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THE SPIRIT OF GOD AND THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL:
RECOVERY OF AN ECONOMIC VIEW OF THE TRINITY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY,
SAINT LOUIS, DEPARTMENT OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY,
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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BY

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Even if God's creatures did not exist, God would still be a Trinity of Father, Son and Spirit, since creation is an act of free will, whereas the procession of the Persons takes place in accordance with nature, *kata phusin*. In addition to this, is it true to say that God commits the whole of his mystery to and reveals it in his communication of himself?

Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*

The connection between Spirit and religious experience in the Old Testament remains clear. Despite what might sometimes seem to be the best efforts of theologians past and present to empty theology of religious depth by leaving little or no room for religious experiences of faith, prayer, renewal, and so on, the Old Testament presents us with something different, which serves as a permanent barrier against over-rationalisation and over-systematisation of the realities of faith and the content of theology.

Gary Badcock, *Light of Truth and Fire of Love*

Introduction

Historical Perspective

Believers following in the Reformation tradition have a rich christology to inform their faith and practice. Even though the Reformation was as radical in its pneumatology as in its teachings on justification and the *solas*, because of other events and the influence of outside forces such as the Anabaptists and Enthusiasts, teaching on the Trinity and the work of the Holy Spirit became more reflexive than constructive and more formulaic than relevant. This was a repetition of early church history and subsequent conciliar doctrine. Though there is not much teaching about the Spirit in the book of Acts, the early church was able to comprehend who the Spirit was by observing his activity in the life of the church and believers. They also had a knowledge of the Spirit of God from the Old Testament and now understood this same Spirit was the Spirit of Christ. But as a result of controversies and heresies such as Arianism, teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit in the Western church started to emphasize ontology over economy and orthodoxy over relevance.

It is likely, not always having learned from our theological history, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church is experiencing a similar phenomenon today. Instead of emphasizing the truth found in rich historical doctrine, both in the early church and the Reformation period, the response to discomfiting pneumatological phenomena is to find comfort in trinitarian formulas and to look rather askance at experience, to find refuge in an orthodox ontological Trinity¹ while eschewing an economic Trinity² based in salvation history.

Historical Lutheran christology has been greatly enriched by study of the Old Testament. Jesus of Nazareth himself taught that many of the Old Testament promises were indeed about

¹ The ontological Trinity can be defined as the inner relations of the Trinity, emphasizing the Persons' equality.

² The economic Trinity can be defined as God's realized plan for redemption of all creation as made known by Christ.

him. For whatever reason (though the *kenosis* of the Spirit may be part of the answer which I will discuss below), our pneumatology is not similarly enriched. Both lay people and professional churchworkers are largely unaware of the presence and activity of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament.³ In orthodox Lutheran study of christology, we emphasize the narrative, the story of Jesus. Again, this is not the case in our study of the Holy Spirit. Does the Spirit of God have a story or does he⁴ simply come under the heading of redemptive or trinitarian doctrine? As with the Son of God, is there a progressive revelation of the Holy Spirit? Observing the Spirit's work in the Old Testament will begin to answer these questions and aid us in recovering an economic view of the Holy Spirit.

Method

In this thesis, I will survey the story of the Spirit of God in the pages of the Old Testament, in the salvation of God's people in their creation, their sustenance and their preservation until the gift of the promised Spirit-bearer, Jesus of Nazareth, i.e., an *economic* Spirit. We will examine the Hebrew word for Spirit, *ruach*, and will see how a concept which represents wind and breath is actually very substantive in meaning. I will briefly survey metaphors and symbols used of the Spirit to deepen our perception of the Spirit. We will see how the Spirit was active in the creation of this world and how he actively sustains all life, spiritual and physical. This understanding will help us counteract gnostic, platonic attitudes towards the physical world or the inappropriate dichotomizing of our worldview. Then, and only then, can we more fully embrace the Spirit's gifts: life, arts, knowledge, beauty, etc.⁵

³ For three years I graded pre-seminary Old Testament exams for LCMS pre-seminary majors – most failed.

⁴ *Ruach* is a feminine noun, but since each of the authors quoted uses the pronoun "he," I will also in the interest of uniformity.

⁵ This is not the usual Pauline list but this particular categorizing of the Spirit's gifts will be further addressed below.

Before proceeding to the specifics in the Old Testament, I will survey early pneumatological heresies, focusing on Arianism, which led the church from its worship of the Spirit for what he did for them to worshipping the Spirit for what he is. I will then touch on criticisms of pneumatological theological history (including the inability of the church fathers to accept a suffering God) which led to theological gymnastics, marginalizing the Persons of the Trinity by negating their uniqueness. This negation is still the case today and is taught as dogma in reformation circles. Augustine and Aquinas were two theologians who had great influence on the Western church but whose approach to the Trinity helped solidify the irrelevance of an ontological Trinity. The Reformation began to reverse this trend, but when confronted with the damaging doctrine of the Enthusiasts, emphasized dogma on biblical authority over the economic Trinity. This section will end with a look at the intriguing concept of the *kenosis* of the Spirit. It will be helpful in giving us some explanation of why we have difficulty ‘picturing’ or comprehending the Spirit of God more than the Father or the Son.

I will end with a study of Jürgen Moltmann’s pneumatology, a pneumatology which will bring this Old Testament-based discussion of the economic Trinity into the present day. Moltmann uses the Spirit’s creative activity to explain how God can and indeed does suffer for his creation. He uses the presence of God’s *Shekinah* glory to provide evidence to Jews that the Spirit is a person of the Godhead. He also uses Jewish reverence for the word of the Lord combined with the *Shekinah* to demonstrate evidence of the Trinity in the Old Testament. Ultimately and profoundly, he ties all of these concepts to the cross.

Purpose

For the theologian, I have several goals for this thesis: a greater interest in the Old Testament, and not only as it relates to Christ; a richer, *economic* understanding of the Spirit of

God which may shed light on our practice and views today; and, perhaps most ambitiously, to influence to some degree how the Spirit of God and the Trinity is referred to and taught about. For the layperson, just as a knowledge of Christ's work gives us great joy, peace and hope, so too will a knowledge of the depth and the breadth of the Spirit's work from the very beginning of history to the present, and the hope of that same work continuing into the age to come. Our worship, not only of the Spirit but of the entire Godhead, will be deepened as our understanding of what the Spirit does for us is realized.

Problems Resulting from Historical Theology of the Spirit

Introduction

Confusion and silence about the Spirit and his work stem, to an important extent, from confusion and error about the Trinity. From the earliest days of the establishment of the Church and even amongst the ranks of orthodox theologians, there has been confusion and heresy regarding the Father and his Son and his Spirit.

The errors included nominalism, Sabellianism, Montanism, Eunomianism, and Arianism. The reaction to these errors, to which we will turn shortly, led to viewing the Trinity ontologically instead of viewing the Trinity as it has been revealed – by its work – with a key consequence of leaving the Holy Spirit marginalized, and more importantly, leaving our churches and believers somewhat bereft of the comfort of knowing the Spirit as a Person, not simply a force.

Errors have continued through the ages. The church has responded to these errors, but frequently the form of dealing with them has been to find refuge in ontological definitions as opposed to emphasizing who the Trinity is as revealed, that is, by its works. Christians look to the doctrine of the Trinity as one of the unique aspects of their faith and as reflective of the true

God and therefore the only God to be worshiped. But the danger in this is a unitarian doctrine of God. As Karl Rahner complained: “All of these considerations should not lead us to overlook the fact that, despite their orthodox confession of the Trinity, Christians are, in their practical life, almost mere ‘monotheists.’ We must be willing to admit that, should the doctrine of the Trinity have to be dropped as false, the major part of religious literature could well remain virtually unchanged.”⁶

The tendency toward unitarianism appears in several ways. One may be called “Christomonism,” as Congar identifies it. “I have already criticized what my Orthodox friends call Christomonism in an article published some years ago. This name is given to a theological construction that is so firmly linked to Christ that the Spirit is in danger of being forgotten. As long ago as 1934, Pastor Charles Westphal told me: ‘You Catholics often give me the impression that you want to economize on the Holy Spirit.’”⁷ The tendency toward unitarianism appears also when people treat the Spirit impersonally. Oden observes: “the modern tendency is to depersonalize the Spirit, to treat God the Spirit as reducible to an idea of spirituality or an attribute of God, rather than God’s own personal meeting with persons living in history.”⁸ This “personal meeting” is not the Spirit’s revelation that he is God but that he does the will and work of God. Kuyper criticizes our historical short-sightedness when it comes to the work of the Spirit: “A modalist spin on salvation history tends to limit and relegate the work of the Spirit exclusively to the latter-day completion of redemption, forgetting those texts that refer to the Spirit as present in creation and incarnation.... If the work of the Spirit were confined to the

⁶ Karl Rahner, *Trinity* (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1999), p. 10-11.

⁷ Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, vol. 2, tr. David Smith (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), p. 210.

⁸ Thomas C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit, Systematic Theology*, vol. 3 (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1992), p. 3.

sanctification of the redeemed, He would be absolutely inactive if sin had not entered into the world (Kuyper, *WHS*, p. 12).”⁹

By focusing on how “[t]he uniqueness of the Spirit’s personhood (the Spirit’s *proprium*) lies in what the Spirit does: uniting everyone and everything with God through Jesus Christ,”¹⁰ we will avoid the one-sided emphasis on certain axioms to which Western theologians have become accustomed. For example, Pieper explains the commonly used Latin term *opera divina ad extra sunt indivisa*¹¹ as indicating trinitarian works being “common to all three persons, because there is only one divine essence, not three; only one set of divine attributes and works, not three.”¹² However, as LaCugna points out, theologians emphasizing that “the works of God *ad extra* are one, along with the doctrine of the *filioque*, obscure the *proprium* of the Spirit by relegating the Spirit to an intradivine realm as the bond between Father and Son.”¹³ Augustine went so far as to assert “that any one of the divine persons could have become incarnate.”¹⁴ An “emphasis on the economy, however, makes the Spirit active as the one who brings the creature into union and communion with God and with other creatures. According to the Bible, the Spirit is the *personal* work of the God of Jesus Christ in the history of salvation.”¹⁵

Before we take an ‘economic’ look at the Spirit, it may be helpful to consider some occasions and reactions in the church’s reflection on God, his Son and the Holy Spirit, and then to explain how this pattern and reflection led to a persistent tendency to obscure the Spirit’s identity and work.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁰ Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us* (San Francisco: Harper, 1973), p. 298.

¹¹ The outward operations of God are undivided.

¹² Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 1 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), p. 416.

¹³ LaCugna, p. 298.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 298. (emphasis mine)

Early Church Heresies

Throughout history, the Spirit's marginalization has led to unbalanced reactions. An early instance was the Montanists "who thought that the Paraclete was delivering new revelations through them and that additional revelations beyond apostolic testimony were needed for faith (Athanasius, *De Synodis*, *NPNF 2 IV*, p. 452)."¹⁶ Reformation era examples would be the Enthusiasts and the Anabaptists, sects looking for direct revelation apart from the Word.

Another early heresy was 'nominalism,' defined by Oden as the view that regards "the Holy Spirit as little more than *the name that the church decided to give to the gifts bestowed upon the apostles...*"¹⁷ He points out that nominalism "tended to reduce God the Spirit to our act of naming God in a particular mode."¹⁸ In other words, nominalism was a kind of modalism. "The heart of this misconception was that the Spirit is a part or role played by God (Sabellianism, A.D. 215), or that there are three distinct separable chronological modes or conceptions of God: creation, redemption, sanctification..."¹⁹ Just as denying Christ's divinity or humanity would negate his salvific work, so too would a modalistic approach to the Spirit. Rahner notes the consequence of such an approach: "Such a conception of God's communication would basically be Arian, it would do away with a true *self*-communication of God..."²⁰

Following the earliest heresies relating to the Godhead, and as the church became more established, there developed a heresy with a broader following than usual and one that would have consequences for centuries following, even to the present age – Arianism. Arianism was primarily a christological controversy, but there were far-reaching ramifications for the church, both from the controversy itself as well as how the controversy was resolved, especially as it

¹⁶ Oden, p. 29.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Rahner, p. 38.

relates to economic versus ontological trinitarianism. The root of the controversy was the struggle with the incomprehensible idea of a suffering and crucified God. LaCugna's explanation is clear and helpful: "If Christian theology had let go the insistence on God's impassibility and affirmed that God suffers in Christ, it could have kept together, against Arianism, the essential unity and identity between the being of God and the being of Christ."²¹ Prior to this struggle, "in the pre-Arian period, the economy was at the center of Christian speculation. The representative expression of this phase was subordinationism, which was an interpretation of Scripture based on salvation history."²² A simple example of this would be praying to the Father in the name of the Son with the aid of the Spirit. LaCugna goes on to compare the focus of theologians before and after the controversy. "Theological speculation prior to the Arian controversy was concerned primarily with christology and therefore with the dynamic biblical vision of the *oikonomia* in which God's plan unfolds in Christ."²³ After the controversy, in the fourth century, "God's relationship to Jesus of Nazareth faded in importance compared to the Father's relationship to the Son."²⁴

Reaction to this heresy immediately began to affect the life of worship. Before the Arian controversy, doxologies reflected an economic subordination (prayers offered to God through the Son). LaCugna sees the mediatory pattern of prayers as found in Ephesians 5:20, Colossians 3:17, Romans 1:8 and others as examples of pre-Arian, *economic* prayers. After the controversy, prayer and doxologies "...were restructured according to a *homoousiite* pattern to eliminate all hint of subordination."²⁵ For instance, "at some point after 340 in Antioch, some Christians began for polemical reasons to pray more regularly to the Father *and* the Son *and* the Holy Spirit

²¹ LaCugna, p. 43.

²² Ibid., p. 30.

²³ Ibid., p. 41.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 42.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 111.

(*doxa patri kai huio kai hagio pneumatic*).”²⁶ Basil wrote his treatise *On the Holy Spirit* to defend his “intentionally anti-Arian doxology: ‘to God the Father *with* the Son, *together with* the Holy Spirit’ (*meta tou huiou syn to pneumatic to hagio*).”²⁷ Thus, as LaCugna concludes: “...the chasm between *oikonomia* and *theologia* that had emerged in the theological materialized also in the *ordo* of Christian prayer.”²⁸

As a reply to these heresies and controversies, theologians went beyond reflection of and on the biblical narrative to metaphysics, and in the fight against Arius’ ontological subordination, economic or processional subordination became downplayed as well.²⁹

There were two consequences of subordinationism for the church’s confession of the Holy Spirit: one was the Eumonian error; the other was the turn in theological reflection toward “ontological trinitarianism.” Because of the apparent difficulty in demonstrating the divinity of Jesus and the Spirit in an economic framework, especially in an Aristotelian context, the argument turned to applying concepts like *ousia*, *hypostasis* and *homoousia* to the Godhead, terms or ideas which are not explicitly found in the pages of Scripture. Eunomians went far afield in the opposite direction by attempting to use both scripture and language theory to prove ontological subordination, particularly of the Holy Spirit.³⁰ The Eunomians believed in a “single supreme ungenerated Being (*agennesia*) whose simplicity was *opposed to all distinction*. The Holy Spirit was thought to be a created being, created by the Son. Consubstantiality was denied.”³¹ In reaction, at the Council of Constantinople, where the divinity of the Holy Spirit

²⁶ Ibid., p. 117.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 111.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 23-24.

³⁰ J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco: Harper, 1978), p. 249.

³¹ Oden, p. 31.

was affirmed, “*theologia* thus pertain[ed] to the equality of divine *hypostases*, not to the manner of their revelation in the economy.”³²

Orthodoxy

Early church trinitarian doctrine was still in the primitive stages of development. On the one hand, the Apologists’ thought was, as J. N. D. Kelly puts it, “highly confused,” because “they were very far from having worked the threefold pattern of the Church’s faith into a coherent scheme. In this connexion it is noteworthy that Justin did not assign the Holy Spirit any role in the incarnation.”³³ On the other hand, Irenaeus expressed a need for a complementary understanding of economy and theology. “Thus he approached God from two directions, envisaging Him both as He exists in His intrinsic being, and also as He manifests Himself in the ‘economy’, i.e., the ordered process of His self-disclosure.”³⁴ Before Arius, in the third century, “... while theologians were obscurely aware of distinctions within the one indivisible Godhead, and Theophilus could even describe the Father with His Word and His Wisdom as the Triad, they showed little disposition to explore the eternal relations of the Three, much less to construct a conceptual and linguistic apparatus capable of expressing them.”³⁵ But in time, they did attempt “... to show how the Son and the Spirit, revealed in the ‘economy’ as other than the Father, were at the same time inseparably one with Him in His eternal being,”³⁶ preserving monotheism.

Augustine

Augustine, father of Latin or Western theology, both aided the church in its struggle and contributed to the problem of the move from *oikonomia* to *theologia* as opposed to allowing the

³² LaCugna, p. 42.

³³ Kelly, p. 103.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 104.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 109.

³⁶ Ibid.

two approaches to complement and strengthen one another. On the positive side, Augustine recognized that “[p]erennial distortions associated with naturalistic spiritualism, pantheism, excessive subjectivism, and crude views of faith healing probably would not have burgeoned so abundantly in the history of the church had more thorough attention been given to the systematic understanding of the mission of the Holy Spirit (Augustine, *Faith and the Creed* 9.19, *FEF* III, 1561, p.44).”³⁷ However, on the negative side, Karl Rahner sees Augustine as bringing us to the place whereby “[n]owadays when we speak of God’s incarnation, the theological and religious emphasis lies only on the fact that ‘God’ became man, that ‘one’ of the divine persons (of the Trinity) took on the flesh, and not on the fact that this person is precisely the person of the Logos.”³⁸ As a result, “[n]o wonder, since starting from Augustine, and as opposed to the older tradition, it has been among theologians a more or less foregone conclusion that each of the divine persons (if God so freely decided) could have become man, so that the incarnation of precisely this person can tell us nothing about the peculiar features of *this* person within the divinity.”³⁹

The church was weakened by Augustine’s focus on the inner workings of the Trinity, which negated the uniqueness of the Persons, as well as his introduction of “the so-called psychological analogy for the divine persons.”⁴⁰ LaCugna explains that the consequences of “Augustine’s pursuit of a ‘psychological’ analogy for the intratrinitarian relations [which] would mean that trinitarian doctrine thereafter would be concerned with the relations ‘internal’ to the godhead, disjoined from what we know of God through Christ in the Spirit.”⁴¹

³⁷ Oden, p. 3.

