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# The Journey Back to God: A Lutheran Pneumatological Assessment of Postconciliar Catholic Soteriology Through the Lens of Pneumatology and Spirit Christology

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THE JOURNEY BACK TO GOD: A LUTHERAN PNEUMATOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT  
OF POSTCONCILIAR CATHOLIC SOTERIOLOGY THROUGH THE LENS OF  
PNEUMATOLOGY AND SPIRIT CHRISTOLOGY

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A Dissertation  
Presented to the Faculty of  
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Systematics  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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By  
Jared Raebel  
January 2024

Approved by:	Dr. Leopoldo A. Sánchez M.	Dissertation Advisor
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	Dr. Timothy Dost	Reader



I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Cecilia, and my sons, Micah and Seth, who supported me through this venture. I would also like to dedicate this to my sainted parents, Roger and Phyllis Raebel through whom God brought me into this world and introduced me to my Savior Jesus Christ.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Sánchez, my dissertation advisor, for his guidance and patience and the extensive time he put into editing this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Okamoto for giving me ideas on how to formulate my thoughts. I would also like to thank my readers, Dr. Burreson and Dr. Dost, for their time in reading this dissertation and giving suggestions for its improvement.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Augsburg Confession
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
BC	Book of Concord
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
CCCD	The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine
Ep	Epitome of Formula of Concord
ESV	English Standard Version
LC	Luther's Large Catechism
LW	<i>Luther's Works</i> , American ed. 55 vols. Philadelphia: Fortress; St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–1986.
MTR	The Modern Theologians Reader, Malde, MA: Blackwell, 2012.
SA	Smalcald Articles
SC	Luther's Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord.
WPh	<i>The Works of Philo</i> . Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993.

## GLOSSARY

**Anthropology, spirit:** The study of the spiritual nature of humanity.

**Appropriation:** Although all persons of the Trinity work together in relation to creation (Lat. *opera ad extra indivisa sunt*), some works or operations are especially appropriated or attributed to a particular divine person (e.g., creation to the Father, redemption to the Son, sanctification to the Spirit).

**Beatific Vision:** The proper end of the human person, eternal union with God, “face to face.”

**Causality, efficient:** What produces something and is distinguished from that which is produced (e.g., God is the extrinsic cause of the created grace He imparts to humans).

**Causality, formal:** What makes a thing what it is (e.g., uncreated grace is the very life of God).

**Causality, quasi-formal:** What is more than efficient, but less than formal. God’s grace is not simply extrinsic to us (efficient causality), nor does it make us divine as God (formal causality). Thus, Rahner uses quasi-formal causality as a way of saying that humans receive God’s very life in a way that they do not become God, thus distinguishing between God and creation while also asserting that the humans are partakers of grace or deified.

**East of Eden:** The space in which fallen humanity lives.

**Economy (of salvation):** God’s providential plan of salvation, God’s management and dispensation of grace.

**Enhypostasis:** An articulation of the doctrine of hypostatic union according to which the human nature of Christ subsists in and depends upon the divine hypostasis or person of the Logos, and which excludes an independent and impersonal existence of the human nature apart from the Logos.

**Existentiell:** A term utilized by Rahner to describe different states of humanity. Rahner uses the word “existential” to refer to an element in humanity’s ontological essence which orients humanity to transcendence and is present prior to the exercise of freedom. It becomes “existentiell” when the individual becomes aware of its existence and appropriates it in freedom.

**Grace, created:** Supernatural gifts given by God to humans beyond what is common to a human nature. It is the result of God’s free self-communication in Word and Spirit and is available to all persons. It is therefore some gratuitous gift of God, distinct from God Himself, positively leading to the beatific vision of God.

**Grace, uncreated:** God’s own life communicated to human nature.

**Immanent Trinity:** The divine persons with respect to one another.

**Neo-Scholasticism:** The predominant Thomistic philosophical system commonly taught in the Catholic Church from the mid-nineteenth century through the Second Vatican Council. It places a strong emphasis on the rational demonstration of universal truths concerning the existence of God, the natural order, and the human soul.

**Pneumatology:** The study of the person and works of the Holy Spirit.

**Postconciliar Neo-Thomists:** Catholic theologians in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council such as Rahner, Kasper, Del Colle, and Coffey. These theologians were trained in or familiar with neo-scholastic theology, employed its Thomistic categories in numerous ways, but also moved beyond Neo-Scholasticism and infused it with other philosophical and theological approaches.

**Self-communication of God:** Divine communication bestowed on human beings created with the capacity to receive this gift. In this God gives Himself freely and completely, so that the Gift and the Giver are one.

**Spirit Anthropology:** The study of the Holy Spirit's relationship to humanity.

**Spirit Chronology:** The study of God's Spirit working through time in human culture and history to lead time to God's intended goal and prepare humanity for the revelation of Christ.

**Spirit Soteriology:** The study of the means and methods the Spirit uses to bring about salvation.

**Subsistence:** A subject which exists but is part of a greater being, but where the latter, within the former acquires the character of a true and proper subject (i.e. The Roman Catholic Church subsists in the Church, but within the Catholic church, the Church acquires a true and proper subject. Jesus subsists in the Trinity, but in Jesus, the Godhead acquires a true and proper subject.)

**Super Existentialism:** A term used by postconciliar theologians to describe the event where the Spirit works through the quasi-formal cause in man alone, bringing about a drawing to God without the consent of the efficient causality of human free will. Although close to a Lutheran understanding of conversion, it is different because Lutherans do not recognize a quasi-formality in humanity and postconciliars do not admit total depravity.

## ABSTRACT

Raebel, Jared M. “The Journey Back to God: A Lutheran Pneumatological Assessment of Postconciliar Catholic Soteriology Through the Lens of Pneumatology and Spirit Christology” 2024. 230 pp.

The dissertation proposes that an adequate way to describe postconciliar Catholic and Lutheran scholars' descriptions of the human person's journey back to God lies in looking at their respective soteriologies through the lens of pneumatology and Spirit Christology. To highlight the ways in which Catholic and Lutheran theologies tell the story of the Spirit in our salvation, the dissertation proposes the metaphor of the Spirit taking humanity on a journey through the divinely created spaces of the Garden of Eden, the space East of Eden, and the space of the New Eden, where humanity fully experiences the beatific vision. In dialogue with Catholic theology, the dissertation also offers a complementary historiographical proposal on how the Spirit of God works through time to prepare people for encountering Christ, thus becoming known as the Spirit of Christ.

## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation describes the journey humanity has made away from God and the Spirit's role in bringing humanity back to God.<sup>1</sup> In the beginning, God, in His grace, contracted or “diminished” Himself to create space and time that allows for the existence of a dependent yet free creation. In His grace, God created a paradox where creation is within Him, but He is not contained within it. God is immanent in creation yet transcends it.

