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contemporary living.*

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# Editorial The Holy Spirit Today

The spirit of our age is the drive for absolute freedom—freedom from limits and without reference to God. This secular spirit which has overtaken the West is now penetrating the very being of Third World societies. Immorality, violence, material greed and corrupt power are on the increase. The biblical account of the Fall is no myth but a daily reality. We look to the Holy Spirit, the paraclete of the risen Christ, to lead us to the truth of God and to empower us to overcome cosmic principalities and powers and their manifestations in society.

Today evangelicals are re-evaluating their theology of the Holy Spirit and are more open to new ways in which the Holy Spirit is at work. The Oslo '85 Consultation on the Work of the Holy Spirit and Evangelism pointed to this new awareness. It would not have been possible ten years ago. The Holy Spirit is the pioneer missionary preparing people to hear and receive the gospel. But as His agents we need to be careful not to manipulate His gifts of grace nor put Him in the straightjacket of our limited knowledge and experience. In the midst of this power encounter we turn in prayer to the living God who alone can save the world from self-destruction and who can renew the Church so that it becomes light and salt in the world. History shows us that revival in the Church is always God's sovereign act but it also shows us that God moves upon his people when they begin to pray.

The Church is a charismatic community, a sign of the present and yet coming Kingdom. The gifts of the Spirit are manifest in the fruit of the Spirit in changed lives and as 'signs and wonders' before a watching world. But the Church is also an institutional community reflecting national cultures and yet transcending it. The Holy Spirit is renewing old structures and creating new ones. House groups and specialist agencies for mission are flourishing. The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper point to the relationship between the charismatic and the institutional life of the Church. However, the work of the Holy Spirit must not be isolated from the Word of God, for the Christ of Scriptures is the cornerstone of all our theology and practice. He holds all things together. [p. 296](#)

## A Decade of Revival—1900–1910

by J. Edwin Orr

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The worldwide Awakening of the early twentieth century came at the end of forty years of evangelical advance which followed the outpouring of the Spirit far and wide in 1858–59 and the sixties. Thus it did not represent a recovery from a long night of despair caused by rampant infidelity, as was the case in the days of Wesley. It seemed, rather, a blaze of evening glory at the end of the nineteenth century, "the Great Century" in the writings of Latourette.

It was the most extensive evangelical awakening of all time, reviving Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Disciple, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Reformed churches and other evangelical bodies throughout Europe and North America, Australasia and South

Africa, and their daughter churches and missionary causes throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America. More than five million folk were won to an evangelical faith in the two years of greatest impact. In countries experiencing awakening in the wake of the revival, there arose the Pentecostal denominations.

## **THE TIMING OF THE MOVEMENT**

Why did it occur at the time it did? The ways of God are past finding out. One can only surmise. A subtler form of infidelity had arisen, a compromise between Christianity and humanism. And there was rising a more sophisticated interpretation of human conduct, inspired by Freud, who spoke of God as an Illusion.

The prescient wisdom of its Author may also account for the sudden spread of the Revival of 1900–1910. Within ten years, the awful slaughter of World War I had started, and a gentler way of life passed into the twilight of history. The Pax Britannica had ended.

Arnold Toynbee, reminiscing, recalled the trauma of the time, when half his classmates died in battle. The writer was a child when news of the Battle of the Somme threw every family in his native city into mourning for the finest of their fathers, sons and brothers killed in action. [p. 297](#)

Chapman's biographer stated in review: "God in gracious providence was reaping a spiritual harvest before He permitted the outburst of revolutionary forces ... The harvest is gathered before the field is doomed to death."

The early twentieth century Evangelical Awakening was a worldwide movement. It did not begin with the phenomenal Welsh Revival of 1904–05. Rather its sources were in the springs of little prayer meetings which seemed to arise spontaneously all over the world, combining into streams of expectation which became a flood of blessing, in which the Welsh Revival became the greatest cataract.

## **BEGINNINGS IN PRAYER**

Meetings for prayer for revival in evangelical gatherings such as the Moody Bible Institute and the Keswick Convention greeted the new century, not surprisingly. What was most remarkable was that missionaries and national believers in obscure places in India, the Far East, Africa and Latin America seemed moved about the same time to pray for phenomenal revival in their fields and world wide. Most had never seen or heard of phenomenal revival occurring on missionfields, and few of them had witnessed it at home. Their experience was limited to reading of past revivals.

The first manifestation of phenomenal revival occurred simultaneously among Boer prisoners of war in places ten thousand miles apart, as far away as Bermuda and Ceylon. The work was marked by extraordinary praying, by faithful preaching, conviction of sin, confession and repentance and lasting conversion and hundreds of enlistments for mission service. The spirit of revival spread to South Africa in the throes of post-war economic depression.

Not without significance, an Awakening began in 1900 in the churches of Japan that had long suffered from a period of "retarded growth." It started in an unusually effective movement to prayer, followed by an unusually intensive effort of evangelism, matched by an awakening of Japanese urban masses to the claims of Christ, and such ingathering that the total membership of the churches almost doubled within the decade. Why did this Japanese Awakening occur in 1900? It would have been impossible four years later, when the Japanese became involved in momentous war with the Russian Empire.

Significantly also for evangelistic follow-up of general Awakening in 1900, Torrey and Alexander's team found that unusual praying had prepared the way for the most fruitful evangelistic ministry ever known p. 298 in either New Zealand or Australia, and the unprecedented success of the campaigns first launched Torrey and Alexander, later Chapman with Alexander, upon their worldwide evangelistic crusades, run conventionally but accompanied by revival of the churches.

Gipsy Smith experienced much the same kind of response in his mission of peace in war-weary South Africa, success in evangelism provoking an awakening of the population to the Christian faith. Likewise, he extended work worldwide.

Meanwhile, worldwide prayer meetings were intensifying. Undoubtedly, the farthest-felt happening of the decade was the Welsh Revival, which began as a local revival in early 1904, moved the whole of Wales by the end of the year, and raised up Evan Roberts as the mystic leader, while filling simultaneously almost every church in the principality.

## **THE WELSH REVIVAL 1904**

The Welsh Revival was the farthest-reaching of all the movements of the Awakening, for it affected the whole of the evangelical cause in India, Korea and China, renewed the revivals in Japan and South Africa, and sent a wave of awakening over Africa, Latin America and the South Seas.

The story of the Welsh Revival is astounding. Begun with prayer meetings of less than a score of intercessors, when it burst its bounds the churches of Wales were crowded for more than two years. A hundred thousand outsiders were converted and added to the churches, the vast majority remaining true to the end. Drunkenness was immediately cut in half, and many taverns went bankrupt. Crime was so diminished that judges were presented with white gloves attesting that there were no cases of murder, assault, rape or robbery, or the like to consider. Local police became unemployed in many districts. Slowdowns occurred in coal mines, not due to unpleasantness between management and workers, but because so many foulmouthed miners became converted and stopped using foul language that the horses which hauled the coal trucks in the mines could no longer understand what was being said to them, and transportation slowed until the horses learned the language of Canaan.

Time and time again, the writer has been asked why the Welsh Revival did not last. It did last. The most exciting phase lasted two years. There was an inevitable drifting away of some whose interest was superficial, maybe one person in forty of the total membership of p. 299 the churches. Even critics of the movement conceded that 75 per cent of the converts, at least, remained in membership after five years.

But there was a falling away in Wales. Why? It did not happen among converts of the 1904 Revival, other than the minority noted. Converts of the Revival continued to be the choicest segment of church life, even in the 1930s when the writer closely studied the spiritual life of Wales.

Wales was overtaken by disasters. World War I killed a high proportion of a generation revived, converted, or only influenced by the Revival, leaving a dearth of men in the churches; the coal mines of Wales were hit in the 1920s by tragic unemployment, which continued into the 1930s in the Depression; and classes under military age during the war, infants during the Revival, espoused the gospel of Marxism.

There was another reason. These Welsh revivalists took scripture knowledge for granted; indoctrination deemed as superfluous was at a minimum; the Welsh constituency was ill-prepared for a new onslaught of anti-evangelicalism which captured

a generation of otherwise disillusioned or embittered Welshmen. Ulster moved into the place held by the principality of Wales as a land of evangelistic activity.

## AWAKENINGS: EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

The story of the Welsh Revival has often been told. Most Christian people, including scholars, have been unaware of the extent of the Awakening in the rest of English-speaking countries, in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, South Africa, Australia and faraway New Zealand.

The Archbishop of Canterbury called for a nation-wide day of prayer. Thirty English bishops declared for the Revival after one of their number, deeply moved, told of confirming 950 new converts in a country parish church. The Awakening swept Scotland and Ireland. Under Albert Lunde, also a friend of the researcher in later years, a work began in Norway, described by Bishop Berggrav as the greatest revival of his experience. It affected Sweden, Finland, and Denmark, Lutherans there saying that it was the greatest movement of the Spirit since the Vikings were evangelized. It broke out in Germany, France, and other countries of Europe, marked by prayer and confession.

It is difficult to count converts in the Church of England, but, in the years 1903–1906, the Free Churches gained a total ten per cent, or 300,000. [p. 300](#)

When news of the Awakening reached the United States, huge conferences of ministers gathered in New York and Chicago and other cities to discuss what to do when the Awakening began. Soon the Methodists in Philadelphia had 6101 new converts in trial membership; the ministers of Atlantic City proclaimed that only fifty adults remained professedly unconverted in a 60,000 population. Churches in New York City took in hundreds on a single Sunday; in one instance 364 were received into membership, 286 new converts, 217 adults, 134 men, 60 heads of families.

The 1905 Awakening rolled through the South like a tidal wave, packing churches for prayer and confession, adding hundreds to membership rolls. First Baptist in Paducah added a thousand in a couple of months and the old pastor died of overwork. Believers' baptisms among the Southern Baptists rose twenty-five per cent in a single year. Various denominations shared equally in the Awakening.

In the Middle West, churches were suddenly inundated by great crowds of seekers. The "greatest revivals in their history" were reported by Methodists in town after town; Baptists and others gained likewise. Everyone was so busy in Chicago that pastors decided to hold their own meetings and help one another deal with the influx. Every store and factory closed in Burlington, Iowa, to permit employees to attend services of intercession and dedication. The mayor of Denver declared a day of prayer: by 10 a.m., churches were filled; at 11.30, almost every store closed; 12,000 attended prayer meetings in downtown theatres and halls; every school closed; the Colorado Legislature closed. The impact was felt for a year.

In the West, great demonstrations marched through the Los Angeles streets. United meetings attracted attendance of 180,000. The Grand Opera House was filled at midnight with drunks and prostitutes seeking salvation. For several hours a day, business was nearly suspended in Portland, Oregon, bank presidents and bootblacks attending prayer meetings while two hundred major stores in agreements freely signed closed from 11 till 2.

Churches of the various denominations, town and country, were moved from Newfoundland to British Columbia across Canada, in both spontaneous prayer and ardent evangelism, while students eagerly responded as in the States.

Church membership in the United States in seven major Protestant Churches increased by more than two million in five years (870,389 new communicants in 1906) and then continued rising. This did not include the gains of younger denominations of Pentecostal or Holiness dynamic whose rate of increase was considerably greater. [p. 301](#)

It is naturally difficult to estimate the gains in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa for most converts therein already possessed family affiliation. The Methodist Church increased by thirty per cent in three years of revival. No doubt, the same patterns applied in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, all stirred by the Welsh Revival.

## **AWAKENINGS IN ASIA, LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA**

The writer had visited all the States of India, and had addressed more than a million people there, and lectured in a score of the theological colleges and to hundreds of missionaries and national pastors; yet he encountered only one who knew of the extent of the Indian Revival of 1905–06, a retired professor of theology. And yet the Awakening in India moved every province while the Christian population increased by seventy per cent, sixteen times as fast as the Hindu, the Protestant rate of increase being almost double that of the Roman Catholic. In many places, meetings went on for five to ten hours.

In Burma, 1905 “brought an ingathering quite surpassing anything known in the history of the mission”; and the A.B.M.U. baptized 2,000 Karens that year, instead of the 200 average. In a single church, 1340 Shans were baptized in December, in all 3113 being added in the “marvellous ingathering.”

The story of the Korean Revival of 1907 has been told and retold. It is less well-known that the Revival came in three waves, 1903, 1905 and 1907, the membership of the churches quadrupling within a decade, the national Church being created from almost nothing by the movement. Since then, the Korean churches have maintained the impetus in rapid church growth, through revivals and recessions.

The revival campaigns of Jonathan Goforth in Manchuria have been recorded and published, but the extent of the Awakening in China from the Boxer Uprising until the 1911 Revolution has not been apprehended. China’s oldest evangelist, survivor of the China-wide Awakening of 1927, told the writer that he had not even heard of the Awakening (in every province in the 1900s) apart from the post-Boxer revulsion. Yet the number of Protestant communicants in China doubled in a decade to a quarter of a million, to half a million for the total Evangelical community. This was the first great evangelical ingathering in China.

In Indonesia, the number of Evangelicals, 100,000 in 1903, trebled in the decade of general Awakening to 300,000, and in subsequent movements of phenomenal power, the number of believers on one [p. 302](#) little island (Nias) surpassed such a figure, winning two-thirds the population. Also, Protestant membership in Madagascar increased sixty-six per cent in the years of Revival, 1905–1915, while pioneering success was soon achieved in the newly-opened Philippines. Such revival and awakening were reported from other islands, revival in the older fields, awakening in the newer.

The Awakening had limited effect in the Latin American countries: unusual revival in Brazil, phenomenal awakening in Chile, with Evangelical membership in both countries starting to climb, until in our times it passed the number of practising Roman Catholics; pioneering continued in other republics with sparse results but promise of future harvest since realised.

The Edinburgh World Missionary Conference recognized that more progress had been made in Africa in the first decade of the twentieth century than experienced hitherto. The Protestant communicants in the African mission fields increased in 1903–10 from 300,000 to 500,000, there having been many awakenings in various parts of those years; but the full impact of the Welsh Revival was not felt until the war years, when phenomenal revival occurred among the Africans. In the next half century, the rate of increase was double that of the general population.



It was noteworthy that the Awakening of the 1900s was ecumenical in the best sense of the word. It was thoroughly interdenominational. The fuller narratives have provided instances of Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Congregational, Disciple, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Reformed congregations sharing in the Revival, with a total lack of evidence of any response on the part of Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox communions, but this is not surprising, for it was so in the days of the Puritans, of Wesley, of Finney and of Moody. Only in the mid-twentieth century, when their changing attitude to Scripture had accompanied a changing attitude to dissent, have heretofore non-evangelical church bodies been affected by evangelical movements.

During the Welsh Revival, there occurred charismatic phenomena, uncanny discernment, visions, trances but no glossolalia. There was an outbreak of speaking in tongues in India in the aftermath of the Awakening. In 1906, there was speaking in tongues among converts of the Revival in Los Angeles, from which Pentecostalism spread widely. A glossolalic movement rose from a non-glossolalic revival.

There is no telling what might have happened in society had not the First World War absorbed the energies of the nations in the aftermath of this Edwardian Awakening. The time, talent and treasure of the people were pre-empted in their struggle for national existence, and p. 303 what little was over was devoted to the welfare of the fighting men and victims of war. This was the case in World War I.

## **SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE AWAKENING**

Even so, no one could possibly say that the Awakenings of the 1900s in Britain or the United States were without a social impact. In Britain, there was utter unanimity on the part of observers regarding “the high ethical character” of the movement. The renewed obedience to the four great social commandments reduced crime, promoted honesty, inculcated truthfulness and produced chastity. Drunkenness and gambling were sharply curtailed. It was the same in the United States, for a wave of morality went over the country, producing a revival of righteousness. Corruption in state and civic government encountered a setback which was attributed by observers in church or state to the Great Awakening. For a dozen years, the country was committed in degree to civic and national integrity, until new forces of corruption triumphed again in the 1920s.

In such awakenings, it seems that the individual response is much more immediate than the social response. British church leaders acclaimed “the high ethical character of the movement.” The then largest denomination in the United States declared in review that the public conscience had been revived, overthrowing corrupt officials, crossing the party lines, electing governors, senators, assemblymen, mayors and district attorneys of recognized honesty. The people of Philadelphia “threw the rascals out” and put in a dedicated mayor. Washington Gladden, the “father of the social gospel,” was assured that the general awakening had started a moral revolution in the lives of the people. In other countries, profound impressions were made.

What was the social effect outside western Protestantism? On mission fields, missionaries multiplied their schools and hospitals. In twenty years, pupils in Christian schools in India doubled to 595,725; 90% of nurses were Christian, mostly trained at mission hospitals. In China, missionaries pioneered secondary and higher education and thus laid the foundations of the medical service; beginnings of Africa’s educational systems and medical service were due likewise to the missionary impulse.

Thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century, revivals of New Testament Christianity and awakenings of people in related communities, accomplished not only much growth in the body of believers but also improvement in society.

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Dr. Orr uses 'revival' for the renewal of life among believers and 'awakening' for the coming alive to spirituality of the community. He writes, "Revival is the work of God with the response of the people of God, awakening, the work of God with the response of the unregenerated masses."

*Editor* p. 304

# The Holy Spirit and the Church

Klaas Runia

*Reprinted from The Holy Spirit Down to Earth, 1977, with permission*

No Christian will deny that there is a close relation between the Holy Spirit and the Church. From the point of view of the *history of salvation* one can say that the New Testament Church came into existence on the day of Pentecost. On purpose we speak of the New Testament Church. If the term 'Church' is used in a wider sense, for instance, as a designation of the people of God, then it must be said that the Church was already in existence in the days of the Old Testament. One can think, for example, of the establishment of the covenant with Abraham and afterwards with Israel as a nation at Sinai. One can even say with the Heidelberg Catechism "that the Son of God, out of the whole human race, *from the beginning to the end of the world*, gathers, defends and preserves for Himself, by his Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith, a Church chosen to everlasting life" (Lord's Day 21). On the other hand, it would be possible to say the the New Testament Church came into being during the ministry of Jesus Himself, who as the Messiah gathered a people around Himself. Yet "in the full sense of the Church in vigorous life, redeemed by the cross of Christ, invigorated by the divine power, set forth on the path of work and worship, the Church certainly did not come into existence until that day of Pentecost. The coming of the Spirit upon the little band of disciples galvanized them into action. It constituted them as the Church."<sup>1</sup>

But the relation between the Holy Spirit and the Church is not only of an historical nature. Spirit and Church are also inseparably related from the *theological* point of view. The ancient Church expressed this in its Creeds by incorporating the Church in the 'third' article, the article on the Holy Spirit. "I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe in the holy,

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<sup>1</sup> Leon Morris, *The Spirit of the Living God*, 1960, 54, 55.

catholic Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.” It is noteworthy that the Church is mentioned first, even before the blessings bestowed upon the individual believer. When the early Christians thought of the Spirit, they related Him immediately to the Church. Likewise, when they thought of the Church, they could do this only within the context of the Spirit and his work.  
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## THE SPIRIT’S RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

The Church, however, is not only related to the Spirit, but also to Jesus Christ. She is not only called God’s temple, in which God’s Spirit dwells ([I Cor. 3:16](#)), but she is also called the body of Christ ([I Cor. 12:27](#)). This raises the question: What exactly is the relation between Christ and the Church on the one hand, and between the Spirit and the Church on the other? Behind this lies the question of the relation between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. As is well known, this is one of the most difficult problems in contemporary theology.<sup>2</sup> It is impossible to discuss it here at great length. It must suffice to make some comments.

Taking our starting point in the history of salvation, we see a double relation between Jesus, who is the Christ, and the Holy Spirit. On the one hand, Jesus Himself is the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit overshadows Mary so that she conceives ([Matt. 1:18ff.](#), [Luke 1:35](#)). On the occasion of Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist, the Spirit descends upon Him ([Matt. 3:16](#)). Yes, He receives the Spirit not by measure, but in fullness ([John 3:34](#)). Therefore He may be called the Messiah, the one who is anointed with the Spirit (cf. [Luke 4:18, 19](#)). Through the eternal Spirit He offers Himself to God on the cross ([Heb. 9:14](#)) and through the same Spirit God raises Him from the dead (cf. [Rom. 1:4](#); [8:11](#); [I Tim. 3:16](#)). The resurrection, however, is also a turning point in the relationship. As the risen and exalted Messiah, Jesus now receives the right to make disposition of the Spirit. Some theologians have even gone so far as to speak of an identification of the exalted Messiah and the Spirit.<sup>3</sup> In my opinion such an identification is untenable on the basis of the scriptural data. Admittedly, the exalted Christ, the Kurios, and the Spirit are inseparable. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ and in the Spirit Christ Himself is present. Yet they are never identified, but always distinguished. This is true even of [II Corinthians 3:17](#), where at first glance Paul seems to identify them, when he writes: “Now the Lord is the Spirit.” But this is immediately followed by the words: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”<sup>4</sup> We can therefore go no further than to say that in and through the Spirit Jesus Himself is present. This does not mean that the Spirit is ‘only’ a function of the exalted Lord and does not have his own subsistence. p. 306 Just as in the history of salvation the Son makes Himself available to be the “servant of the Lord” (cf. [Phil. 2:7](#)), so the Spirit makes Himself available to the exalted Messiah. This Jesus foretold in the Paraclete sayings: “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak.... He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you” ([John 16:13, 14](#)).

