

A Brief Sketch of the Development and Status of Contemporary Pneumatology

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Pneumatological studies are a core part of our curriculum as a Pentecostal Bible college. However, the study of the Holy Spirit is not ours alone. Pneumatology, the study of the Holy Spirit, has been a theological concern since the earliest days of the first century church. With the rising and expanding growth of Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century and the so-called charismatic renewal mid-way through the same century, IPHC historian Vinson Synan has chosen to label that century as the “Century of the Holy Spirit.”¹ As we find ourselves now well into the twenty-first century, we are inundated with competing contemporary understandings and developments in Pneumatology both outside and inside Pentecostalism. In this “sketch” I hope prepare the student for grappling with the various streams of thought concerning the Holy Spirit.

As mentioned above, Pneumatology was not invented or discovered by Pentecostals and Charismatics. The Church has long studied and appreciated the Holy Spirit. Even the early councils of the church testify to this. The book of Acts also testifies to the recognition and dependency of the early church on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Some go so far as to distinguish Acts as “the Acts of the Holy Spirit.”² Indeed, pneumatology has a rich heritage. Telford Work writes, “Theologians in the modern era have inherited the patristic tradition on the Holy Spirit’s divinity, the medieval tradition on the Holy Spirit’s presence to and in the church, and the Reformation-era tradition on the Holy Spirit’s justifying and sanctifying activities.”³ Telford, however, sees Pentecostalism not only as an influencer of recent pneumatological thought but also a product of contemporary pneumatological development. He writes that the story of “modern pneumatology is largely a story of how theology struggled to account and compensate” for the radical shifts in thinking regarding our understanding of the universe and the nature of mankind stemming from the Enlightenment period.⁴

Indeed, the Enlightenment period in the eighteenth century left its mark in Christian history and theology. A major shift during the Enlightenment, according to Roger Olsen, was the adoption of an understanding of knowledge as “what one can be certain of, what cannot be reasonably doubted.”⁵ Though “most early Enlightenment thinkers like Descartes saw this new approach to knowledge as an ally of orthodox Christianity” it would also (and often) be cited as the reason for many to abandon their faith or diminish the role of Christian beliefs and practices.⁶ The parallel rise of the scientific studies and discoveries produced similar consequences for Christian thought. Olson offers Galileo as a prime example. His proven theory that the earth revolved around the sun conflicted with the long held belief by both the Catholics and Protestants that the Earth was actually the center of the Universe. “Galileo’s discovery called the authority of tradition into question; this was no dispute about different interpretations of the Bible but a major attack on religious authority itself.”⁷

One attempt to reconcile religious devotion with Enlightenment principles was called deism. Deism, to an extent, valued natural revelation and diminished special revelation. John Locke, a pioneer deist, “set forth the revolutionary thesis that Christianity, when divested of its dogmatic baggage, was the most reasonable form of religion. On the basis of Locke’s views, Enlightenment thinkers constructed a theological alternative to orthodoxy – deism.”⁸ According to Grenz and Olsen, “What was truly important [to the deists] had been written by the Creator in the great book of nature left open for all to read.”⁹ Locke gave rise to an expression of religion based on “Enlightenment foundationalism” which declared that “all human knowledge

¹ Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 1.

² Telford Work, “Pneumatology”, in *Mapping Modern Theology*, ed. Kelly M. Kopic and Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 255.

³ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Roger E. Olsen, *The Journey to Modern Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 18.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁸ Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olsen, *20th Century Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1992), 23.