In this created space and time, humanity was created. Adam and Eve were created in the image and likeness of God and stood not in need of knowledge of good and evil. All they knew was the knowledge of God's will. Their daily bread was simply to do the will of the God who created them (John 4:34).<sup>2</sup>

Created in the image of God, humanity lived freely before God. It was given space and time, to exercise its free will in the worship of God. Yet, Satan tempted humanity to become independent (free) of God and His will. Satan deceived them into believing they could know good and evil. God and knowledge of His will would no longer be needed. They could become like gods. They (and not God) would become the measure of all things.

Although God did not predestine the Fall, He foreknew that humanity would fail this test of “obedience of faith” in the Garden of Eden. Thus, God created spaces further away from Him for fallen humanity to reside and journey through until the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4) where He could make things right. These distant spaces would preserve humanity from God's wrath until God redeemed it. Sinners cannot dwell with God in the Garden of Eden without being consumed

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<sup>1</sup> The dissertation is, in spirit, a kind of scholarly Spirit-oriented homage to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim Progress*. Alan Vermilye, *The Pilgrim's Progress: A Readable Modern-Day Version of John Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress* (Nashville: Brown Chair Publishing Books, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> All biblical references are from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

by His holiness. The cherubim holding flaming swords at the East Gate of Eden communicates this. Thus, when Adam and Eve sinned, God expelled them to the space called East of Eden (Gen. 3:24). But as sin progressed, further safe distancing from God was needed. After sin escalated into murder, God sent Cain into the space of Nod, a space that was the further East of Eden (Gen. 4:16). Abraham also sent the children born to him from Keturah, eastward from the promised child Isaac (Gen. 25:6).

Sin continued to escalate to the point where God said that no matter how far east of Eden man resided, He could no longer look upon man. He thus destroyed humanity, except for eight souls (1 Peter 3:20). Through Noah's family, God repopulated the world again. However, even after this cleansing, humanity continued to distance itself from God. The Tower of Babel, another act of disobedience, was being constructed as humanity "journeyed **from** the east" (Gen. 11:2) to get closer to God through wrongful means. Humanity in the first eleven chapters of Genesis were constantly failing the "obedience of faith." The space farthest east of God is hell. It is a space God created for those who by their disobedience have reached the point of no return (Mt. 25:41).

The sin of disobedience created not only a space between God and humanity, but a chasm that could only be crossed by a bridge. Spirit Christology talks about how that bridge was made. Spirit anthropology talks about how humanity is placed on that bridge and assisted by God in crossing it.<sup>3</sup> Spirit anthropology is a deficient form of Spirit Christology. Both the Logos and the

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<sup>3</sup> Spirit Christology is a more encompassing phrase than Logos Christology. Logos Christology refers to the relationship the Logos has with the human nature. It is a phrase that leaves little room, if any, for reference to the Spirit's relationship with the human nature of Christ. Since it is understood that the Logos is the identity of Jesus Christ, the Logos is embedded in the word "Christology." Thus, the phrase Spirit Christology is more inclusive as it talks about how the bridge back to God is built by the Spirit and the Logos working together with the human nature of Christ. Spirit anthropology is the study of the Holy Spirit's relationship with man's entire being. This differs from spirit anthropology (little s) which deals with the study of the spirit and or soul within man.

Spirit dwell in Christ and regenerated humanity, but in different degrees. The indwelling of the Logos causes the Logos to be the identity of Christ. In the regenerated believer it does not. The Spirit dwells in both Christ and regenerated humanity, but in different degrees. Christ has the full measure of the Spirit. Regenerated humanity does not and will not have such fullness until the regenerated human reaches the other end of the bridge. This bridge is cruciform in nature. Its cornerstone is the cross of Christ. A foundational block is the Incarnation. It was in that event that people **from** the East made a rightful journey back to God (Matt. 2:1–12).

A foreshadowing of the building of the cruciform bridge back to God took place in the sacrifice of Isaac. With Abraham, God became more personally involved with humanity. He placed Abraham on the bridge and called him to cross the bridge through the “obedience of faith.” At times, Abraham failed to cross the bridge in this manner. Against God’s command, he took Lot with him to the land God promised to show Abraham (Gen. 12:1–4). He lied in Egypt, questioning the protection of God (Gen. 12:12). He committed sin in his attempt to fulfill the promised seed in his own way (Gen. 16:1–4). He failed to cross the bridge in the obedience of faith when he thought the womb of Sarah was too dead for God to bring life from it. He thus conceived what he had hoped to be the promised seed through Hagar, Sarah’s maidservant.

However, in another space and time, Abraham walked over the cruciform bridge in the “obedience of faith.” He was willing to sacrifice the promised seed, Isaac, before he had children. His obedient faith believed that God would make it possible to fulfill His promise to him that he would be the father of many nations, by bringing Isaac back from the dead (Heb. 11:19). It was a show of a greater faith in the promise than believing God could bring life from two dead bodies—his and Sarah’s (Rom. 4:19–22).

Later, the descendants of Abraham were given space and time to fulfill the “obedience of



faith” (Deut. 8:2). During their forty years of wandering in the wilderness, a time of walking a cruciform bridge which consisted of suffering, their faith in God was tested. God, though, assisted their walking by being present with them. He created sacred spaces in which He could dwell with humanity through worship. In these spaces of worship, certain instruments of worship were created, such as the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle, to assist in the worship which made it possible for God cover His glory and safely dwell with His people. To further assist them in their travels across the bridge, God revealed His will to them in the Ten Commandments. He gave them laws to lead them into faithfulness and spiritual guides to encourage them to remain faithful and prescribe sacrifices of atonement when they failed. Their bridge ended in the Promised Land, a land which was a foreshadow of the land believers in Christ would enter at the other end of the bridge back to God.

This dissertation is the first Lutheran assessment of the postconciliar turn to pneumatology as a theological framework for soteriology, the bridge building back to God that takes place through Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology. It proposes that an adequate way to describe and assess this return lies in distilling from postconciliar theology its own story of the journey of the human person back to God through Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology. The dissertation tells such story of how God builds the bridge back to Him through Spirit Christology and how, through Spirit anthropology, He puts man on that bridge and helps him to cross it. This work also offers a Lutheran response to the postconciliar proposals. It will articulate the contours of an alternative story, distilling and building it from Lutheran classic and contemporary scholars working in areas where soteriology intersects with Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology.

To offer a comparative base for understanding postconciliar scholars, the dissertation will consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church's* views on Spirit soteriology and lay out an

official postconciliar account of the Spirit's work in bringing pilgrims back to God (chapter 1).<sup>4</sup>

We will then see how a prominent postconciliar theologian, Karl Rahner, tells the story of this journey, paying special attention to the pneumatological elements in his theology of divine self-communication and human self-transcendence (chapter 2). The next step is to delve into the postconciliar theologians of Ralph Del Colle, Walter Kasper, and David Coffey, tracking their developments and extensions of Rahner's views within the frameworks of pneumatology, Trinitarian theology, and Spirit Christology (chapter 3). We will then assess the postconciliar contributions through a Lutheran lens using the Lutheran Confessions and the views of Martin Luther (chapter 4), as well as the works of modern-day Lutheran scholars Regin Prenter and Leopoldo Sánchez, who have written respectively in the fields of pneumatology (especially in relationship to theological anthropology) and Spirit Christology (chapter 5). Finally, we will offer a complementary chronological proposal for telling the story of the Spirit of Christ's work of building a cruciform bridge back to God through time (chapter 6).