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. I. Herrmann, *Kyrios und Pneuma*, 1961; H. Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 1964, esp. Ch. I; J. P. Versteeg, *Christus en de Geest*, 1971.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Herrmann, *op. cit.*, 140. This view is contested by J. P. Versteeg.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. R. C. H. Lenski, *I and II Corinthians*, 1946, 946. “The fact that Paul is not fusing the two persons of the deity into one is at once apparent when he writes ‘The Spirit of the Lord.’”

For this reason it is not at all surprising that in the New Testament the Church is related to both Christ and the Spirit. The most fundamental of these relations is the one to Christ. The Church owes its existence to Him. Her being rests upon the saving act of God in Jesus Christ, upon the great atonement accomplished once for all in Him.<sup>5</sup> She is “the Church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood” ([Acts 20:28](#)); for “Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her” ([Eph. 5:25](#)). Yes, this relationship is so close, that the congregation is called ‘the body of Christ.’ “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” ([I Cor. 12:27](#)). Here too Paul sometimes uses expressions that almost border on an identification between Christ and the Church (cf. [I Cor. 12:12](#)). Yet throughout his letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians he clearly states that Jesus is the head of the body (cf. [Eph. 1:22](#); [4:15](#); [Col. 1:18](#)).

This close relationship with Christ, however, does not exclude but rather includes the relationship with the Spirit. It is through the Spirit that the exalted Lord communicates Himself and all his gifts to the Church. Exactly at this point it becomes almost impossible to distinguish between Christ and the Spirit. There is hardly any difference between the expressions ‘in Christ’ and ‘in the Spirit,’ or between ‘the Spirit in us’ and ‘Christ in us.’ Within this context Paul can also write: “Now the Lord is the Spirit” ([II Cor. 3:17](#)). For the same reason he can relate the so-called ‘charismata’ to both Christ and the Spirit. In [I Corinthians 12](#) they are ascribed particularly to the Spirit. In [Ephesians 4](#) the gifts descend from the exalted Lord. There is nothing contradictory in this, for it follows from that very same relationship between the exalted Lord and the Spirit.<sup>6</sup> The exalted Lord gives his gifts through the Spirit. The Spirit takes them out of Christ and gives them to the believers.

## THE SPIRIT GIVEN TO THE BELIEVERS COLLECTIVELY

The whole New Testament affirms that every believer receives the **P. 307** Holy Spirit. No one can be a believer without having received the Spirit in his heart. Emphatically Paul states: “No one can say ‘Jesus is Christ’ except by the Holy Spirit” ([I Cor. 12:3](#)). Yet we would be mistaken if we stopped here. In his great work on the Holy Spirit in *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* Swete has pointed out that, “as the end approached and the Pentecostal effusion drew near, Jesus spoke of the Spirit as to be given to His disciples collectively.”<sup>7</sup> And so it indeed happened on the day of Pentecost. Not only did the eleven receive the Spirit, but all 120 believers who were gathered together in “one place” ([Acts 2:1](#)). Later on the new converts received the Spirit, when they were added to the body of Christ by baptism and/or the laying on of hands (cf. [Acts 8:15ff.](#), [9:17](#), [19:5ff.](#)).<sup>8</sup>

In the letters of Paul we notice the same emphasis on the corporate aspect of the reception of the Spirit. We find this in particular in two of his letters and in both cases it is stressed against the background of internal strife and threatening conflict. In the congregation of Corinth there was the great danger of spiritual individualism, whereby each member of the congregation exulted in his own gifts. Overagainst this individualism Paul stated that the whole congregation is a temple (NAOS) of God’s Spirit in which God’s Spirit dwells ([I Cor. 3:16](#)). Later on, in the same letter, he wrote: “For with one Spirit we

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. *The Pattern of the Church, A Baptist View*, ed. by A. Gilmore, 1963, 90.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Herman Ridderbos, *Paul*, 1975, 86ff.

<sup>7</sup> H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, 1919, 4th ed., 306.

<sup>8</sup> The only exception is the case of Cornelius and his household. This event has been called ‘The Pentecost of the Gentiles’ and is a remarkable parallel to the first Pentecost. Yet it should be noted that in [Acts 10](#) the outpouring of the Spirit happens only after Peter has arrived and has started preaching.

were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit” ([1 Cor. 12:13](#)).<sup>9</sup> In the background of the letter to the Ephesians is the contrast Jews-Gentiles, a contrast that threatened the unity of all Christian congregations in the first century. And again Paul put the emphasis on the corporate reception of the Spirit. The basis of unity lies in Jesus Christ who in his death on the cross broke down the dividing wall of hostility ([2:14](#)). But in the same passage Paul also referred to the Spirit. In verse [18](#) he wrote: “for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father,” and he concluded the argument by saying: “In him (Jesus Christ) you too are being built into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (verse [22](#)). It is not surprising either that this letter contains the passage about the one body, the one Spirit, the one hope, the one Lord, the one faith, the one baptism, the one God and Father ([Eph. 4:4–6](#)). Body and Spirit are [p. 308](#) mentioned in one breath, for the secret of the unity of the congregation is found in the one Spirit whom they all received and in whose gifts they all participate.

But these two letters are not exceptions. In nearly all the letters of Paul and also in those of the other New Testament writers we find similar statements (cf. [Rom. 5:5](#); [8:9–11](#); [Gal. 3](#); [2](#), [5](#); [1 Thess. 4:8](#); [1 Peter 4:14](#); [1 John 3:24](#); [4:13](#)). In all these texts the writers address the entire congregation. Their starting point is that all believers have received the Spirit. Rightly F. W. Grosheide says: “In the new dispensation the Church of the Lord, in the sense of the universal Christian Church, is a congregation of Spirit-possessors or Spiritbearers, pneumatici.”<sup>10</sup>

But can this relationship between the Spirit and the Church be defined more precisely? When we survey the history of the Church and of theology, we see that basically there are three different views.

## A. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW

This view is concisely expressed in the formula: “The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church.” This formula, dating back to Augustine, has been taken up in official papal statements of both the 19th and 20th century (*Divinum Illud Munus*, 1896, by Pope Leo XIII and *Mystici Corporis*, 1943, by Pope Pius XII). It is a clear indication of how the Roman Catholic Church sees itself and how it sees the Holy Spirit in relation to itself. George S. Hendry puts it thus: “In the Roman view, the Church is primarily the successor of Christ; the presence and power of the Holy Spirit are then regarded as endowments bequeathed by Christ to the Church to enable it to discharge its supernatural role.”<sup>11</sup> On the one hand this means that the Roman Catholic Church does admit that it needs the Spirit. In order to fulfil its mission it is dependent on the Spirit. On the other hand, this dependence is understood as a kind of possession. In particular the bishops as successors of the apostles and therefore of Christ Himself, partake of the Spirit. They have the right to administer the sacraments and thus to forgive sins. Although it is not denied that the Spirit also works in the ordinary members of the Church, the latter are and remain dependent on the former. Pius XII declares that the Spirit, “though present in all the members and working in them in a divine way, works on the inferior members through the ministry of the superior ones.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The RSV translates ‘by one Spirit,’ but we believe that ‘with one Spirit’ is more correct (cf. also the same expression *en pneumati* in [Matt. 3:11](#); [Mark 1:8](#); [Luke 3:16](#); [Acts 1:5](#)). Cf. also H. N. Ridderbos, *Paul*, 372/3.

<sup>10</sup> *De Heilige Geest*, ed. by J. H. Bavinck, P. Prins, G. Brillenburg Wurth, 1949, 99.

<sup>11</sup> George S. Hendry, *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology*, 1957, 55.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. H. Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 44.

In this way the Holy Spirit **P. 309** is imprisoned in the sacramental institution of the Church and Hendry rightly comments: “There is no place in the Roman Catholic system for a confrontation of the Church with the Holy Spirit as Lord, i.e., as witness to the Lordship of Christ over the Church. Rather, the Holy Spirit, as the soul of the Church is the source from which the Church is inflated with its own authoritarian claim.”<sup>13</sup>

The question may be asked whether this view still holds true of present-day Roman Catholic teaching. Have there not been shifts in emphasis, especially since the second Vatican Council? Although there have been important shifts, we nevertheless believe that basically, at least as far as official teaching is concerned, nothing has really changed. It is true for example, that the *Constitutio de Ecclesia* of Vaticanum II first speaks of the Church as the ‘people of God’ (*populus Dei*) and only then mentions the hierarchy. Yet it speaks of the hierarchy in such a way that the ordinary members of the Church are still fully dependent upon them. “With priests and deacons as helpers, the bishops received the charge of the community, presiding in God’s stead over the flock of which they are the shepherds in that they are teachers of doctrine, ministers of sacred worship and holders of office in government” (section 20). In the next section we read: “In order to fulfil such exalted functions, the apostles were endowed by Christ with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit coming upon them (cf. [Acts 1:8](#); [2:4](#); [John 20:22–23](#)), and they passed on the gift of the Spirit to their auxiliaries by the imposition of hands (cf. [I Tim. 4:14](#); [II Tim. 1:6–7](#)), which is handed down to our day through the episcopal consecration.... It is abundantly clear that by the imposition of hands and through the words of consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is given, and a sacred character is impressed in such wise that bishops, in a resplendent and visible manner, take the place of Christ Himself, teacher, shepherd and priest, and act as his representatives (*in eius persona*)” (section 21).

## B. THE SPIRITUALIST VIEW

An altogether different view is found in the so-called Radical Reformation. Here all emphasis is put on the gift of the Spirit to the individual believer. While Rome institutionalised the Spirit, the Radical Reformation individualised Him. *The* dwelling place of the Spirit is the heart of the individual believer. All stress is laid on the immediate subjective experience of the Spirit. The Church as an **P. 310** institution hardly plays a part in their lives. The really important thing is the fellowship with those who have a similar experience. Berkhof puts it thus: “In no case is the church more than the assembly of those who recognize one another as bearers of the same Spirit. Their church is at most an organized group or sect, in many cases a loose convention or conventicle. In every case this church, as such, is not the work of the Spirit but it is a human consequence of the spiritual work in individual hearts, founded on the natural impulse of congenials to seek out one another. So the relation of the Spirit to this community never can be more than an indirect one. Hence it is quite natural that the group is dissolved or that secessions take place as soon as the participants no longer recognize one another as bearers of the same Spirit.”<sup>14</sup>

Although, to all appearances, this view is diametrically opposed to that of the Roman Catholic Church, there is fundamentally a great deal of agreement. For here too dependence on the Spirit (which is readily acknowledged) basically means possession. Those who have received the Spirit are absolutely certain of his presence and can always

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<sup>13</sup> Hendry, *op. cit.*, 58.

<sup>14</sup> Berkhof, *op. cit.*, 46.

appeal to Him. Here too there is no real place for criticism, for who in the world would dare to criticize the Spirit? It is interesting to note that this fundamental harmony (or should we say analogy?) between Roman Catholicism and Radical Reformation was already recognized by the Reformers. In connection with the inseparable relation between Word and Spirit Luther wrote in the *Smalcald Articles*: “In these matters, which concern the external, spoken Word, we must hold firmly to the conviction that God gives no one his Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word which comes before. Thus we shall be protected from the enthusiasts—that is, from the spiritualists who boast that they possess the Spirit without and before the Word and who therefore judge, interpret, and twist the Scriptures or spoken Word according to their pleasure. Münzer did this, and many still do it in our day.... The papacy, too, is nothing but enthusiasm, for the pope boasts that ‘all laws are in the shrine of his heart’.... All this is the old devil and the old serpent who made enthusiasts of Adam and Eve.”<sup>15</sup> In his *Reply to Sadoletto* Calvin made exactly the same observation. “We are assailed by two sects which seem to differ most widely from each other. For what similitude is there in appearance between the Pope and the Anabaptists? And yet, that you may see that Satan never p. 311 transforms himself so cunningly as not in some measure to betray himself, the principal weapon with which they both assail us is the same. For when they boast extravagantly of the Spirit, the tendency certainly is to sink and bury the Word of God that they may make room for their own falsehoods.”<sup>16</sup>

It is very important for us, too, to have a clear understanding of these matters. For these same views are still present in our day. There may have been many changes in the Church of Rome, but at this point it has remained faithful to its own tradition. The spiritualist view also abounds in our day and makes its inroads into our own churches. I am thinking here in particular of the so-called charismatic movement. At first glance it seems to be quite different from the movements of the Radical Reformation. Pentecostals usually put much emphasis on their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. They also appeal to Scripture in order to found and prove their views. But every one who has a close acquaintance with them soon discovers that in many cases their own spiritual experience is at the centre of their spiritual life. I am afraid that Hendry is right when he says: “The spiritualist individual experiences his own conversion and the resultant spiritual glow rather than Jesus Christ and him crucified; when he bears his testimony, it is to speak of his new-found peace and happiness rather than to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”<sup>17</sup> At times I also wonder whether the ‘underground’ connections between the catholic and spiritualist views are not showing in the great impact the charismatic movement of our day has on large segments of the Roman Catholic Church. Undoubtedly, there are other points of contact as well (e.g., in the doctrine of sacramental grace), but does the deepest point of contact not lie in the idea of the possession of the Spirit, once He has been given and received?<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Smalcald Articles*, Ch. VIII, 3–5. Cf. *The Book of Concord*, ed. T. G. Tappert, 1959, 312.

<sup>16</sup> John Calvin and Jacopo Sadoletto, *A Reformation Debate*, ed. by John C. Olin, Harper Torchbooks, 1966, 61.

<sup>17</sup> Hendry, *op. cit.*, 68/9.

<sup>18</sup> We also believe that there is a clearly ‘enthusiast’ or ‘spiritualist’ trend in many documents of the World Council of Churches. They, too, often claim the presence and guidance of the Spirit, without giving any evidence that the ideas brought forward are based on or legitimated by Scripture. A clear example is the opening statement of the Uppsala Report on ‘The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church,’ which reads: “We give thanks to God the Holy Spirit that at this very time he is leading us into a fresh and exhilarating understanding of the Body of Christ, to the Glory of God the Father” (*The Uppsala 68 Report*, 11).

## C. THE PROTESTANT VIEW

As an example we take the view of Calvin. As is well known, Calvin had a very 'high' view of the Church. The heading of Chapter I of Book IV of the *Institutes* reads: "The true Church with which as Mother of all P. 312 the godly we must keep unity." In the first section of this chapter he writes: "I shall start, then, with the church, in whose bosom God is pleased to gather his sons, not only that they may be nourished by her help and ministry as long as they are infants and children, but also that they may be guided by her motherly care until they mature and at last reach the goal of faith. 'For what God has joined together, it is not lawful to put asunder,' so that for those to whom he is Father the church may also be Mother."<sup>19</sup> In the fourth section of the chapter he deals with 'the visible church as mother of believers' and writes: "For there is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly, unless she keep us under care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like the angels."<sup>20</sup> All this the Church can do only because the Spirit is present in her.<sup>21</sup>

If one did not know better, one might believe he is listening to a Roman Catholic author! But, of course, these statements of Calvin may not be isolated from his total view of the work of the Spirit.<sup>22</sup> In particular his *Reply to Sadoletto* is important for our discussion. Sadoletto had claimed that the Church is always and everywhere directed by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Calvin's reply is a question, followed by an affirmation. What comes of the Word of the Lord, that clearest of all marks, and which the Lord himself, in pointing out the Church, so often recommends to us? For seeing how dangerous it would be to boast of the Spirit without the Word, He declared that the Church is indeed governed by the Holy Spirit, but in order that government might not be vague and unstable, He annexed it to the Word.<sup>23</sup> Calvin does not deny that the Church needs the Spirit. He also believes that the Spirit has been given to the Church. He is willing to say: "The Spirit goes before the Church, to enlighten her in understanding the Word," but then he immediately adds: "While the p. 313 Word itself is like the Lydian stone, by which she tests all doctrines."<sup>24</sup> These few sentences very succinctly summarize the view of the Reformers, which, dare I say, is the view of the New Testament itself. For both Luther and Calvin a Church without the Spirit is an absurdity, but the Spirit is the Spirit of the Word.<sup>25</sup> The Church did not receive the promise of the Spirit, but this promise is not automatically fulfilled. It is fulfilled only if, on the part of the Church, there is faith, and this faith is regulated by the Word of God. The Church will never doubt that the Holy Spirit is always with it, its best guide in the right path. But it will at the same time be mindful what use God would have us receive from his Spirit. 'The Spirit,' he says, 'whom I shall send from the Father will lead you into all truth.' But how? Because, he says, 'the Spirit will recall all

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<sup>19</sup> *Institutes*, IV, I, 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Op. cit.*, IV, I, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *op. cit.*, IV, XIX, 6. "Surely, the Holy Spirit is still present among God's people, for the church cannot stand unless he is its guide and director."

<sup>22</sup> Cf. S. van der Linde, *De Leer van der Heiligen Geest bij Calvijn*, 1943, and Werner Krusche, *Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin*, 1957.

<sup>23</sup> *A Reformation Debate*, 60. For Sadoletto's statement, see 41. Cf. also 45: "The Church errs not, and even cannot err, since the Holy Spirit constantly guides her public and universal decrees and councils."

<sup>24</sup> *Op. cit.*, 61.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. S. van der Linde, *op. cit.*, 98.



that I have said to you.' Therefore, he declares that we are to expect nothing from his Spirit than that he will illumine our minds to perceive the truth of his teaching."<sup>26</sup>

At this point I would like to make one more reference to contemporary Roman Catholic theology. Some authors definitely show a much better understanding of the relationship between Spirit and Church. Hans Küng, for instance, clearly states that the Church is under the Spirit.<sup>27</sup> He works this out in four theses. 1. The Spirit is *not* the Church. It would be very dangerous to identify the Spirit and the Church. 2. The Spirit precedes the Church. 3. The Spirit works wherever He wants. 4. The Spirit works whenever He wants. The fact that the Church still has the Spirit, in spite of all her failures, is evidence of God's faithfulness. Every Protestant cannot but agree with this. And yet one cannot help feeling that there are still traces of spiritualism in Küng's view. In this whole section of his book there is no reference to the norm of God's Word, and therefore the question remains unanswered: how do we know where and when the Holy Spirit speaks to us? This silence about the Word as the decisive criterion is an indication that Küng has not yet fully abandoned the spiritualistic stance which characterized both Rome and the Radical Reformation.

### **How Does the Spirit Work in the Church?**

The Church as an empirical phenomenon shows two aspects, an institutional aspect and a community aspect. Both of them are [p. 314](#) indispensable and for both of them the work of the Holy Spirit is decisive.

#### **A. THE INSTITUTIONAL ASPECT**

We start with a quotation from Berkhof. "For many Protestants it is difficult to understand that the Spirit has anything to do with the institutional and organizational character of the church. The reason is that they have such an individualistic and spiritualistic or, at best, personalistic conception of the Spirit that they do not understand that God created structures as well as persons and that in his saving work he is also interested in structures insofar as they can serve his purposes. The New Testament has not the slightest trouble in seeing that the Spirit is connected with outward acts, ministries and organizations."<sup>28</sup> He then goes on to mention several of these connections, such as: baptism, the laying on of hands, the Lord's Supper, the proclamation of the Gospel, authority and discipline in the Church, and the ministry.

Without the Holy Spirit all these activities and functions would lack all spiritual power. Of course, they could still be there without the Spirit. Externally the Church could maintain itself for a long time without the presence of the Spirit. But she would be spiritually dead. She would have become a purely human organization. Because of this possibility some Christians regard the institution of hardly any importance at all. In their opinion it is only the organizational hull. We believe that this is an altogether wrong approach. Actually it is an approach of unbelief. We should never forget that the Lord has given his promise to grant us his Holy Spirit through these institutional means. We can only be Church, if and when we believe this. Here too the word of Luther applies: 'If you believe, you have.'

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<sup>26</sup> *Institutes*, IV, VII, 13.

<sup>27</sup> H. Küng, *De Kerk*, 1967, 200ff.

<sup>28</sup> H. Berkhof, *op. cit.*, 51.

## B. THE COMMUNITY ASPECT

The institutional aspect is not the only one, it is not even the most important one. The real purpose of the Spirit is to create a community of believers. When we put it thus, we do not in any way want to make a contrast. As a matter of fact Reformed theology has always rejected any such contrast. H. Bavinck wrote: “The congregation of the believers on earth is not only charismatic, but also institutional. She is not only herself the property of Christ, but she also serves to lead others to Christ. She is *coetus* (meeting), but also *mater fidelium* **P. 315** (mother of the believers); organism, but also institution; purpose and means at the same time.”<sup>29</sup> Bavinck also explicitly refuses to answer the question which of the two has priority. “The question of the priority of the institution or the organism is itself evidence of onesidedness. Both belong together and constantly interact.”<sup>30</sup> Yet he does not deny that the deepest essence of the Church is its being the people of God or the congregation of believers. “There can be no doubt that according to the Scriptures the essence of the Church is found in its being God’s people.”<sup>31</sup> “It is beyond all doubt that in its deepest essence the Church is the congregation of true believers.”<sup>32</sup> This is also the teaching of the Reformed confessions. The Belgic Confession states: “We believe and profess one catholic and universal church, which is a holy congregation of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by his blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit” (Art. XXVII). The secret of this congregation is that she is the body of Christ, and this she is because the Holy Spirit connects these people with Christ and thus with each other. As we have seen before, for Paul’s ‘body’ and ‘Spirit’ belong so closely together that they are complementary. “There is one body and one Spirit” ([Eph. 4:4](#)). “With one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” ([I Cor. 12:13](#)). He also calls the congregation “a letter from Christ ... written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God” ([II Cor. 3:7](#)). In connection with the expression ‘the fellowship of the Holy Spirit’ (cf. [I Cor. 13:14](#); [Phil 2:1](#)) Morris writes that two interpretations are possible. The expression can mean: ‘participation in the Spirit’ or ‘fellowship created by the Spirit.’ But then he adds: “Whatever be the verdict on the disputed point, it is beyond doubt that the New Testament views the Christian Church as a fellowship of the redeemed, and a fellowship created by the Holy Spirit. It is not simply the result of the coming together of like-minded people, drawn together by a common interest. It is the result of the action of the Spirit Himself.”<sup>33</sup>

This congregation therefore is a charismatic fellowship. I shall not go into the question of the charismatic gifts, because this is the subject of another paper. But in my opinion there can be no doubt that according to the New Testament all believers have received one or more gifts of the Spirit (cf. [I Cor. 12:4–7](#), esp. verse [6](#)—‘in every **p. 316** one’—and verse [7](#)—‘to each’; cf. also [I Peter 4:10](#)—‘each’). But they have not received them for their own pleasure, but ‘for the common good’ ([I Cor. 12:7](#)), for ‘building up the church’ ([I Cor. 14:12](#)). Here we also find the secret of a vigorous congregational life. The latter is not just a matter of active office-bearers (however important!), but of a congregation in which all use their gifts to the full and co-operate for the edification of the whole.