³⁸ Rahner, p. 11.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Catherine Mowry LaCugna, Introduction to *The Trinity*, by Karl Rahner, p. xvii.

⁴¹ LaCugna, p. 44.

Another aspect of Augustine's approach that has detracted from a full understanding of the work of the Spirit is the doctrine of appropriations.⁴² LaCugna observes two reasons for this. First, "the attributions often are arbitrary and sometimes contradict biblical ways of speaking about God's activity."⁴³ Second, "because the separateness and individuality of each divine person is more pronounced than interrelatedness and codependence.... Thus the Incarnation is accomplished by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one indivisible activity. For Augustine, the Trinity is present in all theophanies in the Hebrew as well as Christian Scriptures."⁴⁴ At first glance, Augustine's appropriations appear to point towards an economic view of the Trinity because of focusing on what the members do (e.g., create, redeem, intercede). But the appropriations are so broad and vague that they have no clear relation to the specifics of the biblical narrative. LaCugna reminds us that "in his early works Augustine admitted the possibility of knowledge of the Trinity apart from the Incarnation.... If it is possible to know the Trinity without Christ, then the economy ... is irrelevant to a theology of God."⁴⁵ When we turn to the economy of salvation in the Old Testament, it will be important to see the issues of economy and theology as complementary. Alternatively, "it is clear that if a theology were to begin from and center itself on the economy, all the while presupposing the essential unity of economy and 'theology,' it would have no need for a doctrine of appropriations."⁴⁶ Moreover, "a theology centered on the economy, in accord with the Bible, and with pre-Nicene creeds, doxologies, and pre-Nicene Greek theology, affirms that God (Father) creates, redeems, and divinizes through the Son and by the power of the Holy Spirit. This preserves the *taxis* of the

⁴² "Appropriations" refers to how we attribute different qualities to one of the Persons (not exclusively), e.g., the Father is characterized by omnipotence, but we would affirm all three Persons are omnipotent.

⁴³ LaCugna, p. 98.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 101.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 100.

economy as well as the link between personal identity and personal activity.”⁴⁷ Not only is this an understanding based on how God has revealed himself to us, it is inherently more meaningful than a doctrine of appropriations.

As a result of Augustine’s influence, “[t]he doctrine of the Trinity gradually would be understood to be the exposition of the relations of God *in se*, with scarce reference to God’s acts in salvation history.”⁴⁸ LaCugna points out the long-term consequences:

Two principles of Augustine’s theology vividly illustrate the extent to which his relocation of the economy within the human soul, away from the events of saving history, his preoccupation with processions over missions, and also his starting point within the unity of divine essence rather than the plurality of divine persons within the economy, contribute to the rupture between *theologia* and *oikonomia*. These principles became formalised in conciliar statements of the Roman church, presupposed in scholastic theology and in the postscholastic manual tradition, and had enormous influence on the whole of Latin theology.”⁴⁹

Aquinas

Aquinas demonstrated the Augustinian influence in the Latin church by how he divided his treatises, *De Deo Uno* and *De Deo Trino*, criticism of which is the theme of Karl Rahner’s work *The Trinity*.⁵⁰ Placher observes that “Aquinas, ... in contrast to the classic medieval pattern of Peter Lombard, separated the discussion of *De Deo Uno* from that of *De Deo Trino*, developing a discussion of the existence and attributes of God before turning to the Trinity.”⁵¹ His starting point indicates the primacy of an ontological approach versus an approach based in salvation history. Different starting points in understanding theology make a significant difference in the primacy given to the Trinity.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 101.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 97.

⁵⁰ LaCugna, Introduction to *The Trinity* by Karl Rahner, p. xi.

⁵¹ William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), p. 165.

Aquinas' theology was a clear development of Augustine's theology. As LaCugna explains, he "adapted Augustine's theo-psychology of the soul and produced a profound theology of the analogy between the eternal Begetting of the Word and Breathing forth of the Spirit, and the two human activities of knowing and loving. But neo-scholasticism distorted this positive theme of Augustinian and medieval theology and relegated the divine persons to an "intra-divine" sphere – a Trinity quite unrelated to us.⁵² Obscuring any sense of the economic Trinity, "Thomas Aquinas will assert that the Lord's Prayer is addressed not to the Father (*ho theos*) but to the Trinity."⁵³ This is a natural outgrowth of Augustine's belief that any of the Godhead could have become incarnate for our salvation.

LaCugna explains: "The much more significant structural feature of [Aquinas'] *Summa* is its starting point with the divine essence, explored apart from its existence in triune personhood. Augustine had prepared the way for this, but Thomas' innovation was to use the metaphysics of Aristotle as the basis for his theology. The move toward Aristotle is reflected in what Thomas explicitly sets out as the focus of the *Summa*: God in himself."⁵⁴ To an even greater extent than Augustine, "[t]his is a clear departure from the Bible, early creeds, liturgy, and Greek patristic theology, all of which begin with the Unoriginate Father who comes to us in salvation history in the person of Christ."⁵⁵

Whether or not the excesses of the leadership and the corrupted doctrine of the Church at the time of Aquinas can be in any way attributed to an emphasis on an ontological Trinity is not the focus of this paper. But a proper understanding of the role of the Spirit in both the Church

⁵² Rahner, p. xi.

⁵³ LaCugna, p. 99.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 147-148.

and individual believer's life should have shifted focus from the Church to the Spirit's role as primary intermediary and revealer of truth.

Reformation and the Spirit

It was to this marginalized and rationalized approach to the Trinity the Reformation came and began to effect some change. Alasdair Heron asserts: "the presence and action of the Spirit in the life of the believer to represent Jesus Christ, to convey forgiveness, to illuminate and renew by divine spiritual energy—these themes take on a new centrality owing directly to the fundamental insights of the Reformation."⁵⁶ Most people familiar with the Reformation would point to themes such as justification by faith, the *solas*, and the centrality of Christ as descriptive of changes the Reformation brought to Western Christendom. But as Heron explains: "The Reformers themselves were well aware that faith, redemption by Christ, justification by faith, the authority of Scripture, were all necessarily bound up with the Holy Spirit."⁵⁷ Calvin was reticent to reflect on the Trinity, but "he was just as clear that, unless we think of God as Triune, 'only the bare and empty name of God flits about in our brains, to the exclusion of the true God.' It is only in Christ and through the Spirit that we appropriate knowledge of God or God's salvific work, so anything important we say about God has to be Trinitarian."⁵⁸

This is not to say that the Reformation entirely reversed centuries of focus on an ontological Trinity. For example, in the Lutheran church we still look to Augustine's trinitarian doctrine as foundational, as seen in our use of the Athanasian Creed. Placher also notes that "the Reformation, for instance, made the issues of works and grace, the sacraments, and ecclesiology more central to theological discussions than the Trinity, which both Calvin and Luther tended to

⁵⁶ Alasdair I.C. Heron, *The Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), p. 99.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁵⁸ Placher, p. 168.

affirm without discussing it much.”⁵⁹ Reformation theologians were able to use the idea of Spirit as mediator of the Word as a weapon in their fight against the established church, but beyond that, Reformation theologians were silent. “Not much later, a Lutheran theologian Abraham Calov believed the Word of God could accomplish conversion without the ‘illumination of the Spirit.’”⁶⁰

LaCugna concludes that this left the door open for

the anti-Trinitarian movements beginning in the sixteenth century [which] rejected the doctrine of the Trinity because of its lack of scriptural basis, its contrariness to reason, and its irrelevance to the practice of faith. The so-called ‘father of modern theology’, Friedrich Schleiermacher, was skeptical that the speculative doctrine of the Trinity could serve as anything more than an appendix to dogmatics. In this he represented the whole ethos of the Enlightenment. ... The doctrine of the Trinity, which by this time concerned a Trinity of persons on the other side of a metaphysical chasm, held little interest for anyone, most theologians included. The doctrine had next to no bearing on the whole of theology, and none whatsoever on Christian life.⁶¹

As a result of these historical trends, especially in the Western church, “[t]he hiddenness of the Spirit has been accentuated.... This has resulted in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit being closely tied – in Western theology especially – to the doctrines of church and scripture. There is clearly a strength in this, for it functions as a defense against the wilder excesses of those who, as Luther so aptly put it, believe they have ‘swallowed the Holy Spirit, feathers and all.’”⁶² In essence, however, this is not so different than the pre-Reformation view where the Spirit is subservient to the church. In fact, Heron believes the Reformation emphasis on

[t]he authority of Scripture could ... become an axiomatic, dogmatic assertion rather than an experienced conviction. This was paralleled by a strong tendency to emphasize the objective, finished work of Christ so exclusively that the activity of the Spirit as sanctifier receded into the background: it was often presented simply as ‘applying’ the fruits of Christ’s ‘satisfaction’ offered to the Father for our sins, and so largely in negative rather

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 165.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 169.

⁶¹ LaCugna, p. 144.

⁶² Gary D. Badcock, *Light of Truth and Fire of Love* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), p. 2.

than positive terms. Over against these strongly objectivist tendencies there not surprisingly emerged a series of reactions which sought to redress the balance: notably the Quaker doctrine of the ‘inner light’ – a transposition of the *testimonium internum* which in effect (if not in intention) eventually threatened to reduce it to something purely subjective—and the less extreme but still very powerful emphasis on inwardness and devotion in Pietism and Methodism. An uneasy oscillation between objectivism and subjectivism has marked a good deal of Protestant theology and piety ever since, as indeed it has also marked wider Western culture.⁶³

Much of the good done by the Reformation was lost in internecine battles, pushed aside by the Enlightenment, and then obscured by Methodism, awakenings and the like. One finds both Catholic and Protestants observing this. Yves Congar bemoans the situation in the Catholic Church by complaining: “There has always been a teaching about the Holy Spirit in the Western Church, but little of it has entered its living faith or its liturgy.... Rome...appears to have replaced the Holy Spirit and let him be overshadowed by the Pope, the Virgin Mary and the cult of the Blessed Sacrament.”⁶⁴ Similarly, Badcock, a Reformed scholar, says that both in the Reformation tradition and in churches today coming out of that tradition, “there is a degenerate tendency to restrict the work of the Spirit to the gift of faith in the Word; therefore, where experience of the Spirit does not arise in connection with listening to sermons or reading the Bible – to caricature the position only slightly – there is no experience of the Spirit at all. What is especially lacking here is an awareness of the Spirit’s presence, not merely in the sacraments and the fellowship of the church, and wherever love is found, but also in darkness and doubt, and in the difficult carrying of the cross.”⁶⁵

Kenosis of the Spirit

The very nature of the Spirit (as we know him) contributes to our lack of a concrete view of him. Just as the Word humbled himself in order to secure our salvation, so too does the Holy

⁶³ Heron, p. 110.

⁶⁴ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, p. 160.

⁶⁵ Badcock, p. 4-5.

Spirit. For this reason and in this sense, we might speak of a *kenosis* of the Spirit. As Congar said: "He has, as it were, emptied himself of the characteristics of a private or particular person. This is why those who have written about the Holy Spirit have frequently called him the 'unknown' or the 'half-known' one. Already in his own time, Augustine noted that the Holy Spirit had hardly ever been discussed and his mystery had not been examined."⁶⁶ The Spirit is the only member of the Trinity for whom some theologians apply the pronoun "it." "Scriptural exegetes are...ill advised to consistently address the Spirit as "it" with the avowed intent of pointing to the Spirit's self-effacing presence (Heron, *HS*, p. 176), for it is precisely the free personal God who is becoming self-effacing..."⁶⁷

Of course we should use the term *kenosis* carefully. But it does help us to see how our way of speaking about the Spirit is different from how we speak of Father or Son. We should note, first, that "[t]here is also the fact that 'spiration' does not really express the relation that is constitutive of the Person (of the Holy Spirit) as 'fatherhood' and 'sonship' do for the first two persons. 'Holy Spirit' is not, in itself, a relative, but an absolute name. In itself, it would be equally suitable for the Father or the Son, or even for the divine essence. In other words, it is only by virtue of an 'accommodation' authorized by Scripture that it has come to be used as the name of the third Person."⁶⁸ Second, we should also recognize that in his very mission there is a certain hiddenness with the Spirit. Congar observes "'procession' can also be used of the Word, the Son. There is no revelation in the objective sense of the Person of the Holy Spirit as there is of the Person of the Word, the Son, in Jesus and, through that Person, of the Person of the Father. In this context, it has been suggested that the Holy Spirit empties himself, in a kind of kenosis, of

⁶⁶ Congar, *I Believe*, p. 5.

⁶⁷ Oden, p. 21.

⁶⁸ Congar, *I Believe*, p. 6.

his own personality in order to be in a relationship, on the one hand, with ‘God’ and Christ and, on the other, with men, who are called to realize the image of God and his Son.”⁶⁹

To be sure, there are misuses of the concept of the Spirit’s *kenosis* which has, for example, enabled rationalism and philosophy to further depersonalize the Spirit, leading to heresies such as Unitarianism. Process theology and liberation theology are examples of diminishing the Spirit by way of convenient impersonal analogies.⁷⁰ Even though Tillich understands that “[w]ithout personal language, God the Spirit soon becomes reduced to a symbolic generalized ‘dimension of depth’,”⁷¹ he “reduced the Spirit to an existential category of being itself.”⁷²

We would not use the *kenosis* of the Incarnate Word as a way to deny his divinity or efficacious works of salvation; so too we cannot use the *kenosis* of the Spirit as justification to not more fully explore and understand the work of the Spirit in this world, our own lives and the life of the Church.

The Spirit does indeed perform those acts with which we are familiar: illumine the Scriptures, lead us to repentance, and make the work of Jesus efficacious. This is certainly a *safe* place to be pneumatologically, but *safe* does not mean correct or full. One could argue that we would not accept such a simplistic approach to christology. The more we know who God is, what God does for us and the riches of God’s gifts to us – through his Son and his Spirit – the greater will our response of worship and praise be. To draw a clearer picture of who the Spirit is *for us*, we turn to the Old Testament.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. vii.

⁷⁰ Oden, p. 20.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 21.

⁷² Ibid., p. 20.

There is nothing new under the sun; each of these heresies (and others) as well as heretical philosophies (e.g., gnosticism, platonism) is found in religious circles today. The way to combat confusion and error regarding the Trinity is not found only in theological formula. Apologetics and reasoning aside, it is the cross that brings the skeptic to his knees; ontology aside, it is a knowledge of God – in three unique Persons *for us* – that saves us from our ignorance and sin.

Spirit of God in the Old Testament – God for Us

Introduction

What is an appropriate understanding of *economy*, and why focus on the Old Testament? The Trinity is a profound set of relationships between the three Persons of the Godhead, an ecstasy of communion, as LaCugna describes it. Without creation the Trinity would be lacking nothing, but with creation the Trinity's economy is a *necessary* revelation of the mystery of God's love for creation as revealed definitely in Christ and made known to us personally by the Spirit. By looking at the Spirit of God in the pages of the Old Testament, we soon see there is more to the Spirit than sanctifier (though of course that is of great significance). This combats the tendency to view the Spirit as a tool for applying salvation, not a Person effecting our salvation. This Person, in *kenotic* humility, is as active in creating and sustaining physical life as he is in creating spiritual life, both corporately and individually. The Spirit nourishes this life by granting outstanding gifts, by acting as an advocate and judge, and by using prophets and the inspiration of Old Testament writers to point us to the Saviour of all creation.

The average layperson sees the Holy Spirit entering history for the first time at Pentecost and making salvation possible by his work. But the work of the Spirit, including salvific work, started at the very beginning. Wilf Hildebrandt surveys the Old Testament and finds “the Spirit

of God is featured as the main mover in the Trinity to bring into reality the plans and purposes of God.”⁷³ Just as the Spirit of God was present and active in the creation of this world, so too the Spirit is active in the undoing of the fall (recapitulation), moving all creation towards salvation. Before looking at the various ways the Spirit brought the Father’s plans and purposes into being, we look at the Hebrew term for Spirit, *ruach*.⁷⁴

Ruach

The term “spirit” often suggests that which is disembodied and ethereal, and so in our endeavour to flesh out and deepen our understanding of the Person of the Spirit, it is helpful to study the name given to the Spirit, that is, *ruach*. Hildebrandt notes that “the first occurrence of *ruah* in the Hebrew canon is in Genesis 1:2, where the phrase ‘and the Spirit of God [*ruah elohim*] was hovering over the waters’ indicates the presence of God in the creation activities.”⁷⁵ There is great scope and variety in the use of *ruach*. “The Hebrew OT has three hundred and eighty-nine occurrences of this term. Of these references, approximately one hundred and seven refer to the activity of God in the world of nature and in the life of humankind. In these passages, *ruah* is translated ‘Spirit’ and indicates the work and activity of the Spirit of God. Other meanings of the term are ‘wind,’ in its plain sense of moving air, and ‘breath.’”⁷⁶

Even though the term *ruach* is often rendered “wind,” Hildebrandt notes that wind is not always merely cosmological in its meaning: “Winds are also instruments and messengers in God’s hands through which the divine purposes are accomplished. In times of judgment they may bring about plagues and drought. Moreover, a wide range of metaphorical uses indicates the nature of wind to blow away chaff, sweep away dust, shake trees, and wither crops. Like the

⁷³ Wilf Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), p. 27.

⁷⁴ Different authors use different phonetic representations; *ruah* and *ruach* are the two most common.