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<sup>4</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [hereafter CCC], 2nd ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1995).

## CHAPTER ONE

### SPIRIT SOTERIOLOGY OF THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM

We first look at the journey back to God through the lens of the official postconciliar Catechism of the Catholic Church. It will serve as a basis for comparison with postconciliar theologians' views on the Spirit's role in this journey. The catechism teaches that in creation, God established Adam in His friendship. It states that God's Word and His Breath (Spirit) are the origin of being. Second, that God created humanity with a body and spirit. Third, that God made man in His image. This means that God impressed His form on man's bodily flesh so that what was visible might bear the divine form.<sup>1</sup> Man was created to have the ability to know and love God and share in His life. This divine form gives man the capability "of self-knowledge, of self-possession, and of freely giving himself and entering communion with others."<sup>2</sup> On the human spirit God impressed His likeness which is His glory.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Pneumatology and Anthropology**

The catechism states that the whole purpose of the creation of the universe and humanity was to share in God's love, divine life, and eternally live life according to the Beatitudes in true freedom.<sup>4</sup> It confesses that the human vocation consists of showing forth the image of God and

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<sup>1</sup> CCC, §703–4.

<sup>2</sup> CCC, §356–57. The neo-scholastics and scholastics heavily emphasized the free will aspect of the image of God in their argumentations. See Chapter 2, 3 and 4 in this thesis. In another section it writes, "Society is not for [man] an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature." CCC, §1879.

<sup>3</sup> CCC, §705.

<sup>4</sup> CCC, §759, 1719, 1740–41. In another section it states that the goal is to become like God. CCC, §1803. Concerning the beatitudes, the catechism states that purity of the heart is a precondition to seeing the beatific vision. It consists of charity, chastity, and love of truth. It also requires modesty because modesty exists as an intuition of the spiritual dignity of man. CCC, §2518–20, 2524. Another precondition for the beatific vision is detachment from riches. CCC, §2544.

being transformed into the image of Christ.<sup>5</sup>

As a spiritual being, man was designed for a supernatural end with his soul raised to fellowship with God.<sup>6</sup> However, Adam, when he was first created, was not experiencing the highest level of fellowship with God. To experience this, Adam had to pass the test of the obedience of faith. God created space and time in the Garden of Eden for this to happen. According to the catechism, the test of obedience would last until the coming of the Son of God in whose image Adam was created. This meant that the tree of knowledge of good and evil would remain until Jesus came. If Adam had stayed in this state of created grace, until Christ came, he would not have died and would have experienced a fulfilled glorification.<sup>7</sup> Of the three persons of the Trinity, the one which helped Adam the most to accomplish this task was the Spirit of God.

However, Adam failed, causing the Spirit to depart from him. God then sent Adam East of the Garden, a direction which symbolizes a distancing from God. This action of disobedience involved rejecting God, losing His friendship, and being separated from Him. It is a wounding, but not a death for Adam. Wounded in its natural powers, humanity is now subjected to ignorance, pain, and death, and is inclined to evil, called concupiscence. In this wounded state, creation and conscience reveal to humanity that it doesn't have the first cause within itself or its end, but they do reveal that humanity participates in the eternal Being. Conscience, though

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<sup>5</sup> In another section the catechism states that man's vocation is, "to make God manifest by acting in conformity with his creation 'in the image and likeness of God.'" CCC, §2085.

<sup>6</sup> CCC, §367.

<sup>7</sup> CCC, §374, 376. Here it indicates that Christ would come into the world even if humanity had not fallen. If Adam had remained faithful, Christ would have come and cut down the tree of temptation. However, since Adam failed, Christ came and had to be hung on a cursed tree (Gal. 3:13) to save man. Though Adam had a sinless body at creation, he did not have a glorified body, one that the New Testament tells us that believers will have at the end of time. One that surpasses the sinless body of the first Adam. In another section, the catechism states, "Constituted in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully 'divinized' by God in glory." CCC, §398.

marred by sin, still can recognize the voice of God which urges humanity to “do what is good and avoid what is evil,” a command fulfilled in love toward God and neighbor.<sup>8</sup>

In this fallen state, humans can still direct themselves toward true good. However, human freedom is not bound toward good. It has the possibility of choosing evil and rejecting God.<sup>9</sup> The pilgrim, because he retains the image (though not the likeness) of God after the fall, can still distance himself from those things which turn her away from God.<sup>10</sup> But if the human person does this, he has violated his freedom and sinned against his dignity.<sup>11</sup> The choice of evil consists of humanity seeking unity with a wrongful god or wrongful ways to attain unity with the true God (Gen. 11).<sup>12</sup>

Concupiscence is opposed to the obedience of faith.<sup>13</sup> Sin has allowed the devil to acquire a certain domination over humanity. This domination, though strong, does not take away all of humanity’s free will. The catechism states, “God willed that man should be ‘left in the hand of his own counsel,’ so that he might of his own accord seek his Creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him.”<sup>14</sup> Adam still had the image, but not the likeness of God. The retained image gave Adam some capability to restore his relationship with the Creator.

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<sup>8</sup> CCC, §36, 1147, 1706.

<sup>9</sup> CCC, §30.

<sup>10</sup> CCC, §226.

<sup>11</sup> CCC, §1740. The catechism says about this freedom, “The right to the exercise of freedom, especially in moral and religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person.” CCC, §1738. In respect to love, the catechism states that it is the source of orientation toward God. However, mortal sins destroy charity and venial sins wound it. CCC, §1855.

<sup>12</sup> The catechism confesses, “Human life finds its unity in the adoration of the one God.” CCC, §2114.

<sup>13</sup> CCC, §1707, 1849–50, 1865. It is, “any intense form of human desire . . . the movement of sensitive appetite contrary to the operation of the human reason . . . Concupiscence stems from the disobedience of the first sin.” In another section it confesses that human desires are good, but often they exceed the limits of reason and drive us to covet unjustly what is not ours. CCC, §2515, 2535.

<sup>14</sup> CCC, §1743. The catechism makes an “ecumenical move” as it states about the condition of fallen humanity, “Because we are dead [Lutheran concept] or at least wounded through sin . . .” CCC, §734.

