming Power: The Socio-Ethical Role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts*.\(^10\) Other recent work,\(^11\) including research that has concentrated on narrative criticism as a way to approach Luke’s pneumatology,\(^12\) has reached similar conclusions.

Little, on the other hand, has been written about Luke’s portrayal of angels.\(^13\) Joel B. Green’s *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*\(^14\) contains a

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5 Angel(s)/ archangel 24x in Luke; 23x in Acts (19x in Matthew; 5x in Mark; 3x in John; 10x in undisputed Paul; 5x in disputed Paul; 14x in Hebrews; 6x in catholic letters; 81x in Revelation).

6 Contrast the significant extent to which study of ancient Jewish angelology has been put to use in illuminating the development of New Testament Christology. See Larry Hurtado, *One God, One Lord* (London: SCM, 1988), especially ch.4.


8 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).


10 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).


section entitled ‘God, Angels, and the Holy Spirit’.\textsuperscript{15} In this, he opines that Luke’s depiction of angels might be informed by intertestamental Jewish angelology.\textsuperscript{16} However, he correctly observes that, “it is manifest that Luke’s narrative is not itself concerned with an angelology per se, but presents angels only in their subordinate role as those who serve the divine project.”\textsuperscript{17} Quite how subordinate that role is will be the subject of this article. At this point it is worth observing that Green’s juxtaposition of ‘angels’ with ‘the Holy Spirit’ in his section title, while suggesting an awareness of functional similarities between the two, is not, however, fulfilled in the section itself, which contains no comparison other than the introductory words to the subsection on the Spirit, “Even more central to Luke’s narrative theology is the Holy Spirit.”\textsuperscript{18}

Squires’ contribution to Lukan angelology takes discussion a little further.\textsuperscript{19} He lists “the action of the Holy Spirit” and “the intervention of divine agents such as angels” next to each other in a list of the “various means” by which God executes His plan.\textsuperscript{20} In explicating this, he surveys Acts in a number of sections in each of which certain factors are discernible that enable God to fulfil His plan. These include the “Spirit, divine agents, miracles, fulfilment, necessity,”\textsuperscript{21} but the Spirit and the divine agency of angels are among the most consistent of these factors. While Squires’ work serves to highlight the fact that angels, not just the Holy Spirit, are instrumental in serving the outworking of God’s plan, direct comparison is still lacking, and the question remains unanswered as to the respect in which the Spirit can be separated from angels, rather than simply being regarded as an agent alongside angels (and others).


The New Testament Context

The New Testament offers a varied witness concerning the importance of angels. In the letters, while some statements concerning angels are neutral

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Green, Theology, pp.37-47.
\item \textsuperscript{16} His claim that such an angelology was “highly developed” is, however, challenged convincingly by Hurtado, God, p.24.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Green, Theology, p.40.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Green, Theology, p.41.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Squires, ‘Plan’, p.19.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Squires, ‘Plan’, p.37.
\end{itemize}
as to their importance or unimportance, others are implicitly evaluative of angels. Of these, declarations demoting angels far outweigh those promoting them. Significant demotion is to be seen at: Romans 8:38 (angels cannot separate believers from divine love); 1 Corinthians 6:3 (believers will judge angels); 1 Corinthians 13:1 (loveless angelic language is useless); Galatians 1:8 (an angelic source for a false gospel does not protect it from condemnation); Colossians 2:18 (angels are not to be worshipped); Hebrews 1:4-6, 13-14, 2:5 (angels’ status is incomparably lower than Christ’s); 1 Peter 1:12 (the gospel is opaque to angels, however much they might wish otherwise); and 1 Peter 3:22 (angels are subject to Christ). The only clear promotion of angels occurs at: Galatians 4:14 (angelic status is rhetorically related to Christ’s – this could reflect the readers’ attitude rather than Paul’s: cf. 2 Sam.14:17); 1 Timothy 5:21 (angels are alongside God in having oversight of a solemn charge); and 2 Peter 2:11 (angels are stronger than people).

Kittel notes this general depreciation of angels. He suggests, plausibly, that the motives for this demotion are to maintain the uniqueness of Christ among the “many ideas of messengers and messages in the surrounding world of religion” and, with particular reference to Pauline and paulinist communities, to distance Christianity from gnostic-type teaching concerning angels.22 Kittel does not note, however, that this demotion of angels is not uniform throughout the New Testament. Certain documents serve, deliberately or accidentally, to promote angels.23 If this promotion is deliberate, the reasons for such a viewpoint are not clear.