⁹ *Ibid.*

derives from empirical foundations, from sense experience.”¹⁰ Olsen continues, “Locke did not deny Jesus’ miracles or his divinity, but he did downplay or neglect them.”¹¹ David Bosch writes, “The Enlightenment tenet that all problems were in principle solvable had an equally far-reaching effect on theology and the church. This dogma ruled out miracles and every other form of inexplicable events.”¹² Christianity became less about the divine activity of God and more about the moral and ethical behavior of man. Inspired by Locke, Thomas Jefferson found it pleasing to extract the miracles of Jesus from the Gospels and remove “any sayings of Jesus offensive to the enlightened mind” in order to make Scripture “free of all irrational elements.”¹³ Locke himself described the essence of Scripture as a “body of Ethics, proved to be the law of nature, from principles of reason, and reaching all the duties of life.”¹⁴ The theology which Locke ignited emphasized God as being “a far-away, radically transcendent deity.”¹⁵ Priority was given to what could be examined with the five senses. Thus, the result, according to Grenz and Olsen, was “rather than look beyond the world to find God, the Enlightenment ultimately turned within.”¹⁶ Bosch sees an even more extreme view arising during the Enlightenment when he writes, “Previously, it was believed that humans derived their existence from God. Now the opposite was proclaimed – God owed his existence to humans.”¹⁷

The implications of such a belief system had great consequences for pneumatological thought. Christianity became a religion based more in logic and reason and less concerned about being led by the Spirit. Such belief broke sharply with the earlier traditions of the church. Martin Luther, for example, wrote in his *Small Catechism*, “I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel . . . and kept me in the true faith.”¹⁸ Paul Chung observes, “Luther’s teaching of justification cannot be properly understood without the Holy Spirit, which calls the human being to faith, preserving him or her in union with Jesus Christ.”¹⁹ The Holy Spirit enables or “kindles”²⁰ faith in Christ in the heart of the believer. Indeed, the choice to follow Christ should be influenced by reason and logical examination. Nevertheless, there is a supernatural element at work through the involvement of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8, 1 Cor. 12:3).

Jefferson’s extreme response to the Age of Reason was not the only reaction. Leaders such as Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley arose to lead revivals and awakenings in the aftermath of the Enlightenment. Though Jonathan Edwards is not widely known for his contribution to pneumatology, Steven Studebaker has demonstrated that Edwards’ theological development included a great deal of pneumatology intertwined with his Trinitarian position and Christology. Studebaker writes, using Edwards own words, that the Holy Spirit is “the sum of all that Christ purchased” in reference to redemption. Studebaker continues, “Grace is thus not essentially pardon from sin, imputed righteousness, sanctification, and so on, but a divine person – the Holy Spirit. Edwards affirms that ‘grace . . . is no other than the Spirit of God itself dwelling and acting in the heart of a saint.’”²¹ Though Edwards’ influence would wane and grow for two centuries after the Great Awakening, he helped to preserve a theology of the Holy Spirit that proclaimed that the Spirit of God is not merely a force or a feeling or a metaphor. He is a distinct entity alongside God the Father and God the Son in the Godhead who is at work in the world and redemption.

Deists emerged from the Enlightenment with the belief that reason was the authoritative source of truth. Edwards represents those who held on to (or took up again) pre-Enlightenment Orthodoxy in regards to the belief that revelation (divinely inspired information) was the ultimate source of knowledge about God. Friedrich Schleiermacher, however, was not content with either of these theological paths. Rather than reason or revelation, Schleiermacher “looked to ‘feeling’ for the foundation of theology. . . He sought to base theology on human experience – to show that religion is rooted in and even identical with an experience essential to true humanity.”²² This emphasis on experience renewed study of the Holy Spirit as an initiator

¹⁰ Olsen, 54.

¹¹ Ibid, 55.

¹²David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 279.

¹³ Ibid, 52.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Grenz and Olsen, 23.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷Bosch, 275.

¹⁸ Martin Luther, *The Small Catechism*, in *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2005), 323.

¹⁹ Paul S. Chung, *The Spirit of God Transforming Life* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 144.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Steven M. Studebaker, *From Pentecost to the Triune God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 159.