The catechism writes, “It is in accordance with their dignity that all men, because they are persons . . . are both impelled by their nature and bound by moral obligation to see the truth, especially religious truth.”<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the catechism states that a desire for reunification with God, “is achieved secretly in the heart of all peoples: ‘In every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable’ to God.”<sup>16</sup> The desire for God is made evident in humanity’s practice of prayers, sacrifice, rituals, and meditations to various gods even outside the Christian faith. Humans are religious beings. They need to journey toward their ultimate destinies by free choice and preferential love.<sup>17</sup>

In the process of this restoration, a death of the self, but not of the free will takes place. In Roman Catholic teaching free will is that part of the image of God which humanity cannot lose. For it to lose free will would mean that humanity would no longer be human. In conversion, the Spirit works the death of the human self but not of her free will and restores the glory of His likeness in the human person.<sup>18</sup>

This spiritual restoration is described as a journey. The catechism states that the universe was created “in a state of journeying toward an ultimate perfection to yet be attained.”<sup>19</sup> Even though humanity may reach out to God with a marred image, humanity cannot restore its divine

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<sup>15</sup> CCC, §2467. It adds, “Truth in words, the rational expression of the knowledge of created and uncreated reality, is necessary to man, who is endowed with intellect. But truth can also find other complementary forms of human expression, above all when it is a matter evoking what is beyond words: the depths of the human heart, the exaltations of the soul, the mystery of God . . . God reveals himself to [humanity] through the universal language of creation, the work of His Word, of his wisdom: the order and harmony of the cosmos—which both the child and the scientist discover—from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator.” CCC, §2500.

<sup>16</sup> CCC, §761. Being acceptable to God is a step toward justification. This gives hope to those who commit suicide saying, “By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance.” CCC, §2283.

<sup>17</sup> CCC, §311. Out of all the creatures, only humanity can know and love its Creator. CCC, §355.

<sup>18</sup> CCC, §298.

<sup>19</sup> CCC, §302, 310.

likeness without the help of the Spirit.<sup>20</sup> Humanity must struggle to do what is right but is aided by God's Spirit of grace.<sup>21</sup> God must draw near to a "wounded, Spiritless" humanity and call for it to seek, know, and love Him. By His Spirit, God restores His glory to humanity so that it can be properly deified by having both His image and likeness.<sup>22</sup> The catechism states, "The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God."<sup>23</sup> It teaches that the historical point where the divine presence of the Trinity personally entered this journey toward man's restoration was through the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:2–3; 15:4). At that point, God redirected humanity toward life and its source.<sup>24</sup>

### **Pneumatology and the Revelation of God**

The catechism states that God speaks to humanity through visible creation. People can see traces of His existence in creation, conscience, and the arts. The Spirit's work is to reveal the source of life, Jesus Christ, to creation. In Christ, God reveals more about Himself than His existence and His beauty. He reveals the mystery or plan of His salvation and forgiveness established from all eternity in Christ, a mystery which makes the Triune God personable and relatable to the pilgrim. This mystery cannot be discovered by human reason but must be revealed.<sup>25</sup> It is through the revelation of this mystery that humanity comes to know the Triune

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<sup>20</sup> CCC, §705. In other sections it describes the nature of humanity as fallen and "tainted" by original sin. CCC, §1250, 1849, 2566. One gift God has given His children to restore human likeness to God is prayer. According to the catechism it enables humans to share in the power of God's love. Contemplative prayer is a communion with God in which He conforms humanity to His likeness. CCC, §2572, 2713.

<sup>21</sup> CCC, §409.

<sup>22</sup> CCC, §1. The catechism states that original sin is not a sin of commission, but a sin that is contracted at conception. Original sin is a state and not an act. CCC, §404.

<sup>23</sup> CCC, §27.

<sup>24</sup> CCC, §1080.

<sup>25</sup> CCC, §50.

God. Access to the Father is given through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, who enables humanity not just to know God, but to share in the divine nature and enter communal fellowship with the Trinity.<sup>26</sup> Through Christ, God manifests His holiness to humanity, and by His Spirit, restores it to His image and likeness.

Traces of God’s existence can also be found in the arts. Humanity, created in God’s image, expresses the truth of its relationship with God by the beauty of its artistic works. Art is a form of creation, wisdom, knowledge, and skill. It gives form to the truth of reality in a language inaccessible to sight or hearing. True art is ordered to the ultimate end of man. Sacred art does this the best as it communicates the transcendent mystery of God. It is directed toward expressing the infinite beauty of God.<sup>27</sup>

### **Pneumatology and Soteriology**

Saving faith in Christ is awakened by the Holy Spirit. He meets us in the response of faith, which He awakens in us, and brings about genuine human “cooperation” into coming to such faith. After having crucified the flesh of the believer with its passions and desires, the Spirit, along with the believer’s assent, places the believer on the cruciform bridge back to God. The believer is then led across the bridge by the Spirit and follows His desires.<sup>28</sup>

The catechism confesses that apart from the cross of Christ, the cornerstone of the cruciform bridge, there is no other way to heaven.<sup>29</sup> It acknowledges that Christ’s death is an

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<sup>26</sup> CCC, §51. The key preposition is the word “in” the Holy Spirit and not “and,” or “by,” the Holy Spirit. The preposition communicates that the Spirit does not reveal God apart from the Son, nor the Son apart from the Holy Spirit. Working together they lead believers to the truth and make the Word of Christ dwell in them. CCC, §79.

<sup>27</sup> CCC, §2500–2503.

<sup>28</sup> CCC, §2543.

<sup>29</sup> CCC, §618. The catechism states, “By his death and Resurrection, Jesus has ‘opened’ heaven to us.” CCC, §1026. Furthermore, it states, “By the blood of his cross, ‘in his own person he killed the hostility,’ he reconciled



eschatological event, bringing believers closer to the end of time, a step closer to the beatific vision.<sup>30</sup>

God's Spirit gives freedom from sin and justification. This work of the Spirit is founded on the redemption of Christ. The catechism calls this journey across the cruciform bridge to freedom from sin the "way of Christ." Through the indwelling of Christ, which the Word and the Spirit has worked in the graced person, an ontological change happens within the pilgrim. The divine image is restored to original beauty and strengthened by God's grace.<sup>31</sup> Through Christ's redemption, the believer receives God's Spirit of grace, enters the communion of the Trinity, and shares in the resurrection of Christ.

The Spirit of grace helps the believer discern the narrow path of the obedience of faith which encompasses moral and religious truths.<sup>32</sup> The human will is involved in the reception of this gift, being graced by God to give its assent.<sup>33</sup> The Spirit of grace works with the charity

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man to God and made his Church the sacrament of the unity of the human race and of its union with God." *CCC*, §2305. Finally, the catechism recognizes that although Christ was perfect from conception, His sacrifice would not be perfect without obedience of His Father's will to the cross. *CCC*, §2606. Also, the catechism states that Jesus, "brought us into the Father's presence," after He had made purification for sins. *CCC*, §2777.