Luke-Acts and Revelation, in particular, do not share the reserve of the epistolary material in their presentation of angels. In the case of Revelation, such is the apparent glory of the angels that the narrator is tempted to worship one (Rev.19:10; 22:8-9).24 The extent to which Luke promotes angels is well illustrated by comparison with other synoptic material. In a piece of possible redaction of Markan material, Mark’s “whoever is ashamed of me… the Son of Man will be ashamed of him, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38; cf. Matthew 16:27) becomes “whoever is ashamed of me… this one the Son of Man will be ashamed

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24 The angel’s refusal to accept worship is reflected in other apocalyptic material. For discussion about whether this indicates that some Jewish groups were involved in angel worship, see Hurtado, God, pp.30-31.
of, when he comes in the glory of him, the Father and the holy angels” (Luke 9:26). While Mark’s angels simply attend the coming, Luke’s share the glory. Indeed, in Luke’s phrasing (which is disconcertingly ‘trinitarian’ in structure: cf. 2 Corinthians 13:13) the angels’ glory might be taken to be on a par with that of the Son of Man and the Father.  

Contrast can also be seen in a comparison with Matthew, which may have leant, with Luke, on ‘Q’. In a similar passage to the one just considered, Matthew contains “everyone who confesses me before people, I will confess him before my Father in heaven, but whoever denies me before people, I will deny him before my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32-33). Luke writes “everyone who confesses me before people, the Son of Man will confess him before the angels of God, but whoever denies me before people will be denied before the angels of God” (Luke 12:8-9). Whatever contribution the angels are to make to the judgement of humans is unclear, but the implication is that these angels occupy an exalted status.


Angels, who are immortal (Luke 20:36), are clearly in close relation to God. In particular, Gabriel asserts, against Zechariah’s doubts, that he stands before God (Luke 1:19; cf. Matthew 18:10). Also, the reference to “joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10; cf. 15:7 – “joy in heaven”) suggests that they are in God’s presence, for it is the finder who rejoices (Luke 15:5, 9, 22-24). In the case of the sinner who repents, the finder is understood to be God, who encourages the angels around him to rejoice with him.

Angels are not only close to God, but associated with visible glory. In Luke 2:9, the night-time angelic apparition to the shepherds is accompanied by the shining ‘glory of the Lord’. In Acts 6:15, Stephen’s face is (shining?) like an angel’s. In Acts 12:7, when an angel comes to release Peter from prison, light also shines in the cell. In Luke 24:4, the two Easter angels (cf. Luke 24:23) are in ‘dazzling’ clothes, as those of the transfigured Jesus are (Luke 9:29). This compares with the Easter angels of Mark 16:5 and John 20:12, who are more soberly dressed in ‘white’ (Matthew’s angel’s clothes are white but his appearance like lightning: Matthew 28:3).

Furthermore, angels are always good. They: act as God’s messengers (from Luke 1:11-13); are part of heaven’s ‘army’ (Luke 2:13-15); rejoice in the repentance of sinners (Luke 15:10); carry Lazarus to Abraham’s side (Luke 21:35).

25 It is noteworthy that the Lukan version also promotes the Son of Man to share the Father’s glory.
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16:22); strengthen Jesus (Luke 22:43); help God’s people (e.g. Acts 5:19); and strike God’s enemies (Acts 12:23). This unalloyed goodness contrasts with Romans 8:38, where angels have the potential to separate believers from God’s love, and so might be regarded as evil, and with Revelation, where some angels fight on the side of the devil (Revelation 12:7-9; cf. Matthew 25:41). In Luke-Acts, no relationship is depicted between angels and the devil or unclean spirits.

An angel of the Lord

Despite the reference to plural ‘angels’ in the title of this article, most references to earthly angelic apparitions in the narrative of Luke-Acts are actually to a single angel (exceptions are Luke 2:13-15; 24:4, 23; Acts 1:10). In most of these cases, the angel is introduced as ‘an angel of the Lord’ or ‘an angel of God’ (the Lord: Luke 1:11; 2:9; Acts 5:19; [7:30, received text]; 8:26; 12:7, 23; God: Acts 10:3; 27:23). This carries clear echoes of Old Testament references to ‘the angel of the LORD’. The echoes may explain why some scholars translate Lukan references as ‘the angel of the Lord’. Given that some Old Testament passages do not distinguish between the angel of the LORD and the LORD himself (e.g. Genesis 16:7-13; Exodus 3:2-6; Judges 6:11-14; Zechariah 3:1-4), the possibility presents itself that Luke too fails to make such a distinction: that the angel of the Lord is as much God’s divine agent as the Spirit of the Lord. This possibility seems all the stronger when it is noted that one of the Old Testament’s ambiguous passages, Exodus 3:2-6, is referred to in Acts 7:30-35, with similar ‘mixed references’ to an angel and to the Lord. Is it the case, then, that Luke promotes at least one angel to the ultimate status of divinity?