⁷⁵ Hildebrandt, p. 18.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1-2.

elusive and invisible wind, words may also be devoid of content and the circumstances of life may be viewed as meaningless.”⁷⁷

Hildebrandt goes on to point out the Semitic use of *ruach* also included a strong anthropological component: “from simple physical breath to a range of psychological and emotional dispositions.”⁷⁸ “The emotions are understood to come forth out of the *ruah* and affect both disposition and behavior. In this way, *ruah* is at times similar to or parallel to *leb* (heart). A distinction between them is that the *ruah* is God’s gift of life to humankind but what proceeds from a person’s own will comes out of that person’s heart (cf. Jer 23:16; Ezek 13:2-3).”⁷⁹ Not all emotions associated with the *ruach* are joyful ones. In Genesis 26:35 it is the *ruach* that feels great depth of painful emotions. The pharaoh’s *ruach* was troubled in Genesis 41:8. The *ruach* of the Israelites was in anguish (Exodus 6:9).⁸⁰ In Psalms 34 and 51 we see that God desires a ‘broken’ or ‘crushed’ *ruach*.⁸¹ Heron notes that *ruach* also referred to “‘person’ or ‘self’. This was a natural further development from the idea of the ‘breath of life’, coupled with the ‘psychological’ application just mentioned. As ‘breath’, *ruach* might be expected to stand for what in English once used to be called the ‘animal soul’, in Latin *anima*, and in Greek *psyche*.... Here it tends to mean not simply ‘the power of life’, but rather the ‘mind’ or ‘self’.”⁸²

Even though *ruach* was used in common and everyday ways to speak of a variety of aspects of life, *ruach* was also the name Hebrews used in speaking about God. Hildebrandt finds that “the term *ruah* is applied to God in approximately one hundred and seven instances. Of this number, the phrase *ruah elohim* [‘Spirit of God’] occurs fifteen times in Hebrew and its

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 14-15.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 15.

⁸² Heron, p. 6.

equivalent five times in Aramaic, while the phrase *ruah yhwh* ["Spirit of the Lord"] occurs about twenty-seven times."⁸³ There is a strong anthropological flavour to the use of the term. Heron uses New Testament examples to bolster the argument that "some may dispute that terminology like 'spirit of his mouth,' 'his spirit,' 'the spirit of the Lord,' is not necessarily referring to the 3rd Person of the Trinity since they do not specifically say 'Holy Spirit.' But in the NT we see the same phenomenon, e.g., Galatians 4:6 'Spirit of his Son,' 2 Thessalonians 2:8 as the 'Spirit of his mouth.'"⁸⁴

Beyond seeing that the Old Testament uses *ruach* to speak of God's presence and activity, we might also ask with Gary Badcock about why. "Why did the ancient Jews adopt the word *ruach*, and with it the notion of breath and wind, into their theological vocabulary, and why did the theological notion of *ruach* persist beyond the confines of their own religious tradition to become such a prominent concept in New Testament theology and in the Christian religion?"⁸⁵ He finds the answer in "the language of prayer in the Old Testament, in particular the Psalms, where *ruach* is used to speak both of the human relationship with God and of creaturely dependence upon God."⁸⁶ In passages such as Psalm 51:10-12 and Psalm 104:25-30 one observes an understanding of the connection between God the creator and life. Heron notes "*ruach* (and 'holy *ruach*') refer both to God acting upon man, and to the result of that action in man himself. So *ruach* even as applied to man has an implicit reference to God as man's creator and sustainer; thus it becomes a linking term which refers both to God and to human life in its dependence upon God."⁸⁷ Connection, however, does not imply ontological equality. As Heron

⁸³ Hildebrandt, p. 18.

⁸⁴ Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), p. 32.

⁸⁵ Badcock, p. 8.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Heron, p. 7.

also explains: “And yet the *discontinuity* between [creator and creation] is also clear in such talk about the *ruach* that God and his living creatures share, for on the one hand, the Spirit of God is holy, and on the other hand, the Spirit is that upon which creatures depend for their very existence, and not something they possess by permanent right.”⁸⁸

One significant realization when studying the word *ruach* is its anti-gnostic nature. This gives substance to our consideration of the Spirit, combating any ethereal notions which may further detract from our relating to the Spirit as Person, not simply an impersonal force or power. This is why Congar suggests the translation ‘breath.’ “The Hebrew word *ruah*, which is almost always translated by the Greek *pneuma*, means breath, air, wind or soul. In the Old Testament especially, but also quite often in the New, to translate it as ‘breath’ gives a realism and an emphasis to the data reported and to the biblical texts that our word ‘spirit’ does not suggest so well.”⁸⁹ He further explains:

Ruah-breath is not in any sense opposed to ‘body’ or ‘corporeal’. Even in profane Greek and the language of philosophy, *pneuma* expresses the living and generating substance that is diffused in animals, plants and all things. It is a subtle corporeality rather than an incorporeal substance. The *ruah*-breath of the Old Testament is not disincarnate. It is rather what animates the body. It is opposed to ‘flesh’, but then ‘flesh’ is not the same as ‘body’. ‘Flesh’ is the purely earthly reality of man and is characterized by the fact that it is weak and corruptible: ‘The Egyptians are men and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit’ Isaiah declared (31:3) in order to dissuade the Jews from looking to them for support. It was a question of knowing the source of real strength and life. In Genesis 6:3, the way is prepared for the flood by God’s declaration: ‘My breath shall not abide in man for ever, for he is flesh’. Men were, in other words, living only according to their own earthly principle.⁹⁰

By examining where we came from (*ruach*) to where we are now (spirit), it may also be helpful to realize that Western Christian theology has been influenced by Aristotelian categories, and consequently moved away from the Hebraic ‘subtle corporeality.’ Congar concludes: “The

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

⁸⁹ Congar, *I Believe*, p. 3.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Greeks thought in categories of substance, but the Jews were concerned with force, energy and the principle of action. The spirit-breath was for them what acts and causes to act and, in the case of the Breath of God, what animates and causes to act in order to realize God's plan. It always refers to a life-energy."⁹¹

Symbols and Metaphors for the Spirit of God

There is a rich variety of terms, metaphors and anthropomorphisms used of the Spirit in the Old Testament. When one explores these terms and their meanings, the Holy Spirit's salvific work in both the Old and New Testaments takes on more concrete meaning; it is more than simply whispering in our ear that Jesus is the Messiah. Oden notes: "The work of the Spirit everywhere leaves footprints, traces, signs, and symbols."⁹² The Spirit gives water for life and the cleansing of baptism; the Spirit anoints believers with gifts to strengthen and edify the body; the Spirit illuminates the Word with the light of fire. But the Spirit's presence and work are witnessed also by the Old Testament. "God's indwelling Spirit was first revealed under anticipatory types or prefigurations of what was to come. Symbols of the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit that recur in the Hebrew Bible include wind, fire, water, dove, and the oil of anointing."⁹³

Water is a common symbol for God at work in the world through the Spirit, caring both for creation's physical and spiritual needs. As Congar notes: "He is not only the wind or breath – he is also water (see, for example, Is 44:3ff.; Ezek 47:1-12; in the Johannine writings, Rev 22:1, 17). In the East especially, water is what enables seed to produce life. It also quenches the thirst and purifies (baptism!)."⁹⁴ In the Old Testament, specifically, we might especially note the

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Oden, p. 9.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 41.

⁹⁴ Congar, *I Believe*, p. 50.

idea of 'rain' in connection with water. "Rain had long been a symbol of the refreshing, life-giving outpouring of the Spirit (Ps. 72:6, 7)... 'So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today – to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul – then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. (Deut. 11:13, 14)"⁹⁵

Old Testament leaders, kings, priests and even the Tent of Meeting (Ex. 30:26) were anointed. Oden explains for what purpose:

The figure of anointing embraced metaphors of consecrating, setting-apart, giving gifts and blessings, and making fit for service. Anointing was a dramaturgical expression of the Spirit's comforting presence, seal, and blessing. Prophets were anointed that God's own Spirit might address the people directly (1 Kings 19:16). Priests were anointed that the Spirit might minister to the people through worship and sacrifice (Lev. 8:12). Governors and judges were anointed that the Spirit might rightly govern the people and judge justly (1 Sam. 15:1, 17; Barth, *CD* II/2, pp. 438 ff.).⁹⁶

An Old Testament anthropomorphism for the Spirit of God is the 'finger of God,' which as Congar observes is "the instrument and the sign of God's power (Ex 8:15) and even of his creative power (Ps 8:3; in 33:6, it is the 'breath of his mouth'). It is also the sign of the authority employed by God in his initiative—the tablets of the Law were, for example, written by his finger (Ex 31:18; Deut 9:10)."⁹⁷ In New Testament Christianity, "God's law is written by his Spirit in our hearts. God's power, then, is expressed by his arm and his hand, the extremity of which touches man."⁹⁸ And not only the law, but it is the revelation of the gift of Jesus' sacrifice that the Spirit writes on the believer's heart.

⁹⁵ Oden, p. 62.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44. "The Spirit anoints the prophet to speak the Word unfailingly (1 Kings 19:16), the priest to be set apart for holiness unto the Lord (Lev. 8:12), the governing powers that justice may rest upon them (1 Sam 15:1)." Oden, p. 45.

⁹⁷ Congar, *I Believe*, p. 4.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

As we saw with the Hebraic use of *ruach*, this variety of images used to describe the Spirit at work gives us a living, tangible (i.e., non-gnostic) perspective. Congar looks at all three members of the Godhead when exploring the purpose for the use of images.

The fact that God is revealed above all in images has a much deeper reason. It is this: the most material images are metaphors which do not in any sense claim to express being in itself, that is, the quiddity of what they are speaking about; they only express behaviour and what that represents for us. God is a rock, Christ is a lamb, the Spirit is living water. This does not mean that God is a mineral, Christ is an animal, or the Spirit is a liquid with a known chemical formula. It does, however, mean that God is, for us, firmness, Christ is a victim offered for us, and the Spirit is a dynamic bearer of life. Revelation, in other words, by being expressed in images, is essentially an expression of what God is *for us*.⁹⁹

Trinity and the Person of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Irving Wood contends if one does not know the history of the Holy Spirit as found in the Old Testament, “[t]he Spirit of God seems at first sight to be hardly more than ‘an aspect of God.’ If pursued until it can become somewhat understood in its historical relations, it is found to be intimately connected with certain conceptions of early Hebrew thought, like that of the angel of Jehovah, and with certain experiences of Semitic life, like that of prophecy.”¹⁰⁰ Was the Spirit of God an agent of salvation in the same way a prophet, priest or king was, or was he more than that? Does an understanding of the richness of the word *ruach* or familiarity with symbols and metaphors for Spirit give us a way to describe the third Person of the Trinity at work in the Old Testament, or are they simply metaphors for *Yahweh* at work? Can we find the Trinity in the Old Testament and specifically the Spirit of God as a *Person* in the Trinitarian Godhead?

Before answering these questions, it should be acknowledged that I am working on the assumption that God’s continuing revelation of his plan of salvation as found in Jesus of Nazareth, revealed by the Spirit, and summarized in the three ecumenical creeds is representative

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Irving F. Wood, *The Spirit of God in Biblical Literature* (New York: A C Armstrong, 1904), p. 3.

of the doctrine of the New Testament. One cannot ‘discover’ the *Holy Spirit* in the Old Testament without the foundation of the revelation by Jesus of Nazareth and the teaching of the apostles. Thus I am writing from a viewpoint that reads the Old Testament in light of the revelation of the New. Just as the New Testament explains that Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfillment of the promised Old Covenant Messiah, so too the New Testament enables us to understand that the *ruach YHWH* is the Spirit of God as taught about in the New Testament. Since we will always be combating some form of Arianism (e.g., Jehovah Witnesses), which also affects our view of the Holy Spirit, we have more than an academic interest in recognizing the Spirit of God in the Old Testament – the third Person of the Trinity who is ensuring the salvation of God’s people through creation, providence, judgment and ultimately, pointing us to the Word of God.

Martin Luther was a biblical scholar, translating both Testaments from original languages into German. He rejected the popular exegesis of his day, which was to interpret many Scriptures analogically. On the question of divinity of the Spirit, he used linguistics in Genesis, “... which he considered especially convincing. He found several persons within the one divinity irrefutably and clearly expressed, according to ancient ecclesiastical interpretation, in the passages wherein God speaks of himself in the plural. ‘Let us make man’ (Gen. 1:26); ‘Behold, Adam has become like one of us’ (Gen. 3:22); ‘Come let us go down’ (Gen. 11.7).”¹⁰¹ Luther made an important shift from using allegorical exegesis to *trinitarian* exegesis. “[He] concerned himself with showing how the threefold manner of God’s work, in its unity and distinctiveness, was felt everywhere. That was why he did not limit himself to formal proofs of three divine

¹⁰¹ Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther and the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 116.

persons; rather, he emphasized the division of divine functions.”¹⁰² As far as the Old Testament was concerned, Luther held that

the God of the Old Testament is the eternal God himself. He separated, forgave, and punished the people of Israel, spoke and worked through the patriarchs, kings, and prophets. That was also the major reason for Luther’s belief in the Trinity in the Old Testament. What at first could appear as the result of an exegetical method, namely, the Christological-prophetic interpretation, was in reality the expression of Luther’s conviction underlying all his exegetical work, that his God is the God of the whole Scripture. What is at stake is ... the uncovering of the reality of the whole, and that means triune, God in the Old Testament; a reality which is hidden at first but then visible to the eyes of faith.¹⁰³

Looking specifically to the Holy Spirit, Luther “insisted that the Spirit in the Old Testament appears as an independent divine effect and, according to the law of the indivisible glory of God, must therefore be fully God, too. If this is recognised, then the existence of the Spirit as a particular person is both confirmed and made apparent.”¹⁰⁴ For this reason, Luther also insisted “...that when Scripture speaks of the two Persons of the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit, the third Person, is also present; for it is He who speaks those words through the prophets.”¹⁰⁵

Others have also identified triadic examples in the Old Testament that emphasize the identity and activity of the Spirit. Isaiah offers some key instances. As Hildebrandt says about the exegesis of this book: “It has been argued that three divine persons are referred to in Isaiah 48:16, where the prophet records, ‘And now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit’ (NASB)... Others claim that in Isaiah 61:1 the divinity is working together in a threefold manner. ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good news to the poor.’ In this passage the Lord anoints the Messiah with the Spirit. It is implied that the *ruah* was not only a divine

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 118.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 199.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 117.

¹⁰⁵ Martin Luther, *Luther Works*, vol. 15, ed. Jaroslav J. Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), p. 282.

messenger who had the power to effect the divine will but was also believed to be a person.”¹⁰⁶

In a similar way Leon Wood has argued that references to the Spirit in such passages as Ezekiel 3:12 (“Then the Spirit lifted me up”) and 11:1 (“The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away”) “shows the prophet distinguishing between the Spirit of God and God himself, and, since the Spirit thus in reference does these things either to him or for him, personality for the Spirit is again implied.”¹⁰⁷

Triad in the Old Testament and the Angel of the Lord

The Angel of the Lord appears often in the Old Testament, usually to effect salvation, both physical and spiritual. Hagar was comforted and Ishmael saved by the Angel; he stayed Abraham’s hand to save Isaac; the Angel of the Lord led the Israelites to freedom out of Egypt; the Angel of the Lord aided the former prophets when Israel needed deliverance. There is a case to be made that the Angel of the Lord or angels in general in the Old Testament refer to the Holy Spirit. We are familiar with angelic theophanies such as the one who appeared to Abram.

Generally the assumption is the appearance is God the Father or a pre-incarnate Christ.

However, early on, Augustine wrote:

I cannot indeed think of any place where the Holy Spirit is actually called an angel, but he can be reckoned to be one from his activity; it is written of him that *He will announce to you the things that are to come* (Jn 16:13), and of course ‘angel’ is only a Greek word meaning in Latin ‘announcer’ or ‘messenger.’ But we find the Lord Jesus Christ being quite unmistakably called *angel of great counsel* by the prophet (Is 9:6, Septuagint). In themselves, both the Holy Spirit and the Son of God are each God and the Lord of angels.¹⁰⁸

Augustine uses Acts 7:51 and 53 to further make his point: “You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!...you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not

¹⁰⁶ Hildebrandt, p. 90.

¹⁰⁷ L.J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁸ Augustine, *The Trinity*, tr. Edmund Hill, O.P. (Brooklyn, NY: New York City Press), p. 114.

obeyed it.”¹⁰⁹ In our times, others have argued that the Angel of the Lord may be identified with the Holy Spirit. A detailed case for this has been made by Jane Schaberg.

Schaberg finds a specific relationship between the New and Old Testament manifestations of the Spirit by focusing on two triadic phrases and their relationship as found in Matthew 28 and Daniel 7. She believes the three-fold reference to the Godhead in the Great Commission reflects themes found in Daniel 7. “[S]everal scholars recognize in Matt 28:18b an allusion to Dan 7:14 LXX. If this is the case, there may be an organic relationship between verse 18b and the triad in verse 19b.”¹¹⁰ “Matt 28:18-19 contains two words and a phrase, or five words, that are identical to Dan 7:14 LXX: *edothe*, *exousia* and *panta ta ethain*. The word order in Matt 28:18b and Dan 7:14 is identical.... Furthermore there is a triad in 7:13 LXX: the Ancient of Days, one like a son of man and those standing by (*oi parestekotes*) who are angels.”¹¹¹ Though we may not be able to adequately or authoritatively explain the connection between the Daniel 7 triad and Matthew 28 and the Trinity, it offers a potential means to show Muslims and Jews not only that there is precedence for a triune God to be found in the pages of the Old Testament but that it is exclusively in this triune God that our salvation is revealed.

Schaberg uses the Old Testament triadic phrase formed by the Ancient of Days, the Son of Man, and the Angel or angelic host to support the assertion that the Angel and the Spirit of God are one and the same. This is not simply an interesting but isolated coincidence. Several New Testament passages are similar to the Daniel 7 passage, e.g. Luke 12:8-9: “I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.”

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 132.

¹¹⁰ Jane Schaberg, *The Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit – The Triadic Phrase in Matthew 28:19b* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980), p. 57.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 113.

In Revelation 3:5, “one speaking like a son of man (1:13) completes the triad with “before my Father and his angels ... hear what the Spirit says...” Mark 8:38 uses similar language which is triadic if not trinitarian: “... the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels” (See also Matthew 16:27). Acts 7:55-56 is more specifically trinitarian: “But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus.... ‘I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’” “The Holy Spirit is related to the visionary experience, and may be thought of as the power by means of which Stephen sees the vision of the Son of Man, or as the authority which legitimizes the vision.”¹¹²

There are many passages in the Gospels and Epistles that are very similar or identical to the Danielic triad. Daniel 7:10 refers to the angelic host: “Thousands upon thousands attended him.” Verse 13 has the other two members of the triadic phrase: “before me was one like *a son of man*, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the *Ancient of Days* and was led into his presence [emphasis mine].” In each of the following passages, we have virtually the three same beings mentioned over and over again:

- Mark 13:32: the angels, Son, father
- Matt 13:36-43: Son of Man, angels, Father (of righteous)
- Matt 25:31-43: Son of Man, my father, the angels
- Mark 8:38: Son of Man, his father, the holy angels
- Luke 12:8-9: Son of Man, angels, God
- John 1:51: Son of Man, angels, God
- Acts 1:6-11: Father, two men (angels), Jesus
- 1 Thess 3:13: our God and Father, our Lord Jesus, all his holy ones
- 1 Thess 4:13-18: the Lord, God, archangel
- 2 Thess 1:5-10: Lord Jesus, his mighty angels, God
- Rev 1:4: who is, and who was, and who is to come, the seven spirits, Jesus Christ
- Rev 5:6-7: the Lamb, the seven spirits, God
- Rev 11:15-18: angel, Our Lord, his Christ¹¹³

¹¹² Ibid., p. 281.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 286.