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<sup>29</sup> H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, IV, 288.

<sup>30</sup> *Op. cit.*, 313.

<sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.*, 282.

<sup>32</sup> *Op. cit.*, 283.

<sup>33</sup> Leon Morris, *op. cit.*, 58.

c. However, this is not the end of the matter. The Church is not the end of God's ways. God's ultimate concern is with the world. It is striking indeed, how in the New Testament the gifts of the Spirit are nearly always connected with the *missionary task of the Church*. We see this already in the Paraclete sayings ([John 15:26, 27](#)). It is a very dominant theme in the Lukean writings ([Luke 24:48, 49](#); [Acts 1:4-8](#)). It is also emphasized in the gospel of John ([John 21:21-23](#)). And when the Spirit is poured out on the day of Pentecost all these promises are at once fulfilled: Peter and all the others immediately begin to evangelize ([Acts 2](#)). As a matter of fact the whole book of Acts is full of it. We call it the Acts of the Apostles, but a better name might be: the Acts of the Holy Spirit. And it is very significant indeed that this book of the Spirit contains the story of the missionary outreach of the Church. The Spirit Himself takes care that the programme of [Acts 1:8](#) is carried out: "In Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

In this way the Church is in the service of the coming Kingdom. Or to put it another way: the Church stands between the accomplished work of Christ and the Kingdom that is still to come. She lives between the times: the time of Christ's first coming and the time of his second coming. She lives out of the first coming and towards the second coming. And the time between these times is the time of the Holy Spirit, who as the Vicar of Christ works in this world, using the Church as his instrument.

### **What Does the Holy Spirit Do in the Church?**

1. The Holy Spirit gives *power* to the Church. In [Acts 1:8](#) we read Jesus' words: "You shall receive power ('dunamis') when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." And indeed, this 'dunamis' becomes visible everywhere. It becomes visible in the *life of the early Church*, [Acts 2:44-47](#). They were together and had all things in common. This is not an 'experiment of communism,' nor the picture of an ideal, but the description of the charismatic reality which prevailed in the life of the new Christian community. This 'dunamis' also becomes visible in the *preaching*. The preachers are ordinary people, the words they use [p. 317](#) are ordinary words, and yet what an effect they produce (cf. [Acts 2:41](#); [4:8](#); [13](#), [33](#) (with great 'dunamis'); [6:10](#); etc.). Some scholars have suggested that there may have been a charismatic element in this preaching.<sup>34</sup> This could well be so, when we take into account the reaction of Festus in [Acts 26:24](#) (cf. also [I Thess. 1:5](#); [I Cor. 2:4](#); [II Cor. 5:13](#)). It would be the fulfilment of [Luke 21:15](#). It also raises the question: Is our preaching today also full of the 'dunamis' of the Spirit? Why does our preaching today often have so little effect? Are our ministers not 'full of faith and of the Holy Spirit' (like Stephen in [Acts 6:5](#))? Is this also the reason why revivals do not seem to happen any more? Some time ago Dr. M. Lloyd Jones wrote: "You will not get the things I mentioned until something has happened to the preachers. The present state of things is a reflection of a defect in the preachers; it is great preaching that produces great believers and great listeners and congregations who rejoice.... The congregation is stirred by great preaching. And this is what happened in the great revivals."<sup>35</sup> The 'dunamis' of the Holy Spirit also becomes visible in the *charismatic phenomena*, such as speaking in tongues (cf. [Acts 10:46](#); [19:6](#) and the charismata mentioned in [I Cor. 12-14](#)). In addition, many signs and wonders happened (cf. [Acts 3:1-10](#); [4:30](#); [5:12](#); [6:8f.](#); [9:36f.](#)). Yet we should be mistaken if we would seek the power of the Spirit only in extraordinary and spectacular things. This power may become very manifest in such things but it is just as much present in the ordinary things which happen in the lives of Christians. Morris writes: "I like the story of the drunkard

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. H. M. Matter, in *De Heilige Geest*, 1949, 81.

<sup>35</sup> 'Twenty-five years on,' Elwyn Davies and Dr. M. Lloyd-Jones, in *The Banner of Truth*, 1975, 20.

who was converted, and who later came across some of his mates. On hearing what had happened they were amused, and somewhat cynical. 'You don't mean to tell me that you believe the Bible!' said one of them. 'Do you really think that Jesus changed water into wine?' 'Well, I don't know about that,' came the reply. 'But I do know that in my house He has changed beer into furniture!' And in its measure the same is true of everyone who has come to a saving knowledge of Christ. When Christ comes into a man's life, so does His Holy Spirit. The Spirit comes with creative power, and in the power of the Spirit that man is able to do things he could never do before. The Spirit does not simply tell men what to do; He gives them strength to do it."<sup>36</sup>

It is very important for us today to remember all this. There are many complaints about the powerlessness of the Church. But is the reason [p. 318](#) not this, that so many of our activities lack the power, the 'dunamis', of the Spirit? And we cannot blame the Spirit! We can blame only ourselves. Do we really pray for the breakthrough of his power in our lives? Let us remember: "Without the Holy Spirit, and without an intense belief in the Holy Spirit, no Church can have any real growth and development in its faith and in its belief."<sup>37</sup> And that is really what matters. The important thing is not that the 'machinery' of the Church runs smoothly, but that something happens to the people in and around the Church. Thomas Chalmers was once congratulated on a masterpiece of speech delivered in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. 'Yes,' said Chalmers, 'but what happened?'"<sup>38</sup>

2. The Holy Spirit is the *guide* of the Church. This is the promise which Jesus gave to his disciples: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth" ([John 16:13](#)). Undoubtedly this first of all applies to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and his saving work. One may say that the New Testament is the evidence of the fulfilment of this promise. Both the Gospels and the Epistles show such a deep insight into the person and work of Christ that only one explanation will do: these writers were guided by the Spirit. But Jesus' promise was not restricted to the apostles and their fellow-workers. Also in subsequent ages the Spirit has been active in guiding the Church. Again and again he raised up men and women who were privileged to discover new truths in the Word of God or who were able to apply to the Word of God in a new way to the situation in which the Church found itself. One can think here of such great men as Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, etc. But through the centuries there have also been many men and women who worked in a local church and were a tremendous help to their congregations. In this connection we should also mention the confessions of the Church, in particular those of the 16th and 17th century which have been and still are of tremendous value for the Church. But the guidance of the Spirit into all truth is not limited to doctrinal or confessional matters only. It applies to all matters that concern the church, including matters of government and discipline. The Dutch fathers of the 16th century were fully right when they inserted the following words in the official 'Opening prayer for ecclesiastical assemblies': "We beseech Thee, faithful God and Father, that, in accordance with Thy promise, Thou wilt abide in the midst of the present assembly through Thy Holy Spirit, and that He may lead us into all the truth." Likewise they said in the 'Closing [p. 319](#) prayer': "Thou hast also been present with Thy Holy Spirit in our assembly, guiding our deliberations according to Thy will, and binding our hearts together in mutual peace and unity." This thanksgiving has nothing to do with the Roman Catholic idea of the

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<sup>36</sup> Morris, *op. cit.*, 77/8.

<sup>37</sup> William Barclay, *The Promise of the Spirit*, 1960, 108.

<sup>38</sup> Barclay, *op. cit.*, 112.

'possession' of the Spirit, but was the believing answer to the promise which had been mentioned in the opening prayer. Moreover, the appeal to the promise was never isolated from the obedience to the revealed Word. In the same opening prayer we also read: "Grant that Thy Word may be our only rule and standard, in order that our deliberations may resound to the glory of Thy Name, the edification of Thy Churches and the peace of our own consciences."

3. The Holy Spirit, however, is not only the guide, but is also the *critic* of the Church. However true it may be that the Church is the communion of the saints, these saints are certainly not yet perfect. They are still sinners, as Luther said: *simul justus et peccator* (at the same time just[ified] and a sinner). Although Rome does acknowledge that the members of the church, including the members of the hierarchy, are all sinners, yet it maintains that the Church as a whole cannot err in doctrine. This view found its culmination point in the decision of Vaticanum I concerning the infallibility of the Pope, when he speaks *ex cathedra* in matters pertaining to faith and morals, a decision which was deliberately and emphatically repeated by Vaticanum II.<sup>39</sup> Here the Holy Spirit is imprisoned in the office of the Church. Protestants have rightly rejected this view as contrary to the Word of God. To be sure, they also believe the indefectibility of the Church.<sup>40</sup> This does not mean however that one particular ecclesiastical institution or denomination will remain till the end of the ages, but rather that there will always be a congregation of believers, however small, which will confess Jesus Christ as Lord, and believe in his Word.

Every Church, both as a local congregation and as a denomination, is constantly open to the criticism of the Spirit, who exercises this criticism by the Word of the prophets and apostles, inspired by Himself. Again and again He confronts the Church with his Word, challenging the Church to examine whether it is really obedient to the Word. This challenge also comes to us as Reformed Churches. For it may be true that we have beautiful confessions, but this does not automatically imply that we are truly obedient Churches. First of all, these confessions themselves are not perfect and therefore cannot be [p. 320](#) the last word. I know we have always acknowledged this. The Belgic Confession, for instance, says: "Neither may we consider any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, of equal value with these divine Scriptures, nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all." Undoubtedly we all agree with this statement, but do we live up to it? To what extent for instance are we guilty of traditionalism? Traditionalism is an easy way out. The traditionalist always has the confession on his side. But does he have the truth on his side? Is he hiding behind the walls of the confession in order to escape from the claim God's Word makes on him in this particular situation? The truth is never abstract but always concrete. In new situations (and history is changing the situation all the time) the Spirit wants to grant us out of the treasure of God's Word both old and new insights (cf. [Matt. 13:52](#)). Are we willing to accept them?

But the confessional aspect is only one side of the matter. There is also the aspect of the life of the Church. What are we doing with Jesus' commandments? (cf. [Matt. 28:20](#)). For instance, what are Christians of the so-called first world doing for the people in the third world? What is our attitude as a church towards people belonging to another race? What are we doing with texts such as: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither

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<sup>39</sup> *Constitutio de Ecclesia*, section 25.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Bavinck, *op. cit.*, IV, 308/9.

slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” ([Gal. 3:28](#))? Are we really willing to revise our own views, yes to revise ourselves, i.e., to be converted, and accept the other as he is? Are we really willing to examine our beliefs and attitudes in order to find out whether we are guided by man-made ideologies instead of being guided by the Word of God? Let us remember, personally but also as Churches, that we can be very confessional and yet utterly unfaithful to the Gospel of Him who told us the parable of the Good Samaritan, yes, who Himself was *the* Good Samaritan, giving his life for sinners of all nations and races. Let us also remember that in all seven letters to the seven congregations in Asia Minor, in which they are criticized on account of both doctrine and life, the expression recurs: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” ([Rev. 2, 3](#)).

4. We also need the Holy Spirit to attain the true *unity* of the Church. We cannot do that ourselves, neither in the local congregation, nor as denominations. Already in the New Testament itself we see that the unity is constantly threatened, and that on two accounts.<sup>41</sup> [p. 321](#) On the one hand, it is endangered by the presence of error (the antichrist-motif); on the other hand, it is endangered by lack of love (the Apollos-motif, cf. [I Cor. 1:10ff.](#)). In both cases the division can be overcome only by obedience to the Word of God. In the first case, where the truth of the apostolic witness is consciously gainsaid or rejected, there is no real unity any more, and the definite warning is sounded not to seek or maintain unity. Here the New Testament speaks of its ‘anathema’ ([Gal. 1:8](#)), or it uses the qualification ‘antichrist’ ([I John 2:18](#); cf. [4:1ff.](#)). In the second case, when it is not a division for the sake of truth but for purely personal reasons, all disunity is utterly condemned. With strong passion Paul puts the question to the Corinthians: ‘Is Christ divided?’ ([I Cor. 1:13](#)). The answer is implied in the question. It is impossible for the body of Christ to be divided by such purely personal, non-theological factors. It is impossible, because the one Spirit of Christ dwells in them all. Paul pleads with the Ephesians that they be “eager to maintain the *unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace” ([Eph. 4:3](#)). And then he immediately continues, stating the reason: “There is one body and one Spirit” (verse [4](#)). Likewise he pleads with the Philippians: “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, *any participation in the Spirit*, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind ...” ([Phil. 2:1, 2](#)).

All this applies not only to the local congregation, but also to the area of ecumenicity. We have to stretch out our hands, across the walls of our Reformed Churches, to reach others. I know this is not easy. There are many complicating factors. But I am convinced that we are not allowed to let our historical, cultural, racial, national, social and even doctrinal differences be the last word. We have also to listen to what the Spirit has to say to us *today*. The Spirit did not work and speak in the past only, but He also speaks today. I believe it is the Spirit of Jesus Christ who has set the Churches into motion, so that they begin to seek each other. Let us never forget that the modern ecumenical movement started on the mission field! We do not have the right to isolate ourselves and hide ourselves in our Reformed castle, but we must be willing to enter into serious conversations with other Churches and to listen, together with them, to what the Spirit has to say to us in the Word of God, as it applies to our 20th century situation. In the only recorded prayer of Paul, a prayer for the Church, he asked for the power “to comprehend *with all the saints* what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God” ([Eph. 3:18, 19](#)). [p. 322](#)

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. *The Nature of the Church and its Ecumenical Calling*, Report for the RES of Amsterdam 1968, *Acts*, 1968, 233ff.

5. Finally, the Spirit keeps the *expectation* of the Church alive. The Spirit Himself is an eschatological gift. His coming on the day of Pentecost is evidence that the 'last days' have started (cf. the insertion by Peter of the words 'in the last days' into the prophecy of Joel, [Acts 2:17](#)). In [Romans 8:23](#) Paul speaks of himself and the believers in Rome as "we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit." The genitive 'of the Spirit' is a genitive of explanation, meaning: the Spirit Himself is the first-fruit of the harvest to come. He is the foretaste of the Kingdom.<sup>42</sup> Likewise the Spirit is called the 'arraboon,' i.e., the down-payment, the first instalment of the riches to come ([II Cor. 1:22](#); [5:5](#); [Eph. 1:14](#)). As Christians and also as Churches we are constantly inclined to settle down in this world. But the Spirit does not allow us to do this. Again and again He awakens us out of our worldly complacency and our complacent worldliness. He knows that what He gives now is only a down-payment. And He keeps alive the desire for the full adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies ([Rom. 8:23](#)). Yes, the joy and peace which He gives makes us abound in hope ([Rom. 15:13](#)). It is therefore not surprising to see that the Book of Revelation closes with the call of the Spirit and the bride: 'Come' ([22:17](#)). Without the Spirit the bride could well have forgotten her bridegroom. But the Spirit keeps the memory of Him alive in her heart and mind. The Spirit Himself is also looking forward to his coming, for at that moment his work too will be perfected. In the present we have only the 'down-payment.' Then we will receive the fullness of the Spirit. John says when Jesus appears that we shall be like Him ([I John 3:2](#)). Of Jesus we read in [John 3:34](#) that he received the Spirit 'not with measure.' We may expect that we too will be full of the Spirit. Our whole being, body and soul, will be permeated and controlled by the Spirit.<sup>43</sup>

Yes, then we shall be God's people in the fullest sense of the word. God Himself will dwell with us and we shall be his people ([Rev. 21:3](#)), a people so full of the Spirit that no trace of sin is left. "In our present world we have no words or ideas to describe what that means, not even by analogy. It is enough to know that the power of Christ's resurrection, which is the power of Spirit now in the world, is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think. 'Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is'" ([I John 3:2](#)).<sup>44</sup>

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# Renewal Catholic, Charismatic and Calvinist

G. A. Cole

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Berkhof, *op. cit.*, 106.

<sup>43</sup> *Institutes*, I, XIV, 18; III, XX, 46.

<sup>44</sup> Berkhof, *op. cit.*, 108.

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From one perspective the Bible's major theme is renewal. For from Genesis to Revelation the Scriptures adumbrate the story of how God the Father is glorifying His name by bringing many sons and daughters to glory—renewing them in his own image through His Son, Jesus Christ by His Spirit ([Colossians 3:10](#), [Ephesians 4:22–24](#), [Hebrews 2:5–15](#)). Biblical renewal is Trinitarian in source and cosmic in scope. Not only is the individual to be renewed but also the created order (cf. [Romans 12:1–2](#) and [Matthew 19:28](#) respectively).

Further, there have been times in the history of the people of God when the blessings of the age to come have dramatically invaded its life. The Apostolic Age and the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century are just two outstanding examples.

Therefore, from biblical, personal and historical perspectives renewal is of great importance and interest to all of God's people. However, not all Christians have understood renewal—its nature, its aims, its conditions—in the same way. Hence a study of this kind.

In this article three important contemporary theological positions—vis-à-vis renewal—shall be presented; namely a Catholic, a Charismatic and Calvinist one. General remarks will be made about each position before a leading representative of each is discussed: Cardinal Suenens, Michael Harper and James I. Packer.<sup>1</sup> Finally a brief conclusion will be offered.

## I

### A CATHOLIC VIEW OF RENEWAL

#### General Remarks

Since Vatican II (1962–1965) renewal has been an important notion for Catholics. This is not accidental for one of the major aims of the council was *aggiornamento* (“bring up to date”). Pope John XXIV himself had the vision of a renewed Catholicism. Therefore, any **p. 324** consideration of Catholic renewal must be made in the light of Vatican II.<sup>2</sup> *Aggiornamento* has a number of features including a renewed interest in the Bible critically considered, a renewed interest in the Liturgy as a community rather than a solely priestly act; a renewed interest in world peace in a just world and renewed interest in the Charisms (gifts) of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

#### Cardinal Suenens

León-Joseph Suenens was born in 1904 in Belgium and educated both in Brussels and at the Gregorian University in Rome. He became a priest in 1927 and a Cardinal of the church, primate of Belgium and Archbishop of Malines—Brussels in 1961. He was

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<sup>1</sup> Choosing a representative figure of each position has not been easy. Catholicism, the Charismatic movement and the Calvinist tradition are each variegated phenomenon. Hence, the stress must fall on the indefinite article “a” with regard to those leaders chosen for discussion.

<sup>2</sup> See Walter M. Abbot (Gen. ed.) and Joseph Gallagher (trans. ed) *Documents of Vatican II*, N.Y., 1966, for some of the key documents of the council. A judicious appraisal of Vatican II from an evangelical perspective is found in David F. Wells, *Revolution in Rome*, London, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> See Vatican Council II and *Aggiornamento* in Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass (eds.), *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, London, 1977.



moderator at Vatican II and in 1976 received the Templeton Award for Progress in Religion. By then he was also part of Catholic charismatic renewal. One Catholic assessment of his stature runs: “Christians of all denominations know him as a committed ecumenist and a leader of worldwide Christian renewal”.<sup>4</sup>

With regard to Vatican II Suenens contends that “Vatican II concentrated on one topic: the renewal of the church”.<sup>5</sup> In his view two of the council documents in particular, draw attention to the importance and centrality of the Holy Spirit in any such renewal; namely *Lumen Gentium* and *On the church*. According to Suenens, both documents teach that the Holy Spirit provides the charisms that the church needs for a robust spiritual life.<sup>6</sup>

Importantly for the cardinal, the Catholic “church is not only the institutional church but is at the same time a charismatic community in which the presence of the Holy Spirit should make a discernible difference to its life. On this view the Catholic church exists in two dimensions: visible and invisible or institutional and charismatic”.<sup>7</sup>

In Suenens’s view the Bible teaches that renewal is a work of the Holy Spirit. He argues:

The Holy Spirit reveals himself as a power, which sends forth the Church to p. 325 the far ends of the world, endowing it with its missionary dimension, its catholicity. It is also he who creates the living unity of the mystical Body making Christians holy, and clothing them with his power.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, for Suenens the agent of renewal is the Spirit, the locus of renewal is the church and evidence of renewal is that the charisms are operating.