In fact, this is clearly not the case. First, one ‘angel of the Lord’ in Luke-Acts introduces himself by name, and it is not God, but Gabriel (Luke 1:11, 19). Secondly, Luke always refers to a single angel as an angel of the Lord, rather than the angel of the Lord (the Greek is anarthrous), despite

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26 The originality of this text is disputed. See later discussion.
the choice of some translators noted earlier. This stands in distinction to the Septuagint, in which the Greek is usually anarthrous (e.g. Genesis 16:7; 22:15; Judges 13:3) but sometimes includes a definite article (e.g. Numbers 22:22; 2 Samuel 24:16; Zechariah 1:11). Thirdly, Acts 7:30-35, while including references both to an angel and to the Lord, does not confuse the two. Luke’s angel is not, on this criterion, divine.

**Similarities between the Spirit and Angels**

It has emerged that Luke promotes angels in ways which, at times, create ambiguities about their creaturely status. While Luke’s ‘angel of the Lord’ is not simply to be equated with the Old Testament’s ‘angel of the LORD’, nevertheless angels do share in the glory of the Father (Luke 9:26). One particular area where Luke’s portrayal of angels has common ground with his depiction of divine activity, and therefore possibly status, concerns comparison between angels and the Spirit. To this comparison discussion now turns. This section presents functional similarities, moving from the clearest to the more obscure.

*An Angel, the Spirit, and Philip (Acts 8:26-39)*

This passage represents the most striking proximity of an angel’s role to that of the Spirit. An angel of the Lord tells Philip to go south (or at noon; Acts 8:26) and as a consequence he meets an Ethiopian official. The Spirit then tells Philip to approach the man (Acts 8:29), and as a result Philip is able to witness to Christ. There is apparently no functional difference here between the voice of the angel and the voice of the Spirit. Each is integral to a purpose which Lukian pneumatologists have long, and rightly, ascribed to the Lukan Spirit. Indeed, in isolation this passage might well suggest that the Spirit was the angel. Such is Bruce’s conclusion, which is unhelpfully reinforced by Bruce’s translation of Acts 8:26 as “the angel of the Lord” (see earlier discussion). He claims that reference to the angel is “a vivid way of denoting Philip’s divine guidance.” While Bruce tentatively identifies the angel with God, Kistemaker is ambivalent: “In the case of Philip, Luke reveals that this angel is actually the Spirit of the Lord (vv.29, 39). Philip is in the service of the Lord, whose Spirit communicates to him through an angel.” Neither Bruce’s claim nor Kistemaker’s equivocation

is convincing, however. Whatever impression this passage might offer in isolation, it seems more reasonable to assume that Luke’s view of angels on the one hand and the Spirit on the other are constant, and that therefore his depiction elsewhere might disperse the ambiguity suggested in Acts 8.34

Before leaving this passage, it is noteworthy that textual uncertainties regarding it possibly attest to a desire on the part of Acts’ early copyists to remove the ambiguity between angel and Spirit caused by Acts 8:26, 29. While the best attested texts of Acts 8:39 declare that the Holy Spirit removed Philip from the scene, the Western text reads “the Holy Spirit fell upon the eunuch, but the angel of the Lord caught Philip up.”35 Among suggestions that this longer reading serves to clarify that the Ethiopian receives the Spirit, and speculation that it protects against a gnostic understanding,36 the possibility also lies that is intended to clarify that the angel is not the Spirit.

An Angel, the Spirit, Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:3-23)

As in the case of Philip’s evangelistic enterprises, Peter’s mission to Gentiles is guided not only by the Spirit, but also by an angel. Peter and Cornelius are drawn together by the intervention of both. In particular, while Cornelius is told about Peter by an angel (Acts 10:5), Peter is told about Cornelius’ friends by the Spirit (Acts 10:19). Thus, again, an angel plays a pivotal part in guiding the early Christian mission, a part usually understood to belong, in Luke’s mind, primarily to the Spirit.

It might be assumed that the distinction in pairings, if not in roles (the angel spoke to Cornelius; the Spirit spoke to Peter) indicates a distinct difference, in Luke’s mind, between the activity of angels and the Spirit: the Spirit is given to believers; Peter is one but Cornelius is not (yet); thus Peter is entitled to the Spirit’s intervention, while Cornelius must, for the time being, ‘make do’ with an angel. However, such an assumption is shown to be false, both from this passage itself, and from others under discussion in this article. In the case of this passage, Cornelius sees the angel by way of a vision (Acts 10:3). Visions are precisely one of the ways that the newly outpoured Spirit would communicate with ‘all flesh’ (Acts 2:17). So Cornelius’ awareness of the angel seems, in turn, to be mediated to him by the Spirit, even if he has not yet received the ‘gift’ of the Spirit promised at

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34 Turner’s suggestion that the reference to an angel is probably traditional, not Lukan, (Power, p.423, n.56) is unhelpful. Luke seems perfectly able to redact his sources to make them contribute to his purposes coherently.