Daniel 7:14 is important not only for possibly being trinitarian but also because the *personhood* of the Spirit would then be put forward. “Both the power of the heavenly world and the power that brings one to the heavenly world may be captured in the phrase ‘the Holy Spirit.’ If angelic members of the court are symbolized or represented here [Dan 7:14], the Holy Spirit can be considered as a personal being.... It is impossible, however, to be sure of this, as the author may have used the term “the Holy Spirit” simply to interpret the impersonal *exousia* of Dan 7:14.”¹¹⁴

Spirit As Person

We may counter the depersonalizing of the Spirit and the subsequent de-emphasis of his role in salvation when we observe to what extent the Old Testament authors viewed the Spirit of God as a *Person*. Wood argues:

No doubt they would not have been able to make a theological formulation regarding the Trinity [in the OT], but still they seem to have made a distinction between the Spirit of God and God Himself and this is a way to characterize the Spirit as having qualities of personality. For instance, the psalmist writes, ‘Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth’ (Psalm 104:30). The verb *sendest forth* is hardly applicable to merely a power or influence ... and if that spirit in turn could create and renew, then an aspect of personality is implied.”¹¹⁵

Pieper, looking at several relevant passages economically, points us in the same direction. “[T]he Old Testament clearly teaches the divine personality of the Holy Spirit in predicating of Him such activities (*actiones et passiones*) as creation (Gen. 1:2), reproving man (Gen. 6:3), speaking through David (2 Sam. 23:1-3), being vexed and embittered by Israel (Is. 63:10).”¹¹⁶ In passages such as 2 Kings 2:9 and Ezekiel 11:1, the writer is “distinguishing between the Spirit of

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 327.

¹¹⁵ L. J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 19.

¹¹⁶ Pieper, p. 395.

God and God himself, and, since the Spirit thus in reference does these things either to him or for him, personality for the Spirit is again implied.”¹¹⁷

Pieper finds that besides these activities of the Spirit, there are also literary clues to the triadic nature of the godhead: “The Old Testament unmistakably teaches the divine personality of the Son and the Spirit by ascribing to each of them divine names, properties and works. It is therefore only natural to regard also those passages as a reference to the Trinity a) in which God speaks of Himself in the plural (Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7 [“Let us,” “like one of us,” “Let us”]), and b) in which God is worshiped in a threefold hymn of petition or praise, e.g., the Aaronic blessing (Num. 6:24-26 [“The Lord...the Lord...the Lord”]) ... and the Trisagion (Is. 6:3 [“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty”]).”¹¹⁸

According to Hildebrandt, the quality of independence (not to disparage the profound interpermeation and interpenetration of the Trinity) is not only found in the activities of the Spirit but also in grammatical constructs. “From the many possessive suffixes and construct states with *ruah* and the divine name, it is evident that the Hebrews did perceive the *ruah* to be an independent personality in some instances (cf. 1 Kgs 22:21-22; Isa 63:11; Ps 51:11). Both personal activities and some dispositions are ascribed to the *ruah* (Gen 6:3; 2 Sam 23:2; Isa 4:4; 63:10; Neh 9:20).”¹¹⁹

One may question whether or not we are reading too much of New Testament revelation into the Old. But rabbinic literature draws similar conclusions:

Writing about Palestinian Judaism, that is, the apocryphal and rabbinical literature, Erik Sjöberg said: ‘The autonomy of the Spirit in Judaism is surprising. In rabbinic writings the Spirit is often spoken of in personal categories. There are many instances of the Spirit speaking, crying, admonishing, sorrowing, weeping, rejoicing, comforting, etc. Indeed, the Spirit can even be said to speak to God.... The Holy Spirit is a special divine

¹¹⁷ L. J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 19.

¹¹⁸ Pieper, p. 395.

¹¹⁹ Hildebrandt, p. 90.

entity which is sent by God and which acts independently within the limits set by the divine will.’¹²⁰

There are numerous passages which point to the divinity of the Spirit. Some passages point to his divinity by ascribing to him attributes such as omniscience (Is. 40.13), omnipresence (Ps. 139.7-10), and omnipotence (Job 33.4, Ps. 104.30).¹²¹ Other passages point to the divinity of the Spirit by the works and activities that are ascribed to him. He is the “‘Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord’ (Isa 11:2, cf Exod 28:3) who gives grace and enables supplication (Zech 12:10).”¹²²

The New Testament writers, looking back to the Old, also teach the deity of the Holy Spirit. “From [Ps. 110:1] Jesus incidentally ... teaches the divine personality of the Holy Spirit when He says that David called the Messiah his Lord through the Holy Spirit (*en pneumati*). The Savior thereby is confirming what David declares 2 Sam. 23:2: ‘The Spirit of the Lord spake by me.’”¹²³ The New Testament uses the Old Testament to point out the economy of the Spirit, his salvific work from the beginning and on throughout eternity. Barrett points out that “we are directed by the Gospel narratives themselves to look to the OT. Doing so, we observe what the earliest Christians appear to have seen: that, just as the Spirit of God was active at the foundation of the world, so that Spirit was to be expected also at its renewal.”¹²⁴ The conclusion is easily drawn that the entry of the Redeemer upon the stage of history was the work of the Spirit, and this accounts for the introduction of the Spirit into the birth narrative.”¹²⁵ (Luke 1:35: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”)

¹²⁰ Congar, *I Believe*, p. 11.

¹²¹ Oden, p. 15.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Pieper, p. 395.

¹²⁴ See especially Ezekiel 11:19 and 36:26.

¹²⁵ C.K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and Gospel Tradition*, (London: SPCK, 1966), p. 23.

In addition to confirming the deity of the Spirit, several New Testament passages addressed to Jews explicitly state that many Old Testament passages are indeed referring to the third Person of the Trinity: Acts 7:51 – it was their Holy Spirit whom Israel rejected as guide in the wilderness; 2 Corinthians 4:13 – it was their Holy Spirit who was the author of faith in OT believers as well as themselves; Hebrews 9:8 – it was their Holy Spirit who gave Israel instructions for ceremonial service; it was their Holy Spirit who gave revelation through David, Isaiah, and others (Matthew 22:43, Mark 12:36, Acts 1:16, 28:25, Hebrews 10:15); it was their Holy Spirit who revealed beforehand concerning the ‘the sufferings of Christ’ (1 Peter 1:11) and who moved ‘holy men of old’ in recording all such revelation (2 Peter 1:21).¹²⁶

To summarize, there is no doubt the Spirit of God is God, the third Person of the Trinity. There are numerous triadic references in the Old Testament which in and of themselves may be inconclusive. But in addition, qualities unique to God are ascribed to the Spirit. He is autonomous in his actions and dispositions. The source of our Christian doctrine, the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, use their only scriptures, the Old Testament, to teach us about the deity and personality of the Spirit.

Four Main Spheres of Activity of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament

It now remains to look more closely at four main spheres of activity in which the *ruach* of God works out and ensures the salvation of God’s people: creation, outstanding gifts, prophecy, and judgment-advocacy. Heron cautions: “These do not add up to a single system of doctrine, but they can illustrate the range and forms of activity associated with the *ruach* of Yahweh.”¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, p. 32.

¹²⁷ Heron, p. 10.

Creation

Creation is a logical presupposition for salvation since, without creation, there would be nothing to save. Before looking specifically at the Spirit in the economy of salvation, we would benefit from a look at the Spirit in God's economy of creation. We marvel at the God who creates us and then sends his Son to become part of that creation in order to redeem it, here picturing the Father and Son. In Western or Latin theology, we regard God the Father as creator (first article of the creed). Some are aware of clearly worded New Testament passages that deem the Logos as creator. However, most lay people and even "professionals" would be hard-pressed to speak to the actuality of the Spirit of God as creator. But the Spirit also gives life to creation and works in it to effect our salvation – in men (prophets), nature (cloud, fire, dove, water), artisans, Jesus of Nazareth, the Church, and individual believers. Recognizing the Spirit's *continuing* role in creation combats the heterodox notion that God (Father) created this earth and then left it alone to follow naturalistically the laws of nature he established. In fact, by tracing the Spirit's role in creating and sustaining life from the Old Testament through the New and then on into the age of the new heaven and new earth, we will experience great joy and satisfaction in the physicality of life, a physicality created, adorned and blessed through the Spirit of God.

There are far more passages referring to the Spirit as creator than to either of the other two persons of the Trinity. Oden finds "the arena of the work of the Spirit is ... manifested throughout all creation, not stingily, but abundantly through every phase and field of cosmic and human history. The work of the Spirit does not begin belatedly with Pentecost, but is found profusely in all creation and its continuing providences."¹²⁸ If to each member of the Trinity is assigned the role of creating, then is Augustine's assertion that the "outer works of the Godhead are one" indeed an appropriate description for God at work in creation? We would agree that the

¹²⁸ Oden, p. 34.

members of the Trinity work in perfect concert, but Augustine, in effect, removes the distinctive work of each member, making the Trinity more amorphous than that to which the Scriptures witness. Leon Wood's summary of the Trinity's work in creation is helpful here: "In general, the work of the Father is that of serving as supreme planner, author, and designer; that of the Son as worker, carrying out the directives of the Father, and especially giving revelation of the Godhead; and that of the Holy Spirit as completer or consummator, bringing to final form that which has been brought into existence by the Son at the Father's command."¹²⁹

In chapter one, we discussed the marginalization of the Trinity. In modern theology, this marginalization may be observed in the theology of creation. For William Placher, this marginalization in Christian reflection on God and creation is a 'domestication of transcendence,' yet another way of 'how modern thinking about God went wrong.' Towards the end of the seventeenth century, "arguments to God as the creator and sustainer of the universe and debates about the role of God in the accomplishment of our salvation tended simply to talk about 'God' – the Trinitarian Persons did not play much role in the analysis. Christ increasingly functioned in a subordinate role, with the Holy Spirit, in Patricia Wilson-Kastner's phrase, 'reduced to a ghostly whisper.'¹³⁰ In a similar vein Rahner concludes: "Today's theology hardly ever sees any connection between the Trinity and the doctrine of creation. This isolation is considered legitimate, since the 'outward' divine operations are 'common' to the three divine persons, so that the world as creation cannot tell us anything about the inner life of the Trinity."¹³¹

We are introduced to the Spirit as active in creation in the opening verses of the Old Testament with the phrase: "and the Spirit of God [*ruah elohim*] was hovering over the waters."

¹²⁹ Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, p. 16.

¹³⁰ Placher, p. 168.

¹³¹ Rahner, p. 13-14.

Other passages underscore the significance of the Spirit's presence at creation; the Spirit is more than merely a witness. Psalm 33:6 states: "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth." Hildebrandt sees this verse as "... a reflection on Genesis 1 and asserts that the creation event was a result of the spoken word of God brought into reality by his *ruah*. The context of the passage affirms that order and existence come about as a result of Yahweh's work through the agency of the *ruah*."¹³² Wood points out that in Deuteronomy 32:11 "God's care of Israel in the wilderness is likened to an eagle *fluttering* over her young in providing for them. The idea of the word in Genesis 1:2, then, is that the Holy Spirit 'fluttered over,' 'took care of,' 'moved upon,' the chaotic state of the world in the interest of bringing order and design. Since the indication comes immediately before the description of the six-day creative activity, the implication is that the work of the six days was performed by the Spirit."¹³³ Meredith Kline moves from the brooding metaphor to the more active work by the Spirit in creation. "Reflecting on Genesis 1:2, Psalm 104 envisages the Creator Spirit (*ruah*) as the one who makes the clouds his chariot and moves on the wings of the wind (*ruah*), making the winds his angel-messengers and flames his servants (vv. 3f.). When we recognize this theophanic cloud-and-wind form of the Spirit in Genesis 1:2, the literary connections between the original creation record and certain redemptive recreation narratives become more luminous."¹³⁴ Barrett sees that the climax of creation, man made in God's image, is made possible by the breath of God, making "...him a living soul (*nephesh hayyah*) distinguished from the dust of which he is composed.... Here too, therefore, we are justified in seeing a reference to God's Spirit in creative action – at the creation of the world."¹³⁵ The Spirit is not simply a

¹³² Hildebrandt, p. 19.

¹³³ L. J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, p. 30.

¹³⁴ Meredith G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), p. 15.

¹³⁵ Barrett, p. 19.

passive extension of the Father's power. "[T]he Spirit is said to act creatively upon matter; not merely to produce visible effects in the physical world ... but to be itself productive."¹³⁶

Just as the Hebraic use of the word *ruach* is broader than its use in surrounding cultures, so too is the biblical creation account "... different [than primeval world-egg beliefs]. That over which the Spirit broods is not potential life; it is chaos. The life is not in the chaos; it is in the Spirit (or breath, or wind). Milton, in a frequently quoted passage, paraphrases correctly:

On the watery calm
His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread
And vital virtue infus'd, and vital warmth,
Throughout the fluid mass.
Paradise Lost, vii. 234 ff.¹³⁷

Recognizing the role and the depth of the work of the Spirit in creation keeps us from putting humankind at the centre of it. Wood observes the centrality of the Spirit in creation: "No operation of nature was too insignificant to be under the guidance of the Spirit of God. Man's connection with natural operations now disappeared as a reason for the interest of God's Spirit in them. To God the Creator nature is an end in itself, not merely a means. In this period Hebrew thought passed from the anthropocentric to the cosmocentric phase, and the change in the usage of the Spirit is one mark of that transition."¹³⁸ "Other passages demand for explanation the idea of the Spirit as immanent cause: Job 27.3, The breath of God is in my nostrils; Job 34.14, 'If he gather unto himself his spirit and his soul' (if 'his' refers to God)."¹³⁹

The prophets also speak often and clearly about the Spirit's creative work. As Hildebrandt puts it: "In the Prophets, the incomparability and transcendence of Yahweh are highlighted in connection with God's work as creator. Isaiah asks, 'Who has understood the

¹³⁶ Barrett, p. 17.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

¹³⁸ I.F. Wood, *The Spirit of God in Biblical Literature*, p. 53.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 55.

mind of the Lord [*ruah yhwah*], or instructed him as his counselor?’ (Isa 40:13)... The importance of this reference is indicated by its position at the beginning of a major division in Isaiah.”¹⁴⁰ Ezekiel 36:26-27 promises that the work of the Spirit includes *re*-creating the heart of man. This promise creates hope, both for the present and the eschatological future: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” Kline notes that “in the vision of Ezekiel 37, when God summons his Spirit-wind to breathe upon the lifeless in the valley, the valley comes to life with a host of living men (vv. 1-10, 14).”¹⁴¹ In Joel 2, there is not only the promise of the Spirit poured out on God’s people but also a pouring out of the Spirit that will “show wonders in the heavens and on the earth...” In Zechariah, “Yahweh is identified as the one who forms the human *ruah* within a person (Zech 12:1).”¹⁴²

The Writings also speak of the Spirit as the creator of life. There are several passages in Job which recognize the Spirit’s role in creation and providential sustenance of life: “the Spirit of God has made me” (Job 33:4); “by his breath the skies became fair” (Job 26:3). Oden reminds us that “merely to be alive is to be endowed with life by the Spirit of God. Job assumed this when he declared that he would hold on to his integrity ‘as long as I have life within me, the breath [*ruach*] of God in my nostrils’ (Job 27:3). Life is wholly dependent upon its being received from God the Spirit. The withdrawal of the Spirit could mean only death.”¹⁴³

Hildebrandt also points out the relationship of the breath of life in all creatures and the Spirit-breath in Ecclesiastes: “The pessimistic preacher sees the fate of humankind and animals in

¹⁴⁰ Hildebrandt, p. 19.

¹⁴¹ Kline, p. 22.

¹⁴² Hildebrandt, p. 13.

¹⁴³ Oden, p. 36.

similar terms – both have the same *ruah* and therefore return to dust from which they were formed (Eccl 3:19; cf. Ps 146:4). Where the *ruah* goes after death remains a mystery to the preacher (Eccl. 3:21), but the epilogue of Ecclesiastes affirms that the *ruah* returns to God who gave it (12:7).”¹⁴⁴ Congar draws similar conclusions from other passages. “The breath of God was not simply extended to man (Gen 2:7; 6:3; Job 21:3; 33:4; Ezek 37; Eccles 12:7)—it was also given to all living creatures (Ps 104:28-30; Job 34:14-15). What is more, the ‘Breath of God’ is also the creative Breath (Jdt 16:14; Ps 33:6; 104:30).”¹⁴⁵ “In Lamentations 4:20, ‘the breath (*ruah*) of our nostrils’ stands in appositional parallelism to ‘the (Spirit-) anointed of the Lord.’”¹⁴⁶

There are profound implications from recognizing the Spirit’s role in creation. As Meredith Kline said:

Once it is seen that God the Spirit in his theophanic Presence is the divine paradigm in the creation of the image of God, a conceptual overlap, if not synonymity, will be recognized between the *imago Dei* and concepts like messiahship and the Spirit’s filling or baptism of God’s people. And to perceive that it is the same Spirit by whose charismatic enduing the church is qualified to fulfill the great commission who also, as Paradigm-Creator of man in the image of God, endowed him to execute the cultural commission, is to possess a vital coherence factor for working out a unified world-and-life theory, inclusive of creation and redemption and, within the area of the redemptive accomplishment of God’s creation designs, comprehensive of both holy and common vocations.¹⁴⁷

Thus the significance of the Spirit’s role in creation cannot be overstated for the theologian, the believer and the unbeliever. A proper understanding of the Spirit’s role combats errors such as deism, a closed universe, a disinterested God, and gnosticism, to name a few. The believer has a more concrete knowledge of God’s personal and ongoing interest in his or her life (past, present and the age to come). The unbeliever is equally dependent upon the Spirit for life

¹⁴⁴ Hildebrandt, p. 14.