²² Grenz and Olsen, 39-43.

and creator of religious experiences. Veli-Matti Karkkainen writes that “while pneumatology is by no means the structuring principle of Schleiermacher’s *Christian Faith*, because of the centrality of the category of experience, the Spirit is introduced as a crucial theme. The Spirit for Schleiermacher is effectively the spiritual influence left behind by Jesus that gives coherence to the life of the church as a spiritual entity, and therefore to the life of Christian faith.”²³ Indeed, in Scripture we see a crucial function of the Spirit is to keep believers connected to the Divine through various experiences such as prayer, encouragement, miracles, instruction, gifts, and fruit (John 14:26; Romans 8:26; Hebrews 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Galatians 5:22-23). Karkkainen, describing Schleiermacher’s thought, writes, “Since even in Jesus’ life the absolute God-consciousness was mediated by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit is the union of the ‘divine essence’ with human nature in the form of the common Spirit that exists among believers, or among those who have been regenerated by Christ.”²⁴ The problem, however, is that Schleiermacher seems to give Scripture and human experiences with God’s Spirit equal authority. Grenz and Olsen write, “Whatever the influence of the Holy Spirit was in [the Bible’s] writing should be seen as different only in degree and not in kind from the Spirit’s influence elsewhere.” This viewpoint diminished the standard of Scripture by elevating the experiences of believers to a place of unorthodox authority - truth is found in both. Unfortunately, this approach to human experience is still being adopted even by some contemporary Pentecostals. Nevertheless, the majority hold to the Protestant Orthodox view that Scripture has unique authority as the special revelation of God. Human experience, therefore, must be interpreted through the lens of Scripture. Though these experiences can (and do) add value to Christian life, they do not contain authority above the Bible. Nevertheless, Schleiermacher is appreciated for emphasizing that “the Spirit is truly God present here and now in the church, which is itself a product of God’s presence in Jesus Christ.”²⁵

Schleiermacher’s influence remains today, not so much for Pentecostals in particular, but for theology in general. Grenz and Olsen write, “For better or worse, his influence has permeated contemporary theology. It is especially evident in those schools of theology labeled as ‘liberal’ that came to dominate Protestant thought toward the end of the nineteenth century.”²⁶ Olsen, using the definition of Claude Welch, writes that, “Liberal theology is best defined as ‘maximal acknowledgement of the claims of modern thought’ within Christian theology.”²⁷ In the wake of Schleiermacher, liberal theology arose as a major stream of Christian thought in both Europe and America. Liberal theology became thoroughly intertwined with modernity. Thomas Oden defines modernity, in part, as an ideology “which assumes that chronologically recent ways of knowing the truth are self-evidently superior to all premodern alternatives.”²⁸ As a theological system espousing such a mentality, liberal theology readily accommodated to the philosophical whims of its surrounding culture. According to Olsen, liberal theologians would never plead guilty to “sacrificing the essence of Christianity.” Nevertheless, he continues that, “Critics argue that liberal theologians kept changing Christianity’s essence to allow maximal accommodation to modernity.”²⁹ The result of this in regards to pneumatology is varied but Clark Pinnock sees a general diminishment of the Holy Spirit in liberal theology. As an example he cites Geoffrey Lampe who “equates spirit with divine immanence and the consequent nature of God, as in process theism. In effect, Spirit is conscripted to meet the requirements of a philosophy in which it is not a Person but a symbol of creative love.”³⁰

As a response to the perceived abuses and even heresy of liberal theologians, conservative and fundamental schools of thought arose in the nineteenth century to counter liberal theology. Leading the way was Charles Hodge who advocated for returning to “the objectively given revelation of God in the Bible and derive all doctrines solely from it.” Olsen writes that for Hodge, the task of theology is “to receive Scripture as God’s objectively given, factual revelation of truth, discover from it the doctrines God wants us to believe and put them in an orderly system.”³¹ Though Hodge was in some ways extreme in his view, completely rejecting developments in theology as well as the historical-critical approach to studying Scripture, he represents the historical roots of many evangelicals today who remain committed to the inerrancy and primacy of Scripture. Thus, pneumatological thought for those in the evangelical steam of thought, which would include Pentecostals, use the Bible as a primary source for information about the Holy Spirit. Religious

²³ Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Pneumatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 62.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, 63.

²⁶ Grenz and Olsen, 51.

²⁷ Olsen, 126.