<sup>30</sup> *CCC*, §571, 586, 613. The catechism also refers to an objective and subjective act of redemption. *CCC*, §600–601. In the act of Christ's redemption, the catechism strongly emphasizes the role Christ's obedience had in bringing redemption about and in transforming, "the curse of death into a blessing." *CCC*, §606, 1009.

<sup>31</sup> *CCC*, §1608, 1695, 1701, 1708. Although the catechism states that the divine image is restored through Christ it still does not equate the restoration of the image with full justification.

<sup>32</sup> *CCC*, §1889, 1960. The catechism states that God offers man a "conscience" to accept the gift of faith. If one rejects the gift of conscience, one makes a shipwreck of one's faith. For the Roman Catholic Church, it is important to stress a freedom of will in humanity because it gives dignity to humanity, a dignity not lost in the fall. One is not human without freedom of will. Humanity is not only created with the ability to give itself to the Other, but also can use its freedom to decide against giving itself to the Other. *CCC*, §368, 1700. Although sins of believers may be purified in purgatory, the act of rejection cannot be forgiven after death. *CCC*, §393. This relates to the catechism's view on predestination. According to the catechism God included in His plan of predestination, "each person's free response to his grace." On the other hand, the catechism's understanding of human free will enables it to confess that God does not predestinate anyone to hell. Condemnation rests on man's rejection of God by his own free will. The catechism struggles to find that happy median between the sovereignty of God and human free will when it comes to salvation. *CCC*, §600,1037. Finally, this dignity of free will is connected to a believer's prayer life as the catechism states, "Our Father knows what we need before we ask him, but he awaits our petition because the dignity of his children lies in their freedom." *CCC*, §2736.

<sup>33</sup> *CCC*, §143. The Catechism states, "Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him." Although

found in every human heart to accomplish this.<sup>34</sup> Through the revelation of Christ, the Spirit of grace reveals God's love and holiness to humanity. It enables humans to be partakers of the divine nature.<sup>35</sup>

Through the resurrection of Christ, the Spirit of grace reveals what experiences the believer will have in the glorified body and in communion with the Holy Trinity. The glorified body of Christ was not subject to time and space. It was able to be present where, when and whatever form He willed it. His body was filled with the Holy Spirit. As the glorified body of Christ is, so shall the believers' bodies be (1 John 3:2).<sup>36</sup>

The Holy Spirit's proper mission in history lies in assisting the pilgrim to cross the cruciform bridge to the beatific vision. Two historical instances of this mission are found in Scriptures. First, with John the Baptist, his preaching of repentance, and his offering a baptism for the forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit began the believer's journey toward the restoration of divine likeness.<sup>37</sup> Second, with Mary, the Holy Spirit begins the believer's journey toward communion with the incarnate Christ.<sup>38</sup> The Incarnation of God dwelling in the flesh, enables the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers, intensifying their communion with Christ.<sup>39</sup> Once the Spirit dwells in the believer, he conforms the pilgrim to the image of Christ and grants to the

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it is a gift it is also qualified as a human act. "In faith, the human intellect and will cooperates with divine grace." Again, to be human means to have freedom of the will. CCC, §153–58.

<sup>34</sup> CCC, §1991,1996, 1999. The preparation of a human to receive grace is considered a work of created grace.

<sup>35</sup> CCC, §460.

<sup>36</sup> CCC, §645–46. A glorified body like this will enable to believer to experience a perichoresis existence in the Holy Trinity, a communion where space is not needed for bodies to inhabit.

<sup>37</sup> CCC, §720.

<sup>38</sup> CCC, §722. This is the enabling of the human body, and not just the human soul, to enter this communion with Christ, since through Mary, Christ has a body.

<sup>39</sup> CCC, §788.

believer a participation in the relation the Son has with the Father.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the Spirit's and Christ's dwelling puts the pilgrim into a living relationship with Christ and causes him to anticipate the fullness of communion with the Trinity.

### **The Spirit and the Sacraments**

The Spirit and the Word are distinct yet inseparable in the acts of creation and redemption.<sup>41</sup> Their joint mission is to bring the believer into communion with the Father.<sup>42</sup> They use the sacraments to accomplish this. The Spirit, through the Sacraments of Initiation and Healings, heals the wounds of sin through a spiritual transformation.<sup>43</sup>

The Law of God (the Word) serves a role in this as it fosters a desire for the Spirit by causing a growing awareness of sin.<sup>44</sup> This knowledge fosters a trusting humility which aids in bringing the pilgrim back into communion with the Trinity and with the Church.<sup>45</sup> Through Divine and Natural Law the believer is called to submit to God.<sup>46</sup> God's Old Divine Law is the first step on the bridge back to God.<sup>47</sup> Through the New Divine Law the Spirit helps the pilgrim

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<sup>40</sup> CCC, §1098, 1101, 1107–8, 1127, 2780.

<sup>41</sup> CCC, §689.

<sup>42</sup> CCC, §737–38. Upon His glorification, Jesus sends His Spirit to those who believe on Him.

<sup>43</sup> CCC, §1695.

<sup>44</sup> CCC, §708.

<sup>45</sup> CCC, §2631.

<sup>46</sup> CCC, §1954–60, 2037. The natural law teaches the “dignity of the person and determines the basis for his fundamental rights and desires, [it] binds men among themselves and imposes on them . . . common principles [it] provides the solid foundation on which man can build the structure of moral rules to guide his choices.” However, man cannot know moral and religious truths through natural law alone.

<sup>47</sup> CCC, §1963. The catechism states a distinction between the Divine Old Testament and New Testament “Law of the Gospel.” The Old Law prescribed charity but did not give the Holy Spirit. In the New, the Spirit is given and becomes the source of an interior law of charity. The Gospel brings the Law to its fullness. It is a law of love because it makes one act out of the love infused by the Spirit, a law of grace because it confers the strength of grace to act, and law of freedom because it sets us free from ceremonial laws. CCC, §1961–74.

make the steps across the bridge.<sup>48</sup> Through both Divine Old and New Law the pilgrim's conscience is informed by the Spirit, and his moral judgment is enlightened.<sup>49</sup> All this helps him to stay on the path of the obedience of faith.

### **Pneumatology, Justification and Sanctification**

According to the catechism, the divine work of justification and sanctification, which assists the pilgrim along this path back to God, “properly” belongs to the Spirit and not the Son.<sup>50</sup> Sanctifying grace is a present participle communicating an action that is continuous. The catechism is consistent when equating justification and sanctification if the former is understood as “making righteous.”<sup>51</sup>

Speaking specifically to justification, the catechism states, “justification consists in both a victory over the death caused by sin and a new participation in grace. It brings about filial adoption so that men become Christ's brethren . . . We are brethren not by nature, but by the gift of grace.”<sup>52</sup> The Spirit of grace gives a participation in the life of God. When this grace is called the “grace of Christ,” or the “Spirit of Christ,” it becomes the sanctifying, deifying, or

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<sup>48</sup> CCC, §1724.

<sup>49</sup> CCC, §1785.