¹⁴⁵ Congar, *I Believe*, p. 218.

¹⁴⁶ Kline, p. 21.

¹⁴⁷ Kline, p. 11.

and all that sustains that life. The Spirit does more than infuse creation with life; he beautifies and fills his creation.

Included in the Spirit's saving work is the ongoing activity in creation often called providence. Oden declares: "There is no work or thought or achievement of humanity that can be called good, true, or beautiful that is not premised by the Spirit's gift (Jer. 31:35 Ps. 136:25; 2 Cor. 3:3-11; John 3:34; Wisd. 7:17-20). The Spirit guides human insight in literature, the arts, the sciences, philosophy, poetry, and political life. Renaissance art at times portrayed Socrates as teaching on the port of the temple (cf. Justin Martyr, *Address to the Greek* 20-33, *ANF* I, pp. 281-87)."¹⁴⁸ Congar adds: "Another point...emphasized by Eastern Christians is that God's indwelling in our sanctified bodies is marked by their preservation."¹⁴⁹ This can be applied to all of creation, which will also be renewed.

Calvin, in his *Institutes*, writing under the heading "Science as God's Gift," refers to God's providence as granted and sustained by the Spirit:

If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we will be careful, as we would avoid offering insult to him, not to reject or condemn truth wherever it appears. In despising the gifts, we insult the Giver... But shall we deem anything to be noble and praiseworthy, without tracing it to the hand of God? ... Notwithstanding of this, He fills, moves, and invigorates all things by the virtue of the Spirit, and that according to the peculiar nature which each class of beings has received by the Law of Creation.¹⁵⁰

Irving Wood would count the very gift of the knowledge of the Spirit as another example of providence. "The origins of the idea of the Spirit lie in the common ground of early religious concepts. The growth of it may be explained by laws which we find working in all early religions. Its peculiarity is that it started very early along a line of development which is, as far as we can see, the only line that could have prepared it to receive the rich religious content with

¹⁴⁸ Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, p. 36.

¹⁴⁹ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, p. 82.

¹⁵⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (London: Bonhom Norton, 1599), p. 273-274.

which Judaism and Christianity later filled it. If there is ever a providence in the history of human thought, surely here is a place where it may be seen.”¹⁵¹

A fuller understanding of the Spirit who gives us life and sustains that life compels us to respond with praise and worship. We will find much for which to be continuously praising the Spirit: our life, new life, beauty and wisdom in the arts, the genius of mathematicians and scientists, the skill of an athlete, and the insight of the poet.

Prophecy

The Spirit was integral to the salvation of Israel not only in physically sustaining her as a nation and people but also by providing spiritual counsel and by bringing the Word of God to her by way of the prophets. This gift of discerning the Word has been passed on to us via the canon of Scripture and confessed in the creeds of the Church. From the Nicene Creed, we are well catechized that the “Spirit spoke by the prophets.” The New Testament reveals it was the Holy Spirit at work in the prophets of the Old Testament in passages such as 2 Peter 1:21. As Swete puts it: “The prophet is a *man of the Spirit*, the Spirit of God falls upon him, fills his mind, and speaks by his mouth; he finds himself at times dominated by a spiritual force which comes from without and from above. Yet the prophets of the Old Testament lay no exclusive claim to the possession of the Spirit.”¹⁵²

Klein notes that the Spirit used prophets to proclaim “restoration for individuals and nations...to announce hope for the future.”¹⁵³ The Spirit rarely used prophets to foretell future events but rather to keep Israel in the place where God could bless and save them. Often prophets warned God’s people of his impending judgment because of their sin while holding out hope for future reconciliation and salvation.

¹⁵¹ I.F. Wood, *The Spirit of God in Biblical Literature*, p. 37

¹⁵² Henry Barclay Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1909), p. 3.

¹⁵³ William W. Klein, et.al., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993), p. 293.

The prophets were aware they were inspired by the Spirit of God. Hildebrandt illustrates this with the words of David: “Prophetic inspiration, whether visionary or auditory, is attributed to *ruah*. Thus, David claims, ‘The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me, his word was on my tongue’ (2 Sam 23:2).”¹⁵⁴ The prophets were also aware that “Yahweh [would] not only give his word through them but [would] also bring his word to fulfillment in history (Isa 48:16c; 59:21).”¹⁵⁵ There was also the understanding that because it was the Spirit of God inspiring the prophecies, ignoring such a message would have grave consequences. Zechariah used this understanding to condemn the people of Israel: “They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the Lord Almighty was very angry.”

It is true that the writing prophets rarely pointed to the *ruach* as the source of their inspiration. But this may be explained as attempts to distance themselves from the professional, degenerate prophets of the day. Amos is well known for adamantly denying any connection with prophets, but Barrett is careful to point out: “it by no means follows that he did not regard himself as standing in the succession of inspired men through whom Yahweh had formerly made his presence known in the life of Israel; nor is there any reason to assume that he looked on the manner of his inspiration as essentially different from theirs: the verb which he uses to denote his own prophetic activity (*hinnabe*’ 7.15) is that which was commonly applied to the *Nebi'im*.”¹⁵⁶

Not only were the prophets aware of the source of their inspiration, but so too were the Israelites. The Israelites confessed of themselves: “For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you admonished them through your prophets. Yet they paid no attention, so you handed them over to the neighbouring peoples (Neh. 9:30).” They appear to also understand the

¹⁵⁴ Hildebrandt, p. 27.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁵⁶ Barrett, p. 150.

reason for Spirit-guided prophecy. Leon Wood observes: “The Spirit’s special provision for prophets ... concerned two basic needs: the provision of revelation that they might have God’s information to declare to the people, and enablement in the declaration that it might be performed in the best way possible.”¹⁵⁷

The New Testament confirms this view of inspiration of the prophets in the Old Testament. Using the examples of Elisabeth, Zechariah, Simeon, Anna and John the Baptist, Barrett points out that in the Gospel of Luke “we meet a *pre-Christian* Church, equipped with the Holy Spirit and with prophets.... It is well known that the songs [in Luke] themselves – magnificent as they are – are in structure little more than collections of phrases from the OT; similarly, there are OT passages where prophecy is ascribed to the action of the Spirit.”¹⁵⁸ The connection between Old Testament prophecy and these New Testament examples are significant for the Jewish world – not because the *Holy Spirit* was an unknown quantity, but in order to make the name of Jesus known. Schaberg observes: “Israel knew and believed in God the Father, knew of the Holy Spirit who, emanating from God, had inspired the prophets. What it did not know was the name of the Messiah and, therefore, the name of Jesus was the center of the earliest Christian message.”¹⁵⁹

Outstanding Gifts

The Spirit is the preeminent craftsman. We know from Proverbs 8 that “Wisdom preexisted and was a ‘craftsman’ at Yahweh’s side in bringing about the mighty works of creation. Therefore, Wisdom worked together with Yahweh in bringing into reality the heavens and the earth that declare the glory of God (Prov 3:19-20; Isa 40:12-17, 28-31).”¹⁶⁰ It is

¹⁵⁷ L. J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, p. 57.

¹⁵⁸ Barrett, p. 122-123.

¹⁵⁹ Schaberg, p. 11.

¹⁶⁰ Hildebrandt, p. 44.

commonly accepted that Proverbs 8 refers to the preincarnate Christ, but Hildebrandt concludes that “in this role and from an OT viewpoint, Wisdom has more affinities to the work of the *ruah* in creation than it does to the preincarnate, only begotten Son of the Father.”¹⁶¹

But even if we put this suggestion aside, as part of his sustaining of creation and effecting its salvation, the Spirit does provide outstanding gifts to his people. In the Old Testament there are several instances of the Spirit giving wisdom and understanding in order to have the artistic skills necessary for the building the tabernacle and the temple. In Exodus 31 we read that the craftsman Bezaleel is filled with the Spirit of God for wisdom, understanding, knowledge and especially workmanship. Aholiab was to work with Bezaleel and was also given the spirit of wisdom. Solomon was similarly gifted for building the temple, and was given “... the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord” (1 Chronicles 28:11, 12). Solomon commissioned Hiram of Tyre for work on the temple. He too was filled with wisdom and understanding for the task ahead.

When we refer to the gifts of the Spirit, we are often referring to those listed by the Apostle Paul for the building up of the Church. But the Old Testament also shows us that the Spirit’s gifts cover all aspects of life. For instance, Calvin reminds us that the various gifts of the Spirit are for the good of *all* mankind though the creation of faith is unique to believers:

... [L]et us not forget that there are most excellent blessings which the Divine Spirit dispenses to whom he will for the common benefit of mankind. For if the skill and knowledge required for the construction of the Tabernacle behaved to be imparted to Bezaleel and Aholiab, by the Spirit of God, (Exod. 31: 2; 35: 30,) it is not strange that the knowledge of those things which are of the highest excellence in human life is said to be communicated to us by the Spirit. Nor is there any ground for asking what concourse the Spirit can have with the ungodly, who are altogether alienated from God? For what is said as to the Spirit dwelling in believers only, is to be understood of the Spirit of holiness by which we are consecrated to God as temples.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Calvin, *Institutes*, p. 275.

In order to preserve the line from which Messiah would be born as well as a community which needed to be taught how to worship the one God, it was necessary that the Spirit of God gift the Israelites in diverse ways. Oden catalogues several:

One who is ‘God of the spirits of all flesh’ (Num. 16:22) could work to unify all diverse human purposes (Job 32:8), inspiring not only the civil lawgivers and sages but also the poets, and above all the prophets (Num. 1:7, 25, 26; 2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Kings 22:24; Ezek. 2:2; 11:5; Dan. 4:8, 11; Mic. 3:8); commissioning magistrates, judges, kings and prophets; restraining evil; and enabling good... By the Spirit ‘Othniel judged; Gideon waxes strong; Jephtha conquered; Deborah, a woman, waged war; and Samson, so long as he did righteously and grieved Him not, wrought deeds above man’s power’ (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. Lect. XVI.28*, *NPNF 2 VII*, p. 122). The Spirit’s guidance occurred from the outset not by obstructing but by allowing the people of God to meet and deal with changing historical conditions. The dynamics of grace emerge under extremely variable historical conditions through the guidance of the Spirit (*Common Catech.*, p. 642).¹⁶³

Another gift of the Spirit, alluded to above, was leadership. This gift helped preserve Israel (especially in the days of the former prophets) in order to fulfill the promise of the coming Messiah. For example, the Spirit gives the gift of leadership to Joseph that he might help Egypt, and through Egypt, his own people. “The pharaoh recognizes a special endowment of wisdom in Joseph, who also has the ability to interpret dreams. Although the utterance that attributes Joseph’s unique ability to the *ruah elohim* comes from a pagan ruler, we must note that Joseph has previously informed the pharaoh that the ability to answer his request is dependent on the source of his wisdom and ability, *elohim* ([Gen] 41:16).”¹⁶⁴ Thus the Spirit accomplishes God’s will in such a way that witnesses will know it is the Spirit at work. After the Exodus and the establishment of Israel as a nation, “the need for rulers or leaders becomes evident. In this context, the majority of references in the Pentateuch to *ruah* as Spirit deal with some kind of leadership ability given by the *ruah* for a particular task... The *ruah* that is understood to be on

¹⁶³ Oden, p. 36.

¹⁶⁴ Hildebrandt, p. 22.

Moses is now distributed among the seventy elders.”¹⁶⁵ For this reason, God said: “I will come down and speak with [Moses] there, and I will take the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them [the seventy]. They will help you carry the burden of the people” (Numbers 11:17).¹⁶⁶

Leon Wood observes that Isaiah “speaks of the sin of the Israelites while in the wilderness and then refers to the ‘holy spirit within’ Moses, ‘that led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm’ (Is 63:10-12).”¹⁶⁷

The work of the Spirit providing the words of prophecy foreshadows Christ’s coming as the incarnate Word. Badcock sees the anointing of kings by the Spirit in preparation for kingship as looking forward to the King of Kings. “Saul’s experience of the Spirit resulted initially, at least, in his prophesying, but the real reason for the gift of the Spirit related to the kingship.... David, for his part, similarly receives the Spirit, only in this case the *ruach yahweh*, in anticipation of the kingship (1 Sam. 16:13). In the early Hebrew theology of kingship, therefore, the king appears as the one anointed by the Spirit, who by virtue of that anointing is God’s instrument in bringing blessings on his people.... One day, there will be an ideal king, endowed with the Spirit in an ideal way, who will usher in the earlier expectation of national blessing (e.g., Isa. 11:2).”¹⁶⁸ Just as the Spirit sustains creation, he also sustains those whom he has anointed. “The preservation of the king by the *ruah* is also evident after David is established upon his throne through the deliverance effected by the *ruah* (2 Sam 22:16; Ps 18:15 [16 MT]). The king then attributed the victories he experienced to the direct intervention of Yahweh by the *ruah*.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ See also Numbers 27:18 where the gift of the Spirit to Joshua may be understood in the same way: “The Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him.””

¹⁶⁷ L. J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, p. 49.

¹⁶⁸ Badcock, p. 14.

¹⁶⁹ Hildebrandt, p. 21.

Advocate-Judge

We are familiar with the motif of Spirit as Comforter. We are less familiar with the motif of the Spirit as judge – judging both individuals and nations; however, this is a common theme both in the Old and New Testament. The salvation of Israel is dependent on the Spirit’s work as judge, moving hearts to repentance. The Spirit drives other nations to punish Israel as well as to aid them. The Spirit sends searing winds, fire and storms to burn up the sinful chaff of God’s wandering people. In ultimate judgment, he removes the life-breath from those with unrepentant hearts.

There are many instances in the Old Testament that connect *ruach*-wind with judgment: “The prophets employ the common understanding of wind with modifiers such as ‘destructive,’ ‘powerful,’ ‘blustering,’ and ‘mighty’.... Wind may also be used in a metaphorical sense as in Isaiah 7:2, where hearts are shaken as trees by the wind, or in judgment, where individuals are blown as chaff before the wind (Isa 17:13).”¹⁷⁰ Hildebrandt sees the imagery of wind being used “to convey the coming judgment of God, who directs the wind for purposes of punishment. Whereas the wind may blow from the west, it most often comes from the east (Jer 18:17; Ezek 17:10; 19:12; Jonah 1:4, 4:8). In these contexts of proclaimed judgment, the hot easterly winds, which wither crops and torment people, illustrate the nature of the events to come. God in wrath will unleash a violent wind (Ezek 13:11).”¹⁷¹

Meredith Kline sees the Spirit acting as God’s breath in judgment as early as Genesis 3: “Genesis 3:8 describes the approach of the Lord God following the fateful disobedience of the man and the woman in the garden. Judgment was the purpose of God’s coming and he proceeded at once to prosecute his lawsuit against the covenant-breakers and to pronounce the

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 10.

damnation of their tempter.”¹⁷² Kline argues against the usual exegesis, believing the phrase ‘cool of the day’ is referring to ‘a wind,’ i.e., the Spirit.

[I]f we follow the sound exegetical practice of proceeding from what is clear to what is obscure, it will appear that *lrwh hyywm*, though cryptically concise, is actually an eloquent addition to this verse’s description of the advent of the Glory.... What would be the point of such a temporal reference? Are we really prepared to accept the anthropomorphism of the Lord’s seeking the relief that might be afforded by the evening air from the burden of the day? Moreover, on such an interpretation, the purpose assigned to this excursion bears only an incidental relation to what God actually proceeded to do. The momentous primeval judgment would then have transpired just coincidentally to what began as an idyllic stroll.¹⁷³

Moreover, the voice (*qol*) of God in Genesis 3:8 was not a fatherly “where are you hiding?” but “was the shattering thunder of God’s advent in judgment.”¹⁷⁴

According to Kline, the promises of judgment and future relief in Genesis 3 are paralleled in Malachi. In Malachi 3:1 and 4:1 the Lord promises a messenger who will prepare the way with judging, refining fire. “That day is foreseen as the time when God takes decisive action (3:17; 4:3 [3:21]), when the Lord approaches for the purpose of judgment (*le mispat*; 3:5), to administer the covenant lawsuit (3:1, 5), judicially separating the righteous from the wicked (3:18). It is the advent of the Judge which is here definitive of the day (3:1, 2; 4:6 [3:24]).¹⁷⁵ From Schaberg’s work highlighted earlier in this paper, it is reasonable to see the promised messenger as the Spirit. The preparation this messenger undertakes prior to the Messiah’s appearing is that of judging which purposes to *create* repentant and purified hearts. The voice in Isaiah 40, calling for the desert to be prepared and the wilderness way made straight, is a command being given to the Spirit. Response to this command, which John the Baptist obeyed too by crying out for sorrowful, repentant hearts, can only be brought about by the Spirit.

¹⁷² Kline, p. 97.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 102-3.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 116.

Kline draws similar connections between Genesis 3 and Joel and the Psalms. In Joel 2:1-11 there is promised judgment along with the call for repentant hearts (vv. 12-13). There is the “same combination of Glory-Spirit, the day, and the sound of Yahweh that we find in Genesis 3:8. Joel’s likening of the effects of the judgment to the transformation of the garden of Eden into a wilderness (2:3) is another intimation that the prophet’s eye was on the primal advent of the Spirit of the day (Gen. 3:8).”¹⁷⁶

Psalm 139 also appears to be referring to the circumstances of Genesis 3, as the psalmist asks: “Where could I go from your Spirit or where flee from your Presence?” (v.7). When he confesses that if one were concealed in the darkness of Sheol, the very light of God’s shining Spirit-Presence would make the night like day, exposing the hidden one to plain sight (v. 12), he clearly evokes the guilty pair hiding in the shadows among the trees of the garden of Eden, yet for all their desperate efforts exposed by the coming of the Spirit of the day (Gen. 3:9ff.).¹⁷⁷ In other passages,¹⁷⁸ “‘Spirit’ appears as the designation of the Glory-chariot, the Presence of God in sovereign power on judicial missions of surveillance, sentencing, and execution.”¹⁷⁹

The Spirit uses individuals as well as nature to act as judges. For example, “the Spirit of the Lord came upon [Othniel], so that he became Israel’s judge and went to war” (Judges 3:10). The Spirit “... also employs pagan kings on occasion as instruments of judgment and restoration. Such is the case in the experience of Cyrus, whom Yahweh anoints for the purpose of effecting a new policy of repatriation (Isa 45:1ff; Ezra 1:1ff). In addition, Yahweh uses Artaxerxes I to effect his plan among the exiles. This ruler will be “driven along by the *ruah*” in order to

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁷⁸ Haggai 2:5, Isaiah 63:11ff., Nehemiah 9:19, 20.