²⁸ Thomas C. Oden, *After Modernity . . . What?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 46.

²⁹ Olsen, 128.

³⁰ Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1996), 34.

³¹ Olsen, 232.

experiences or popular cultural philosophy stand as secondary sources at best. For those who remain in this tradition, experiences or philosophies that are contrary to Scripture, even if they arise from some sort of religious event or person, are discarded in terms of informing or influencing theology (Galatians 1:6-9).

Karl Barth provides some middle ground in the liberal versus conservative theological debate at the beginning of the twentieth century. Grenz and Olsen write that “Barth affirmed the validity of both the historical-critical method of studying Scripture and the doctrine of verbal inspiration.” They continue that “Barth criticized liberal theology for turning the gospel into a religious message that tells humans of their own divinity instead of recognizing it as the Word of God.” Ultimately, “Barth found a relevant message for his parishioners in the transcendent Word in Scripture and not in philosophical theology.”³² Nevertheless, Barth did maintain that there is a difference between the Bible and the Word of God. Grenz and Olsen write that Barth believed that the Bible “is not statically God’s Word.”³³ The Bible becomes God’s Word when God uses it or speaks through it for his purposes. Conservatives felt this was not in harmony with their belief in inerrancy. Thus, Barth was not fully welcomed by either the liberal or the conservative camp. Still, for Barth, the Word of God was authoritative³⁴ and the Holy Spirit was vital to understanding the things of God. Pinnock, quoting Barth, states that Barth’s starting point for Christian theology was that “Everything that one believes, reflects and says about God the Father and God the Son . . . would be demonstrated and clarified basically through God the Holy Spirit.”³⁵ Olsen concludes that Barth’s “theology powerfully spoke into the profound disillusionment of modern people about the modern mind. It spoke to the hunger for transcendence and salvation left in the wake of the cultural crisis of the twentieth century.”³⁶

The twentieth century also saw the rise of Pentecostalism. Even though Pentecostals have arisen as a contemporary movement influencing the recent study of pneumatology, Pentecostalism traces its roots back to theological frontier thinker John Wesley’s Methodist movement in the eighteenth century which began in England and spread quickly to and throughout America.³⁷ This movement was characterized by Wesley’s doctrine of sanctification which he called a “second blessing” being a work of God that the believer experienced subsequent to Salvation.³⁸ Wesley also represented an Arminian theological school of thought. Nevertheless, he understood the Holy Spirit to be at work, as Pinnock points out, “before any human movement toward God.” Pinnock continues to explain that Wesley believed in a prevenient grace that “enables sinners to respond to the Spirit, who draws them to the light without forcing them.” For Wesley, “Spirit precedes evangelization, not only empowering witnesses to preach and heal but also present already in all the places where they go.”³⁹ Albert Outler writes that in Wesley’s theology, “faith is human re-action to an antecedent action of the Holy Spirit’s provenience, aimed at convicting our consciences and opening our eyes and ears to God’s address to us in Scripture.”⁴⁰ It would be difficult to assign John Wesley to one of the particular theological camps mentioned above. Though influenced by the Enlightenment, he maintained the highest regard for Scripture. In regards to Wesley’s theology, Outler comments, “We can see in Wesley a distinctive theological method, with Scripture as its pre-eminent norm but interfaced with tradition, reason, and Christian experience as dynamic and interactive aids in the interpretation of the Word of God in Scripture.”⁴¹ Thus, Wesley appears to be quite a cosmopolitan theologian with an appreciation for experience, tradition, and reason while maintaining the Bible as the primary source for theology. The Pentecostal descendants of John Wesley share this trait with their spiritual ancestor.⁴²

In the nineteenth century, some within the Methodist movement in America felt that Methodism had wandered away from its commitment to sanctification or holy living and they began to break away. These groups were often called “Holiness” because of their sometimes radical views of sanctification and many of them “emphasized signs and wonders and the gifts of the Spirit.”⁴³ These believers paved the way for the Pentecostals in the early twentieth century. One of these holiness leaders was Charles Fox Parham who

³² Grenz and Olsen, 66-67.