<sup>50</sup> CCC, §2003.

<sup>51</sup> “The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of justification.” CCC, §1266. The catechism describes this grace as that which leads one to faith, gives power to lead a holy life, and allows them to grow in goodness and in the end deified. Sanctification in most churches is a growth period. Justification is an end. In the Roman church, full justification is equated with deification. Thus, the way it is written, it communicates that justification is a process which only ends in total ontological transformation into deification. Adding to this, the catechism confesses, “The faithful Christian who has ‘kept the seal’ until the end, will be able to depart this life ‘marked with the sign of faith,’ with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God—the consummation of faith—and in the hope of the resurrection.” The seal it refers to is the seal of the Spirit given in Baptism. This seal is a “juridical” act marking ownership, but it refuses to call it a moment of full justification. CCC, §1273, 1295. Finally, when the catechism talks about the beatific vision, it mentions that holy people struggle with their sinful flesh to attain it and calls these struggles a “way of perfection [where] the Spirit and the Bride call whoever hears them to communion with God. CCC, §2550.

<sup>52</sup> CCC, §654.

“justifying” grace.<sup>53</sup>

The catechism teaches that justification detaches believer from sin and causes the acceptance of God’s righteousness through faith in Christ. It entails the “sanctification” of the pilgrim’s whole being.<sup>54</sup> The—process—of justification brings about faith, hope, love, and the obedience of faith. The Spirit gives these at baptism and conforms the believer to the righteousness of God. The Spirit establishes cooperation between God’s will and human freedom.<sup>55</sup> Justification gives, “not only remission of sins but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man.”<sup>56</sup> In the catechism’s understanding of justification, the Spirit gives the believer only “the hope of one day being with [Christ] forever.”<sup>57</sup>

The source of sanctification comes from the above. Humanity must experience a death to self, but not to God’s image within it (understood to be human free will) to receive the birth from above. It is a gift of grace. Only when Christ is fully formed in us, will the believer experience her full justification, the full mystery of Christmas, where God dwells within man at the highest level possible for a finite being, mirrored in the Incarnation.<sup>58</sup> Until deification takes place, the

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<sup>53</sup> CCC, §1999. Sanctifying grace is a habitual gift meaning that it perfects the soul to enable it to live with God. Habitual grace is the permanent disposition to live and act in keeping with God’s call. It is the grace which enables one to habitually pray in Christ’s name. Actual grace are those unilateral acts of God which can happen at conversion or over the course of sanctification. CCC, §2725.

<sup>54</sup> CCC, §526, 591,1995.

<sup>55</sup> The catechism states, “God’s free initiative demands man’s free response, for God has created man in his image by conferring on him, along with freedom, the power to know and love him . . . God immediately touches and directly moves the heart of man [to long for His truth and goodness].” CCC, §2001.

<sup>56</sup> CCC, §1989.

<sup>57</sup> CCC, §666. The Council of Trent decreed, “If anyone says with absolute and infallible certainty that he will certainly have that great gift of perseverance until the end, unless he teaches this on the basis of special revelation, let him be anathema.” In the Lutheran faith, the pilgrim lives in certainty of deification when justified by faith.

<sup>58</sup> For the catechism, glorification and deification are the same. However, justification does not give the believer peace that this will take place at one’s death. Due to justification understood as a process, the pilgrim does not know the end of his road until he gets there. The catechism confesses that if glorification does take place, it is because the Incarnation of Christ unites Him with the believer which enables the glorified bodies of believers to

catechism states that believers must walk across the cruciform bridge imitating Christ until the final formation happens—a formation which brings about an ontological change at the end of the bridge called deification.<sup>59</sup>

### **Pneumatology and Ecclesiology**

The Holy Spirit has been given to the church and lives within it. The Holy Spirit calls humanity to the bridge that saves. The Spirit began this calling of God’s people to the bridge of salvation, the moment humanity’s relationship with God was broken or wounded by sin. It primarily does this calling through the church, the community of saints.<sup>60</sup> It is through the church that the joint mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion.<sup>61</sup> According to the Second Vatican Council, the human nature of Christ and his humanly constituted body, the church, are respectively the Son’s and the Holy Spirit’s created instruments of salvation in the world.<sup>62</sup> The church’s “first purpose is to be the sacrament of the inner union of men with God” and it “contains and communicates the invisible grace,” to men to accomplish this.”<sup>63</sup> In the church, the Holy Spirit directs humanity toward submission to and union with God. Only through the church can individuals and communities come to faith. The pilgrim cannot baptize himself or

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enter communion with the Holy Trinity. The catechism hints that this formation takes place at the end of the “road” as it confesses about the church that, “the Church gathers sinners already caught up in Christ’s salvation but still on the way to holiness.” CCC, §618, 827.

<sup>59</sup> CCC, §793. For Lutherans, deification is understood as the full restoration of the image of God. It takes place only in heaven. Justification gives a partial restoration of God’s image in man. Sanctification helps make that image become fuller. In heaven, it is fully restored. Thus, in heaven, man is deified in that God’s image is now fully restored in him. “An Explanation of the Small Catechism,” *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1991), 115.

<sup>60</sup> CCC, §1878, 2030.

<sup>61</sup> CCC, §737.

<sup>62</sup> See Leopoldo Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology* (New York: T&T Clark, 2021), 21.

<sup>63</sup> CCC, §774–75.

proclaim the Gospel to himself.<sup>64</sup> In the church, the Holy Spirit gives the pilgrim a foretaste of the divine fellowship in heaven.<sup>65</sup> In the church, the Holy Spirit creates a sacred space which serves as the “ladder of ascent to God,” a rightful means back to unity with God.<sup>66</sup> The catechism states, “The visible church is a symbol of the Father’s house toward which the People of God is journeying.”<sup>67</sup> In the church, the Holy Spirit builds the body of Christ that can help the pilgrim on his journey back to God. Along the bridge, a helpful supportive pilgrim is Mary. She is understood to have the ability to deliver souls from death through her intercession. By contemplating on Mary, the pilgrim can better understand the mystery of the church and what the church will be like at the end of the bridge.<sup>68</sup> This is done by the church meditating on what Mary is experiencing in the beatific vision and how she awaits the church to join her there.<sup>69</sup> The doctrine of her Assumption offers further opportunities to meditate on the pilgrim’s participation in Christ’s resurrection and her experience in the beatific vision.<sup>70</sup>

The Holy Spirit, through calling and anointing, has gifted the church with guides (i.e., bishops, priests, deacons, etc.) sacraments, doctrines, and teaching that help to assist the pilgrim across the cruciform bridge to the beatific vision.<sup>71</sup> Through the sacramental liturgy the life of the

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<sup>64</sup> CCC, §875.

<sup>65</sup> CCC, §789.

<sup>66</sup> CCC, §797.

<sup>67</sup> CCC, §1186, 1198. In the sacraments of the Church spiritual progress brings about intimate union with Christ and through Christ, participation in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. CCC, §2014.