Suenens makes virtually no attempt at exegesis when discussing the biblical materials. There is a reason for this. Suenens reads the Bible through the lens of the official teaching of his church. He is a loyal Catholic who sees in the church’s doctrinal pronouncements the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus he can say of Vatican II:

... the Holy Spirit gave a ray of light and warmth to his church. It was just like the sun coming out and shining on a mountain snowcap ... Pope John opened Vatican II by saying that he hoped it would be a “new Pentecost”. I believe (writes Suenens) the decade we are just beginning (the 1970’s) will bear out his wish.<sup>9</sup>

By the end of the 1970s amongst those Christians touched by charismatic renewal, the Catholic charismatics were the most numerous and best organized.<sup>10</sup>

For the cardinal, Holy Spirit renewal is not antithetical to social action. In his view, the body of Christ needs both emphases. He maintains that the Charismatic renewal is a renewal of commitment to the first commandment (love for God), whilst the social action movement is a renewal of commitment to the second commandment (love for neighbour).

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<sup>4</sup> From the Introduction by the editors in Léon Joseph Suenens, *Essays on Renewal*, Ann Arbor, 1977, p. viii.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>6</sup> Léon Joseph Suenens, *A New Pentecost?* London, 1977, pp. 30–32.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Suenens, *Essays*, p. 118.

<sup>10</sup> See Ralph Martin’s assessment in “A Catholic Assesses the Charismatic Renewal in His Church”, *Christianity Today*, March 7, 1980, pp. 17–18, and Michael Harper, *This is the Day*, London, 1977, ch. 3–4, *passim*.

In an interesting work jointly written with activist bishop Dom Helder Camara of Brazil, Suenens maintains:

... a Christian who is not charismatic—in the full sense of the word, that is to say, open to the Spirit and docile to his promptings—is a Christian forgetful of his baptism. On the other hand, a Christian who is not “socially committed” is a truncated Christian who disregards the gospel’s commandments.<sup>11</sup>

For Suenens charismatic renewal and the pursuit of justice in society are not either/ors but both/ands. His balance is impressive. p. 326

With regard to liturgy, Suenens is likewise committed to renewal. He sees the Liturgical Movement as a means for rediscovering the prayer life of the church.<sup>12</sup> He believes that the church is founded on the Eucharist and Pentecost and notes a new accent on the Holy Spirit in the Liturgies of the Word, Eucharist and other sacraments. He comments:

In drawing attention to the living reality of the Holy Spirit in the Church, the liturgical renewal brings us to a greater awareness of the role of religious experience itself. Indeed renewal means an awareness of the ever faithful, ever active presence of God among us. The Holy Spirit enables us to experience the immediacy of God in the heart of man and in history; this experience is essential to Christianity.<sup>13</sup>

How then does Suenens understand the renewal of the individual Christian? Again, his own presentation is so lucid it deserves quotation in extenso:

We should clarify the vocabulary we use. For instance I am not too pleased when we speak of the “baptism in the Spirit” unless one explains very clearly what one means. It is really the release, the coming to full freedom and liberty of all the gifts of the Spirit which we have already received at our baptism and confirmation. It is not any sort of new sacrament, but rather a revitalization of all those gifts of the Spirit hidden within us and now coming to openness, to full blossoming.<sup>14</sup>

Significantly, Suenens’ statement above is found in a work to which both he and Michael Ramsey, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, contributed. The work itself is illustrative of Suenens’ commitment to ecumenical dialogue. His great hope is that the charismatic renewal might be used by the Spirit to bring Christian unity closer. He believes that already signs of doctrinal rapprochement can be detected in the areas of Baptism, Eucharist and ministry and existential unity in the area of Holy Spirit experience.<sup>15</sup>

In sum: Cardinal Suenens exemplifies many aspects of modern Catholic renewal in his concern for the Spirit and concern for a revitalized church through social action, individual renewal and ecumenical dialogue. He is an excellent example of what has been aptly termed “the revolution in Rome”.<sup>16</sup> p. 327

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<sup>11</sup> Cardinal Suenens and Dom Helder Camara, *Charismatic Renewal and Social Action: A Dialogue*, London, 1980, pp. 2–3.

<sup>12</sup> Suenens, *Pentecost*, p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Léon Joseph Cardinal Suenens and Michael Ramsey, *Come Holy Spirit*, London, 1977, pp. 54–55.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 78–81.

<sup>16</sup> Wells, title.

## II A CHARISMATIC VIEW OF RENEWAL

### General Remarks

The Charismatic movement has renewal as its chief desideratum. Predominantly lay in character, charismatic renewal is now a worldwide movement that has leapt denominational boundaries. A defining characteristic of the movement is an accent on the exercise of spiritual gifts based on the model thought to be found in Paul's Corinthian correspondence (especially [1 Corinthians 12-14](#)). Such an exercise—it is argued—is usually predicated upon a deep experience of Holy Spirit renewal often termed the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit". The movement had its rise in the early 1960s in the U.S. and since then has spread geographically to the Old World and the Third World.<sup>17</sup>

### Michael Harper

Michael Harper is an Anglican minister, who served, at one stage, for six years as John Stott's curate at All Souls, Langham Place, London. He is an internationally recognized leader in Charismatic renewal, author of numerous books on the subject and at one time Director of the now defunct Fountain Trust.

How then does this charismatic leader view renewal? For Harper renewal can be defined as:

... the Christian's fresh encounter with the Holy Spirit variously interpreted as Baptism in the Spirit, the release of the Spirit, the actualising of water baptism, or being filled with the Spirit.<sup>18</sup>

This accent on encountering the Holy Spirit in one's experience is the distinctive of the movement according to Harper and is therefore not negotiable.

In Harper's view this experience lies at the heart of Christian faith. He characterizes that experience as:

... the effects of that real presence ... to be seen and felt in free worship, in signs and wonder, in changed lives and changed circumstances.<sup>19</sup> p. 328

Because of the vivid nature of the Spirit's presence in Charismatic renewal, Harper can argue that the movement: "In some sense possesses no great incentive to provide a theological justification for its position".<sup>20</sup>

The emphasis on experience rather than theology may explain Michael Harper's strong commitment to ecumenical unity. In his view, the church is made up of three sisters, as it were: Evangeline who taught him the Gospel and introduced him to Christ; Charisma who helped him experience the spiritual dynamic of the Holy Spirit and Roma

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<sup>17</sup> For a helpful though brief analysis of the movement see Charismatic Movement, The, in Gordon S. Wakefield (ed.), *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, London, 1983, pp. 85–87. A more extensive discussion which relates the Charismatic movement to the Pentecostal tradition is Frederick Dale Brunner's, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, London, 1970, especially pp. 52–54, 118–119, 127–128.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Harper, *Charismatic Crisis: the Charismatic Renewal—Past, Present and Future*, Mitcham, 1980, p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Harper, *This is the Day*, p. 57.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

who helped him understand the more corporate dimensions of the Christian life, especially the sacraments.<sup>21</sup>

Harper maintains that the three sisters need each other and further, that Charismatic renewal is the Spirit's strategy to end the squabbling in the family and eventually to include one more sister, Orthodoxa.<sup>22</sup>

Three areas of common belief would make such a unity possible. First, all four sisters share a common respect for the Bible and commitment to the fundamentals of the faith. Second, each sister has a heart for evangelism and mission. Third, all sisters believe in the supernatural.<sup>23</sup>

Significantly, amongst the fundamentals of the faith Harper includes: the Virgin Birth; the Atonement of Christ for our sins, the Deity of Christ, the empty tomb, the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the return of Christ. However, there is no reference in the list to justification by faith alone.<sup>24</sup>

With regard to the renewal of the individual, Harper would prefer the term "baptism in the Spirit" to be reserved for Christian initiation. Even so, he argues that Christian initiation includes, or at least should include, that experience called "Baptism of the Spirit" by the Pentecostal tradition. On this view, Holy Spirit renewal is part of the sacrament of Baptism and is often evidenced by tongues-speaking. He acknowledges that his own view is close to that of most Catholic charismatics.<sup>25</sup>

Like Cardinal Suenens, Harper is committed to the Bible as the Word of God. There is more attempt at exegesis in Harper's works but p. 329 the impression gained is that although the Bible provides much of the language of Christian experience the accent really falls on what the Holy Spirit is presently saying to the churches, apart from the Bible.

Harper argues that the Holy Spirit continues Jesus' work in the church in three areas. First: He speaks forth God's words through God's people. Second: He foretells the future through certain members of the body of Christ. Third: He enables God's people to have an intuitive grasp of God's message ("a kind of eighth sense").<sup>26</sup>

With regard to the role of a prophet in present day church life, Harper maintains:

A prophet is not a scripture exegete. He knows the scriptures, but he does not teach from his knowledge of the Bible; which is the role of the teacher; he hears that which is particularly appropriate for the hour, and he faithfully passes on the message to the appropriate quarter, wherever and whoever that may be.<sup>27</sup>

For Harper there is continuing revelation.

### III A CALVINISTIC VIEW OF RENEWAL

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, ch. 1

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 51–52.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 44–47.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 60–61. Interestingly, for Harper one of the features of his own personal renewal has been a growing respect for the value of the sacraments and the virgin Mary, *ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Harper, *Let My People Grow*, London, 1977, p. 67.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

## General Remarks

Describing a Calvinistic view of renewal is more difficult a task than to describe a Catholic or Charismatic one. For in the case of Catholicism, Vatican II was about renewal and for the Charismatic, renewal is the *raison d'être* of the movement.

The Calvinist, on the other hand, has historically been animated by a particular vision of God. B. B. Warfield, one of the doyens of the Calvinistic tradition, lucidly outlines that vision:

The Calvinist is the man who sees God behind all phenomena, and in all that occurs recognizes the hand of God, working out His will; who makes the attitude of the soul to God in prayer the permanent attitude in all its life activities; and who casts himself on the grace of God alone ...<sup>28</sup>

A contemporary Calvinist who shares that vision and who is also concerned with spiritual renewal is James. I. Packer. [p. 330](#)

### James I. Packer

Packer is an Anglican minister, now serving as Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Regent College in Vancouver. He is the author of numerous books and articles. His book *Knowing God* may prove to be a spiritual classic.

His view of renewal (or to use his preferred term “revival”) is thoroughly God-centred. He defines revival as:

... a work of God by his Spirit through his Word bringing the spiritually dead to living faith in Christ and renewing the inner life of Christians who have grown slack or sleepy.<sup>29</sup>

This quotation betrays a number of Calvinistic motifs. Revival is a work of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is redemptive and restorative in character. The initiative lies with God who freely moves towards sinning man. Word and Spirit are connected through a common focus on Christ. The human response is faith wrought by Word and Spirit.

For Packer the New Testament provides the requisite data for constructing a model of authentic revival. In his view the apostolic age itself was one of revival and its literature has the stamp of revival. He argues, in the light of the New Testament, that:

... we may list as marks of revival an awesome sense of the presence of God and the truth of the gospel; a profound awareness of sin, leading to deep repentance and heartfelt embrace of the glorified, loving, pardoning Christ; an uninhibited witness to the power and glory of Christ with a mighty freedom of speech expressing a mighty freedom of spirit; joy in the Lord, love for his people, and fear of sinning; and from God's side an intensifying and speeding-up of the work of grace so that men are struck down by the word and transformed by the Spirit, in short order, making it appropriate pastorally as well as theologically to baptize adult converts straight after they have professed faith.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> B. B. Warfield, *Calvin as a Theologian and Calvinism Today*, London, undated, p. 14. Warfield maintains: “It is the vision of God and His Majesty; in a word which lies at the foundation of the entirety of Calvinistic thinking”, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> James I. Packer, “Puritanism as a Movement of Revival”, *Evangelical Quarterly*, Vol. LII, No. 1, Jan.–Mar., 1980, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

Viewing the Book of Acts as a paradigm<sup>31</sup> Packer maintains that revival is corporate in nature and that historically speaking the Reformation and Puritan movement were similar works of God's sovereign grace. p.331

Packer is aware that revival claims need careful sifting. In the tradition of Jonathan Edwards, he searches the Scriptures for the pertinent criteria and concludes that they are two in number. First: Packer proposes a credal test by which Christ is confessed as Lord ([1 Corinthians 12:3](#)) and His incarnation acknowledged ([1 John 4:2-3](#)). Second: the moral test reveals whether or not the supposedly renewed person is keeping God's commandments and loving fellow Christians (1 John, *passim*).<sup>32</sup>

In his opinion, the use of these criteria shows that the Charismatic movement is a genuine work of God's Spirit. However, this endorsement is qualified. Although Packer believes the movement is the product of a real work of God, he also contends that those touched by it haven't theologized about their experience in a soundly biblical fashion.<sup>33</sup>

For example, he argues that the so-called "Baptism in the Spirit" is in fact an experience of the Spirit of adoption:

... intensifying ... the sense of acceptance, adoption and fellowship with God which the Spirit imparts to every Christian and sustains in him more or less clearly from conversion on.<sup>34</sup>

In his view, "Baptism in the Spirit" is a term that should only be applied to Christian initiation.

With regard to the individual Packer would appear to distinguish between revival (a visitation of God in which the work of grace is speeded up in the life of God's people) and sanctification which is the normal Christian experience of progressing in the Christian life.<sup>35</sup>

Sanctification, he argues, is a work of re-creating the Christian in the image of Christ and as such is a life-long process of growth and transformation. The culmination of this process takes place beyond this life with the redemption of our bodies. Until that culmination is reached the Christian experiences a split-self as testified in [Romans 7:14-25](#) and [Galatians 5:16-26](#). In this interim of the split-self, the Holy Spirit is present in the life of the believer as the first instalment of the life in heaven.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *ibid.* One might ask about the consistency of Packer's views at this point. On some occasions, Packer is happy to see the Acts material as paradigmatic. However, on other occasions, he can maintain that the Acts material furnishes neither models nor paradigms of how God will always act. See James I. Packer, "Theological Reflections on the Charismatic Movement (Part 2)", *Churchman*, Vol. 94, No. 2, 1980, p. 106.

<sup>32</sup> James I. Packer, "Theological Reflections on the Charismatic Movement (Part 1)", *Churchman*, Vol. 94, No. 1, 1980, pp. 14-15.

<sup>33</sup> Packer, *Theological Reflections* (Part 2), pp. 103-104.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>35</sup> Compare Packer, *Revival*, p. 2 and *Theological Reflections* (Part 2), pp. 114-115.

<sup>36</sup> Packer, *Theological Reflections* (Part 2), pp. 115-115. Packer argues elsewhere that one's exegesis of [Romans 7:14-25](#) reflects one's theological orientation as a whole. His own exegesis is a venerable one that stands in the tradition of Augustine, the Reformers and the Puritans; namely that [Romans 7:14-25](#) speaks of the tensions of the on-going Christian life. See his unpublished papers, *Sanctification*, undated, in the Moore College Library. This interpretation of [Romans 7:14-25](#) appears in one of his early journal articles and his stance has remained unchanged. See James I. Packer, "'Keswick' and the Reformed Doctrine of Sanctification", *Evangelical Quarterly*, 27; July-September 1955, pp. 153-167, especially pp. 165-166.

According to Packer the work of sanctification is predicated upon [p. 332](#) justification and adoption which unlike sanctification do not involve a process. He argues:

Justified and adopted into God's family through faith in Christ, Christians are immediately and eternally secure, nothing can sever them from the love of the Father and the Son ([Romans 8:32-39](#)). But the work of re-creating us as psycho-physical beings on whom Christ's image is to be stamped, the work of sanctification as older evangelical theology called it, is not the work of a moment.<sup>37</sup>

#### IV CONCLUSIONS

First, Suenens, Harper and Packer see renewal (or revival) as a work of God's Spirit. However, of the three it is Packer who understands the phenomenon in the most explicitly Trinitarian way.<sup>38</sup>

Secondly, all accent the corporate nature of renewal (or revival). It is God at work amongst His people. However, Suenens of the three is the most committed to the institutional form of his church which he sees as Christ's own historic body.

Thirdly, each appeals to the Bible in stating his position. In Suenens case the doctrinal stance of his church clearly directs his Bible reading. With Harper, he allows the Spirit to provide a revelation of God's will for today's generation apart from the pages of the Bible. Whilst for Packer, the Bible alone is to determine the models and categories by which renewal is to be understood and assessed.

Fourthly, of great interest is the apparent convergence in views between Cardinal Suenens and Michael Harper. That convergence lies not only in sharing a charismatic experience but also in the theological understanding of that experience. Moreover, both see the charismatic experience as a means the Spirit is using to draw Christians of differing traditions together.

Fifthly, Suenens and Harper make little reference to grace in discussing renewal. Whilst for Packer, renewal (or revival) needs to be [p. 333](#) considered in the context of sin and grace with the focus on Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour and Lord. In his view, the Spirit's ministry is not self-promoting but Christ-promoting. Word and Spirit must not be divorced from each other nor from the Christ to whom both bear witness.

Lastly, with regard to the doctrine of justification by faith alone—the doctrine that Luther described as the article of a standing or falling church—Packer alone quite explicitly relates the Spirit's work of sanctification to the foundation of justification.

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## The Fall Is A Human Reality

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>38</sup> Rev. Cole prepared this article before the release of Dr. Packer's book, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*. See a review of the book elsewhere in this issue of ERT. (Ed.)

# Gerald Bray

*Reprinted from Evangel, Spring 1985, with permission*

The biblical doctrine of the Fall of man, like that of creation, is universal in its scope and fundamental in its importance, but like its companion is has been just as thoroughly derided and discounted as mythological. To some extent the accusers are a different breed, however. Creation has come under attack from biologists, chemists and geologists—experts in the natural sciences. The Fall has been discredited more by psychologists, sociologists and philosophers—students of the human sciences. This is not surprising, because although creation is certainly concerned with the origin of man, this is only one aspect of the doctrine. The Fall, however, is a human matter above all, with only somewhat debatable consequences for the rest of the created order.

## THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD

It is therefore a matter of primary importance to consider what the Scriptures tell us about man as a creature, if we are to understand what is meant by the Fall in Christian teaching. We are told in [Genesis 2:7](#) that man was formed from the dust of the ground, a fact which secures his link with the material world. But at the same time we are also told that God breathed into him the breath of life, a feature which immediately distinguishes him from his fellow animals. We are also told ([1:26–27](#)) that man was created in the *image and likeness* of God, a vitally important concept which sets him apart from every other created being.

What is meant by this expression? For many centuries it was believed that the image and the likeness were distinct things, corresponding to the soul and spirit according to the classical tripartite division of man. Today we no longer accept that division, at least not in its traditional form, and our better knowledge of Hebrew tells us that *image* and *likeness* are two words for the same thing. As a result it is no longer possible for us to believe that at the Fall man lost the likeness but kept the image, so that Christian conversion is a restoration of the likeness of God in man. In some ways this is a pity, since the doctrine of the restoration of the likeness relied heavily on the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer—sanctifying his spirit—and thus touched on a fundamental Christian concern. In some branches of the [p. 335](#) Church this has been felt so strongly that the old idea has been artificially maintained, in spite of evidence to the contrary!

Conservatism of this kind is always a temptation, but it plays straight into the hands of those who brand the whole idea as an outworn myth. The abandonment of the soul-spirit analogy and the recognition that the image/likeness is a single reality must be accepted, but of course there are still problems, inherited from the older scheme of ideas, which need to be faced. The first of these is that the entire image/ likeness was lost at the Fall or if not completely lost, then so seriously defaced that it is no longer recognisable. This view has often been associated, one way or another with Protestants, and it has been severely criticised. The Bible nowhere says that the image/likeness was lost at the Fall; indeed, it appears as a functioning reality well after that event (eg. [Genesis 9:6](#)). It is true that the idea does not reappear in the Old Testament, and that in the New it is strictly linked to Christ, the new Adam in whose image we are re-created, but that does not take away the basic point at issue. We are not entitled, on the basis of Scripture, to say that man lost the image of God at the Fall, nor ought we to say that it has been “defaced”, since the evidence for that too is lacking.



## AN ACT OF DISOBEDIENCE

But if we reject traditional teaching about the image/likeness of God in man, are we not rejecting the notion of the Fall? Here the answer must be an unqualified no. The Fall, in Scripture, is not linked to the image/ likeness of God but to the divine dispensation in the Garden of Eden. In [Genesis 2:17](#) we are told that man was allowed complete freedom in the Garden, as long as he made no attempt to acquire moral awareness. This awareness was present in the Garden as a living reality, but it belonged to God, and not to man.

It may be that the tree is meant to be understood symbolically, but we should be very careful about this. It is one of the tricks of the Devil to make us think that sin must be some great crime, which the average person is most unlikely to commit. We are less inclined to believe that a small thing might be equally sinful and have consequences which are no less serious. Eating fruit from a tree may not seem like very much, but if it is an act of disobedience, it is sin every bit as much as the biggest crime. Our human minds need adjustment just at this point, since we are disinclined to accept the principle that divine authority is the source of Christian morality, rather than abstract principle. It is wrong for us to kill because God has said so—not [p. 336](#) because there is some ethical standard which makes killing inappropriate.

The key to understanding the Fall is accepting that it was an act of disobedience above all else. As such, it did not affect man in his ontological state, but it *did* touch something more important—his relationship with God. Because of his disobedience, man was cut off from God, and no longer able to live in the way in which God had intended. The fact that his physical being was not altered as a result of this is extremely important for two reasons. First, it takes away any need to regard sin as a *stain* on the soul which must be cleaned (e.g. by baptism). We are not talking about an inherited defect but about a broken relationship which must be put right. Secondly, it makes it possible to understand how Christ could have been a man yet not have been sinful. If we picture sin as part of human nature, then either Christ sinned or he did not have a human nature—an impossible dilemma! But if sin is disobedience, leading to a broken relationship with God, then clearly Christ did not sin, even though he was a human being just like Adam!