35 Menzies regards the Western text as original, though for tendentious reasons (Empowered, p.113). Most (e.g. Bruce, Book, p.178; Conzelmann, Acts, p.69) are agreed that it is not.

36 Bruce, Book, p.178 and Conzelmann, Acts, p.69 respectively.
Acts 2:38 and recorded, in his case, at Acts 10:44. Moving to other relevant passages, the guidance of an angel and the Spirit in Philip’s case (Acts 8; see discussion above) indicates that even for those who are recognisable Spirit-filled (Acts 6:3-5), angelic intervention has a place.

An Angel, the Spirit, and Paul

In the case of Paul’s mission, angelic intervention is not as visible as it is in Peter’s or Philip’s. While Paul is, like them, guided by the Spirit in his mission (Acts 13:1-4; 16:6-10; etc.), no record is offered of an angel’s guidance or involvement. When the prison doors open to Paul, no angelic agency is mentioned (Acts 16:26; cf. 5:19). However, an angel is involved in reassurance. He tells Paul not to be afraid: he will survive storm and shipwreck (Acts 27:23-24). This bears significant similarities to Paul’s vision in Corinth, in which the Lord tells him not to be afraid, for he will not be harmed (Acts 18:9-10; cf. 23:11). Here the Holy Spirit is not mentioned explicitly, but as already discussed, visions are programmatically related to the outpoured Spirit at the outset (Acts 2:17). It is the Spirit who is to be understood as conveying God’s words to Paul in Corinth, just as it is an angel who conveys divine words to Paul on the ship. Thus, less directly than in the instances above, an angel’s role in Paul’s life is depicted as equivalent to that of the Spirit.

An Angel, the Spirit, and Jesus

As the discussion turns from Jesus’ followers to Jesus himself, the claim for any similarity between the role of angels and that of the Spirit must become tentative, for the evidence is tenuous. As in the case of Paul, angelic intervention occurs not to guide the mission, but to strengthen and reassure in circumstances of hardship or pressure. Luke 22:43 records the strengthening appearance of an angel to Jesus on the Mount of Olives, when Jesus is prayerfully facing the dread of the cup of suffering He must drink at the end of His earthly ministry.

This may bear some resemblance to the Lukan Spirit’s ministry to Jesus in His wilderness temptations at the start of His ministry, as is suggested by comparison with the record in Mark’s gospel. Assuming that Luke uses


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Mark as a source, he follows him in stating that the Spirit is the cause of Jesus’ presence in the wilderness (Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1). However, by altering both the verb and the preposition involved in this declaration, Luke introduces a potentially important distinction: in Mark, the Spirit *thrusts* Jesus *into* the desert; in Luke, the Spirit *leads* Jesus *in* the desert. Mark’s implication may be that the Spirit does not accompany Jesus there, despite the Spirit’s arrival on Jesus at Mark 1:10. Indeed, such divine succour as Jesus receives in the midst of His temptations is provided by angels (Mark 1:13). Luke’s implication, on the other hand, is that the Spirit accompanies Jesus, presumably to aid Him withstand the tests.⁹⁰ Significantly in this regard, the angels are absent from Luke’s account (cf. Matthew 4:11), offering further indirect evidence that Jesus’ help is coming by way of the Spirit.

Comparison with Luke 22:43 can now be offered: on the Mount of Olives, an angel supports Jesus in His time of need; in the wilderness, the Spirit seems to. Equivalence of function is perhaps implied.

Differences between the Spirit and Angels

The evidence reviewed above suggests that Luke promotes angels to be on a functional par, at least in some respects, to the Spirit. This obviously raises questions about the degree of distinction, if any, that he also draws. If no distinctions were to be found, then Lukan pneumatology and angelology would need to fundamentally rethought. However, some important distinctions do emerge, both in terms of function and in terms of status.

Angels, the Spirit, and Miracles

There is superficial resemblance between the ministries of angels and the Spirit with regard to miracles: both perform them. However, they do so in quite different ways. Angelic miracles, which are rare, are recorded as being performed by the angel himself (Luke 1:20-22; Acts 5:19; possibly 12:9-10, 23). Angels *never enable people to perform them*. The Spirit, on the other hand, typically empowers people to perform miracles (e.g. Acts 10:38; 13:9-11).⁴⁰ The only miracles which Luke regards as performed by the Spirit directly are the conception of Jesus and the translation of Philip (Luke 1:35; Acts 8:39).