³³ Ibid, 71.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Pinnock, 12-13.

³⁶ Olsen, 325.

³⁷ Work, 239.

³⁸ Synan, 15.

³⁹ Pinnock, 199.

⁴⁰ Albert Outler, “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral – in John Wesley”, in *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage*, ed. Thomas C. Oden and Leicheter R. Longden (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 25.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Studebaker, 13-14.

⁴³ Synan, 15.

opened a Bible school in Topeka, Kansas. Parham became convinced that the church should operate in the power of the Holy Spirit and encouraged his students to pray for Baptism in the Holy Spirit as an additional event subsequent to Salvation. One female student, Agnes Ozman, reported receiving this baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues on January 1, 1901. Another student of Parham, a black preacher named William Joseph Seymour, took the message of Pentecost to Los Angeles, California in 1906. In April he began preaching in a building on Azusa Street and from that street Pentecostalism began to spread to world-wide fame with millions of adherents today.⁴⁴

While the history of Pentecost is well recorded, clearly defining Pentecostal theology, even in the area of Pneumatology is not an easy task. Karkkainen writes, "From the beginning, Pentecostalism has been characterized by variety, and therefore, any classifications are at their best generalizations."⁴⁵ Likewise, Harvey Cox points out that Pentecostal thought "constitutes a kind of compendium of patterns and practices from virtually every Christian tradition."⁴⁶ Both Karkkainen and Cox attribute this variety in Pentecostal expressions of theology, worship, and spirituality to the diversity of the cultures and nations within which Pentecostalism arose and matured in the 20th century. This multicultural origin is demonstrated by Vinson Synan who writes that the early American Pentecostal movement "seems to have been a merger of white American holiness religion with worship styles derived from the African American Christian tradition."⁴⁷ With the early leaders being of great diversity (white and black, male and female, rich and poor) yet all worshipping together, Pentecostalism emerged as a "striking exception to the racism and segregation of the times."⁴⁸ The movement also resulted in the immediate sending out of missionaries who spread Pentecostalism to every continent within a decade of the beginning of the Azusa Street revival.⁴⁹ The multicultural and multinational origin and context of Pentecostalism created the great diversity that the movement still experiences today. Nevertheless, some common threads of pneumatological thought can be identified within the greater Pentecostal movement.

First, Pentecostal theology is intertwined with human religious experiences. Experiences do not create theology but does inform theology to some degree. Karkkainen writes, "The focus of Pentecostal spirituality is experiencing God mystically as supernatural. The category of experience is essential to understanding the spirituality of Pentecostals."⁵⁰ Barry Callen writes, "The essence of 'pentecostalism' is an emphasis on the direct and personal awareness of the indwelling presence and power of the Spirit of God."⁵¹

Second, while Pentecostals emphasize the Holy Spirit, in general they hold to orthodox Trinitarian beliefs. Despite some "oneness" groups that have emerged from Pentecostalism, Pentecostal theologian Steven Studebaker has shown that Pentecostals are formulating theological work that both affirms and contribute towards Trinitarian theology.⁵² He writes, "the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit is only the starting point for a process of theological reflection that engages Scripture with a desire to acquire the biblical narratives of the Spirit and thereby the Spirit's identity in the Trinity. A Pentecostal Trinitarian theology emerges from this movement of the experience from the Spirit to the Spirit's role in the Biblical drama of redemption and finally to the Spirit's identity in the triune God."⁵³ Karkkainen agrees when he summarizes "in the power of the Spirit, the focus is on Jesus Christ and God."⁵⁴

It is in the view of the Trinity (and the Spirit's place therein) that much agreement can be found between Pentecostals and Evangelicals. Clark Pinnock has summarized the view of much of the evangelical school of thought in regards to the Holy Spirit in the Trinity when he writes, "The Spirit is more than God's presence: the Spirit is a Person in fellowship with, but distinct from, Father and Son. Called the Paraclete in John's Gospel, the Spirit is personal agent, teacher and friend."⁵⁵ Pentecostals understand what Millard Erickson communicated about the Trinity when he wrote, "the Holy Spirit is the point at which the Trinity becomes personal to the believer."⁵⁶ The desire of evangelicals to have a personal relationship with God is

⁴⁴ Ibid, 3-4.