It might be added in this connection that sin as disobedience also destroys the common equation which is made between sin and suffering. Today we hear talk of healing as if it were the automatic birthright of every Christian. The belief that pain and illness are due to unconfessed sin has returned in a slightly modified guise, since now they are likely to be seen as the work of hostile evil powers! Scripture gives no comfort to supporters of such views, who have simply misunderstood what happened—or rather what did *not* happen—at the Fall. Man in the Garden of Eden was mortal, but preserved from death. When he fell, that protection was removed, but his actual physical being did not change.

## TEMPTED TO BE LIKE GOD

The Bible tells us that the Fall of Man came about through a disobedience which sprang from *temptation*. Man did not simply decide to disobey God; he was lured away by the promise that disobedience would make him more like God himself. And surprisingly, that promise was correct! When he ate the fruit, he *did* become like God as we see in [Genesis 3:22](#). The moral awareness which had been God's preserve now became man's privilege as well. What is more, God nowhere takes it away, either in punishment for the act of disobedience or as part of the restoration of man in Christ. The second [P. 337](#) Adam is in this respect greater than the first, a fact which is never denied or compromised in any way.

What are we to make of this extraordinary fact? We are told by the Apostle Paul that no man can thwart the plan of God, and here we see that even in sin his purpose for us is being worked out. At the same time, we cannot forget that it is being worked out in a way which is radically twisted as far as fallen man is concerned. His moral awareness increases his likeness to God, but on a basis of sinfulness which only serves to condemn him all the more. The message of Scripture, as we see from [Romans 1](#), is that the more the unregenerate man knows of God, the greater is his condemnation. There is no scope here for any kind of natural theology which might be linked in with a concept of salvation by moral principle and good works!

Another important aspect of this is that man is engaged in a web of evil which goes far beyond himself. In recent years we have seen a renewed interest in types of sin which go beyond the conscious disobedience of the individual, though in the secular society in which we live this interest has focused on the structures of society. We are now being told that man is a prisoner of his heredity and his environment—factors which alleviate and may even remove any responsibility on his part. The Bible certainly does not reject the idea of superhuman sin, but neither does it explain it in this way. As far as the Scriptures are concerned, man has passed from being the Son of God to being the Son of Beelzebub—the slave of Satan, who has entangled him in his rebellion against the Creator. Far from taking away his responsibility, it places him squarely in the camp of the rebellious angels, to whom the human race is in thrall. Cosmic evil is personal, just as man is personal, and where there are persons there is responsibility as well.

## VULNERABILITY OF MALE AND FEMALE

A further point about the Fall, which is so obvious as to be easily overlooked, or else so potentially controversial that it is simpler to ignore, is the role assigned to the female sex. We are told that it was Eve who sinned first, not only in Genesis but in [1 Timothy 2:14](#) where Paul uses this fact as justification for giving women a subordinate role in the public worship of the Church. How can we accept this in a day of sexual equality? The answer would appear to lie once more in the close connection between the Fall and the origin of man, male and female. The female came out of the male, and thus in some sense her being depended on his. Had he been the one to sin first, she might **P. 338** have escaped, or else been included in the sin without her consent. But by attacking the woman first Satan was able to touch the man at his weakest spot, and thereby seize them both. It is not because Eve had a greater guilt than Adam that women were subjected to men in the way outlined by Paul, but rather because *both* male and female were more vulnerable when the female was allowed to take the lead. It is for the protection of both, and not for the glory of one over the other, that Paul's commands are given in the way they are.

We must conclude our examination of the Fall with one final point. This is the question of *total depravity*, so familiar to students of the Synod of Dort and so resented by those who believe that it is a miserable rejection of any form of human goodness or achievement. Total depravity, like everything else connected with the Fall, must be seen primarily as a spiritual consequence of disobedience. It is not that every human being is so thoroughly corrupt that he cannot rise to any good whatever. Unregenerate men and women are full of good works and great achievements, not infrequently surpassing those of Christians. Nobody is denying that! What we are talking about here is salvation, which comes by grace through faith, and not by works! The doctrine of total depravity says that fallen man is encased in a framework of sinfulness from which he cannot escape. He has a conscience, but uses it on the wrong foundation, for wrong ends. He does good, but in a

manner which is ultimately futile and self-defeating. None of his gifts is denied; it is the context which is wrong, and which only God can put right.

When all is said and done, the Fall is a reality which has introduced into human experience the spiritual rebellion of the fallen angels. We did not start this rebellion; we have been tempted into sharing it. But once caught in the net there is no escape, unless God himself provides a way. This he did in Christ, when he defeated the power of Satan, destroyed the gates of hell and paid the penalty for sin which made it possible for God to receive us back as his children and open up to us the tree of life from which the disobedience of our first ancestor had so tragically barred us.

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# **The Work of the Holy Spirit and Evangelization Reflections on Oslo '85**

Bruce J. Nicholls

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I wish to summarise my reflections on this important consultation in 10 points.

## **I**

### **The Holy Spirit empowers God's people for world evangelization.**

World evangelization is the central task of the church. It is set within Christ's kingly reign in creation and redemption. While social responsibility and justice are also part of Christ's purpose for his church, reconciliation with God is central to reconciliation with one's neighbour. The Father sent the Spirit to bear witness to the Son and without his witness ours is futile. He is the agent of salvation or as the Nicene creed confesses "the giver of life".

World evangelization is an unfinished task. If it is true that half of the people who ever lived are alive today and that statistically the number of Christians remains static at less than one-third of the world's population, then the extent of spiritual lostness is unprecedented. Manifestations of demonic power, whether overt or masked, are as great as in the apostolic age. Human suffering in all its forms continues to escalate.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only hope now and for the age to come. We await his return in power. He gave to his disciples and to every succeeding generation the promise of the paraclete, the Holy Spirit, to empower them for this global task. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost to equip God's people to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. Today the same spirit renews and empowers his people and thrusts them into mission. In obedience to the inspired Word of God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are called into costly discipleship as individuals, families and p. 340

churches. The task of world evangelization can be carried out only by people who are open to the Spirit and whose lives are transformed by his power. While previous consultations on world evangelization reflected on other aspects of mission it was the task of Oslo '85 to focus specifically on the work of the Holy Spirit and evangelization. Sixty evangelical church leaders from Pentecostal, charismatic and other traditions rejoiced in the unity experienced and a degree of mutual understanding achieved in the areas of differences. The Holy Spirit was in our midst and Christ was glorified.

## II

### **The work of the Holy Spirit must be understood in the trinitarian framework of God's mission in the world.**

In the midst of the present day confusion about whether the Holy Spirit is divine and personal or simply the name for the ultimate Being of God active in the cosmos, we recognise the need for a trinitarian framework to test the truth of conflicting claims and the variety of religious experiences. The Holy Scriptures affirm that the Holy Spirit is personally distinct from the Father and the Son and yet co-equal, co-eternal and co-divine. His work as the divine agent in salvation is inseparable from who he is in Godhead and in creation.

Though innocent of later trinitarian formulations, the New Testament writers think of God in the tri-personal way that the later formulations were trying to safeguard. They testify that believers know God in and through Jesus Christ so they know Jesus Christ in and through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's ministry is the *paraclete* ministry of Christ; all experiences and religious life must lead to him. It is the Spirit who reveals and mediates the Crucified Christ risen from the dead to all who respond to his convicting and convincing work. The convictions and formulations of the Spirit in the New Testament were revealed to the apostles by God in the context of their living in the Spirit and directly experiencing Christ as Saviour and God. Their theology of the Spirit emphasises the historical and eschatological, the experiential and charismatic dimensions of the Spirit's work. Our doctrine of God must be truly trinitarian if the present reductionist trend to unitarianism is going to be stemmed and the Holy Spirit given his rightful place in the divine economy.

## III

### **The work of the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the Word of God.**

We affirm that we cannot speak about the work of the Holy Spirit apart [p. 341](#) from witness to Jesus Christ, the living Word of God. The *paraclete* function of the Spirit is to glorify Christ. This Jesus of history is the Christ of faith. He is Christ Emmanuel, always personally with us through the Holy Spirit by faith. In Christ we understand by faith that the true God is at work in the world, in history and in people. In general revelation God discloses himself as creator in the works of creation, in his moral law and in his providential care of all things. But it is only through witnessing to the Word that the Holy Spirit reveals that God is redeemer. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life, creates faith and emancipates us from demonic forces. This distinction between general and special revelation, common and saving grace, law and gospel, is essential to our understanding of the relationship of Word and Spirit. The distinctive yet inseparable relationship of Word and Spirit, so emphasised by the 16th century European reformers in their efforts to

clarify the work of God as creator and saviour, needs to be restated today. This is also true of our understanding of the Spirit in relation to the sacraments as the Word visible.

The incarnate Word is no hidden impersonal cosmic Christ nor is he merely a human Christ seen in the face of the poor. Yet through his Spirit the risen Christ reigns in the cosmos and shows his love and compassion to all, especially to the poor, the helpless and oppressed. The spirit calls us to a compassionate and costly identification with Christ and his mission to all human kind, who are spiritually lost, suffering in their humanity and are in demonic bondage.

The Spirit is also inseparable from the Scriptures as the Word of God written. The same Spirit who first inspired the authors of the Bible, now illumines our minds to understand and interpret what God has said and done. Our Lord who promised that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth does not guide us into truth apart from the Scriptures. We bring the world's agenda to the Word and listen to the Word's response to it. We also proclaim the Word's agenda to the world ever looking to the Spirit to give life and salvation to those who hear it.

#### IV

#### **It is important to churches seeking their own identity and mission to understand the interpretations given to the work of the Holy Spirit throughout the history of the Church.**

The rapid growth of the Church in the 20th century especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America raises acutely the issues of the unity of the Church, the relevance of denominational distinctives and the [p. 342](#) Church's mission in the world. Churches in the third world which are the fruit of the modern missionary movement with ecclesiastical roots in Europe or in North America are searching for their own identity. A careful study of the expansion of the Church through history and especially interpretations given to the work of the Holy Spirit over the centuries is essential to churches seeking to understand their nature and mission in their own cultural and historical situations. The person and work of the Holy Spirit became a central issue of the Church fathers from the time of Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil and Gregory of Nyssa in the late 4th century A.D. They attempted to do for the Holy Spirit what Athanasius had done for the doctrine of the person of Christ. However, the schism over the filioque clause on the procession of the Holy Spirit, Augustine's debate with the Donatist's over sacraments and the influence of neo-platonistic philosophy on his doctrine of the Church has had its influence on the Church worldwide. This is also true of the conflict between Luther and Calvin on divine election, the sacraments and missions, and Luther's dispute with the Anabaptists. From the 18th century on, revival movements associated with the Wesleys, George Whitefield and Jonathan Edward and with D. L. Moody and C. H. Spurgeon have influenced the direction of missions. German pietism, the emergence of the ecumenical movement after the Edinburgh conference of 1910, the explosion of Pentecostalism and more recently of the charismatic movement have all shaped denominationalism worldwide.

A knowledge of this history helps the younger churches to discover their roots and also to critically evaluate the degree that western inculturalisation of the Church has influenced their own history. The movement towards indigenisation, the dangers of religious syncretism and western colonialism and the spirit of secular humanism and Marxism are factors that make the study of Church history important for the Church's self-understanding and mission.

## V

### **The Holy Spirit constantly renews the Church for mission in the world.**

Scripture affirms that the Church as the Kingdom community is a corporate, supernatural community of God's chosen people. The church is both a body with Christ as head and a household of faith in which believers individually and personally are members. The universal Church is visibly manifest in place after place where local congregations live as worshipping, learning, caring and witnessing and serving communities under the Lordship of Christ. [p. 343](#)

God renews and empowers the local church through the work of the Spirit in the preaching of the Word and in worship in the purpose of glorifying Christ and building up the Church as his body. Renewal in worship, both in liturgical and non-liturgical forms, is central to the Church's fulfilling its mission in the world. The celebration of the sacraments, ordinances and Christian festivals become opportunities for evangelism as the Word made visible confronts unbelievers with their need of salvation in Christ. The Holy Spirit renews the bodylife of the local congregation through his ongoing sanctifying work in individual and corporate holiness. The integration of what we proclaim, what we are, what we do and how we live, is essential to our witness in the world. The supreme proof of the newness of life in Christ is the fruit of the Spirit produced in the life of the Christian. Proclamation gains credibility only when the transformation proclaimed in the Gospel is seen in the lives of God's people and it loses credibility when it is absent.

The Holy Spirit renews the local church through the setting apart of pastors, teachers, elders and missionaries for the work of the ministry. Church discipline in matters of doctrine and moral behaviour is essential. Church members must accept the role of servanthood to each other and be willing to suffer for the sake of Christ and the gospel. Renewal by the Spirit brings new life to existing Church structures and may create new structures from time to time to serve expanding needs. Constant and believing prayer is central to the Spirit's work of renewal of the churches. The consultation was frequently reminded of the effect of periodic revivals throughout history on the missionary outreach of the Church.

## VI

### **The Holy Spirit renews unity in the lifestyle of the Church.**

The cross as the basis for true fellowship and unity in the Church makes reconciliation central to harmony and restitution among believers. The Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of truth actualises the spiritual unity in the lifestyle of the congregation in its worship, witness and service. Schism is sin, except where unrepented apostasy or persistence in immorality necessitates separation. The Holy Spirit renews the local church so that as a microcosm of the whole Church it manifests the single corporate priesthood of all believers by a genuine inter-relatedness to its members who may not naturally be drawn together.

Only in the reality of this unity does diversity become possible. This [p. 344](#) diversity may be expressed in different forms of worship and in spiritual gifts for ministry. It is evident in the structures of the Church from house groups to large conglomerate congregations. It is also manifest in numerous so-called para-church agencies with specialist ministries and in cross-cultural missionary structures. A sense of mutual accountability and stewardship in all things ensures that diversity is complementary and not competitive to unity in the church.

This awareness of our unity and diversity was a significant characteristic of the Oslo '85 Consultation. There was great diversity in our midst—theologians, pastors, evangelists and missionaries from western and non-western regions. We represented pentecostal, charismatic and non-charismatic traditions, and yet we maintained a spirit of unity and expectancy throughout the five days together. On the fourth morning of the consultation the participants were constrained by the Holy Spirit to set aside their agenda and to renew their identity in Christ through spontaneous praise, confession and prayer for renewal. Further, case studies discussed in the consultation from Northern Ireland, South and East Africa and South-East Asia also bore living testimony to “maintaining the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace across barriers of race, religion and creed.”

## VII

### **Spiritual gifts as functional ministries of the Holy Spirit continue to be valid today.**

One of the signs of renewal in the church is the effective and Godcontrolled exercise of the spiritual gifts God gives at will to equip his people for functions or roles in the life of the church. Such gifts are given for the service of the whole body and are not to be used selfishly. The gifts listed in the New Testament are usually illustrative of diversity of functions rather than exhaustive in number and institutionalised. Pastors, teachers and elders have a special responsibility in the corporate life of the church to exhort the right use of gifts and to maintain a balance between freedom and order. The church is a charismatic community offering praise to God, experiencing healing within and manifesting the power and love of God to all in need of forgiveness, acceptance, liberation and healing. In the exercising of these gifts, worship is transformed into a joyous response to the living God and so becomes a powerful evangelistic witness to the world, especially where the gospel cannot be openly preached.

In God's sovereign control, all the gifts through the Spirit are to be [p. 345](#) encouraged and continue to be valid. However, some among us believed that some of the gifts are restricted to the apostolic age. Not all Christians are agreed on the interpretation to be given to the use of these gifts and further opportunity for dialogue between Christians on this subject is urgently needed. Such tests as are discernible in Scripture need to be applied in determining the authenticity of their use.

## VIII

### **The power of the Holy Spirit in signs and wonders needs to be balanced by holiness in the life of the believer.**

The gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit in holy living are complementary. Demonisation and occult practices are more widespread than is commonly acknowledged, not only in those third world societies which accept the supernatural as normative, but also in more secular societies where the manifestation of demonic power may take more deceptive forms. In this power encounter the kingly reign of Christ may be manifest in diverse signs and wonders. In our consultation, attention was given to speaking in tongues, prophesying, miraculous healing, exorcism of demonic spirits. Several case studies evidenced that the power of God characteristic of the apostolic age is still present today. However, there is a need for discernment, for example in recognising various stages of demonisation and distinguishing them from psychosomatic illnesses. Special pastoral care may be needed for those who have not received specific gifts for which they have prayed or were not healed in mass healing campaigns. Team ministry in

the local congregation in the exercising of these gifts is to be encouraged. The dangers of obsession with these special ministries needs to be heeded. Faithful preaching for growth in the knowledge of Christ and for evangelistic outreach should be given priority in ministry.

The ministry of signs and wonders needs to be balanced by an equal emphasis on the fruit of the Spirit in individual lives and in the congregation as a whole. Sanctification as an ongoing process of walking in holiness is essential. The work of the Holy Spirit is to indwell the believer, fulfil the righteous requirements of the law and to set us free from the law of sin and death. True spirituality is walking in the spirit. A spirit of prayer, generosity to others and a daily walk in discipleship are signs of the inner working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Godliness is prior to spiritual power. [p. 346](#)

## IX

### **The Holy Spirit is the prior cross-cultural missionary.**

The Holy Spirit is the primary missionary who goes beyond the frontiers of the life of the Church, overcomes cultural barriers, confronts people with the need to respond to God's creatorhood and moral law. He prepares them to hear and receive the Gospel. The Bible shows us a world without Christ—ever seeking God, for all are created in his image. But at the same time the world is ever rebelling and rejecting God and his moral law, for all have sinned and have come short of his glory. Conscience, guilt, shame, and idolatry are all elements of the response of religious men and women to the work of the Holy Spirit. The secular man relativises all truth in favour of pluralism and reduces the complex to the simple and an irreducible unity by a process of reductionism. Thus reduced to meaninglessness, the secular man is already prepared by the Holy Spirit to hear the Gospel. The Spirit's witness to people of other faiths and ideologies cannot be identified with God's preparation of Israel for the fuller revelation of Jesus, the Messiah. Their closed systems of belief and experiences in most cases causes them to resist the Gospel. Yet the Spirit of the living God is always at work in all people, irrespective of their religious adherence, confronting them with their sin and rebellion and preparing them to hear and receive the Gospel when it is proclaimed to them.

The Christian missionary motivated and guided by the Holy Spirit is the Spirit's agent to proclaim Christ as the only Saviour by word and by deed. The awareness that the Holy Spirit is the prior missionary enables the Christian to locate inter-religious dialogue more faithfully within the context of human understanding and of evangelism. Because of this work of the Holy Spirit and the impossibility of salvation apart from his convicting and saving ministry, the Christian will give priority to prayer in the fulfilling of the cross-cultural missionary task.

The Holy Spirit enables the new believer to evaluate his own culture in the light of God's Word, rejecting what is idolatrous, transforming those elements that are all consistent with God's general revelation and divine law. He will see all of life through the eyes of his new faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit will enable the Christian worker to use creatively all the communication media with moral integrity, technical proficiency and with accountability to the Church. [p. 347](#)

## X

### **The Holy Spirit speaks to the conscience of the people and of the nation.**



The current “success theology” with its emphasis on personal popularity and highly visible ministry goals exalts the promises of the kingdom of God but rejects or ignores its demands. When this new cultism is accompanied by moral breakdown in the life of the Christian leader, the manipulation of the communication media and the failure to give leadership in difficult ethical issues such as abortion, poverty and racism, the Church loses all credibility before a watching world. The work of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgement to come. He transforms God’s people into the image of Christ as salt and light in the world and they become his agents for restraining evil and corruption and his witnesses to the convicting and guiding light of Christ himself.

Christ calls us to follow the way of the cross and to identify with him in his earthly humiliation. We suffer together with the whole humankind as we share in the suffering of creation on its way to liberation and freedom in the Spirit. We agonise with the growing poverty and social and economic injustice in the world today on a scale never experienced before. In the midst of violence and oppression we adopt the role of “suffering servants”. This may lead us to identify with the legitimacy of oppressed peoples’ concerns against the claims of legality as in South Africa and to disobey Caesar in order to obey God as in other parts of the world. As the Holy Spirit enables us to faithfully witness to both the goodness of God and the justice of God he speaks with convicting power to the conscience of the people and their leaders. Whenever Christians have embraced this role of powerlessness and servanthood, God has been pleased in many cases to multiply their number many times. This law of the harvest has been amazingly evident in recent years in parts of Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

May the fruits of Oslo ’85 be seen in greater Christian unity, in holiness and justice, and in world evangelization. The promise is

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth.” ([Acts 1:8](#)).

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**Dr. Bruce J. Nicholls was a participant in the consultation on the Holy Spirit and Evangelization held May 28–June 1, 1985 in Oslo, Norway under the joint sponsorship of WEF and LCWE. He also contributed a paper on “The Holy Spirit Confronts the World of Religions”. A book summarising the 40 papers and findings of the consultation is being edited by Dr. David Wells and will be published early in 1986. p. 348**

# **Belief and Unbelief in Prayer A Comparison Between Calvin and Karl Barth**

**Han Chul-Ha**

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The problem of modern theology lies in neither dogmatic inaccuracy nor dogmatic heresy, but on unbelief which the theologies contain. It is just the same with Barth's teaching on prayer. The doctrine is, so to speak, something like a grammar on faith. When a doctrinal error is involved in a statement of faith, the faith becomes also erroneous. And yet, although there is no error in the grammar of faith, still the statements of faith may be mere words and not occupied with the object of the faith. We cannot overlook the unbelief lurking behind their professions of faith.