This distinction is implicitly more than one of mere function. It suggests that the Spirit and angels are not equivalent as intermediaries between God

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⁹⁰ For discussion, see Wenk, *Power*, pp.198-199.
⁴⁰ Menzies’ thesis that the Lukan Spirit of Prophecy, like the intertestamental one, is not directly involved in miracles (*Empowered*, e.g. pp.102, 227) does not stand, as has been ably demonstrated by Turner (*Power*, e.g. pp.138, 224-225, 256-264).
and humanity. The agency of an angel creates a three-step procession: the God who sends; the angel who performs; and the person who benefits. The agency of the Spirit, however, creates a four-fold procession: the God who sends; the Spirit who enables; the person who performs; and the person who benefits. This begins to resolve some of the ambiguity suggested earlier about the status of angels: an angel who performs miracles is to be more closely associated a person who performs them than with the Spirit who enables them.

\textit{Angels, the Spirit, and Divine Speech}

Angels characteristically speak, while the Spirit characteristically enables people to speak. In fact, angels hardly ever seem to be silent when they appear to people.\textsuperscript{41} They act as God’s mouthpiece, bringing God’s message. There is no record of angels directly enabling human speech, either by giving precise words to say or by granting the boldness to overcome inhibitions, although they do occasionally offer more general guidance concerning future speech (Acts 5:20; 10:5, 22).

In the case of the Spirit, the situation is more complex. As discussed above, the Spirit does sometimes speak to people (Acts 8:29; 10:19; 13:2;\textsuperscript{42} possibly 16:7). Characteristically, though, the infilling of the Spirit enables people themselves to become God’s mouthpieces, bringing God’s message (Luke 1:15-17, 41-42, 67; 2:27-28; 4:18; 10:21; 12:12; Acts 1:8; 2:4, 17; 4:8, 31; 6:10; 10:44-46; 13:9; 18:25;\textsuperscript{43} 19:6). These Spirit-filled people, then, rather than the Spirit himself, become functionally equivalent to the angels as God’s messengers on earth. In terms of status, angels who bring God’s speech appear to have a subservient position to the Spirit who enables God’s speech.

\textit{Angels, the Spirit, and Divine Apparition}

Angels are often visible (whether in vision or ‘physically’ is not always clear to the onlookers: Acts 12:9). The Spirit only is twice (Luke 3:22; Acts 2:3).\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{41} There are remarkably few records of an angel’s appearance on earth in the narrative of Luke-Acts that do not involve a record of that angel’s words (Luke 22:43; Acts 12:23).

\textsuperscript{42} However, 13:2 might best be regarded as a reference to prophecy, rather than as a direct (inner?) voice to the whole group (so Bruce, \textit{Book}, p.245; Conzelmann, \textit{Acts}, p.99; Shepherd, \textit{Function}, p.92).

\textsuperscript{43} 18:25 is open to a number of plausible translations, which may or may not attribute Apollos’ fervour to the Holy Spirit. See brief discussion in Fitzmyer, \textit{Acts}, pp.638-639.

\textsuperscript{44} Shepherd refers to the ‘opacity’ of these visible aspects as means to knowing the Spirit as a character in Luke’s narrative (\textit{Function}, p.253); cf. Hur, \textit{Reading}, pp.129-130.
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He is assumed to be generally invisible. Also, while angels are sometimes thereby the objects of visions (e.g. Luke 24:23; Acts 10:3), the Spirit never is: He is the grantor of visions (Acts 2:17). This places the Spirit and angels in a subject-object relationship with one another, rather than as direct equivalents. The Spirit is the subject, regarded as acting upon angels, in that a Spirit-inspired vision might involve an angel. Angels are never presented by Luke as subjects acting upon the Spirit.45 Also, though the Spirit is active as a character, while God is ‘off-stage’,46 His general invisibility nevertheless suggests that He is on the divine side of the duality between visible characters in the drama of Luke-Acts who fulfil God’s plan on earth, and the invisible heavenly instigator of that fulfilment.

Angels, the Spirit, and Human Inspiration

It seems likely that Luke intends to convey the idea that those who are visited by angels and thereby guided, reassured and informed, are ‘inspired’ as a result. The visitation itself is at least sometimes numinous enough to inspire fear or amazement (Luke 1:12, 29-30; 24:5; Acts 7:30; 10:4). However, when discussion turns to the Spirit, it is of course possible to use the word ‘inspiration’ in a far more technical sense. The Spirit is sent by God to be in, or upon, people (Luke 1:15, 41, 67; 2:25; 4:18; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 4:8; 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 9:17; 10:44; 11:24; 19:6).

The only possible equivalents to this indwelling in Luke-Acts have to do with the realm of evil. Satan enters people (Judas – Luke 22:3; Ananias – Acts 5:3); demons are ‘in’ people (e.g. Luke 4:33-36). However, there is no internal evidence that Luke regards Satan or demons as part of the angelic realm. With these possible exceptions, the picture is consistent: angels are only ever external to people, whereas the Spirit is available to reside and work within. This would not have any direct implications concerning the status of angels, were it not for the widespread availability of the Spirit to be thus within people (Acts 2:17, 38-39). The universality of this availability implies omnipresence – a characteristic never ascribed to angels.