⁴⁵ Karkkainen, 89.

⁴⁶ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2001), 16.

⁴⁷ Synan, 4.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 5.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 6-8.

⁵⁰ Karkkainen, 91.

⁵¹ Barry L. Callen, *Authentic Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 227.

⁵² Studebaker, *From Pentecost to the Triune God*, 187-207.

⁵³ Ibid, 207.

⁵⁴ Karkkainen, 91.

⁵⁵ Pinnock, 35.

⁵⁶ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Volume III (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 846.

vigorously sought after by Pentecostals who view the Holy Spirit as their personal connection to the knowledge and power of the Triune God.

Third, the Pentecostal emphasis on the work of Holy Spirit includes the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the receiving the gifts of the Spirit as described in the letter of Paul. Steven Studebaker writes, “One of Pentecostalism’s more significant contributions is to correct the tendency in other Christian traditions to marginalize the experience of the Spirit and the charismatic gifts.”⁵⁷ Baptism in the Holy Spirit is described by J. Rodman Williams as “the idea of being enveloped in the reality of the Holy Spirit.” Williams goes on to describe Baptism in the Holy Spirit as “the gateway into a new dimension of the Holy Spirit’s presence and power.”⁵⁸ Pentecostals believe that this is a definite work of the Holy Spirit that occurs in the believer after salvation and/or sanctification. Studebaker writes, “Pentecostals have endeavored to demonstrate that Spirit baptism is a second work of grace subsequent to salvation (for Holiness Pentecostals, a third work of grace).”⁵⁹

Fourth, Pentecostal theology focuses a great deal on spirituality including spiritual formation and prayer. Often, prayer in the Pentecostal context will include glossolalia or the speaking in tongues. Pneumatological studies in Pentecostal theology must include a discussion of this phenomenon. Spiritual formation also includes an emphasis on personal holiness (sanctification) in daily life which Pentecostals see as necessary for receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. J. Rodman Williams writes, “It is because this sanctification has occurred that a person is prepared for the coming of the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁰ While in the past Pentecostals have been guilty of holding on to legalistic beliefs concerning sanctification, many Pentecostals now see sanctification as beginning at salvation and continuing under the power and ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

Even though Studebaker admits that Pentecostal theology has much work to do, even in terms of developing a proper Pneumatology, he is optimistic about the future. Pentecostal theology is expanding. Studebaker writes, “Though Pentecostal scholarship teems with discussion of the Holy Spirit, until recently it concentrated on a narrow range of issues.”⁶¹ Pentecostal theologians are now coming of age and involved in “emerging and diversifying Pentecostal theological undertakings.” Studebaker continues, “Pentecostals can learn much in conversation with other Christian traditions, but they have something to offer at the ecumenical table as well.”⁶²

Turning now to contemporary pneumatology within a broader theological context, we find that Pentecostals, by no means, have the corner on the study of the Holy Spirit. Telford Work points out that “Reformed theology has a robust, if sometimes underappreciated, pneumatology, which understands the Holy Spirit to be the agent who accomplishes God’s ongoing work in the world.”⁶³ Louis Berkhof writes, “By His special operation the Holy Spirit overcomes and destroys the power of sin, renews man in the image of God, and enables him to render spiritual obedience to God, to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and a spiritual leaven in every sphere of life.”⁶⁴

Wayne Grudem has sought somewhat to unite charismatics, Pentecostals, and reformed believers through his theological work. He affirms in his *Systematic Theology* that “the work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.”⁶⁵ He goes on to explain that the Holy Spirit empowers believers by giving life and power for service; the Holy Spirit purifies believers through an initial break with sin and an ongoing work of maturity; the Holy Spirit reveals the things of God to the believer (with Scripture as the standard of course); the Holy Spirit unifies believers in community and fellowship; the Holy Spirit give assurance to believers.⁶⁶ In terms of a key Pentecostal doctrine however, Grudem departs from Pentecostal understandings and states that “there are no New Testament texts that encourage us to seek for a second experience of ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’ that comes after conversion.”⁶⁷

⁵⁷ Steven Studebaker, *Defining Issues in Pentecostalism* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008), 46.