## I

### BARTH ON PRAYER AS PETITION

Barth presents systematically the teaching on prayer in the fourth part of Volume III of his Dogmatics. In the beginning of his exposition, it is indicated that the purpose of 'prayer' differs from that of 'confession'. The special concern of 'confession' is that man may give honor to God for the purpose of "seeking, asking and accepting from Him something he needs", not to "offer something to God or do something for Him."<sup>1</sup> Thus, Barth puts 'petition' at the center of the prayer and consequently he follows the tradition of the Reformers, especially of Calvin. He defines prayer decisively as 'petition'. He says in addition:

How can we understand this properly without perceiving at once that perhaps the very highest honor that God claims from man and man can pay Him is that man should seek and ask and accept at His hands, not just something, but everything that he needs?<sup>2</sup>

In this way, Barth indicates that we can glorify God not only by praising Him and confessing to Him, but actually more by seeking, asking and accepting everything at His hands. p. 349

### UNIVERSAL AND NOT PARTICULAR

Barth is explaining why it is important to understand prayer definitively as 'petition' with two points. The first reason is because of our "absolutely needy relation to God." This keeps in touch with the feeling of "absolute dependence upon God" which is the essence of Schleiermacher's theology. But we must make it clear that the place of 'prayer' is not just to 'confirm' our absolute dependence on God, but rather on this basis and ground to "ask such a God" for "something relative." In Barth's exposition of prayer the aspect of absolute dependence is well presented and consequently there is nothing wrong in it as an exposition of prayer, but this *aspect of the place of prayer* for our "relative needs" tends to be absorbed into the former aspect. Even in the introductory words this fact is apparent: "Man should seek and ask and accept at His hands, not just something, but everything that he needs." The statement that "all things are miracles" can be the same thing as saying "there is no miracle." Likewise, the statement that we should ask Him for "everything" can be actually regarded as the statement that we need not ask Him anything. At first sight, the words "not just something but everything" seem to be those of a pious man. But for us, provided we accept at His hands merely 'everything' but not something

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance. tr. by G. W. Bromiley *et al.*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957), III, 4. p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

'particular', God actually remains outside the sphere of 'something particular' and is unable to exert an influence upon that sphere.

### ULTIMATE AND NOT PEN-ULTIMATE

Barth's second reason why prayer must be petitionary has the same weakness: "In prayer it is a matter of the man himself—he who in other spheres must function and serve, and therefore present a *persona*, and to that extent to wear a mask ... The one who has need of God and in spite of everything is man himself."<sup>3</sup> This existentialistic outlook of man and his world puts us in completely different relationship to God. Here a sharp distinction is made between man himself and the world to which he belongs. The relationship to God is related to the authentic self. This point of view coincides with that of Paul Tillich when he insists that not all the questions of human life are given answers from theology but only the questions of ultimate concern. All of these ideas are traced back to Kierkegaard's existentialistic standpoint that man finds his authentic self when he is **P. 350** confronted with death. It may be one way of our standing before God. Solitude and independence may represent one aspect of man. However, a human being, in his real state of affairs, was created in the world, and is involved in various kinds of relationship, and is living on the relative things and the daily bread which are given to him. But, even after that serious affirmation of ourselves in the face of death, still we may need our prayers, particularly because of our relative needs of daily life and numerous pen-ultimate things. Now those 'other spheres' are really the concerns of our life. As a matter of fact, the places where we are actually related to God are no other than these very 'other spheres'.

### PUBLIC AND NOT PRIVATE

Barth shows the same tendency of weakening private prayer and of prayers for individual needs, when he makes the subject of prayer to be always 'we'. Following the teaching of the Lord's prayer, he concludes that "prayer is the prayer of the Christian community." He practically ruled out petitions for individual needs. "This is what takes away the egoistic character that it might and indeed must have in itself as the utterance of his personal privation and desire, as his personal asking."<sup>4</sup> These words are true. In his exposition of the Lord's prayer, Calvin also explains the will of 'our Father' that with a feeling of 'brotherly love' we should proceed to God in order to ask for our brothers in Christ, and even embrace 'all men who dwell on earth'; and sums up conclusively: "all prayers ought to be such as to look that community which our Lord has established in his Kingdom and his household."<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Calvin immediately added: "this does not prevent us from praying especially for ourselves and for certain others." So what Barth said is by itself not wrong at all. But what we miss is, the essential point of prayer, namely the necessity of prayer for individual or personal needs, where the genuine power of God is manifested. It is this very essence of prayer that is suppressed with the above pretext. It is a German theological tradition that this aspect of religion has been completely suppressed since the day of Kant under the term 'Gunstwerberei' (favor-seeking) in contrast to 'moralische (moral) Religion'. However, our Lord, as he taught us to pray, also did meet all kinds of

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103

<sup>5</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. by J. T. McNeil and tr. by F. L. Battles, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, n.d.) III, xx, 38.

individual needs in healing the sick, caring for the poor, and accepting the sinners. In the light of the fact we are **p. 351** convinced that he attached importance to both the public and individual sides of prayer. The question is whether we seek and ask and accept everything that we need at His hands, and whether we believe and yield to the teaching of Jesus: "Ask, and it shall be given you." This word of Jesus indeed encourages us to pray for our individual needs but it is extremely weakened in Barth.

## INTERCESSORY AND NOT PERSONAL

This tendency becomes apparent when Barth develops a concrete form of prayer. He disregards completely private prayer,<sup>6</sup> and makes all petitions to be 'intercession'. Particularly he rejects 'extemporary prayer'. The result is to make prayer a mere liturgy. Consequently the aspects of 'asking' and 'accepting' become weakened. Of course, he is not ignorant of such general meaning of prayer. He certainly grasped this point when he said as follows: "Prayer is an act of obedience to God who commands prayer. If God commands prayer, certainly He will hear the prayer and will fill the empty hands of one who comes to him in humility and obedience."<sup>7</sup> Yet when it is asked whether this rule is applicable in the very reality of our life's struggle for faith it becomes ambiguous. If we come to Calvin, the matter becomes apparent all at once; and what is missing in Barth is eloquently expressed as the very focal point.

## II

### CALVIN ON PRAYER AS PETITION

Calvin, in that long chapter of Institute III,xx, defines prayer as petition, in the literal sense, viz. "to obtain something" from God. This is exactly the opposite to the modern Western theologians' attempt to remove petition as an unnecessary stumbling block to our faith. They reject this truth as 'favor-seeking religion', or as 'superstition' or as an old 'working hypothesis' which is no more necessary for a man come of age. As an introduction, Calvin sums up the meaning of prayer as follows:

Surely, with good reason the Heavenly Father affirms that the only stronghold of safety is in calling upon his name. By so doing we invoke the presence both of his providence, through which he watches over and guards our affairs, and of his power, through which he sustains us, weak as **p. 352** we are and well-nigh overcome, and of his goodness, through which he receives us, miserably burdened with sins, unto grace ... we even rest fully in the thought that none of our ills is hid from him who, we are convinced, has both the will and the power to take the best care of us.<sup>8</sup>

Calvin gives six reasons why prayer is not superfluous in answer to such a charge: Firstly, we need to be accustomed in every need to flee from him as to a sacred anchor. Secondly, that we should never be ashamed to make him a witness, while we learn to set all our wishes before his eyes, and even to pour out our whole hearts. Thirdly, that we be prepared to receive his benefits with true gratitude of heart and thanksgiving. Fourthly, having obtained what we were seeking, and being convinced that he has answered our prayer, we should be led to meditate upon his kindness more ardently. Fifthly, that at the

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<sup>6</sup> Barth, *Dogmatics*, III, 4, p. 110.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, III, xx, 2.

same time we embrace with greater delight those things which we acknowledge to have been obtained by prayer. Finally, that use and experience confirm his providence ... he never extends his hand to help his own, not wet-nursing them with words but defending them with present help.<sup>9</sup>

### RULES FOR PRAYER AS “ASK-GIVE”

Thus, we can see that Calvin never departs from the biblical teaching on prayer: ‘ask-given’. Calvin’s four rules of right prayer follow exactly the same thought: *First*, our prayer necessarily is directed to giving God due reverence. “As we must turn keenness of mind toward God, so affection of heart has to follow.”<sup>10</sup> The *second* rule is a sincere sense of want, and with penitence. “... that in our petitions we ever sense our own insufficiency, and earnestly pondering how we need all that we seek, join with this prayer an earnest—nay, burning—desire to attain it.”<sup>11</sup> At this point, in contrast to Barth, Calvin rather attacks “many perfunctorily intoned prayers after a set form, as if discharging a duty to God,”<sup>12</sup> while Barth feels “so-called extemporaneous prayer” to be something inferior. Calvin stresses the needs of penitence and repentance both in this second and *third* rule, mainly for two reasons, first, that without sincere repentance we cannot actually approach God. “The beginning, and even the preparation, of proper prayer is the plea for pardon with a humble and sincere confession of guilt. Nor P. 353 should anyone, however holy he may be, hope that he will obtain anything from God until he is freely reconciled to him.”<sup>13</sup> And second, whenever we ask God something, we should truly become humble before Him, recognizing that there remains no other hope except supplicating to Him. Calvin warns us not to mock God while we are praying. “As I have just said, mankind is so stuffed with such depravity that for the sake of mere performance men often beseech God for many things that they are dead sure will, apart from his kindness, come to them from some other source, or already lie in their possession.”<sup>14</sup> In fact, we in our Korean church services today, can frequently perceive that God is being mocked rather than being worshipped. The *fourth* rule is the confident hope in prayer: “a sure hope that our prayer will be answered”. Here again Calvin repeats what the Bible teaches: “I say unto you, whatever you seek..., believe that you will receive it, and it will come to you.” ([Mark 11:24p](#)). “Whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.” ([Matthew 21:22](#)). “Let him ask in faith, with no wavering”. ([James 1:6](#)) This faith is to Calvin no other than the secure knowledge of God’s kindness and gentle dealing with us.

### III

#### PRAYER AS CHRISTO-CENTRIC IN CALVIN AND BARTH

Calvin’s teaching is *christological*. His teaching on prayer is not exceptional in this character. At the beginning of this chapter he clearly indicates this point. A man is

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xx, 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xx, 5.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xx, 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xx, 9.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xx, 6.

“destitute and devoid of all good things” in himself, he must, in order to “get resources to succor him in his need”, go outside himself: that is, to no other place except in Christ.

For in Christ he (God) offers all happiness in place of our misery, all wealth in place of our neediness; in him he opens to us the heavenly treasures that our whole faith may contemplate his beloved Son, our whole expectation depend upon him, and our whole hope cleave to and rest in him ... in our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the Father willed all the fullness of his bounty to abide so that we may all draw from it as from an overflowing spring, it p. 354 remains for us to seek in him and in prayers to ask of him, what we have learned to be in him.<sup>17</sup>

Barth also attempts Christological concentration in the whole field of his theology. But in him, Christo-centricism tends to absorb us into a third dimension; that is, from our first time, i.e. man’s time, into ‘the third time’, i.e., the time of grace. In this peculiar third time (*die r̄itte Zeit* which is distinguished from *Menschen Zeit* and *Gottes Zeit*) there is no more need for asking anything more except praising and thanksgiving for the overwhelming grace. But in case of Calvin, the reality of man’s time is never forgotten. This Christo-centricism in Calvin does not interfere with the rules of prayer which is strictly in the line of the biblical teaching: the ‘ask-given’ character of prayer.

And as a rule has been established to call upon God, and a promise given that those who call upon him shall be heard, so too we are particularly bidden to call upon him in Christ’s name; and we have the promise made that we shall obtain what we have asked in his name.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, the Christo-centric character of Calvin’s faith makes the rules of prayer to become: “ask in Christ’s name and obtain in his name.”<sup>19</sup> Particularly Calvin emphasizes that we must ask in his name because of his heavenly ministry as our intercessor.

We ought carefully to note the circumstance of the time when Christ enjoins his disciples to take refuge in his intercession, after he shall have ascended into heaven. “In that hour,” he says, “you will ask in my name.” ([John 16:26](#))<sup>20</sup>

Calvin indicates that actually this principle of prayer was already practiced in the Old Testament times.

And we see that the saints, when they desired to obtain something, based their hope on sacrifices, for they knew them to be the sanctions of all petitions ... Hence we infer that God was from the beginning appeased by Christ’s intercession, so that he received the petitions of the godly.<sup>21</sup>

Then why does Christ assign a new honor, saying: “Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask” ([John 16:24](#))? It is because, although the Jews knew already the rudiments of the offices of Mediator, they “did not yet clearly understand that Christ by his very ascension into heaven would be a surer advocate of the church than p. 355 he had

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xx, 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, II, xx, 17.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xx, 17.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xx, 18.

<sup>21</sup> *Loc. cit.*

been before.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, in Calvin’s Christo-centricism, he never causes the order of God and man to be made obscure by way of introducing the ambiguous dimension of ‘the third time’, and also never deviates from the fundamental character of the purpose of prayer to ‘obtain something from God’. Furthermore, Calvin and Barth contrast markedly with each other with regard to the fact that the former tries to find the ground of our asking in Christ’s name in the intercessory work of Christ in his heavenly ministry, whereas the latter totally excludes this aspect from his Christology.<sup>23</sup>

#### IV PETITION AND THANKSGIVING IN BARTH AND CALVIN

When we come to discuss the connection between prayer and ‘thanksgiving’, Barth here also represents a striking contrast to Calvin. For Barth, ‘thanksgiving’ is the ‘root’ of prayer and ‘essentially’ and ‘indispensably’ correlates to prayer. So, Professor Helmut Esser at the University of München had good reason when he insisted in a conversation I had with him at his home that what centers around Barth’s teaching on prayer is not ‘petition’, but ‘thanksgiving’.

So far as thanksgiving is concerned, it is in fact the root of prayer to the extent that it impinges immediately upon the objective divine basis of this action, upon the command of the gracious God, which is as such an invitation, a permission, a freedom given to man.<sup>24</sup>

Since God’s command to pray is a gracious invitation of God, we have to obey this command in gratitude. Even though in Barth’s theology, ‘thanksgiving’ is so intrinsically related to, and thus so easily accompanies prayer, yet for Calvin, it is not such an easy task to identify this relationship. The reason is that Calvin and Barth were differently situated when they wrote their works. Whereas Barth was expounding his theological considerations in opulent lecture rooms, Calvin was setting forth a realistic faith in the context of the troubled and distressful life situations of the Reformers who needed to be empowered by the hope of comforts in the world to come. While he is dealing with this question, Calvin is always involved in “the actual situation of believers who are to suffer tribulations and distresses.” Although “many by peevishness, boredom, impatience, bitter grief, and fear are impelled to mumble ... while still waiting to obtain what p. 356 they desire,” Calvin cites the passages of [Philippians 4:6f](#): “In all prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God,” bids believers to temper emotions and bless God cheerfully. Calvin takes the more concrete reasons that we should be thankful to God and praise him. “But if this connection ought to be in full force in things almost contrary, by a still holier bond God obligates us to sing his praises whenever he causes us to obtain our wishes.”<sup>25</sup> Throughout his exposition of the necessary connection between the petition and thanksgiving Calvin never fails to give a reason for this: “because he offers us unfailing reasons to praise and pray.”<sup>26</sup> In short, Calvin, even in the process of discussing the reason why thanksgiving is a necessary accompaniment to prayer, never

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<sup>22</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Barth, *Dogmatics*, IV. 1, pp. 314 ff.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 4, p. 99.

<sup>25</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, III, xx, 28.

<sup>26</sup> *Loc. cit.*

deviates from the basic formula of the prayer 'ask-given'. According to Calvin, we cannot but thank God because of the things which he previously gave us.

## V

### PRIVATE SPONTANEITY OR PUBLIC FORMALITY

Finally, the question of focus of attention on 'private prayer' or 'public prayer'; there is an obvious deviation in Barth from 'private' to 'public' from Calvin's understanding of the relationship of the two.

We must consider that whoever refused to pray in the holy assembly of the godly knows not what it is to pray individually, or in a secret spot, or at home. Again, he who neglects to pray alone and in private, however unremittingly he may frequent public assemblies, there contrives only windy prayers, for he defers more to the opinion of men than to the secret judgement of God.<sup>27</sup>

Calvin clearly explains the importance of both engagements of prayer but simultaneously shows the centrality of private engagement of prayer life. It is to learn what prayer is that one needs to pray in the holy assembly of the godly. This indicates that the true prayer and the standard of prayer must be learned there. In other words, apart from the church community, man cannot learn true prayer through his own private engagement of prayer life. But without private engagement of prayer, Calvin says, however unremittingly he may frequent public assemblies, he contrives only 'windy prayers' and he really does not refer prayer to the 'secret judgement of God.' On the contrary, Barth went to such an extreme: The rule: "Better according to a form than p. 357 not at all, or: better according to a form in the community than freely in separation."<sup>28</sup> Thus, Barth tries to defend 'formulated prayer' against 'extemporary prayer' and gives strong favor to 'public prayer' in place of 'private prayer'.

Of course, Barth is well aware of the danger involved in public prayer: only to set up a "mask behind which man does not really ask, or a mechanism by which he only tries to create for himself a good conscience in relation to the divine summons."<sup>29</sup> Consequently he indicates a problem of satisfying both needs: 'the necessity of form' and the necessity for 'free, hearty and spontaneous prayer.' Even though Calvin and Barth commonly refer to the important teaching of our Lord in [Matthew 6:7ff.](#), the latter well takes up our Lord's warning that our prayer must not be too repetitious, and he uses this warning, for the necessity of formulated prayer, but the former in the same teaching as Jesus, attached more importance to the phrase: "enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret."

Accordingly, as has already been said, the Heavenly Teacher, when he willed to lay down the best rule for prayer, bade us enter into our bedroom and there, with door closed, pray to our Father in secret, that our Father, who is in secret, may hear us.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, III, xx, 29.

<sup>28</sup> Barth, *Dogmatics*, III, 4, p. 112.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113

<sup>30</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, III, xx, 29



It is regretful that Barth omitted this important part but it is a natural result from his outlook on prayer. And Calvin indicates that the Lord has also impressed us with his example of his habitual withdrawal to a quiet spot that “we must not neglect these helps.”

The fundamental question involved in Barth’s theology of prayer is not really in this external form of prayer. The issue consists in the fact that in Barth’s theology the most essential contents of the doctrine of prayer is seriously weak or almost missing: that is its ‘ask-given’ character. In Calvin this character of prayer is fully enlivened throughout his teaching on prayer. Prayer is nothing but an instinctive Christian practice of “fleeing to him in every need.” As we bring our wishes before his eyes, we are prepared to receive his benefit with true gratitude of heart. Having obtained what we were seeking from his hand, we are led to meditate upon his kindness more ardently. At the same time, the things given from him become dearer to us than if we had obtained them from other sources. Thus, the fact of divine fatherly [p. 358](#) providence is indeed more clearly confirmed through our use and experience of it.

#### IV PRAYER AS NATURAL OR SUPERNATURAL

This is exactly the point which modern Western theology in general tries to avoid. If Bonhoeffer was thinking of “doing away with that age-old working hypothesis” and standing on his own feet as man come-of age, without God but before God, he was only honestly pursuing the same theological line which Barth had already set. Is it then superstitious that we ask something of God in prayer? Moreover, as a result, when we get something in a miraculous way, that is beyond the process which we have thought about, and even though secular people may commonly say with reference to such an effect that it occurs by chance—or that we are just ignorant of the natural causality hidden behind it and nothing else—is it a superstition that we believe it is caused by the supernatural spiritual Being? Of course, it is not always by supernatural methods that God grants us things according to His will. His will may be over-ruling the causal nexus of various levels; numerological, spacio-physical, psycho-physical and socio-ethical. We can hardly explain away how these overlapping multidimensional dynamics work out to a certain result. The only thing which we know is that God, the living One, who holds power over the world given us by His fatherly care, kindly provides us the things which we need by his divine power.

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## The Church and Theological Ferment in Africa

Osadolor Imasogie

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The Church of God in any given generation and historical milieu has one authentic and unchanging non-negotiable global mission. That mission is to bear witness to the Christ—the saving presence of God—in the midst of his creation. While this mission is timeless and valid for all times in its global scope, its actualization is “time conditioned and culture bound,”<sup>1</sup> because the historical ethos and the accompanying self-understanding of people are subject to periodic variations. The implication of this is that the Church must be alert to “discern the times and be sensitive to the context in which God has placed it”<sup>2</sup> if its witness to the saving presence of God is to be redemptive.

With that as a précis of an understanding of the task of the Church and the conditions under which it is carried out, this writer intends to develop the theme, “The Church and Theological Ferment in Africa,” along three lines. Initially, an attempt will be made to present an overview of the present religious situation and its worldview in Africa and the Church’s response heretofore. In the second place, attention will be called to some guidelines to be considered in developing a more effective mission strategy that will be responsive to the new appreciation of the realities of our situation. Finally, the role of theological institutions in the effective and comprehensive prosecution of the mission of the Church will be examined.

## THE AFRICAN RELIGIOUS SITUATION

The continent of Africa is best described religiously as pluralistic, where religion is taken seriously by an overwhelming percentage of the population. This African religiosity has not been significantly affected adversely by growing materialism and sophistication. Each of the over 850 ethnic groups in Africa has a myriad of traditional divinities worshipped by a majority of its population. One such ethnic group is reputed to have between 400 and 1440 divinities available for worship.<sup>3</sup> Added to those are the Christian and Islamic religions that **P. 360** have been embraced by a sizeable number of Africans. From among the main historical Christian churches, particularly the Protestant groups, have sprung up over six thousand separate Christian church movements generally referred to as African Independent Churches.