Angels, the Spirit, and the Christ

Terminologically, angels are related to God in a way that superficially mirrors the Spirit’s relation to God (‘angel of the Lord’; ‘Spirit of the Lord’; ‘holy angel’; ‘Holy Spirit’). When, however, their relation to the risen Christ is observed, no similarity is to be found. The coming one promised by John

45 The only possible occurrence of such a concept in the New Testament is at Revelation 17:3.
46 See discussion by Shepherd of the Spirit as ‘character’ and ‘actor’ (Function, pp.90-98).
the Baptist is to be one who himself grants the Spirit (Luke 3:16). Initially, when he comes, Jesus has a relationship with the Spirit in which he is the recipient of the Spirit’s involvement and help (Luke 1:35; 3:22; 4:18; Acts 1:2; 10:38). He grants power (Luke 9:1), but not the Spirit. After the ascension, however, a remarkable change in relationship occurs. Now, ascended to the Father’s right hand, Jesus is given the Spirit by the Father to grant (Acts 2:33). Thereafter, the Spirit can rightly be called the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7), for not only can the visions he grants convey the presence of Jesus to their recipients (Acts 7:55), but, more generally, his whole ministry to the church offers them continuing experience of Christ’s presence.47

The comparison with angels is simple and clear. As Conzelmann observes, angels in Luke-Acts are never ‘the angel of Christ’.48 Some association (of glory) between the Son of Man and angels has already been noted (Luke 9:26). However, there is no sense at all that angels appearing to people are conveying the presence of Christ. In this respect, their contribution to the church’s life is distinctly less significant than that of the Spirit. As Turner notes, “Luke does not imagine any believer being sustained in ‘salvation’ by a succession of angelophanies.”49

**Conclusion**

**Summary**

It has emerged in the course of this discussion that Luke promotes angels in ways that are distinct (though not unique) within the New Testament corpus. His references to them are profuse, and their appearances in his narrative occur at pivotal moments. Their impact, through the news they bring and the miracles they perform, is presented as not merely tangential to the outworking of God’s plan, but vital to its success.

In particular, a remarkable similarity of function between angels and the Spirit in Luke-Acts has been surveyed. Both are involved in enabling, guiding, strengthening and reassuring the mission of the earliest church. In both cases, this involves doing God’s works and speaking God’s words, thereby acting as God’s agents. The similarity is so close at times that certain passages, heard alone, might suggest confusion of identity, or at least status, between the Spirit and angels.

However, when the differences are surveyed, indications emerge of

47 See Turner’s discussion in *Power*, ch.13.
the distinction in status and identity that Luke maintains between the two. While the Spirit and angels both stand as objects of God’s activity (especially sending), the Spirit stands always as subject, and never as object, in relation to angels themselves. Furthermore, His relationships with people are distinct from those which angels have in ways which indicate: His potency, for He enables people to speak and act for God; His omnipresence, for He is available to all; and His relationship to Christ, whose presence He conveys.

Implications for Lukan and Pauline Studies

Luke is obviously indebted to the Old Testament (and in particular the Septuagint). However, his world-view also bears certain resemblances to the intervening Judaism attested to by well-known pseudepigraphic literature. His view of the Spirit, of course, contains crucial differences, for it has been refracted through the lens of the Christ-event and earliest Christianity’s interpretation of that event. His view of angels, however, has changed less. Jewish pseudepigraphic literature is capable of unrestrained promotion of angels. They: are holy (1 Enoch 20:1; 27:2); surround God (1 Enoch 60:2; cf. Test. Jud. 25:2; Test. Levi 18:5); perform miracles (1 Enoch 66); guide souls (Test. Ben. 6:1); and perhaps receive prayers (1 Enoch 99:3). Luke is more restrained in his presentation. Notably, in language that is reminiscent of 1 Enoch 99:3, human prayers now stand as a memorial, not before angels, but before God (Ac.10:4). However, he is not as restrained as Paul, whose letters display a cautious attitude towards angels (see discussion above).

In seeking an explanation as to why the Pauline departure from the pseudepigraphic picture is greater than the Lukan one, an answer cannot be found in chronology, for Luke-Acts was undoubtedly written later than the undisputed Pauline literature, and so represents a reversal of the Pauline tendency. It seems more likely that Luke’s enthusiasm for angels and Paul’s caution concerning them are part of a wider enthusiasm or caution on the part of the two authors, which may in turn indicate as much about their personality as their theology. Other examples of this difference of attitude can be discerned in their presentation of spiritual manifestations, such as the public use of tongues speech (Ac.10:46-47; 1 Cor.14:19) and visionary trances (Ac.10:10-20; 2 Cor.12:4), and in their approach to characters such as Peter, who for Luke is clearly one of the great heroes of the faith (Ac.2:43; 3:12; 4:19, 33; 5:9, 15, etc.) but to whom Paul offers somewhat reluctant recognition (Gal.2:9), but ready criticism (Gal.2:11).