¹⁷⁹ Kline, p. 104.

accomplish God's purposes (Isa 59:19). Through his work, the nation would know Yahweh's presence among them (59:21)."¹⁸⁰

The Spirit himself judges Israel for not seeking his guidance (contrary to the notion that the Spirit is hidden and not concerned with himself):

Just as the king found deliverance and salvation in Yahweh, so also did Yahweh care for and preserve Israel.... It is often the lack of trust in Yahweh's leadership that brings judgment on Israel. Rather than looking to Yahweh for guidance by his *ruah*, the nation turned to foreign powers. The foolishness of this tendency is made clear in the statement, 'But the Egyptians are men and not God; their horses are flesh and not spirit [*ruah*] (Isa 31:3).' Therefore, it is by the *ruah* that Yahweh guides and preserves the nation just as Yahweh did during the wilderness wanderings (cf. 63:7-14).... Because of Israel's rebellion, the *ruah* is grieved (Isa 63:10), and God turns against the people in order to bring about repentance in the nation.¹⁸¹

Finally, the Servant of Isaiah, as Spirit-bearer, will be given the right to judge. "Of his Servant, God declared: 'I have put my Spirit on him; he shall bring forth judgment to the nations' (Isa. 42:1), and the Servant himself claims this Spirit-endowment to carry out the task of the day of God's vindication of his people (Isa. 61:1ff)."¹⁸²

Indwelling of Old Testament 'Believers'

Did the Israelites fall into sin so often because the Spirit was only guiding them on occasion? When the Holy Spirit came on the believers at Pentecost, was that the beginning of the Spirit indwelling the elect? A cursory reading of the Old Testament may have us agreeing with arguments against the indwelling of Old Testament individuals with its many references to the Spirit's coming on Old Testament saints and apparently leaving them. Arguments for indwelling appeal to systematics: one cannot be regenerated without the work of the Spirit; Old Testament saints were saved; thus, the Spirit regenerated the saints. Also, as Oden notes, the

¹⁸⁰ Hildebrandt, p. 24-25.

¹⁸¹ Hildebrandt, p. 21.

¹⁸² Kline, p. 104.

people of Israel were a worshipping people. “Here the question turns upon how erring children of the divine Father might be made able to glorify the incomparably holy God. How could sinners magnify God? How could self-determining creatures prone to fall come to that maturity of moral character that reflects the goodness of God? This could occur only by the power of the Spirit.”¹⁸³ The Old Testament is a narrative that climaxes in the life of Jesus, not a systematic text. Can we see the Spirit of God revealing God’s love in salvation in the Old Testament? How do we respond to the many passages whereby the Spirit comes on individuals here and there? If the work of the Spirit is substantially different in the Old Testament than the New, is the Old Testament relevant to our pneumatology today?

Leon Wood has written his book *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* primarily to answer the question in the affirmative of whether or not the Israelites were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. He agrees that even though we will not find terms like ‘indwelling,’ ‘sealing,’ or ‘filling’ in the Old Testament, we can see evidence of their existence in the lives of Old Testament saints. He agrees that the Spirit did come upon a variety of people for a time but he examines those instances and finds that, though all activities of the Spirit are related to salvation, these particular comings and goings do not disallow the Spirit’s presence in the followers of God. One thing we do know, and Reformation theology would surely agree, is that “since these OT saints certainly remained in a regenerated condition, it must have been the Holy Spirit who kept them so. The NT is clear that the Christian is incapable of keeping himself, any more than he is capable of saving himself. He must be ‘kept by the power of God’ (1 Peter 1:5). One must ask, then, Did the OT saint possess an ability for perseverance not known to the NT saint?”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Oden, p. 37.

¹⁸⁴ L. J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, p. 70.

We may identify four general classifications of people for whom it is spoken that the Spirit came on them and left them: judges, craftsmen, prophets, and civil administrators. “An evaluation of these texts shows that all involved empowerment for a physical activity. None of them had to do with *salvation from sin* in any sense, so that any of the ‘spiritual’ concepts mentioned above (regeneration, indwelling, sealing, filling, empowering, and baptism) were involved.”¹⁸⁵ The Spirit came on craftsmen to provide them with gifts for a specific activity (e.g., Bezaleel and Aholiab for the Tabernacle; David and Hiram for the Temple).¹⁸⁶ Though both the Tabernacle and Temple were related to the salvation of the people of Israel, the gifting of craftsmen and architects for service is not clearly related to our question on the indwelling of believers.

Several prophets were filled temporarily – the Spirit came upon them for the activity concerned and then left them when that activity had been completed: Azariah, Jahaziel, Zechariah, Balaam and Amassai. “The activity involved for each of these five people was speaking a message for God. The Spirit of God came upon them in connection with this action, clearly enabling them in regard to it. An evaluation of the occasions, then, once more shows an aspect of empowerment or enablement for an activity. This activity had little to do directly with the salvation of the persons concerned and therefore not with any of the “spiritual” concepts in view.”¹⁸⁷ Most other prophets (e.g., Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, et. al.) do not mention the Spirit coming upon them and going, but surely they were also empowered by the Spirit.

Zechariah informs us

of the people’s unwillingness to hear ‘the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets’ (7:12). Nehemiah is the other one. Writing about seventy-five years after Zechariah, he also speaks of the sins of preexilic Israel and in that

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 41. (emphasis mine)

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

connection says of God, 'Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by the spirit in thy prophets.' (9:30) It should be recognized that neither of these men refers to any particular group of prophets; the implication is that all the well-known preexilic prophets were empowered by the Spirit in their ministry. The indication is clear that they believed this empowerment was continuous.¹⁸⁸

Wood reiterates his premise: "As with the first two groups, the judges and craftsmen, Spirit-empowerment for the prophets again had to do with an activity and not with an inward change of their own hearts. This was true for both those temporarily filled and those continuously filled....

The Spirit did not empower prophets that they might themselves be brought into a right relationship with God."¹⁸⁹

Civil administrators such as Moses, Joshua, Saul and David were blessed with the Spirit for their momentous tasks. As with the previous groups, they "were also empowered by the Spirit for an area of service and not in respect to a personal relationship to God. They were all administrators over God's people and they were enabled that they might be effective administrators."¹⁹⁰ Wood can see no other explanation for this type of filling than a unique empowering:

One might argue that Saul experienced spiritual salvation at the time of the Spirit's coming on him prior to the Jabesh-gilead battle, but this is not likely. The Spirit had already come on him temporarily, as observed, and also Samuel had anointed him to be king even before that (1 Sam 10:1). It is hard to believe that God would have directed a person to be anointed whom He did not consider to be His child at the time. Or, one might argue that David was regenerated at the time the Spirit came on him. Again, however, he had already been anointed to be Israel's next king (1 Sam 16:13); and, further, the coincidence of the Spirit's coming on both Saul and David with their approval as Israel's king is too significant to overlook. Both experienced Spirit-empowerment, not Spirit-regeneration at these times.¹⁹¹

Aside from needing the Spirit's empowering for unique or special situations, can we see evidence of salvation in Old Testament characters? Noah and Abraham are two early examples

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 47.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 51-2.

of individuals who were considered just. Genesis 6:9 refers to Noah as “a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.” Romans 4:3 calls Abraham a man of faith, of whom it is said he believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. One can also point to the spiritual growth and maturity in characters such as Joseph or David: “What more telling evidence for regeneration could there be than the lives of these great OT saints? How could such lives be accounted for otherwise? These people were born sinners, as any of NT time (Romans 3:23). Yet they came to display the very highest in faith and obedience to God.”¹⁹²

Badcock points out how the Spirit’s primary work from the Fall to the Eschaton is indeed salvation. “It is in the image of the Spirit as the agent of ethical renewal ... that the Old Testament’s theology of the Spirit finds its highest expression; it is the *holy* Spirit, in short, that is the instrument of God’s purpose in creation and history.”¹⁹³ Badcock goes on to note that the relationship between Israel and the *holy* Spirit is brought into special clarity in the time of the exile with the prophet Ezekiel:

In the exilic era again, the prophet Ezekiel speaks of a new relationship between Israel and the Spirit that will come to pass, and so both vindicate Yahweh’s holiness and give Israel a new heart and a new obedience....The theme of *ruach* as the life-principle that comes from God and the theme of eschatological renewal are fused in [Ezekiel’s] hopes for the future of Israel, risen from the grave and restored to the land. Moreover, a new relationship between Israel and the Spirit is spoken of, bringing with it a new heart and a new obedience to Yahweh’s laws and commands (Eze. 36:24ff.). The holiness of Yahweh will thus be vindicated in the newfound holiness of his people, newly possessed as they will be by his Spirit.¹⁹⁴

Joel’s prophecy speaks to ongoing renewal, not a new or sudden oncoming. “[It] extends the promised blessing of the Spirit to all of God’s people, and not just to the prophet or king:

I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 65.

¹⁹³ Badcock, p. 15.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see vision.
Even on the male and female slaves,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

... Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
(Joel 2:28, 31; cf. Acts 2:17ff.)¹⁹⁵

Congar directs our attention from the question of individual indwelling to a communal focus, foreshadowing the gift of the Spirit to the church. "There was never any question of the Holy Spirit or of God taking up his dwelling in souls as persons who are his temple. His presence is a collective one and is conferred on his people as such. It is not so much an indwelling of souls as a presence which guides men and strengthens them so that they may implement a plan which is God's."¹⁹⁶

Though the early pages of the Old Testament appear to be steeped in law-giving and law-keeping as well as a Spirit that comes and goes, Congar finds an emphasis on the condition of the heart: "The prophets' criticism of the practice of sacrifice without any concern for interior conversion and for a true relationship with God begins with Amos.... It is a constant characteristic of the prophetic office.... Israel was to learn from the prophets during the exile that this true interior relation to God demands a change of heart which only God can give by grace, a total renewal which would be, as it were, a new creation."¹⁹⁷

It seems evident then that the Spirit was present among his people, both individually and corporately, strengthening their faith in the promise of coming perfect sacrifice, enabling them to worship *YHWH*, and revealing the works and nature of God to them. It was the Spirit of God who anointed their prophets, priests and kings. It was the Spirit of God who kept his people in

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 16-17.

¹⁹⁶ Yves M. J. Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple* (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1962), p. 16.

¹⁹⁷ Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple*, p. 59.

the place where they could be blessed, including chastisement and blessing. Looking at this question of indwelling negatively, there were nations who did not believe. There were members of the Israelite community who did not believe. What differentiated them from those who did?

It can only have been *ruach YHWH*.

If the Trinity was at work in the Old Testament, and we know from later revelation it was, then Rahner's impassioned assertion applies to not only the here and now but to all history. "There *must* be a connection between Trinity and man. The Trinity is a mystery of *salvation*, otherwise it would never have been revealed. We should show why it is such a mystery. We must point out in *every* dogmatic treatise that what it says about salvation does not make sense without referring to this primordial mystery of Christianity."¹⁹⁸ Understanding the Spirit's work in the Old Testament gives us freedom to use the Old Testament (read in light of the New) more often to inform our preaching, teaching and devotions. Just as Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, so also is the Person of the Spirit.

New Testament Issues

We will turn briefly to the connection between what we have been learning about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and apply it to that with which we are already familiar in the New Testament. We know from John 3:3-21 in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus that "[w]hile the doctrine of rebirth by the Spirit came as a surprise to Nicodemus, Jesus' words imply that he should have understood on some level – that the OT says plenty about the nature and importance of a changed life.... Man cannot bring about a change of heart since he is spiritually dead. Nicodemus should have thought of this."¹⁹⁹ Leon Wood goes on to note: "One

¹⁹⁸ Rahner, p. 21.

¹⁹⁹ L. J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, p. 85.

may object that OT people could not exercise faith in Christ like those of the NT, since Christ had not yet lived. This is true to a point, but Paul provides the biblical answer by his reference to Abraham in Romans 4. Paul says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness’ (v.3). The OT person was counted righteous simply on the basis of believing God.”²⁰⁰

An understanding of the Spirit’s work is not the only truth that has become better illuminated over time. We would not know from the Old Testament alone that Adam’s sin infected all mankind. We learn from the New Testament that Jesus was the second Adam whose sacrifice offered cleansing to all mankind. In other words, the New Testament makes explicit the typological references of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, this does not make other Old Testament types necessarily less significant. Thus, New Testament teaching allows us to realize the Spirit’s continual work from the beginning of time even though it is written of differently in the Old Testament from that in the New.

There are numerous examples of New Testament believers who received special gifting, or outstanding gifts from the Holy Spirit, similar to the Old Testament: Peter in his speech to the Sanhedrin, Paul who rebuked Elymas, Stephen looking into heaven, etc. “Miracles were performed by the Spirit (Romans 15:18, 19); believers helped in their infirmities (Romans 8:26); taught (1 Corinthians 2:13); given gifts (1 Cor 12:8-11; Hebrews 2:4). Actually, there are more cases of Spirit-empowerment of believers in the NT than in the Old.”²⁰¹

In John 7 the writer informs us that Jesus is speaking of the Spirit who is not yet given. Does this negate all that has preceded in relation to the Spirit’s dwelling in creation and especially in the Old Testament believers? “The time in view clearly was the day of Pentecost

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 66.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 73.

and following, when the Holy Spirit would be given for baptizing believers into the church and empowering them for spreading the gospel.... In other words, Jesus was speaking of the day of church activity, when the gospel would go forth to a dying world.”²⁰²

What of the verses John 14:16, 17 26; 15:26; 16:13 which refer to a gifting of the Spirit as *parakletos* after Jesus’ return to heaven? Leon Wood appeals to grammatical subtleties for a possible answer.

Since Jesus did use two different prepositions, however, it follows that He did wish to convey some variant meaning. What was the difference He had in mind? The difference that seems to fit the situation best is the distinction that has been seen already – the distinction between the Spirit’s work in believers before the church started and after this time. Christ was saying that the Spirit had been ‘with’ believers in the senses that have been noted (regenerating, indwelling, sealing, filling, empowering), but that the time was near when He would additionally baptize them and then empower them to a new way for gospel proclamation.²⁰³

Though we have only briefly compared the Spirit of the Old and New Testament, it appears that areas of apparent contradiction (e.g., the perception of when the Spirit’s work began or the Spirit’s activity in individuals) can be explained and explained in such a way that further illuminates our understanding of the Person of the Spirit.

By not viewing Pentecost as the Holy Spirit’s ‘first great appearance,’ the more confusing passages in Acts become less so. “As Swete has noted, Pentecost did not simply give the apostles once and for all an understanding of the universal nature of the call to faith. This understanding was only gained after some time and several fresh interventions. There is, in other words, a history of the coming of the Spirit. In accordance with his plan (see 1:8), Luke refers to a series of various kinds of Pentecosts: in Jerusalem (2:4, 25-31), in Samaria (8:14-17), in the

²⁰² Ibid., p. 85.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 87.

event which begins the missionary adventure with Cornelius and the 'Pentecost' at Caesarea (10:44-48; 11:15-17) and even the episode in Ephesus (19:1-6)."²⁰⁴

Swete reminds us that the Spirit is eternally active and is not confined to the New Testament church. "Thus the resurrection of the body is so far from being the last work of the indwelling Spirit that it will be the starting point of a new activity of spiritual life."²⁰⁵ Though we are not specifically told of the role of the Spirit after Christ's return, "[h]e is seen to be still the giver of spiritual life; if the Lamb now leads in person, He leads to ever fresh supplies of the Spirit, fountains of waters of life, means of grace hitherto unknown or inaccessible, but open to those who are *accounted worthy to attain to that world*."²⁰⁶ This is similar to the realization that if the Fall had not taken place, negating the need for regeneration, the Spirit would still have as significant role in the life of creation as he does in the biblical narrative.

Jürgen Moltmann's Pneumatology

Introduction

The purpose of delving into the Old Testament in this paper is not only to see the role the Holy Spirit plays from the beginning of history but also to shake up our uni-dimensional view of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Moltmann takes us further in understanding the ramifications of this multi-dimensional understanding of the Spirit as it relates to our own creation, unique gifting, judgment and grace. I am choosing to examine Moltmann's pneumatology because the "... genius of Moltmann as theologian, and the most important reason for his theology's great impact, is his ability to make a creative use of classical Christian language in his attempt to show the relevance of Christian faith to the social and political

²⁰⁴ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, p. 45.

²⁰⁵ Swete, *Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 355.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

movements.... He reconstructs Christian doctrines, but without surrendering classical trinitarian Christian faith. Instead, he finds the basic sources for formulating a relevant theology in the biblical language and the Christian tradition themselves.”²⁰⁷ Moltmann sees the task of theology “...as one of mediation of the tradition to the modern world. Theology must be able to show the relevance of the Christian faith to the current situation.”²⁰⁸

I am aware that Moltmann is frequently criticized for being arbitrary in his theological reflection. But Rasmusson makes sense when he argues: “What he actually seems to do, and more clearly so in his later writings, is to take up themes from the biblical and Christian traditions as well as from modern thought and science, and try to merge this material in a both faithful and relevant imaginative synthesis.”²⁰⁹ In the areas I am addressing, that is the Spirit of God in the Old Testament and the relevance for the church, Moltmann’s constructions are helpful and illuminating. I trust that the foundation I have laid from the Old Testament will serve as appropriate basis for that which follows.

I will begin with a brief biographical sketch which helps us understand Moltmann’s emphasis of the hope we find in God before examining his use of the Old Testament to enhance our pneumatology. Finding joy and meaning in all aspects of life, contrary to gnostic or platonic philosophy, is a recurring theme in Moltmann’s work. As such, he finds the activity of the Spirit in the Old Testament, especially in creation, helpful in countering these philosophies as well as providing a positive and relevant foundation for our *joie de vivre* in Christ. He examines the terminology for Spirit of God to further counter gnostic tendencies. Moltmann also uses the Old Testament form of the presence of God, the *Shekinah*, to solve the great historical theological difficulty (for Jews and Christians) of the *impassibility* of God and the suffering Messiah. He is

²⁰⁷ Arne Rasmusson, *The Church as Polis* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), p. 45.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

able to use the concept of the *Shekinah* to illustrate trinitarian activity to his Jewish readers.