<sup>68</sup> CCC, §972. In another section the catechism confesses, “The [Church] proposes [the saints] to the faithful as examples who draw all men to the Father through Christ, and through their merits begs for God’s favors.” CCC, §1173.

<sup>69</sup> CCC, §972.

<sup>70</sup> CCC, §966.

<sup>71</sup> CCC, §737. According to the catechism it is the church where the family of God is formed and takes shape during history in alignment with the Father’s plan. “God created the world for the sake of communion with Him and with a “convocation” of men in Christ, which is the church. The church is the goal of all things.” Believers who live the life of the church are sanctified, “if they move away from the church they fall into sins and disorders that prevent

faithful are conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God, the Father, as they journey over the bridge.<sup>72</sup>

The Holy Spirit has gifted the church with a dogma which tells people that a successful journey across the bridge means a total to surrender to God. Through dogma the Spirit works the “obedience of faith,” while maintaining the dignity of human free will.<sup>73</sup> This journey can be taken quickly or slowly but will always contain the essential elements of the proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel, and profession of faith.

Through the church, the Holy Spirit gifts the believer with the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love that dispose the pilgrim to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity. These virtues are perfected by the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, gifts which belong in fullness to Christ but are participated in by the pilgrim.<sup>74</sup>

The Holy Spirit also works through the Sacraments of Initiation. They are Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. They are part of this journey and lay the foundation of the Christian life. They give the graces needed for life as the pilgrim journeys to the homeland. All the Sacraments have as their goal the leading of the believer into the life of the Kingdom.<sup>75</sup>

All sacraments dispense the fruits of Christ’s Paschal mystery, unite the faithful residing in the church militant and triumphant, bind them to Christ, and transform believers. However, the

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the radiation of her sanctity.” CCC, §760, 826. Furthermore, the catechism states that God’s people are called to live in His truth and act as witnesses to the Gospel. CCC, §2465, 2472.

<sup>72</sup> CCC, §2558. The liturgy combined with the Eucharist are understood to be necessary things for the pilgrim’s journey. CCC, §2837.

<sup>73</sup> CCC, §143, 150, 426. The catechism teaches that tradition, Scripture, and the Magisterium are connected that they, like the Spirit and Son, cannot stand without the others. Working in unity, under the action of the Spirit, they effectively contribute, “to the salvation of souls.” CCC, §95. The obedience of faith also brings about contemplative prayer. CCC, §2716.

<sup>74</sup> CCC, §1812–13. The seven gifts are wisdom, counsel, understanding, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord. CCC, §1831.

<sup>75</sup> CCC, §1211, 1533, 1680.



Eucharist works these graces the best or most fully in the life of the Christian. It completes the Christian initiation.<sup>76</sup> It makes the past a present reality which helps the pilgrim conform his life to the redemptive acts of Christ in history.<sup>77</sup> For those who were not completely purified at their death, the Eucharist can reach beyond the grave and bring about purification for them so they may enter the fellowship of the Triune God.<sup>78</sup> Through this Sacrament, the Spirit augments our union with Christ, preserves, increases and renews the life of grace received at baptism. The gifts of the Eucharist are the manna for our pilgrimage.<sup>79</sup>

The Sacrament of Baptism is the first rite of initiation and the chief sacrament of the forgiveness of sins. Through it, the Spirit unites the baptized with Christ in His death and resurrection. It bestows faith.<sup>80</sup> It puts the pilgrim on the bridge. Baptism is the gateway to life in the Spirit, the cause of a rebirth which enables the believer to enter the kingdom of God. It is the door to the other sacraments. Through it, the Holy Spirit begins the gathering of God's people, brings about death to sin, new birth in the Spirit, adoption into His family, a sharing of Christ's divine nature, and entry into the life of the Trinity. The baptized lives no longer for oneself but for Christ.<sup>81</sup>

The baptismal gift of faith gives believers a foretaste of the beatific vision and is the beginning of eternal life.<sup>82</sup> In it, God adopts the pilgrim as His child. However, the pilgrim's

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<sup>76</sup> CCC, §1074, 1211, 1322.

<sup>77</sup> CCC, §1363.

<sup>78</sup> CCC, §1371.

<sup>79</sup> CCC, §389–90.

<sup>80</sup> CCC, §168. Faith is understood to be an ecclesial act as the Church's faith precedes and nourishes the individual faith. CCC, §179–81.

<sup>81</sup> CCC, §1265. Note that baptism brings death to sin, but not death to the image of God in man. Moreover, the catechism states that, "God has bound salvation to the Sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments." Thus, children who die without baptism are entrusted to the mercy of God. CCC, §1257.

<sup>82</sup> CCC, §163.

sonship is not on the same ontological level as that of the bridge builder, the Son of God.<sup>83</sup> His sonship is one by nature. The pilgrim is one by the gift of adoption. Both involve the will of God. It is by God's will that Jesus was conceived. It is by God's will that believers are adopted.<sup>84</sup> However, the faith given at Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith. It needs further development during the journey back to God.

Further development takes place through a second rite of initiation called the Sacrament of Confirmation. There one experiences a further outpouring of the Spirit to help with the journey home. It brings about an increase and deepening of baptismal grace.<sup>85</sup> It teaches that Christian initiation remains incomplete without it and the Eucharist. Confirmation is so important to Christian initiation that if a non-confirmed baptized believer is at the point of death any priest should perform the rite.<sup>86</sup>

Besides the Sacraments of Initiation, the Spirit also works through the Sacraments of Healing. They consist of the Sacrament of Penance and of Anointing.<sup>87</sup> They are needed because as the pilgrim journeys across the bridge he is plagued by sin, sickness, and death. The Sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to recover the grace of justification when sin takes him off the right path and joins the repentant believer once again to God's intimate friendship.<sup>88</sup> It does not declare them at the end of the bridge but simply puts the pilgrim back on it.<sup>89</sup> It helps

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<sup>83</sup> CCC, §270,537. Christ is the Son of God by nature, not by adoption like us.

<sup>84</sup> CCC, §505.

<sup>85</sup> CCC, §1258, 1303.

<sup>86</sup> CCC, §1306, 1314.

<sup>87</sup> CCC, §1420, 1426.

<sup>88</sup> CCC, §1446, 1468. Again, justification is more a process toward a fuller ontological change, rather than as an imputation of righteousness unto salvation.