50 Study of Jewish beliefs in divine intermediaries has been an important contributor to providing a background for New Testament Christology. See Hurtado, God.
Implications for contemporary Christian practice

It is not surprising that Pentecostal and charismatic churches evidence an interest in angels, given their appetite for ‘supernatural’ phenomena.\(^{51}\) If such churches are to have an attitude to angels that is informed by Luke’s, the results will be both positive and negative. Negatively, Luke does not in the final analysis allow angels to usurp the Spirit’s unique place. While Luke’s characters do reply when addressed by angels, he makes no suggestion that there is value in offering petitionary prayers to angels.\(^{52}\) Further, he gives no room for the replacement of the Spirit by angels which occurs in the Celestial Church of Christ.\(^{53}\) Also, Luke’s presentation is at variance with the experience of Alex Buchanan, who reports seeing a vision of angels in which they, alongside the Trinity, say “Never be afraid because we are with you, and we are for you.”\(^{54}\) Luke’s account certainly offers a precedent for Buchanan’s vision, and for angels to be seen therein. However, Christians in Acts are not comforted by the abiding presence of angels, but by the abiding presence of the Spirit of Christ.

Positively, however, some churches today may need to balance a natural caution about angels, created by their world-view and perhaps supported by Pauline reticence, with a recognition of their value in the spread of the earliest church, and the potential value of their activities in the life and mission of the church today. Whether one should actively seek this involvement is not a question to which Luke’s narratives offer any answer, but Luke supports the notion that one is wise to welcome it if it so occurs.

Evidence of such an interest includes popular books on the subject, e.g.: Charles and Frances Hunter, Angels on Assignment (Kingswood: Hunter Books, 1979); David Lamb, Angels and Demons (London: Marshall Pickering, 1999); Trevor Newport, Angels, Demons and Spiritual Warfare (Chichester: New Wine Press, 1997); Ayo Omideyi, Angels of the Lord (London: Sower, 1996). This output is not without its critics. Robert A. Geulich, ‘Spiritual Warfare: Jesus, Paul and Peretti’ (Pneuma 13.1 [Spring 1991], pp.33-64) is unimpressed not just by Peretti’s demonology but by his angelology (cf. Frank Peretti, This Present Darkness [Westchester: Crossway, 1986]).


“Instead of the Holy Spirit, as is the case for most Western pentecostal groups, the CCC views the activity of angels (the effects of their presence) as evidence of sanctification, divine favour, and spiritual significance.” Of prophecy, “Here, too, angels and not, strictly speaking, the Holy Spirit are responsible for this spiritual gift.” (J. D. Carter, ‘Celestial Church of Christ’, pp.467-472, Stanley M. Burgess, ed., The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), p.468.

Alex Buchanan, Heaven and Hell (Tonbridge: Sovereign World, 1995), p.130.
Book Reviews

**Signs and Blunders: Memoirs and Reflections of a Pentecostal Preacher**

*David Allen*

(Rotherham: Navigatoria, 2005 pbk, 144pp £7.99)

David Allen has been part of the teaching staff of Mattersey Hall, the British assemblies of God Bible College, for the past twenty-two years, although he was linked with them for much longer than that in a part-time capacity. This book is his opportunity to reflect on his ministry within the Pentecostal movement both as a pastor and a teacher. For those acquainted with David, you will recognise his voice clearly throughout the book, endearing and provocative in equal measure. The value of the work lies in the fact that we need more primary, honest accounts of ministering within British Pentecostalism in the mid twentieth century. Whilst for many the events described and atmosphere evoked will be clearly recognised, for the younger generation of Pentecostal historians and theologians, they will need works like this to gain an understanding for the development of the denominations.

The book is unashamedly personal and is at times whimsical, but then closes with a biting afterword, examining the latest changes in the denomination, in particular asking pointed questions concerning the understanding of authority, the use of apostolic titles and concepts and the need to re-emphasise the core concepts of ‘blended’ worship, the primacy of the preaching of the Word and the balance of the gifts of the Spirit with the fruit of the Spirit.

This is a small book that for those wanting to understand more about the British Pentecostal scene over the past forty years would repay examination.