In addition to these traditional divinities and various versions of Christianity and Islam, there are such Oriental religions as the Hare Krishna version of Hinduism and the Bahai faith, to mention only two, that have recently joined the struggle for African spiritual allegiance. Just as these Oriental religions and Islam are in the service of their respective founders, the Christian Church is in Africa, as has been pointed out, to bear witness to the saving presence of God in Christ. Since the African is the target of all these religions, our analysis of the theological situation will be limited to the African traditional religion and its worldview. The authenticity and depth of the Africans’ existential response to the Christ will be determined by their perception of the Christ within their conceptual framework. In other words, if the Church is adequately to meet the spiritual needs of the Africans and successfully compete for their commitment, a workable knowledge of their traditional religion and the worldview and self-understanding

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur F. Glasser and Tracey R. Jones, Jr., “What is ‘Mission’ Today? Two Views,” in *Mission Trends No. 1*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (New York: Paolist Press, 1974), p.7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>3</sup> Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Longman, Green and Co., Ltd., 1962). pp. 67–68.

fostered by it becomes a *sine qua non* for the agent of the Church. For this purpose, it is in order to give a brief description of African traditional religion and an African worldview. *Worldview* is to be understood here as that “complex of a people’s beliefs and attitudes concerning the origin, nature, and structure of the universe and the interaction of its beings with particular reference to man.”<sup>4</sup> Religion is usually a response-behavior to these beliefs. This overall framework of meaning is characterized by a unity of reality that has no room for dichotomy between the spiritual and the material, the sacred and the profane. This is so because the whole universe is the plane for the interaction between persons and spiritual forces, be they benevolent or malevolent. Thus, the typical African naturally perceives problems against the backdrop of a universe populated by multitudes of spiritual realities, many of whom are on the warpath against humanity either to satisfy their own propensity for evil or at the service of evil persons.<sup>5</sup>

Unlike the mechanistic model which presents the universe as a cosmic machine moving inexorably in response to a predetermined natural law, the African worldview perceives the universe as a dynamic equilibrium “that is constantly threatened and sometimes p.361 actually disturbed by natural and social calamities.”<sup>6</sup> That is why such disasters as flood, drought, famine, epidemic diseases, and even death are seen as resulting from disequilibrium occasioned either by malevolent spiritual forces interfering with the cosmic order or by humanity’s infringement of some cosmic laws as prescribed by divinities. It is believed that these disturbers of cosmic equilibrium are controllable through the help of occult men and divinely appointed spiritual intermediaries. Consequently, the warding off of these evil forces in order to achieve tranquility becomes the major focus in the practices of African traditional religions. Such religious activities include divination, sacrifices, and rituals aimed at the restoration of cosmological balance without which persons cannot live in harmony with the natural, spiritual and human communities.

Hitherto the Christian Church in Africa has not taken the African traditional religions and their concomitant worldview into serious account in its mission. The result is that in times of serious existential crises the “average African Christian reverts to the traditional African religious practices”<sup>7</sup> for coping with such crises. The truth of this observation is substantiated by the phenomenal increase of what we have referred to as independent African Christian movements which arise from periodic waves of schism within the historical Christian churches. These protest Christian groups, which today boast of over six thousand such separate and Africanized Christian sects and a host of other more syncretistic churches,<sup>8</sup> are characterized by long worship sessions of visions, foretelling, spiritual healing, exorcism, and even ritual sacrifices. The sessions are conducted after the manner of the practices of African traditional religions for warding off evil forces and maintaining cosmic balance.

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<sup>4</sup> Tokunboh Adeyemo, “Towards an Evangelical African Theology,” *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 7 (1983), 151.

<sup>5</sup> Osadolor Imasogie, *Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa* (Achimota, Ghana: Africa Christian Press, 1983), p. 75.

<sup>6</sup> Adeyemo, “Towards an Evangelical African Theology,” p. 151.

<sup>7</sup> Imasogie, *Guidelines*, p. 68.

<sup>8</sup> David Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 6.

It is sad to note that the mainline Christian churches in Africa, with the possible exception of the Roman Catholic Church<sup>9</sup>, have not shown sufficient awareness of the tremendous problem this neglect posed to the success of the mission of the Church. The problem has recently been heightened by the revival of culture in Africa and the popularity of departments of religious studies in African universities. While the churches have failed to take correct cognizance of the religious plurality and the accompanying theological hazards, it is p. 362 gratifying to note that a significant number of the so-called “African Christian academic theologians” and a few expatriates are beginning to make efforts to come to grips with the challenge. There are several articles and a few books dealing with the question of African Christian theology that take the African worldview and traditional religion into serious consideration. Some of these articles and books are listed in the notes.

In brief, all that legitimately may be said of these efforts to respond to the issue is that there is no consensus yet as to how the challenge to Christian theology posed by African traditional religions and an African worldview may be tackled. Such high sounding terms as *indigenization*, *africanization*, *incarnational theology*, *adaption*, and *contextualization* have been suggested as rubrics under which the task is to be prosecuted. The whole problem of consensus is further complicated by “the size of the Christian community in Africa, the variety of denominational experience, the immense variations between (sic) the human situation, the political and economic pressures.”<sup>10</sup>

The result, according to Yusufu Obaje, is that some scholars criticize the lack of consensus by saying that while the “Black theology in South Africa is concerned only with the liberation of blacks in Southern Africa ... African Christian theologies, coming mainly from the East and West African countries, attempt to recover the traditional African worldview.”<sup>11</sup> This, he says, is unfair. Whichever position one may choose to take here, the truth is that the search for an authentic African Christian theology is still in a state of flux. This state of ferment notwithstanding, the search has begun. Henceforth no version of Christian theology in Africa will be considered to be spiritually satisfying if it is not informed by a clear knowledge of the cosmic spiritual struggle implied in the traditional religions and their worldview. The Christ must be presented first and foremost as the Victor and Liberator par excellence who forever lives to destroy the demonic forces wherever found. He does this to free those committed to him from the stranglehold of these evil forces. In addition, Christ must be proclaimed as the cosmic Lord who is more than able to supply all human needs within the context of each individual. Christ’s saving concern must be seen as transcending narrow spiritual salvation to include liberation from human oppression and the reconciliation of man to God, to fellow humans and to nature. Given the traditional p. 363 religions and the African worldview delineated above, any apologetic endeavor that does not present Christ as being able to respond to all areas of human experience cannot command a total commitment of the African who has a holistic view of reality.

## **SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR A MORE RELEVANT MISSION STRATEGY**

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<sup>9</sup> Aylward Shorter, *African Christian Theology—Adaptation or Incarnational?* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975), pp. 145–160.

<sup>10</sup> Adrian Hastings, *African Christianity* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1976), p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> Yusufu A. Obaje, “The Church as a Theocentric Community with Special Reference to Certain Aspects of Traditional African Ideas of God and Man” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1982), p. 67.

In the massive *World Christian Encyclopedia*,<sup>12</sup> David Barrett predicts that by the year A.D. 2000, the present 203,490,710 adherents of Christianity on the continent of Africa will have increased to 393,326,210. This projected figure represents a little over 190,000,000 new Christians in 16 years. Whether or not this projection will be realized or exceeded will depend partially upon a more effective mission strategy in Africa. The more serious question, however, is what percentage of whatever number of African Christians exist at the turn of the century will be existentially committed to the Christ and his way of life? The answers as to the numerical strength and quality of African Christianity in the year A.D. 2000 stand or fall on the Church's awareness of the need for and success in its determination to evolve a new mission strategy that is responsive to the demands of the newly perceived situation. Crucial to the evolution of whichever strategy may be devised is a new reappraisal of the important role which worldview plays in self-understanding. This is important because "communication from a person in one world view to someone in another will necessitate understanding of both world views."<sup>13</sup>

The point has been made that the present mission strategy in Africa—apart from limiting the number of possible converts—does not produce qualitative Christian spirituality that equips Christians to face the crises of life without wavering. When an inadequate Christianity ignores the place of a person's worldview in the understanding of self and perception of spiritual reality, it is unable to speak from the person's perspective. This inherent tendency not to empathize with the worldview of others has been the dilemma of every missionary in every age who takes the gospel to people of another culture. The same problem confronted the early apostles, especially those described as [p. 364](#) Judaizers, as they carried the gospel to the gentile world. Unlike the apostle Paul, many of the earliest Christian missionaries insisted on interpreting the gospel only in terms of their own culture and worldview, which were not existentially meaningful to the Gentiles. Paul was well aware of this when he declared his strategy as follows:

To win Gentiles who are outside the Law I made myself like one of them, although I am not in truth outside the Law, being under the Law of Christ. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. Indeed I have become everything in turn to men of every sort so that in one way or another I may save some. ([1 Cor. 9:21-22](#))

It is unfortunate that two thousand years later Christ's disciples have yet not learned the lesson Paul taught.

In light of the above, it is in order here to re-examine the dilemma of foreign missionaries vis-à-vis their authentic proclamation of the gospel in a foreign culture. This will lay the basis for understanding the guidelines for an improved mission strategy which will be suggested. In the words of Father Segundo Galilea, a foreign missionary is "one who leaves his culture in order to proclaim the Gospel in a different culture."<sup>14</sup> Galilea goes on to add that the average missionary is always faced with unconscious temptation to "communicate his own ideals and his own cultural values as necessarily linked with

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<sup>12</sup> David Barrett, ed., *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Norman L. Geisler, "Some Philosophical Perspectives on Missionary Dialogue," in *Theology and Mission*, Papers and Responses Prepared for the Consultation on Theology and Mission, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, School of World Mission and Evangelism, March 22–25, 1976, ed. David Hesselgrave (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 243.

<sup>14</sup> Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas Stransky, eds., *Mission Trends No. 3* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), p. 74.

Christianity.”<sup>15</sup> This problem is often heightened for the missionary by the requirement to dance to the tune of the Foreign Mission Board, which monitors activities from a sort of ecclesiastical switchboard. The missionary requires more than goodwill to escape from this malaise; it demands what Galilea calls *Kenosis*. “The tragedy of the missionary,” Galilea warns, “is that his action may well be a two-edged sword; he can do much good or much evil, depending on his attitude towards the local churches and cultures.”<sup>16</sup> There is the other extreme reaction in which the foreign missionary uncritically swallows the foreign culture and worldview “hook, line and sinker” to the extent of inadvertently losing sight of the “ultimate reason for his missionary presence.”<sup>17</sup>

An acceptable mission strategy is one that allows missionaries to be free to minister under a creative tension between the two extremes, realizing that neither their own culture nor the new one should be absolutized. What is being demanded is a conscious recognition that a p. 365 people’s culture and worldview do condition their perception and that unless this is accepted the missionary is not in a position to proclaim the gospel in an atmosphere that is conducive for the “Word to become flesh” in that culture. This point has been succinctly expressed as follows:

Within an evangelical framework, cultural contextualization of Christian truth involves a dynamic process of sympathetic understanding leading to empathetic identification with the culture so that Christianity may be “inculturated” within the indigenous forms of the recipient peoples. Nothing of the supercultural is to be lost or distorted.<sup>18</sup>

If this desired goal is to be achieved, the missionary must be able to introspect so as to discover the influence of the home culture in the apprehension of the gospel. This is easier said than done, but it is a task that must be pursued seriously in as much as the preaching of Christ is a matter of life and death which must not be taken lightly.

Against this background it is imperative for every Foreign Mission Board to build into its mission program an opportunity for its prospective missionaries to have an in-depth study of the religion and worldview of the particular people among whom they are to serve. It is not likely that this all-important exposure can be adequately handled in the missionary’s own country, for lack of required expertise and necessary practical exposure. It is advisable, therefore, that arrangements be made for a comprehensive orientation course on the mission field. The course should be long and intensive enough to be meaningful. It should include the study of the traditional religion, African worldview, the cultural practices of the people, and the language. Included also in this orientation should be a history of the country, with particular emphasis on Christian missionary activities—failures and successes—compared with other religious groups.

Having now dealt with the question of worldview and the proclamation of the gospel, attention will be turned to the question of strategy in the light of the African situation. Foreign mission strategy in Africa has hitherto consisted mainly in evangelism through schools and hospitals. As a strategy this has been very successful. It has produced national Christian leaders as well as political leaders throughout Africa. Any objective African historian will come to the inevitable conclusion that the present developments in education and health services owe their impetus to foreign missionaries who built and

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>18</sup> “The Contextualization of Theology,” in *Theology and Mission*, p. 329.

used these institutions for evangelistic purposes. By their very natures p. 366 both schools and health centers presented the Church with captive audiences. In that case it did not matter much whether or not their worldview and religions were ignored; converts were made. The result of the inadequacy of this policy was, however, reflected in the often superficial commitment of most of the so-called converts who equated attendance at mission schools and treatment at mission hospitals with being Christians. With the rise of nationalism and subsequent political independence, most of the African states have now assumed responsibility for education and health care. As a result, Christian missions have lost their erstwhile effective mission strategy and captive audiences. In a few instances, the Church has not only lost this twofold useful mission strategy but they have also incurred the usually unjustified hostility of radical nationalists who, often under the subtle influence of Islam and communism, identify Christian missionaries with the exploitive colonialists from whom they wrested political power. They insist that, like the colonialists, the missionaries must be sent packing out of Africa.

This state of affairs, to say the least, must be painful and frustrating to the various foreign mission boards because it engenders a sense of insecurity and spells a bleak future for missionary activities in Africa. This may be said to be a crisis for the mission of the Church in Africa. Responding to a similar situation in Latin America, William B. Frazier concludes that:

Despite the insecurity and discomfort which accompany them, crises are usually occasions of progress. The reason, of course, is that progress does not happen until we have lost confidence to some degree in the status quo. There is every indication that missionaries are presently struggling with a crisis of this kind, a crisis of creativity, out of which, hopefully, a corrected sense of missionary identity may emerge.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, a crisis of this nature calls for creativity which will result in a new strategy that is best suited for the new situation in which God has placed the Church in Africa to bear witness. If the Church is to develop a new strategy, it must first re-examine its original model for the self-understanding of its mission which, perhaps unconsciously, influenced the continuing strategy for which a substitute is now being sought.

The two time-honored and hitherto effective components of mission strategy, schools and hospitals, derive from what Frazier calls the "Sanctuary Model" for the understanding of the mission of the Church. According to Frazier, this model sees the Church as the p. 367 "Sanctuary of Salvation ... a place of refuge situated in a hostile environment"<sup>20</sup> to which all persons may come for protection and spiritual nourishment. As long as the Church sees itself this way, its mission is conceived as extending its spiritual blessings to all that come within the "Sanctuary" while those outside have themselves to blame. One negative implication of this image of the Church is that many of those who came in the past unwittingly identified themselves as Christians because they equated education and health with the Christian faith without existential commitment to Christ. Thus an educated person with a foreign "Christian name" was regarded as a Christian irrespective of faith-commitment, while the illiterate with a "native name" was considered a pagan.

In exchange for "sanctuary" as a model of its self-image, Frazier suggests that the Church now consider the model of a "sign":

Unlike a sanctuary, a sign is meant to point beyond itself and to have impact outside itself.  
Unlike a sanctuary, a sign is not an enclosure, but a disclosure. A sign performs its function

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<sup>19</sup> William B. Frazier, "Guidelines for a New Theology of Mission," in *Mission Trends No. 1.*, p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

not by containing, but by communicating; not by annexation, but by representation. In relation to their respective environments, a sign is a humble image, sanctuary a haughty one; sign is an image of service, sanctuary an image of separation; a sign is co-operative, a sanctuary is competitive; a sanctuary finds within itself any action which is really important, a sign points beyond itself to where the action is. In a word, the main improvement of a sign over sanctuary as an image of the Church is the quality of openness to its environment which, in application to the Church, means openness to the world.<sup>21</sup>

It is imperative that the Church divest itself of the sanctuary image and put on the sign image for self-understanding.

A change in the model for self-understanding as suggested above will enable the Church to develop a strategy of mission that is capable of ministering in all human situations, even where the saving presence of God is not easily discerned because the Church sees herself as “a sanctuary of salvation.” The new strategy must include a veritable secularization of the theology of missions, which makes no distinction between the sacred and the profane, the clergy and the laity. This has been an unfortunate distinction—a distinction not recognized by traditional African religions nor by the God of the Hebrews. This new dynamic theology of missions interprets God’s creation as a unified whole where Christians are called upon, whatever their vocation, to p.368 become partners with God in the process of spiritual transformation and humanization of men and women. The new model of “sign” for the Church’s self-understanding no longer allows the church to wait for people to come from the world for refuge, but will go out into the world as the sign of God’s saving presence. It will be there, bearing witness to the involvement of God wherever people struggle for development, freedom, peace, improved health and working conditions, political self-determination, and everything that makes for humanization as a testimony to God’s saving concern for the actualization of the purpose of creation.

Laypersons will be actively enlisted and trained as missionaries to permeate every walk of life, every profession and movement, as spiritual yeast that leavens every pocket of human lump for the glory of God. This will not in any way detract from the importance of ordained ministers who will still be the spiritual leaders of the Church. It will, rather, hallow every acceptable vocation as God’s potential instrument through which the richness of the Christian life of holiness can be manifested in the midst of the world where the issues of life are decided.

This type of mission strategy makes provision for a more active and participatory involvement of the nationals in the planning and execution of mission programs. The lack of such mutual involvement is responsible for the occasional call for “moratorium,” which is an ill wind that does no one any good. Participation of nationals at this level is important because, by virtue of their citizenship and culture, they are always in a better position to mediate the saving presence of God to their fellow citizens without the suspicion that may sometimes hinder the effectiveness of a foreign missionary. If the implied model of partnership in mission is to become a reality, the existing model for understanding the relationship between the “sending church” and the “receiving church” must be reviewed in terms of mission policies. No longer should the model of “he who pays the piper dictates the tune” prevail. If the funds for missions are truly given for that purpose, then the partners in mission together should plan, under God, for their use and for the most judicious deployment of missionary personnel.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.



## THE ROLE OF THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

Thus far attention has been drawn to the mission of the Church in Africa in the light of a new appraisal of the African religions and social context. It has been argued that if the church is to fulfill its mission it **P. 369** must not only have a working knowledge of the religion, the resulting worldview, and the self-understanding of the African, it must also design a mission strategy that is best suited for the situation. But mission is much more comprehensive than bringing people to initial commitment of their lives to the Christ. The command of the Risen Lord is that such people must be taught “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded...” The implication of this is that the Church must become the center of theological instruction and discussion. The tragedy of our time is that the overwhelming majority of the so-called converts drop out of the Church for lack of effective programs for spiritual nurture. On the other hand, for the same reason, a majority of those who still identify themselves with the Church are neither hot nor cold. The Church does not have effective programs for nurturing its members a spiritual vitality because most of its present leaders are ill-equipped to develop such programs.

Theological institutions in Africa have a vital role to play in developing trained spiritual leaders who will ensure that Christians are trained and stimulated to remain vitally committed to Christ and to be responsible to the conscious leadership of the Holy Spirit. Achievement of this goal presupposes the existence of curriculum designed to provide the theological students with theological ground and contextualized professional know-how that will equip them to bring biblical insights to bear on the spiritual, emotional, and social needs of their parishioners within the cultural milieu.

Judging from what has been said concerning the Church’s neglect to take the African situation seriously in its proclamation of the gospel, one may conclude that this same neglect has also affected the curricula of the various denominational and nondenominational theological institutions. A glance at any such theological curriculum will reveal a carbon copy of the theological curriculum of the home country of the specific church or seminary model. The obvious result is that pastors trained in such schools do not have the tools to render effective ministry to the people under their care. Relevant curricula are not developed in a vacuum. Curricula are aimed at equipping students to meet specified needs in a particular cultural environment. To achieve the desired aim it is essential that the curriculum be a product of an adequate knowledge of the self-understanding of a given community within its worldview. This is crucial inasmuch as one’s worldview, as has been argued, affects one’s perception of reality and one’s relation to that reality. In other words, a theological curriculum developed to meet needs in a specific cultural environment may not be a successful instrument in another cultural setting. This will be the case **p. 370** because the worldview and the thought pattern and the consequent perceived needs of the people in the latter culture were not taken into consideration in its original formulation.

While there are some basic core courses such as biblical studies, biblical languages, church history, etc., without which one cannot talk of a theological curriculum, they may not “become flesh” in the life of the people unless they are passed through the prism of their thought pattern. This is why theological institutions in Africa need to re-evaluate their curricula in the light of the African situation. An objective review of existing theological education curricula will indicate the necessity of including courses on such areas as African traditional religion, Islam, theological methodology, apologetics, spiritual formation of the theological student, African Christian theologies, Christianity and contemporary issues, African Church history, pastoral psychology, the independent

African Church movement, etc. The overriding aim in all of these is to train the pastor to be able to bring the claims of Christ to bear on every issue of life as perceived by the parishioner. For instance, the current curriculum, which is a replica of a theological curriculum from the West does not provide for dealing with the fear of the nefarious spiritual forces in whose grips the average African lives. The absence of this opportunity is understandable because in the western worldview such fears are considered irrational—fit only to be treated by professional psychiatrists. In the African context it is a commonly recognized spiritual problem which needs a spiritual solution. Consequently, when the trained African pastor is confronted with such a problem by a church member, the pastor is unprepared to minister effectively because current theological training does not expose students to that area of human experience.