Finally, Moltmann draws the activity of the Spirit into the whole of the Trinity's salvific work.:

“In the operation and indwelling of the Spirit, the creation of the Father through the Son, and the reconciliation of the world with God through Christ, arrive at their goal.”²¹⁰

Biographical Sketch

Jürgen Moltmann is professor emeritus at Tübingen University where he taught systematic theology from 1967 until 1994. He is a prolific author and is best known for two systematic trilogies, the first comprised of *Theology of Hope*, *The Crucified God*, and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*; the second, *Systematic Contributions to Theology: The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, *God in Creation*, and *The Way of Jesus Christ*. Two very common themes in his writings are hope and eschatology, which are a reflection of his early life experiences.²¹¹ He was born in Hamburg in 1926 and raised in a family that exposed him to artists and philosophers. He was drafted as an eighteen-year-old to fight in World War II and surrendered to the first allied soldier he could find, just six months into his military career. While in a POW camp, he read a New Testament given to him by a chaplain while at the same time observing how fellow POWs fared with and without hope. He was overwhelmed to see how the Word spoke to his experience and needs.²¹²

Moltmann was allowed to study theology in England prior to returning to Germany where he attended Göttingen University.²¹³ Initially he was strongly influenced by Karl Barth but later moved past 'Barmen Orthodoxy.' He came under the influence of Bonhoeffer and Luther, and also various reformed theologians, which deepened his understanding of the

²¹⁰ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation*, tr. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1985), p. 96.

²¹¹ Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz, *The Kingdom and the Power* tr. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), p. 17.

²¹² Hyung-Kon Kim, *Moltmann, Jürgen* (Boston University: Weird Wild Web Courses, 1999, accessed 14 April 2004); available from http://people.bu.edu/wildman/WeirdWildWeb/courses/mwt_themes_855_moltmann.htm

²¹³ Muller-Fahrenholz, p. 17-18.

significance of the cross, resurrection and justification. While Moltmann cannot provide evangelical Lutherans with a comprehensive systematic theology (e.g., he is likely a universalist), he writes profoundly and helpfully, especially on issues of hope, the cross and the resurrection, and the Trinity.²¹⁴

Creation and Anti-Gnosticism

Moltmann ties together three major themes – creation, salvation and the *Shekinah*-Spirit – in such a way that we see the economic Trinity about its salvific work:

In the gift and through the powers of the Holy Spirit a new divine presence is experienced in creation. God the Creator takes up his dwelling in his creation and makes it his home. The experience of the Spirit is the experience of the Shekinah, the indwelling of God: men and women become in their bodies ‘the temple of the Holy Spirit’ (I Cor. 6.13-20). The new Jerusalem will become God’s tabernacle or dwelling among human beings (Rev. 21.3). In the life-giving operations of the Spirit and in his indwelling influence, the whole trinitarian efficacy of God finds full expression. In the operation and indwelling of the Spirit, the creation of the Father through the Son, and the reconciliation of the world with God through Christ, arrive at their goal. The presence and the efficacy of the Spirit is the eschatological goal of creation and reconciliation. All the works of God end in the presence of the Spirit.²¹⁵

Moltmann believes the misconceptions of both church leaders and individuals regarding the Holy Spirit can be corrected by taking the totality of the Spirit’s work into consideration, including the Old Testament. “The Holy Spirit is not simply the subjective side of God’s revelation of himself, and faith is not merely the echo of the Word of God in the human heart. The Holy Spirit is much more than that. It is the power that raises the dead, the power of the new creation of all things; and faith is the beginning of the rebirth of human beings to new life.”²¹⁶ In spite of all that, “there is a tendency to view the Holy Spirit solely as the *Spirit of redemption*. Its place is the church, and it gives men and women the assurance of the eternal blessedness of their souls. This redemptive Spirit is cut off both from bodily life and from the

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 20.

²¹⁵ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 96.

²¹⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, tr. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), p. 7.

life of nature. It makes people turn away from ‘this world’ and hope for a better world beyond. They then seek and experience in the Spirit of Christ a power that is different from the divine energy of life, which according to the Old Testament ideas interpenetrates all the living.”²¹⁷ But such experience is not the stuff of our theological textbooks, which “talk about the Holy Spirit in connection with God, faith, the Christian life, the church and prayer, but seldom in connection with the body and nature.”²¹⁸

Moltmann uses the Spirit’s role in the Old Testament story of creation as a way of counteracting the Western church’s tendency towards gnosticism. He is also drawn to creation since it informs our stewardship of creation. “From the continual inflow of the divine Spirit (*ruach*) created things are formed (*bara*’). They exist in the Spirit, and they are ‘renewed’ (*hadash*) through the Spirit. This presupposes that God always creates through and in the power of his Spirit, and that the presence of his Spirit therefore conditions the potentiality and realities of his creation. The further assumption is that this Spirit is poured out on everything that exists, and that the Spirit preserves it, makes it live and renews it.”²¹⁹ This is far from the common perception, even by Christians, that the spiritual world is superior to the physical world.

According to this notion, the soul is saved from this vale of tears, and from this frail husk of the body, and is carried up into the heaven of the blessed spirits. But these notions of redemption are not Christian. They are gnostic. It was in order to contravert them that the ancient church introduced ‘*the resurrection of the body*’ into the third article of the Apostles’ Creed, and confessed the Spirit ‘who spake by the prophets’, as the Nicene Creed puts it. But if redemption is the resurrection of the body and the new creation of all things, then the redeeming Spirit of Christ cannot be any Spirit other than Yahweh’s creative *ruach*.²²⁰

By neglecting the theology of creation – and the scope of the Spirit’s creative work – the result is an individualistic, non-communal approach to our lives. “Even today this [Platonisation of

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 10.

²²⁰ Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, p. 9.

Christianity] still puts its mark on what is termed ‘spirituality’ in the church and religious groups. It takes the form of a kind of hostility to the body, a kind of remoteness from the world, and a preference for the inner experiences of the soul rather than the sensory experiences of sociality and nature.”²²¹ This emphasis on inner experience prevents us from fully experiencing what happens outwardly: church-body life, joy in the material life, worship that is more shared and mutual than individual – reflecting the inner *and* outer life of the Trinity. Examining the Spirit’s role in creation and the scope of that creative work is one way to counteract this trend.

Even though Moltmann criticizes those who see the Spirit solely as an agent of redemption, he does appreciate the important relationship between the activities of creation and redemption. “In both the Old and the New Testaments, the words used for the divine act of *creating* are also used for God’s *liberating* and *redeeming* acts (e.g., Isa 43.19). Redemption is the final new creation of all things out of their sin, transitoriness and mortality, for everlasting life, enduring continuance and eternal glory.”²²² Thus this inspired and productive handiwork will not turn suddenly *spiritual* in the age to come, but will be all the more glorious and celebrated. When we appreciate that “the redeeming Spirit is the Spirit of the resurrection and new creation of all things, then to employ Platonic and gnostic conceptions is simply to misunderstand it. To experience the power of the resurrection, and to have to do with this divine energy, does not lead to a non-sensuous and inward-turned spirituality, hostile to the body and detached from the world. It brings the new vitality of a love for life.”²²³

Ruach

Moltmann further counters gnostic and platonic notions by looking closely at the language used for Spirit, especially Hebrew terminology.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 8.

²²² Ibid., p. 9.

²²³ Ibid.

If we wish to understand the Old Testament word *ruach*, we must forget the word ‘spirit’, which belongs to Western culture. The Greek word *pneuma*, the Latin *spiritus*, and the Germanic *Geist*/ghost were always conceived as antitheses to matter and body. They mean something immaterial. Whether we are talking Greek, Latin, German or English, by the Spirit of God we then mean something disembodied, supersensory and supernatural. But if we talk in Hebrew about Yahweh’s *ruach*, we are saying: God is a tempest, a storm, a force in body and soul, humanity and nature. The Western cleavage between spirit and body, spirituality and sensuousness is so deeply rooted in our languages that we must have recourse to other translations if we want to arrive at a more or less adequate rendering of the word *ruach*.²²⁴

To be sure, Moltmann might be read as overstating matters. In John 3, Jesus makes a distinction between flesh and spirit that does not pit material against immaterial, and in Romans 8, Paul is not pitting material against immaterial when he contrasts flesh and spirit. Nevertheless, Moltmann does have an important point that we should heed when he insists that the Old Testament word *ruach* cannot be understood properly if it is understood as the counterpart to the material.

Relationally, the word Spirit or *ruach* suffers in meaning, but the profundity and extent of the meaning behind it is actually more evocative than Father or Son. “In the Old Testament, the meaning of the word is so complex, and the periods from which the relevant writings date are so widely separated, that it is impossible to find a simple semantic pattern for the word’s usage, or to construct a single unified concept for what is meant. *Ruach* was probably originally an onomatopoeic word for a gale – for example, the strong wind which divided the Reed Sea for Israel’s Exodus from Egypt (Ex. 14.21).”²²⁵ Generally we conceive the Spirit as an immaterial force, but, “[t]he word always means something living compared with something dead, something moving, over against what is rigid and petrified. In the transferred sense, when the word is applied to God, the tempest becomes a parable for the irresistible force of the Creator’s

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

²²⁵ Ibid.

power, God's killing wrath and life-giving mercy (cf. Ezek 13.13f; 36.26f.)."²²⁶ It is the personal hand of God forming our lives, both individually and in community.

The *ruach* is not simply the giver of physical life; he is the source of joy in life. "Because people saw the livingness of life in the inhaling and exhaling of air, *ruach* was also the breath of life and the power to live enjoyed by human beings and animals (Eccles. 12.7; 3.21).... In Ps. 51.10, the psalmist prays for 'a new, steadfast *ruach*'. In Ps. 31.5, the psalmist commits his *ruach* into God's hands (cf. Luke 23.46)."²²⁷ *Ruach* is more than breath of life. "When Yahweh's *ruach* is mentioned in this context, a distinction is often made between God's own creative power to give life, and the created ability to live enjoyed by all the living. We find this in Ps. 104.29f., for example: 'When thou takest away *their ruach* they die. When thou sendest forth *thy ruach* they are created; and thou renewest the face of the ground.'"²²⁸ In the creative power of life, God is present. Every efficacious presence of God is determined by the *ruach* and, as Calvin said, has to be interpreted pneumatologically."²²⁹ Recognizing the Spirit as creator not only gives us inward joy, but also produces outward worship, for which we are created.

The Bible makes reference to all three members of the Trinity in relation to creation.

Moltmann offers a connection or differentiation between the three persons, which is more elaborate and helpful than the Augustinian notion that the outer works of the Trinity are common.

[God] creates through the operation of *the Holy Spirit*.... It is the powers and energies of the Holy Spirit that bridge the difference between Creator and creature; the actor and the act, the master and the work – a difference which otherwise seems to be unbridged by any relation at all.... A trinitarian doctrine of creation is able to absorb the elements of truth in the idea of creation as God's 'work' and in the notion of creation as a divine outflowing or 'emanation'. The Holy Spirit is 'poured out'. The metaphor of emanation

²²⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 42.

belongs to the language of pneumatology. It is therefore wrong to polemic continually against the neo-Platonic doctrine of emanation in considering the Christian doctrine of creation. Creation in the Spirit has a closer relationship to the Creator than the act has to the actor or the work to the master. All the same, the world is not 'begotten' by God, as is the Son, who is one in essence with the Father. This intermediate situation, between creation and engendering is expressed by the 'pouring out' of the energies of the creative Spirit. This Spirit is the divine breath of life which fills everything with *its own life*.²³⁰

Studying the role of the Spirit in creation helps us better understand the economic Trinity and how the Persons relate to each other. "It is always the Spirit who first brings the activity of the Father and the Son to its goal. It follows that the triune God also unremittingly breathes the Spirit into his creation. Everything that is, exists and lives in the unceasing inflow of the energies and potentialities of the cosmic Spirit. This means that we have to understand every created reality in terms of energy, grasping it as the realized potentiality of the divine Spirit. Through the energies and potentialities of the Spirit, the Creator is himself present in his creation. He does not merely confront it in his transcendence; entering into it, he is also immanent in it."²³¹ This creative activity is manifest also in the incarnation of the Word (Matthew 1:20) and later in the Church. "If the Holy Spirit is 'poured out' on the whole creation, then he creates the community of all created things with God and with each other, making it that fellowship of creation in which all created things communicate with one another and with God, each in its own way. The existence, the life, and the warp and weft of interrelationships subsist in the Spirit: '*In him* we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28)."²³² In the new heaven and new earth, we can look forward to growing in perfected relationships, an ongoing work of the Spirit.

An Hebraic interpretation of the theology of creation supports less traditional theologies.

"The new approaches to an 'ecological theology', 'cosmic christology', and the rediscovery of

²³⁰ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 112, 114.

²³¹ Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 9.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

the body, start from the Hebrew understanding of the divine Spirit and presuppose that the redeeming Spirit of Christ and the creative and life-giving Spirit of God are one and the same.”²³³ An Hebraic understanding of the Spirit’s role in creation is also helpful both in combating the permeation of Eastern religious philosophy in our society as well as giving us an appreciation for creation that is not pantheistic. “In earlier times, contempt for life, hostility towards the body, and detachment from the world was merely an inward attitude of mind. Now it has become an everyday reality in the cynicism of the progressive destruction of nature. Discovery of the cosmic breadth of God’s Spirit leads in the opposite direction – to respect for the dignity of all created things, in which God is present through his Spirit.”²³⁴

The Spirit and Judgment

In spite of the Spirit’s role in creation, all is not well. Because of the intrusion of sin into this world, the need for repentance must be revealed to creation. Familiar to Lutheran soteriology is the Law-Gospel motif. It is therefore appropriate to recognize the Spirit’s role in terms of divine judgment as well as the means through which grace flows. “*In negative terms*, he is the Spirit of righteousness and justice who speaks in *the guilty conscience* of the people who commit violence.”²³⁵ There cannot be love or mercy without justice. The Spirit gives us freedom to see his justice in positive terms: “The Holy Spirit is the righteousness and justice of God which creates justice, justifies and rectifies. In the Spirit, lasting community with God, with other people and with nature become possible. That is why we can in this sense also call the Holy Spirit *the justification of life*. In the Spirit life again becomes worth loving. In the Spirit, human beings again become capable of loving life.”²³⁶

²³³ Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, p. 9.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

The *Shekinah*

Moltmann writes a great deal on God's *Shekinah* glory as it relates to the salvation of his chosen people. He makes the case that the *Shekinah* is not a facet of God but a "self-differentiation" of God and that the presence of God in his *Shekinah* glory is the presence of the Person of the Spirit. Moltmann uses this concept to explain how God can suffer (since the early church's difficulty in dealing with God's impassibility gave rise to an ontological Trinity, this is significant) as well as to build a bridge between Christianity and Judaism.

Franz Rosenzweig defines the *Shekinah* as "God's descent upon man and his sojourn among men, ... a dichotomy taking place in God himself. God himself separates himself from himself, he gives himself away to his people, he shares in their sufferings, sets forth with them into the agony of exile, joins their wanderings."²³⁷ As a result, Moltmann does not see Christ's ultimate suffering for our sake as something out of the ordinary for God. Unlike the early Church fathers, Moltmann does not equate impassibility with the character of God. On the contrary, "[n]othing would be more natural for the 'God of our Fathers' than that he should 'sell' himself for Israel and share its suffering fate. But by doing so, God himself puts himself in need of redemption. In this suffering, therefore, the relationship between God and the remnant points beyond itself."²³⁸ Not only did God enter creation to redeem it, but when Jesus took all sin on himself, he needed 'saving,' which was effected when he was raised by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Is there a relationship between the *Shekinah* and the Holy Spirit? "[L]et us look at certain concepts in Jewish mysticism. Here the *Shekinah* was thought of in hypostasized and personified form. But if the *Shekinah* is viewed, not merely as one of God's characteristics, but

²³⁷ Pinchas Lapide and Jürgen Moltmann, *Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine*, tr. Leonard Swidler (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), p. 51.

²³⁸ Ibid.

as God in person, then it is necessary to assume a profound self-differentiation in God himself.”²³⁹ At the least, Moltmann sees parallels between the Old Testament *Shekinah* and the Holy Spirit in the New Testament Church. “A new *divine presence* is experienced in the experience of the Spirit. God does not simply confront his creation as creator. He is not merely, as the incarnate One, the representative and advocate for men and women. In the Spirit God dwells in man himself. The experience of the Spirit is therefore the experience of the *Shekinah*, the divine indwelling. The *Shekinah* is a divine presence which was otherwise only experienced in the Temple, in worship on the Lord’s day.”²⁴⁰

We can be comforted and strengthened by our faith in the eternal efficacious work of the Spirit by understanding how the relationship between the *Shekinah* and *ruach* illustrates the

continuity which the Spirit gives to history [and] that the future operation of the Spirit can be trusted. Yahweh’s *ruach* no longer dwells and rests merely in his temple. His dwelling place is the people and its history. In this way Yahweh’s *ruach* became the expression for Yahweh’s presence and *Shekinah*, outside the cult on Zion too. And this meant that after the fall of the temple, Israel was able to console herself with the accompanying presence in her history of her God. That is the reason why God’s historical activity in and for Israel was then ascribed to Yahweh’s *ruach*. Yahweh’s *ruach* accompanied Moses – it divided the waters of the Reed Sea – it led the people through the wilderness: ‘Like cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So thou didst lead thy people, to make for thyself a glorious name’ (Isa. 63.14; see the whole context, Isa. 63.7-19).²⁴¹

Moltmann further uses the concept of the *Shekinah* to help us understand the connection between the Spirit and the other members of the Trinity as well as reminding us of the *kenosis* or humility of the Spirit. Just as the Spirit works as an intermediary for creation, so too is the Spirit an intermediary in the economic Trinity.

So the Spirit is the real determining subject of this special relationship of Jesus’ to God, and of God’s to Jesus. And it is therefore the Spirit who also ‘leads’ Jesus into the mutual history between himself and God his Father, in which ‘through obedience’ (Heb.

²³⁹ Moltmann, *Trinity and the Kingdom*, p. 28.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

²⁴¹ Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, p. 54-55.