⁵⁸ J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology*, Volume II (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 199-200.

⁵⁹ Studebaker, *From Pentecost to the Triune God*, 2.

⁶⁰ Williams, 269.

⁶¹ Studebaker, *From Pentecost to the Triune God*, 2.

⁶² *Ibid*, 270.

⁶³ Work, 323.

⁶⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 426.

⁶⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 634.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 634-649.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 775.

Liberal theologians have recently developed a pneumatology that favors religious pluralism. The Spirit, they say, “becomes the god present in all the world’s spiritualities.”⁶⁸ The presence and work of the Holy Spirit in these other religions creates the possibility for people to be saved apart from faith in Christ. Telford Work writes that for some in this liberal camp, the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the world’s religions “requires no coherence with the work of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁹ Interestingly, this has reignited the *filioque* debate. If the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, we find in this creed an affirmation that God the Father can only be known through the Son as revealed by the Spirit. However, if one denies this and sees the Spirit proceeding only from the Father, it can be argued that the Spirit can reveal the Father apart from the Son. Work explains that *filioque* “is an obstacle for liberal advocates of religious pluralism, who wish to affirm that God can be truly and redemptively known through a variety of religious traditions.”⁷⁰ Work summarizes that “Religious pluralists prefer to treat Jesus as the agent through whom God is revealed to Christians, and the Spirit as the agent through whom god is revealed in other religions.”⁷¹ In regards to the *filioque* debate, Clark Pinnock writes, “The idea of adding *filioque* was not perverse theologically. The risen Lord did and does pour out the Spirit on the church. But the phrase in the creed can lead to a possible misunderstanding. It can threaten our understanding of the Spirit’s universality. It might suggest to the worshiper that Spirit is not the gifts of the Father to creation universally but a gift confined to the sphere of the Son and even the sphere of the church.”⁷² As suggested above, Pinnock emphasizes the universal presences of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, all theologians would affirm the omnipresence of the Spirit. He is present throughout creation and his activity is not confined to the church or individual believers. Thus, Pinnock sees the universal nature of the Spirit’s activity present even in other religions. While Pinnock states that, “It would certainly not be wise to regard religions as such as vehicles of grace”⁷³ he also writes, “The tension between universality and particularity is eased when we do justice to the twin mission of Son and Spirit.”⁷⁴ According to Pinnock, the mission of Christ is to serve as the only mediator between God and humanity (1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 8:6). However, the mission of the Spirit is to work “everywhere in advance of the church’s mission, preparing the way for Christ.”⁷⁵ While most theologians can agree with this, Pinnock applies this principle other religions in arguing that the Spirit is at work in those religions to reveal truth. Pinnock walks a fine line. He writes, “On the one hand, God’s decisive self-revelation took place only in Jesus Christ. There is no other deity revealed in other religions. The one God is the triune God. On the other hand, God is not our property or possession but is active throughout creation and history. . . . We do not affirm the possibility of God’s revealing himself out Christianity begrudgingly – we welcome it.”⁷⁶

Pentecostal theologians are also participating in this conversation about the Holy Spirit in other religions. Amos Young has ventured towards pluralism by arguing that “the religions are neither accidents of history nor encroachments on divine providence but are, in various ways, instruments of the Holy Spirit working out the divine purposes in the world and that the unevangelized, if saved at all, are saved through the work of Christ by the Spirit (even if mediated through the religious beliefs and practices available to them).”⁷⁷ While Young represents a minority of Pentecostals, others have moved in this direction. Studebaker indicates an affirmation that “the Spirit and grace may be at work in the lives of non-Christians, but also that this may occur in the context of their religious activities. Though it may seem a theological bridge too far, the step from the position that grace is available to non-Christians to the one that their religion is the context for the work of grace is not as large as it seems.”⁷⁸ Karkkainen, however, warns against promoting a “king of pneumatological approach that tends to diminish the role of Jesus Christ as more limited than that of the Spirit.” Karkkainen most likely represents the majority of Pentecostal and Evangelical thought in this area when he writes, “The Spirit not only speaks to universality but also to particularity; any talk about the Spirit in

⁶⁸ Work, 247

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Pinnock, 196.