*Neil Hudson, Regents Theological College, Nantwich*

**Power and the Spirit of God: Toward an Experience-Based Pneumatology,**

*B. Cooke*


Bernard Cooke develops his analysis of various forms of power from the vantage point of being a male American Catholic theologian. Consequently, patriarchalism, the power of the Catholic church and American hegemony are three themes to which he repeatedly returns in his phenomenological analysis of ‘power’. Although European Pentecostals must think creatively to relate the book’s insights to their own context, Cooke’s treatment of the main theme – the Spirit of God and His relation to power – is of immediate relevance.

Cooke’s introduction documents the steps that led to the twentieth century interpretation of communal human existence as a dialectic between power and weakness rather than good and evil. Cooke maintains that a corresponding paradigm shift in the theological view of ‘power’ may be the most radical shift in Christian thinking.
for eighteen hundred years. Consequently, reconsideration of the Spirit’s role in this new paradigm is necessary. Although not offering a comprehensive pneumatology, Cooke seeks to relate contemporary understandings and exercise of power to pneumatology using experience as the starting point of theological reflection.

Part I focuses on the basic power paradigm of physical (violent) strength and the related power of fear. For Cooke, physical force is the underlying historical model of power that leads to political, military and patriarchal domination. Part II considers power in the public arena. The power of office, particularly as relating to Catholicism, is discussed at length and Cooke freely criticises the concentration of dominating power in the hands of the ordained. The ancillary chapters of ‘law’, ‘fame’ and ‘wealth’ are dealt with separately though they impinge on the exercise of public office.

Part III deals with the power of nature, creativity and imagination, which leads on to the discussion in Part IV concerning the power of symbol, thought and ritual. Following the sections on the power of eros and love (Part V) Cooke’s conclusion brings the book to a climax as he delineates a model of understanding the Spirit as the Divine Power exerted by embrace. As a non-dominating power the Spirit respects human freedom but seeks to elicit a response of friendship. The Spirit’s embrace empowers people to conquer dominating powers that diminish them and attain unity with God and each other.

In criticism, Cooke’s work ranges over a vast terrain and consequently appears as a collection of vaguely linked theological musings rather than a unified work with a clear purpose throughout its entirety. Furthermore, Cooke’s concept of the world as an evolutionary process coupled with his phenomenological approach and his rejection of the personhood of the Spirit means his portrayal of the Spirit lacks a clear sense of transcendence or ‘otherness’. However, although one may dispute any number of Cooke’s assertions, including his belief that divine justice and mercy are indistinguishable or that the doctrine of atonement leads to fear rather than trust, critical engagement with Cooke’s work will prove stimulating and fruitful. Theologians, students and pastors who are concerned with developing a pneumatology that speaks prophetically to contemporary society or with discriminating between the various forms of power exercised in society should use Cooke’s work as a conversational partner to help them develop a more rigorous and relevant pneumatology of divine power.

Martin Clay, Regents Theological College, Nantwich
Discovering the Holy Spirit in the New Testament

Keith Warrington

This well-written and thoughtfully crafted book highlights numerous facets of the third person of the Trinity, several of which are rarely found in popular writings or analytical work on the Spirit. Keith Warrington aims to give a comprehensive survey of what the New Testament authors teach on the Spirit, discussing each NT book in a separate chapter. The exposition recognises the different agendas of the individual authors, such as Luke’s special concern for the poor, Matthew’s emphasis on discipleship in the community formation, and so forth. Their signature may be recognised in the editing of the stories, the metaphors chosen and the facets of the person of the Spirit that are brought to the fore as they address different audiences and different needs.

The exposition of the texts, a careful reading that notes the distinctive themes and patterns of reasoning in the individual authors, is consistently followed by questioning what the significance of the message would be for the original reader. Attention to the social, political, philosophical and religious aspects of the historical background that shaped the community illuminates fascinating aspects of the first century world. Thus, this survey of the distinctive vision of the Spirit in each of the books seems to shape our understanding of the Spirit much as a jeweller shapes the facets of a diamond.

While there is a temporal and cultural distance between us and the texts, the appropriation of the NT message is stimulated by the poignant questions at the conclusion of each chapter, challenging the reader to consider the significance of the texts for today. The thematic, text-by-text approach and clear style of writing makes this book accessible to leadership, students, and all those interested in exploring the role and person of the Spirit. As such, Keith Warrington has successfully achieved his goal “to facilitate a context for thinking and exploration”.

Discovering the Holy Spirit in the New Testament not only generates a sense of wonder about the person and significance of the Spirit in our lives but also reminds us of the depth of the Spirit’s commitment and his presence in accompanying us on the road of discipleship. The NT authors placed a life led faithfully before God in the light of the life to come, probably more prominently than would be found in contemporary teaching. The gift of the Spirit that seals and assures this eternal perspective not only reminds us of the promise of eternal life but also provides a lens through which reality is to be viewed. I anticipate regularly delving into the riches that are found in this book, not only for study or lectures, but also for life itself.

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