5.8) he will 'learn' his role as the messianic Son. The phraseology about the 'descent' of the Spirit on Jesus, and its 'resting' on him, suggests that the Spirit should be interpreted as God's Shekinah. What is meant is the *self-restriction* and *self-humiliation* of the eternal Spirit, and his feeling identification with Jesus' person and the history of his life and suffering – just as, according to the rabbinic idea, God's Spirit has committed itself to the history of Israel's life and sufferings.²⁴²

Two great stumbling blocks between Judaism and Christianity are the suffering Saviour

and an apparent contradiction to belief in a monotheistic God, that is, the Trinity. By understanding the continuity that exists between Old Testament motifs and salvation history, there is the possibility of building theological bridges between Christianity and Judaism, a topic in which Moltmann is quite interested. Additionally, by examining certain Old Testament motifs (e.g., the *Shekinah*) through Jewish eyes, our own Christian understanding will be enhanced.

For his Jewish readers, Moltmann draws three profound connections between the *Shekinah* and *ruach* and then ties in the impassibility of God to open the door to accepting a crucified Messiah. First: "the Spirit is more than one of God's attributes, and more than a gift of God to what he has created. The Spirit is *God's empathy*, his feeling identification with what he loves."²⁴³ Second: "[t]he concept of the Shekinah also draws attention to *the sensibility of God the Spirit*. The Spirit indwells. The Spirit suffers with the suffering. The Spirit is grieved and quenched. The Spirit rejoices when we rejoice. When it descends and takes up its habitation and indwelling in wandering and suffering created beings, the Spirit thrusts forward with intense longing for union with God, and sighs to be at rest in the new, perfected creation."²⁴⁴ Finally: "[t]he idea of the Shekinah points towards *the kenosis of the Spirit*. In his Shekinah, God renounces his impassibility and becomes able to suffer because he is willing to love. The theophany of the Spirit is no anthropomorphism, but is made possible through his indwelling in

²⁴² Ibid., p. 61.

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 51.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

created being.”²⁴⁵ Moltmann uses the example of how “the Spirit ‘rests’ on the messianic king [as] a way of expressing God’s faithfulness to him, and his own reliability for God. It is also, and not the least, a way of describing the divine Shekinah in the messiah.”²⁴⁶

As do other theologians, Moltmann sees triadic traces in the Old Testament. In his dialogue with the Jewish theologian Pinchas Lapide, Lapide admits to them as well. “Why is it often written in the Bible, ask the Rabbis, ‘The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob’? Is there not only One God in heaven and on earth? And the Holy Scripture, which knows no lack, also knows no superfluous word. Therefore, why does it not say plainly and simply, ‘The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’?”²⁴⁷ It has not only been Christians who have seen some form of the Trinity in the Genesis 1 account of creation. “The mystics of the Cabala discovered a trace of the triad already on the first page of the Bible. ‘In the beginning God created heaven and earth, and the spirit of God hovered over the waters; then God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.’ Here stand the three (say the mystics, not normative Judaism): God’s Self, God’s Spirit, and God’s Word.”²⁴⁸

Lapide points to other examples as found in Isaiah and Ezekiel.

Here also belongs the so-called *Kedusha*, or *Trishagion*, from Isa. 6:3 where the choir of angels sings, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the entire earth is full of God’s glory!’ ... It is no wonder, therefore, that this so often repeated three-foldness of the holiness of God had led to a whole wave of quasi-trinitarian speculation in the fringe groups of Judaism, especially in connection with Ezekiel 3:12, where it says, ‘And the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a large noise as the glory of the Lord raised itself up.’ The Spirit, the Glory, and the Lord’s Self, say several of the mystics—there you have it: the three manifestations of the Godhead.”²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 53.

²⁴⁷ Lapide and Moltmann, *Jewish Monotheism*, p. 34.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 35.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 36.

In some respects, Lapidé's Jewish high regard for the Word of YHWH causes him to be more generous in where he is willing to see triadic phrases than some Christian theologians. He adds: "A final *locus classicus* in triadic thought in Judaism should be mentioned here—the theophany of Abraham at Mamre.... The transition from the number three of the men to the number One of God in this pericope is so frequent and so immediate that the number of rabbinical interpretations of this passage exceeds a dozen. Nevertheless, it appears clear to most of the exegetes that God is manifested here in a triad of men, or as one of the three men, which corresponds to a dynamic monotheism attempting to bring the manifoldness of the experience of God under a single roof."²⁵⁰

Assuming some Jewish readers can make a connection between the *Shekinah* and the *ruach YHWH*, and then make the admittedly difficult move to acceptance of a trinitarian Godhead, the next step is the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. "The doctrine of the Trinity is nothing other than the conceptual framework needed to understand the story of Jesus as the story of God."²⁵¹ "The doctrine of the Trinity is the theological short summary of the story of the passion of Christ. With it we grasp the story of the passion of Christ as the story of divine passion."²⁵²

Unlike the inability or unwillingness of early church fathers to comprehend a suffering God, Moltmann does not shy away from it; on the contrary, he sees a suffering saviour as the basis for a deeper understanding of the Trinity. "These accommodations of God to human history are however at the same time the *anticipations* of God's universal indwelling in creation, when God's glory will fulfill all things in the end. In God's *Shekinah* (condescension, indwelling) God is present in Israel, suffers with Israel, goes with Israel into exile, feels with the

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 37-38.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 47.

²⁵² Ibid.

martyrs the agonies of death.”²⁵³ One can see a correlation between the concepts of a suffering saviour and the economic trinity just as historically the dogma of a non-suffering saviour went hand-in-hand with the emphasis on an ontological trinity.

Salvation

When looking at the question of the Holy Spirit and regeneration in the Old Testament, one naturally wonders where the *gift* of the Spirit in the book of Acts fits in. Gary Badcock, in *Light of Truth*, suggests Moltmann’s pneumatology is helpful here.

In the first place, through his understanding of the development of the trinitarian relations themselves through salvation history, Moltmann is able to provide a trinitarian explanation for the fact that the Holy Spirit was not sent to the church until after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; until then, the Spirit was not in the strict sense the Spirit of the Son. Rather, it is through the trinitarian history of the Christ-event that the Spirit has *become* the Spirit of the risen Christ (*Trinity*, 122ff.). Room is thus found within the doctrine of the Trinity itself for the fact that Pentecost succeeds Easter and for the fact that the Spirit of the Father is also the Spirit, not just of the Son, but of the risen Jesus Christ.²⁵⁴

This is similar to the idea that the Jews needed to recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the *Spirit bearer* in order to recognize his Messiahship. The Spirit was known to them throughout their history; the Son less so. By grasping that the Son, a Person whom they could see with their eyes and hear with their ears, was the Spirit bearer, the way was opened for New Testament believers to begin to understand a Godhead made up of three self-differentiated Persons.

Moltmann “is able to represent the Holy Spirit successfully as a personal agent of Salvation within the Trinity. Moltmann thus effectively overcomes the standard problem of traditional trinitarian pneumatology; he condemns, for example, its understanding of the Spirit’s personal character as a function of the relation between the Father and the Son, or else as an “energy” by which the divine outreach to the world is effected, arguing that such an

²⁵³ Ibid., p. 50.

²⁵⁴ Badcock, *Light of Truth*, p. 201.

understanding prevents the recognition of the Spirit's equality with the Father and the Son (*Trinity*, 125-26, 142-43)."²⁵⁵ This new insight is based in a knowledge of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament, especially in creation but also in the corporate sustenance of the people of God.

The Spirit is not hidden, secret or private; nor is "the Spirit ... just something the Father and the Son share in common, or a power of God by which the creation is liberated (although the Spirit is both); rather, the Spirit is actually the agent of acts that affect the Father and the Son. The Spirit, for example, glorifies the Father and the Son by bringing the creation back to the Father through the Son and by unifying it with the Father and the Son. The Spirit therefore has a distinct role of his own to play in the divine life, at once economic and immanent, and appears as the glorifying and unifying God (*Trinity*, 125-26)."²⁵⁶

To conclude, Moltmann has given us insights into an economic Trinity by highlighting the Spirit's role in creation. He uses the concept of the *Shekinah* to illustrate the self-differentiation of God in the Old Testament as well as the Personhood of the Spirit. He also uses this concept to help us with the historic struggles that both Christianity and Jews have experienced with a suffering Messiah. Moltmann's writings focus on the economic Trinity, but not at the expense of the ontological Trinity.

Conclusion

Old Testament saints saw the *ruach YHWH* at work everywhere. Their kings, leaders, prophets, artisans and musicians were men and women of the Spirit. They were aware that every breath was a gift from the Spirit of God. All of creation around them was a gift from the Spirit.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 202.

They feared grieving the Spirit and inviting his judgment. They were given hope by the Spirit's message in the mouth of the prophets for ongoing and ultimate deliverance. New Testament believers, because of Jesus' teaching and his giving of the Spirit to them, now understood that Jesus was indeed God – he was the bearer of the Spirit of God. But just as sin led the people of Israel astray from the truth, so too in the early church we see confusion surrounding a proper understanding of the Holy Spirit. As church leaders reacted to the various heresies mentioned in the early pages of this paper, emphasis on understanding the Godhead ontologically prevailed over salvific economy. The Church was forced by heresies, especially Arianism, to find new vocabulary and new ways to express who the Father, Son, and Spirit were and how to define their relationship. To protect the divinity of Jesus, theologians stressed his equality with the Father. In time, the same would be said of the Spirit. It was not that the theologians were wrong in how they finally defined the position of Christ and the Spirit in the Godhead; the difficulty is that is where they remained, i.e., entrenched in a *correct* but incomplete *theologia* at the expense of *oikonomia*, instead of allowing the two approaches to complement and strengthen one another.

St. Augustine, one of the greatest theologians of the Church, went a step further when he asserted the outward works of the Trinity were the same. He went so far as to say it was possible to know the Trinity apart from the Incarnation, rendering the economy of salvation unnecessary for a knowledge of God. This became an accepted assumption for centuries, which was both evidenced and solidified by the great theologian of the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas.

One might rightly assume that the Reformation brought improvements to the field of pneumatology. The Reformers raised the role of the Spirit in creating faith and redemption over that of the role of a corrupt church. But as is true today, theological discussions began with the

authority of Scriptures (necessary at that time because of the Catholic Church's claim of authority) before moving to the Trinity (and an ontological one at that).

We are familiar with the *kenosis* of the Word, Christ emptying himself of his divinity for the sake of those he came to save. Similarly, the Spirit may also have emptied himself of something or have set some aspect of his personality aside in order to effect our salvation. The Spirit may well be the marginalized Person in the Trinity because of his very name and nature. We can picture a father or a son, and we can picture the attendant relationships. But 'spirit' is more ethereal and difficult to envisage, especially as we have come to define it in our Western culture. "Holy Spirit" is an absolute name, not a relational name, and since we know there is a profound relationship between the members of the Trinity, it seems the Spirit may set aside some relational aspect of his person in order to better achieve our salvation.

One way to make the workings of the Spirit more relevant to the church today and also to enrich our lives is studying the Spirit at work in the Old Testament. We believe we are familiar with the Spirit's works as seen in the New Testament: creating faith and endowing individuals and the Church with gifts. But there is much more than that, and by simply looking at the relevant Old Testament texts, we see the breadth of the Spirit's work and just as importantly, have our current understanding enhanced.

We started by studying the Hebrew word for Spirit, *ruach*. By looking at different meanings and uses of the word (fire, wind, breath, heart, etc.), we see a depth and a substance to the Person of the Spirit often not considered. The Spirit is the power of life in all senses of that word. When looking at *ruach* and the variety of metaphors and anthropomorphisms, the Spirit is not confined to an incorporeal or ethereal role in the world. And we see the Spirit as taking on

numerous roles and forms in order to achieve our salvation. We see, in the Spirit, just to what great extent God is *for us*.

We took up the questions of whether or not we could see the Spirit as a Person of the Trinity in the Old Testament and whether or not we could, with the aid of the New Testament, find the Trinity in the Old Testament. There are significant triadic phrases in the Old Testament (Ancient of Days, Son of Man, angelic host), some of which are directly related to explicit New Testament trinitarian phrases, such as the Father, the Son of Man, and Angels. Jane Schaberg used comparisons between Matthew 28 and Daniel 7 to argue that the Angel of the Lord is the Spirit of God – in both the Old and New Testaments. We observed how the Old Testament writers considered the Spirit as more than a force by the way they referred to him and his activities and that his person was seen as divine. The writers ascribed to the Spirit divine names, activities, and properties. There is also linguistic evidence for the Trinity as was pointed out by Luther and Lapidé.

We then considered the works of the Spirit as the power of life and his relevance to our existence as seen even in his role in creation. At the very beginning of earthly history, the Spirit is hovering or brooding over the chaos. Psalm 33 is a commentary on Genesis 1 and informs us that both order and being are as a result of God's work through the Spirit. The Spirit does more than simply effectuate God's will as we see in Psalm 104 where it is the Spirit who is acting creatively. The Spirit not only infuses all things living with life but does so in beautiful ways. We have freedom to exalt in the gifts of life and creation as opposed to disparaging this world with our gnostic tendencies. We have freedom to be filled with praise for the gift of life and to worship the giver of the gift. Gifts of providence – nature, the arts, literature, music, science, athletics, exploration (to name a few) – will no longer seem mundane or taken for granted or

even looked down upon as not *spiritual* enough. With a proper understanding of the Spirit's presence in all aspects of creation, we can remove the false dichotomy between the physical and spiritual.

The Spirit gives many gifts to move creation towards redemption, both temporal and eternal. Chief among them is the gift of the word given to the prophets to share with the people of Israel. The prophets were men of the Spirit and proclaimed judgment, restoration, hope, reconciliation and salvation. The Spirit also inspired the writers of the Scriptures and then has preserved the word through the ages. Men and women of the word today sustain our spiritual lives.

We know the Holy Spirit granted gifts to the church in the New Testament and also today. The Spirit gave gifts during Old Testament times as well. By studying them in the form of narrative as opposed to a list, they take on a reality and relevance that may have previously been taken for granted. Gifting ranged from art to leadership. When considering the examples given in the Old Testament, we see the gifts are for a definite purpose, a reminder that the Spirit works via means, in many cases through individuals and their skills.

So far, we see the positive ways in which the Spirit works. The Spirit also judges his people in order to bring them to repentance; he judges evil in order to vindicate his people. The Spirit requires his people to seek his guidance. When studying the Spirit as judge in the Old Testament and how he moved in nations, groups and individuals, we can be comforted when witnessing the Spirit at work in difficult circumstances, continuing to drive people to repentance and renewal.

To the uninitiated, it appears the Spirit makes his grand entrance to dwell in believers at Pentecost (there are actually several so-called Pentecosts). The ensuing assumption is that the

Spirit was not available to individual Israelites in Old Testament times. Because the Spirit came and went at times, anointing people for certain occasions and situations, it appears he did not indwell OT saints for their regeneration. But we see parallels in the NT where the Spirit came and went for special gifting. There is much evidence that Old Testament saints were saved in that they had faith in the promised Messiah. They were not saved simply because they were God's chosen people since there is evidence that not every Israelite had saving faith (one example would be those judged and executed at Sinai for worshiping the calf). Thus the source and giver of that faith was the Spirit, not some special lineage.

This study of the Spirit concluded by looking at the pneumatology of Jürgen Moltmann. By exploring the Spirit's role in creation and examining the language used for the Spirit, Moltmann enhances our economic view of the Trinity. Additionally, he sees the study of the Holy Spirit, especially in creation and other Old Testament themes, as a foil to gnostic and platonic tendencies in Western Christendom, tendencies which may have been encouraged by over-emphasis on an ontological Trinity. By celebrating the Spirit's role in creation, our own lives are richer as we take delight in *all* the gifts of the Spirit in our lives and the world around us. Moltmann is especially helpful in how he uses the Old Testament's economic approach to the Godhead as witness to his Jewish colleagues of a Trinitarian God. From this he is able to use a familiar concept (to them) of the *Shekinah* to effectively show how God in his very Person, i.e., the Person of the Spirit, is a suffering God, paving the way for acceptance of a crucified Messiah. Here Moltmann helps Western Christendom which has also struggled with the impassibility of God, allowing our focus to be on the economic Trinity: God's realized plan for redemption of all creation as made known by Christ.

For The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod there needs to be discussion about how to view the work of the Spirit that is not largely shaped by negatives such as fear of the ‘charismatics’ but rather is shaped by the profound truths witnessed to through the entirety of the Scriptures. Ironically, we can use the Spirit to combat spiritualism, an heresy which we fallen creatures struggle with. Gnosticism and Platonism stifle the joys in living. Contrasting that with exultation in the many gifts of the Spirit will lead to richer worship and liturgy (contrary to a *te deum* used in our churches which praises the Father and the Son, adding almost as an afterthought, “And also the Holy Spirit...”²⁵⁷).

To conclude, studying the Old Testament informs us of the wide-ranging work of the Person of the Holy Spirit. We see how narrowly defining the Spirit’s work has dangerous consequences in distorting our own faith and leading us closer to Gnosticism. Whether or not the Spirit has been domesticated by ecclesiastical concerns in our own denomination (The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod) is difficult for this writer to say, but it is hoped that by studying the activity of the Spirit as found in the pages of the Old Testament, theologians can discuss whether or not we have been too narrow or controlling of our definition of the Spirit’s role in the church or in how we define the means through which he works. I have not explicitly addressed the concept of the Spirit working through means, but many of the means by which the Spirit works are specifically addressed.

The Spirit is the giver of life. No longer do we need to be conflicted about our stewardship and exploitation of this earth; it is a gift, just as is every breath we take. Our new life in Christ is due to the Spirit. Jesus was conceived by the power of the Spirit, sustained and led by the Spirit, raised by the power of the Spirit, and his work is made efficacious by the Spirit. The Spirit took of what was the Father’s and gave it to the Son. He has taken what is the Sons’

²⁵⁷ *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), p. 215.

and revealed it to us. Our life as a body of believers is sustained by the Spirit and strengthened by his gifting – his means of sustaining Christ’s Bride.

Finally, the Spirit will raise us incorruptible and sustain us throughout eternity. Our very ability to enjoy eternity will be based in the Spirit’s presence in and around us. And for all eternity, the Spirit will be continuously revealing to us the *God for us*.

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