Incidents like this, arising from inadequate theological preparation for contextualized proclamation of the gospel, must have led the recently deceased veteran foreign missionary Bishop Stephen Neill to the following conclusion:

Unless the first deliverance from fear has been fully accomplished, unless Jesus has really been enthroned as Conqueror of the demons, the believer is still half-living in the old naturalistic world in which the spirits have power and the time has not yet come in which his ears will really be opened to hear the teaching concerning sin, righteousness, repentance and forgiveness.<sup>22</sup> p. 371

This observation re-emphasizes the truth that one's view of life is shaped by culture and no matter what effort is made to suppress it, it continues to surface at critical moments in life. The only effective way of dealing with such fears is to bring them to the conscious level where they can be dealt with. This is the point Neill is making here. A theological institution is under obligation to devise a curriculum that makes provisions for a comprehensive examination of the African situation and the sufficiency of Christ in meeting any and every eventuality. It needs to be pointed out that the use of the phrase "theological education" throughout this paper is not restricted to institutional seminaries and colleges. It includes noninstitutional theological educational programs such as theological education by extension and correspondence courses designed to train Christian ministers.

Of course, it is to be assumed that those responsible for designing this curriculum and educating pastors are people who, in their training and field research would have sat where the parishioners sit and have learned from them "where the shoes pinch." It is only teachers with such an experimental background that can relate theories to practice. Whatever the limitation of their exposure to this area in their training, this is an experience which all intelligent and imaginative, dedicated theologians can acquire through field research.

Thus, at the heart of the role of theological education is the obligation to ensure that those who have responded to the call of God into the spiritual leadership of the Church are adequately trained to lead. There is no other institution that is designed and equipped to meet this need.

The mission of the Church in Africa will not be complete until everyone is incorporated into the the life of God through Christ. The validity of such an incorporation can only be measured by the degree to which the *Word has once again taken flesh in the culture and thought-pattern of the African*. It is only then that the African Christian can live life as a virtual proclamation of the gospel in all of its ramifications here and now as a foretaste of

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<sup>22</sup> Stephen Neill, *Christian Faith and Other Faiths: The Christian Dialogue with Other Religions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 174f.

unmediated eternity with God. If this expectation is not to remain a mere dream, the theological institution must play its role as the spiritual watchdog of the Church to see to it that the Church ministers to the total needs of persons, without which no one can be existentially committed to God—a commitment which is the goal of the church's mission.

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## Book Reviews

### ETHICS AND SOCIETY

Ronald J. Sider and Richard K. Taylor, [\*Nuclear Holocaust and Christian Hope\*](#)  
Reviewed by Kenneth G. Greet

Christopher J. H. Wright, [\*Living as the People of God\*](#)

J. I. Packer, [\*Keep in Step With the Spirit\*](#)  
Reviewed by Peter Jensen

Hermann Sasse, [\*This is My Body\*](#)  
Reviewed by James Atkinson

### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Anna C. Hogg, [\*Values in Focus\*](#)  
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## Ethics and Society

### NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST AND CHRISTIAN HOPE

by Ronald J. Sider and Richard K. Taylor  
(Hodder and Stoughton 1983)  
Pp. 368, pb. \$1.95

A review by Kenneth G. Greet in *Faith and Thought* January 1984

One of the most moving passages in this useful and impressive book comes near the end: 'We confess that heavy foreboding has slowly settled upon us in the months that we have worked on this book. We have not abandoned hope, but it comes harder now'.

That is a very honest response from two men who have looked long and hard at the actual facts about the militarism that holds the world in its iron grip. The opening chapter presents an imaginary account of the effects of the dropping of a megaton nuclear bomb on Moscow. Though imaginary the horrendous description is based on careful research into the effects of nuclear explosions. There is a ghastly realism about the picture of thousands of mutilated bodies being whirled through the air like leaves in a winter storm.

In Section II there is a careful examination of the traditional just war doctrine. That doctrine itself is severely criticised, but even if it is accepted, we are left in no doubt that the use of nuclear weapons cannot be justified by any form of argument acceptable to the Christian.

But if the Christian must say 'no' to nuclear weapons what concrete steps can he advocate to ensure that the holocaust never comes and that instead we begin to move towards sanity and peace? This question is addressed in Section III. The significance of the Church as a universal fellowship is underlined and the vocation of peace-making is realistically explored. Many readers, one suspects, would have been grateful for a more thorough examination of how Christians can help to overcome the hostilities of the very different systems of East and West.

Finally there is a very full examination of the possibilities of nonmilitary defence. There are, it is urged, huge resources of power as yet untapped in the Christian concept of non-violent resistance and noncooperation with evil. It is argued, I believe rightly, that this concept is at the heart of the ministry and teaching of our Lord.

This book is remarkable because it comes from two avowedly [p. 375](#) evangelical writers. There is, however, no truck with the notion that nuclear holocaust could in any sense be God's way of bringing the world to an end. Nuclear war would be an arrogant and wicked denial of the will of God. The imperative responsibility of Christians, therefore, is to see that it is averted.

There is no disguising the enormity of the task facing the Christian peacemaker. Realism dictates the sombre judgement that humanly speaking there is very little hope. But our hope is in God and His power which has so often, exercised through dedicated minorities, turned the tide of history.

The usefulness of this eminently readable book is greatly enhanced by the splendid bibliography, the list of peace organisations and other information for the local congregation.

## **LIVING AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

by Christopher J. H. Wright.

(Inter-Varsity Press 1984)

Pp. 224, £5.95

*Reprinted from The Expository Times, July 1984 with permission*

Christopher Wright sets out the ethical teaching of the OT within a theological framework that is in no way narrowly conservative and shows the relevance of that ethic for the Christian today without overlooking the culture gap between the world of ancient Israel and modern society. The argument is well constructed and has overall coherence, and it is expounded in a clear, flowing style that makes for easy reading.

In a lively prologue Dr. Wright depicts several of the ways Christians approach the Bible as a source of guidance on moral issues—selecting texts at random, attempting to discover central 'principles', questioning the place of the OT law and whether it was 'fulfilled' in Christ. Against these approaches to the OT ethic Dr. Wright finds the basis in the theological themes of creation and covenant, and he develops this argument by

looking in turn at the theological, social, and economical angles of the ethic. He is firmly convinced that to present a coherent biblical ethic the final authority must be the completed text in its canonical form.

Having placed the OT ethics within this theological framework, Dr. Wright proceeds to examine six themes: economics and the land, p.376 politics and the world of nations, righteousness and justice, law and the legal system, society and culture, and finally the way of the individual. Within each chapter he combines an emphasis on the theological framework with a discussion of the teaching and a forward look to the NT and the situation today.

He is absolutely right in stressing the social aspects of OT ethics. As he points out, the primary ethical thrust of the OT is social. Emphasis is placed upon the kind of society God wants and only then is the derived theme of the kind of person that members of the society must be, expounded.

I found two points in this most interesting study of particular value. The first is the method which Dr. Wright proposes for moving from the OT to the modern situation. He sees the basic structure of the moral universe as comprised within a triangle of God, fallen humanity, and the earth. Within this triangle lies God's redemptive purpose in Israel and beyond it stands the eschatological hope of redeemed humanity and the new creation. The NT also sits within the larger triangle of God, humanity and the earth, for within it redemption is expressed through the church and *koinonia*. This model enables Dr. Wright to find a typological relation between the testaments. More importantly it means that the OT ethic is a 'paradigm' which we are to adopt and follow in our modern ethical search. He uses 'paradigm' in the way it is used in grammars of foreign languages—a model which exemplifies the way other verbs or nouns of a similar type are formed. It is not so much to be imitated as applied. Thus we are not literally to imitate Israel (this would be equivalent to using only one verb in a foreign language). But the social system of Israel is not to be dismissed as totally foreign to the Christian church or the rest of mankind. As we see how the ethical principles were applied to ancient Israel we are led on to the ethical task of applying that pattern to our own day. The OT ethic is not the only paradigm for the Christian. He has the social teaching of Jesus and the social life of the early church as well. To formulate a social ethic that is truly biblical, however, both testaments need to be included.

Secondly, there is the question of the relation of Israel to the culture of the nations within which it lived, and hence the relation of Christians to their environment. Dr. Wright points out that the OT totally rejected some features in that surrounding culture, such as cultic prostitution. Other features, however, were tolerated and controlled (polygamy, divorce, and slavery), while yet others were accepted and affirmed (the forms of family current at the time are an illustration of these). This leads him to assert that the variety of OT p.377 responses rules out simplistic views on our part. A discriminating approach is needed. We must expect to find some aspects of fallen human society abhorrent to God and to be rejected. But if we allow that society is 'fallen', and note that divorce (for example) was tolerated within Israel, though not without criticism, we must agree to its being tolerated within secular society. 'Not that it should pass without criticism and, more than that, positive working to uphold the highest, absolute standards and to enable people to approximate to them.' Further and positively, there are many features of human society and cultural life that we can take over joyously.

I warmed to this book and commend it to our readers. It is written from an evangelical viewpoint, but this should not deter those of other persuasions from reading it. To accept that ours is a fallen world does not entail accepting a literal fall, and nothing that Dr. Wright says offended me. The stress on covenant is perhaps a little out of favour among

OT scholars today, but election and covenant are important features of the completed OT, even if covenant only became stressed by Deuteronomists. The overall approach is similar to that adopted by the Biblical Theology movement, and again that stress has receded, though the emphasis on the canon fits much recent thought. There is too little recognition of differences between the various parts of the OT in matters of date and genre. Perhaps a greater awareness of the actual working of Israelite society might have made the presentation less abstract. On the other hand Dr. Wright is fully aware of the world of the ancient Near East, of which Israel formed a part.

This positive, thoughtful and suggestive study will be of great value to clergy and ministers. And scholars will be glad of the excellent bibliographies. They may even find something of interest to them in the discussion.

### **KEEP IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT**

by J. I. Packer

(Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1984)

Pp. 301, £4.95

Reviewed by Peter Jensen in *The Reformed Theological Review*, Jan–Apr, 1985.

Dr. Packer has given us a splendid and much-needed book which will edify all who read it seriously. It is not written at the level of technical scholarship, but it could not have been written without that judicious [p. 378](#) expertise for which the author is justly noted. Dr. Packer's aim is to expound the scriptural teaching about the person and work of the Holy Spirit and to apply it to the state of the Church today. He therefore sets the foundation with a careful summary of what we know of the Spirit through revelation, and then relates it to Wesley's perfectionism, classic Keswick teaching and contemporary charismatic spirituality. Alongside these he offers his own corrective and exhortation, drawing largely from the Augustinian tradition as exemplified by Reformed and Puritan theology.

My reference to Dr. Packer's scholarship was deliberately emphasised. Many have found that his book *Knowing God* has deepened and refreshed their lives. Once again in this book Dr. Packer has called on the ample resources of his reading in historical theology to provide the spiritual depth so sorely lacking in many evangelical works. The lay reader may not fully recognise the importance of this background nor understand the source of Packer's strength. The scholar and pastor ought to take note and ensure that they draw on the Christian classics as they instruct the people of God. There is no substitute for the perspective that such a study brings.

I commend the book also for its style. Dr. Packer has a gift for putting a complex matter in a deft and memorable way. On a subject which may engender strong feelings he has managed to write critically without engaging in bitter polemic.

On the matter of substance I find myself in fundamental accord. Packer's "key thought" as he calls it is "The essence of the Holy Spirit's ministry, at this or any other time in the Christian era, is to mediate the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ" (p.55). Packer has a great deal more to say than this, of course, but he keeps returning to it and measuring theological convictions and spiritual realities by it, as does the NT itself. He argues strongly for the on-going power of the flesh in Christian experience, endorsing the view that the latter part of [Romans 7](#) refers to Paul's post-conversion state. He speaks passionately about congregational worship and the importance of an every-member ministry. He has trenchant remarks to make about various failings in modern Church life, from the eudaemonism of the charismatics, to the traditionalism of many non-charismatic evangelicals, and the inept social gospel of the universalists. As well, he offers a theological

reconstruction of charismatic religion which does not destroy, but summons all Christians, charismatic or not, to a deeper obedience.

All this (plus much more) is to the good. It seems to me, however, that the book falters at one important point where Dr. Packer asks of [p. 379](#) the charismatic movement “whether it is inspired by the Spirit of God at any point at all” (p. 184). Using the credal test (“Jesus is Lord”) and the moral test (obedience plus love), Packer concludes “God is in it”. I am not sure that I want to differ from his conclusion, but I suggest that, since by these tests he would also conclude that Roman Catholicism has God in it, he ought to have been more expansive. God may be “in” Catholicism, but one needs to say more than that about its relationship to the Gospel of grace. Perhaps [Galatians 5:4](#) may have suggested itself as a further relevant text. Had Packer followed this line he might have been able to explain more fully why charismatic religion is prone to elitism and eudaemonism. It is, after all, the charismatic distinctives (e.g. “Spirit-baptism”) which raise the vital question of whether the gospel is being obscured or, to put the matter another way, whether Christ and His cross are being obscured. It is Paul’s thrust in Galatians which is the basis of true honour for Christ and the true oneness of God’s people.

I conclude, however, on the positive note with which I began: this is an excellent book and will be fruitful in the lives of those who study it.

## **THIS IS MY BODY**

by Hermann Sasse

(Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977, revised 1981; original edition Minneapolis, 1959).

Pp. x+381,

Reviewed by James Atkinson in *Themelios*, January 1985

This book consists of a detailed and scholarly study of Luther’s doctrine of the eucharist. The argument is carried through with compelling conviction and with an authoritative command of all source material available. The author gives an account of the mediaeval explanation of the eucharist; how Luther understood it; a detailed account of the debate between Luther and Zwingli; how Bucer and Calvin (and Anglicanism) interpreted the eucharist; and finally, the problem as it is today together with its resolution. Nevertheless, it is not just another learned historical account of the controversy. The book is fired by a concern to discover the truth of the matter and thereby recover the full and true gospel. The author has the touch of the prophet. It is a work of fine and original research, which gives a compelling authority to his conclusions.

It is the author’s deep conviction that in defending the literal [p. 380](#) meaning of ‘this is my body’, Luther was not defending a view of his own, nor of any theological school, but a basic dogma of the whole Christian church. With the ‘*est*’ of ‘*hoc est corpus meum*’, Sasse argues that the doctrine of the incarnation stands or falls: and with the reality of the incarnation stands or falls the church of Jesus Christ. He sees in the great Colloquy of Marburg between Luther and Zwingli (1529), the encounter between a realistic and an idealistic understanding of God’s revelation in Christ. In the final stages of the Colloquy, when the discussions had broken down, Luther proposed his final condition for unison: ‘We confess that, by virtue of the words “This is my body, this is my blood”, the body and blood are truly—*hoc est: substantive et essentialiter, non autem quantitative vel qualitative vel localiter*—present and distributed in the Lord’s Supper.’ This formula expresses what Luther means by the doctrine of the real presence, *i.e.*, the real body and the real blood are present ‘substantially and essentially’. What is meant by these words is that the true body of Christ (which means the body that was born of the virgin, hung on the cross, and

was raised from the grave) was present by virtue of the words of institution really and truly. This presence was to be understood not as a presence in 'quantity' (*i.e.*, extension) or 'quality' (*i.e.*, the quality which otherwise body and blood have), and not in the sense of a local presence, as mediaeval theologians had already limited the 'in' and 'under'. The difference between Luther and the schoolmen here is that he uses these words, not to give any *theory* as to the *how* of the presence, but only to reject what he calls the 'geometrical' or 'mathematical' understanding of the presence (we would now say 'physical' rather than 'geometrical' or 'mathematical'). What Luther demanded was that the words of Christ be accepted in simple faith while the *how* remained God's mystery—just as the incarnation or the resurrection, for that matter. Sasse argues that Christianity stands or falls by this doctrine, and sees the loss of this conviction in Christendom the explanation of its present unbelief, and, therefore, of its failure. It is more than a doctrine of holy communion which is at stake, it is the living Christ. This is Sasse's deep concern.

The reader may demur that this is a lot to claim, but Sasse argues that no one can understand Luther unless he has understood this fight for the real presence. He goes so far as to say that the life or death of the church depends on the question whether she will be able to regain Luther's deep understanding of the sacrament, and therewith, the total gospel. He believes that this true understanding can be regained only if the Holy Spirit opens up to each generation the holy scriptures, and therewith the *full* gospel. It is impossible to raise counter-arguments, p. 381 for the author anticipates the critic and raises them all. What is more, answers them at the highest level of scholarship.

To work through this passionate and learned book of a deeply committed theologian, line by line, footnote by footnote, will open up,, not only Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, but clarify that of Rome, Geneva and Canterbury; it will give a penetrating insight into the meaning of worship, a healthy criticism of the ecumenical movement, but above all, a warm, encouraging awareness of the truth of the gospel and of the urgency of the Christian message today.

The reviewer gives his unqualified recommendation. It will make every reader think, and then think again.

## Christian Education

### VALUES IN FOCUS

by Anna C. Hogg  
(Sydney: ATCF Books, 1984)  
Pp. 143

Reviewed by Kathleen D. Nicholls

Dr. Anna Hogg was formerly Head of the Department of Education at Sydney Teachers' College and Foundation Editor of the *Journal of Christian Education*. *Values in Focus* is one of a series of books, *Christian Viewpoints*, devoted to current educational issues and published by the Australian Teachers' Christian Fellowship. This reviewer is grateful to Dr. Hogg for verbalising some of the uneasiness felt by teachers, parents, consumers, survivalists, traditionalists, Christians, advertisers and materialists concerning the values upheld in our communities.



As she focuses on values, Dr. Hogg points out that 'Christian values' can and should be subjected to the same scrutiny as any other values just as Christian ethics can and should be examined by the same processes as any other ethical positions. She sensibly suggests that the stronger our beliefs, the more ready we should be to examine them.

In response to the glib 'Blame the Schools' attitude held by many of us, Dr. Hogg reminds us that our society is very uncertain about [p. 382](#) values. Not all changes have been for the worse; some can be welcomed, but the confusion, fear, apathy, dishonesty, preoccupation with wrong doing, with the parading of the intimate in public are reflected in the schools. *This is the society in which the schools operate.* Children, far from being 'a bunch of innocents being contaminated by the schools or society' make their own contribution to the problem, just as their parents, teachers and the rest of us do. The (objective?) standard by which we judge the schools is the standard by which we also must be judged. Are we identifying with that which is good in the places where this identification needs to be heard and seen? Are we success-orientated and guilty of pride, that deadliest of sins?

In our uneasiness about the relevance of schools to employment and the content of some courses, what are the values to apply to curricula, the translation of educational beliefs into specific learning goals, bearing in mind that we cannot get away from the idea that education somehow makes a person better? 'Education is not something "done" to people by others ... they themselves learn something which is for their betterment.' We are left asking, 'How can we have freedom without sacrificing order and security; how can we maintain *our* values without sacrificing that fundamental value—the value of *all* human beings?'

Having surveyed various ethical theories, the growing pluralism of our societies, morality and religion, being moral and being Christian, Dr. Hogg ends the book with a challenge to action. She allows us no latitude in the moral sphere; she considers inaction to be immoral. On the other hand, her analysis of the weakness of 'morality movements' is very penetrating. In fact, the statement that we 'are easily deceived into allowing our organisations to eclipse the cause they are intended to serve' is one that could be applied to many other issues besides values. Determinism is one of our excuses for lack of moral responsibility that falls with the first ball bowled. She suggests five attitudes to be acquired and five activities to be attempted: A Willingness to Investigate, A Determination to Live by the Findings, Courage to Teach What is Right, the Self-sacrifice to be Personally Involved and the Faith to Believe that God will Triumph. Her emphasis on the eschatological as well as the personal dimension of Christian faith brings us back to the central hope of the Gospel—that God will ultimately triumph over all his foes and his reign ultimately prevail. Which leaves us ordinary human beings to be 'instruments of righteousness' and co-workers with God in establishing 'a new heaven and a new earth', the home of righteousness. [p. 383](#)

This book is a must for parents and children seeking ultimate values beyond the 'generation-gap', for advertisers, teachers, in fact for each of us in attempting to assess the present focus on values in the perspective of society as a whole. [p. 384](#)

## Journal Information

### *Publications referred to in this Issue*

**Themelios**

Published jointly by the British Theological Students Fellowship and the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, 38 De Montford St, Leicester LE1 7GP, U.K., or 233 Langdon Madison, Wisconsin 53703, U.S.A. Subscriptions £3.00 U.K. \$6.00, Sfr 10.00 (3 issues).

**Evangel**

A Quarterly Review of Biblical, Practical and Contemporary Theology, Rutherford House, 17 Claremont Park, Edinburgh EH6 7PJ Scotland. Rates £4.25, \$12.00 (12 issues)

**The Holy Spirit Down to Earth**

Monograph of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, 1677 Gentian Drive SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508, U.S.A, 1977, pp. 80, \$1.50

**The Expository Times**

Published monthly by T. & T. Clark Ltd., 36 George St., Edinburgh EH2 2LQ. Subscription £10.95, New subscription £9.50.

**The Reformed Theological Review**

Published three times a year. Box 2587W, Elizabeth St., P.O. Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia. Annual subscription £6.90.

**Review and Exposition**

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40206, U.S.A.

**The Restudy of Revival and Revivalism** by J. Edwin Orr

Published by School of World Vision, 135 N. Oakland Avenue, Pasadena, CA91101 U.S.A. pp. 66.