⁷³ Ibid 207.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 194.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 207-208.

⁷⁷ Amos Young, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 236.

⁷⁸ Studebaker, *From Pentecost to the Triune God*, 228-229.

a Trinitarian context is always specific even if universal in its scope.”⁷⁹ For Karkkanien, the specificity of the Spirit’s work refers to salvation in Christ.

Though still being shaped and developed, the post-modern Radical Orthodoxy movement has introduced some fresh pneumatological thoughts with somewhat ancient origins. Radical Orthodoxy understands the Spirit to be intimately involved in the life of the church. James Smith writes that the church is characterized by “the common presence of the Spirit at work among its members through Word and sacraments. As such, [the church] stands in contrast to every other *polis* insofar as no other shares its narrative (Scripture) or is the site for the Spirit’s regenerative, sacramental, and sanctifying presence.”⁸⁰ In fact, for Smith, authentic community requires the presence of the Holy Spirit. He writes, “If authentic community is possible only where there is love, and love is only properly shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit’s indwelling presence (Rom. 5:5), and the Spirit indwells only the redeemed (i.e., the elect), then authentic community is possible only in the company of the redeemed - the renewed *polis* that is the church.”⁸¹ This understanding of the necessity of the Spirit for genuine community is a vital doctrine for this time as many are seeking after real experiences of love and belonging. This speaks to our culture powerfully; that all other attempts to establish authentic community are at best a counterfeit to the real community found in the church “animated by the Holy Spirit.”⁸² Smith continues, “Authentic relations of charity and love are possible within this community” alone.⁸³

Finally, Pneumatology has helped to foster an ecological movement within evangelical and Pentecostal circles. Jurgen Moltmann promoted a type of creation care theology in his book *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*. More recently, Pinnock has sought to emphasize the Holy Spirit’s work in creation. He writes that “recognizing Creator Spirit gives us the opportunity to relate theology to origins and environment in fresh ways. . . The Spirit’s work allows us to speak more intelligibly about creation and even helps us with ecological responsibility and our stewardship of the earth.”⁸⁴ Studebaker agrees when he writes, “Creation care, no less than the traditional disciplines of Christian formation, is a way that Christians can ‘keep in step with the Spirit’ (Gal. 5:25). . . Creation care is a pneumatological participation in the coming kingdom because the scope of redemption extends to all of creation, and the Holy Spirit in the intrinsic divine presence that leads all of creation to its eschatological consummation.”⁸⁵ Once again, this is an area of pneumatology with profound relevance for the present culture. Creation care is being championed by so many outside the church yet those inside are often slow to respond. There is no doubt that the current push for ecological responsibility is influencing this aspect of pneumatological studies. Nevertheless, responding to and honoring the work of the Spirit in creation care will also demonstrate to the world a dimension of God’s love and redemption that would not only cause creation to be preserved but also people to be brought into the Kingdom of God. Pneumatology does not promote ascribing divine qualities to creation but it does remind us of creation’s divine origins and our responsibility to care for the things of God.

Pneumatology is an extensive field of study in this present era of theology. As we participate in the contemporary study of Pneumatology, let us also participate in the ongoing presence, power, and work of the Holy Spirit.

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⁷⁹ Veli-Matti Karkkainen, “How to Speak of the Spirit among Religions”, in *The Work of the Spirit*, ed. Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 63.

⁸⁰ James K. A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 239.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 256-257.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 237.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Pinnock, 63-64.

⁸⁵ Studebaker, 263-264.

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