<sup>89</sup> CCC, §1470

the believer to be “configured” unto Christ.<sup>90</sup>

Penance strengthens one’s relationship with the community of saints, fellow travelers crossing the bridge. In this sacrament, the pilgrim can be made stronger by the exchange of spiritual goods among the members of the church both militant and triumphant.<sup>91</sup>

The Sacrament of Anointing is a ritual for the sick and dying. Through this sacrament the Holy Spirit gives the sick individual the fruits of strength, peace, and courage. The dying person, besides receiving this anointing, is also given the Eucharist. When it is given in this rite, the Eucharist is called the viaticum which is Latin meaning, “provision for journey.” The catechism stresses that this should be the last Sacrament of the pilgrim’s earthly journey. The Anointing of the Sick completes the believer’s conformity to the death and resurrection of Christ, just as Baptism started it.<sup>92</sup> At the death of the pilgrim, the definitive “conformity” to the “image of the Son” is fulfilled which is necessary to be clothed with the nuptial garment.<sup>93</sup> The catechism clearly states that “completed” justification takes place then and brings about a full ontological change within the justified. The Church which has given the believer birth in Baptism, accompanies the pilgrim at his journey’s end for the purpose of surrendering him into the Father’s hands—a surrendering which takes place through the Eucharist.<sup>94</sup>

### **Pneumatology and the Means of Prayer**

Prayer is another means the Spirit uses to assist the pilgrim across the bridge. As an

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<sup>90</sup> CCC, §1460. It also strengthens them in chastity. The catechism states that it is through chastity that we are gathered and unified once again from the fragmentation that took place because of sin. At baptism, the believer, “is pledged to lead his affective life in chastity.” CCC, §2348.

<sup>91</sup> CCC, §1469, 1476.

<sup>92</sup> CCC, §1517, 1523–24.

<sup>93</sup> CCC, §1682.

<sup>94</sup> CCC, §1683.

adopted child of God, the believer is transformed which gives her the ability to follow the example of Christ and share in His prayer life.<sup>95</sup> Prayer is always the prayer of the Church. It brings about communion with the Trinity. It is the life of a new heart. To pray to the Father is to enter His mystery as the Son has revealed Him.<sup>96</sup> The catechism states, “A consecrated life cannot be sustained without prayer.”<sup>97</sup> The Holy Spirit works through both prayer and the Beatitudes to bring about a new form to the believer’s desires. It creates the desire to become like the Father. It humbles and builds trust in the Father. Prayer springs forth both from the Holy Spirit and man. It is directed to the Father, in union with the human will of the Son of God. It enables a foretaste of the kingdom where the whole human spirit will be in union with the entire holy Trinity.<sup>98</sup>

However, because of sin, in this communication, God’s initiative of love comes first. The pilgrim responds to this initiative with prayer. Every time the pilgrim prays to Jesus, it is the Holy Spirit who draws the pilgrim to prayer by this initiative of God called prevenient grace.<sup>99</sup> Jesus is recognized as the mediator and way of prayer, but His mother Mary is the “Sign” of the way, showing us how to pray to the Son and how to live a life for God.<sup>100</sup>

The relationship one has with God through prayer reflects a “covenant drama.”<sup>101</sup> This is a drama which unfolds the whole history of salvation as a reciprocal call between God and

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<sup>95</sup> CCC, §2717. By adoption, the believer is strengthened to imitate much of Christ’s life, but to imitate His forgiveness, a vital participation in the heart and love of God, is possible only by the Spirit. CCC, §2842.

<sup>96</sup> CCC, §2655, 2672, 2779–85.

<sup>97</sup> CCC, §2687.

<sup>98</sup> CCC, §2564, 2825.

<sup>99</sup> CCC, §2670.

<sup>100</sup> CCC, §2674–79.

<sup>101</sup> CCC, §2567.

humanity. This drama involves a test of faith in the faithfulness of God as it did for Abraham.<sup>102</sup> Prayer brings about humility. By it the pilgrim's heart is made aware of its wretchedness and the Savior's mercy. According to the catechism, "Christian prayer loves to follow the way of the cross."<sup>103</sup>

The pilgrim's prayer life is constantly assaulted by sin and the devil which tempt us to see no value in prayer. To overcome this, the pilgrim is called to gain humility, trust, and perseverance through prayer.<sup>104</sup> In the end, prayer and the Christian life are inseparable, for both include the same love and renunciation, the same filial and loving conformity with the will of the Father, the same transforming union in the Spirit who conforms the believer more and more to Christ. The rightness of the pilgrim's life depends on the rightness of his prayer.<sup>105</sup>

### **Pneumatology and Eschatology**

The journey through the created spaces, which the Holy Spirit leads the pilgrim through, ends with a bodily resurrection and judgment. On the day of judgment, the truth of each person's relationship with God will be revealed, whether it involves sincere acceptance, defiant rejection, or hypocrisy.<sup>106</sup> Knowledge of the "end time", the end of the bridge, gives opportunity for the Holy Spirit to reveal Himself as a distinct person in the Trinity.<sup>107</sup> In the "end times" the proper mission of the Spirit, to unite the pilgrim to Christ and make him live in Him, and to lead him to

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<sup>102</sup> CCC, §2572.

<sup>103</sup> CCC, §2669.

<sup>104</sup> CCC, §2728. In the Lord's Prayer, the pilgrim asks that God would not allow him to, "take the way that leads to sin." CCC, §2846.

<sup>105</sup> CCC, §2764.

<sup>106</sup> CCC, §1039.

<sup>107</sup> CCC, §686.

the beatific vision, is revealed.<sup>108</sup>

Death before the end of times does not stop the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit works through death to help the pilgrim realize that he has only a limited time in which to bring his life to fulfillment. By the power of the Spirit, the pilgrim can transform his death into an act of obedience and love toward the Father, following the example of Christ.

Those who die in God's grace and friendship are purified, glorified, deified, and live with Christ and the saints in the mystery of the communion of the Trinity. Those who are not completely purified must journey through the created space of purgatory for cleansing. Those may be assisted in their purification journey by the faithful living in the church militant through their prayers and masses for the dead.<sup>109</sup>

The catechism states at the end of time the believer will experience, "true and subsistent life, where the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, pours out His heavenly gifts without exception".<sup>110</sup>

The catechism states that God's call to enter the beatific vision, which involves the contemplation of God in His glory and the unity of humanity, is offered to all nations and faiths.<sup>111</sup> In the beatific vision, the believer will experience God's innermost secret which is that His being is one of an eternal exchange of love among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that He

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<sup>108</sup> CCC, §690. It further states that the Spirit "transforms" what it touches. CCC, §696.

<sup>109</sup> CCC, §1032.

<sup>110</sup> CCC, §1050.

<sup>111</sup> CCC, §64. The call goes out to the Jews, Muslims, and members of other non-Christian religions. The truth found in these religions are a "sanctifying grace" which prepares their hearts for the Gospel. Salvation is found in truth, and those who obey the Spirit of Truth are already on their way to salvation. The Catholic Church maintains that there is no salvation outside the church, which has the fullness of salvation. However, in the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church states, "Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation." CCC, §839–48.

has called us to share in this love. The Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life.

The catechism states that although the believer experiences the beatific vision and the innermost secret of God at the end, the total mystery of God will not be revealed. There still will remain a hiddenness of God, which involves His ineffable name. The name of God is one with His being. The mystery of the total being of His triune nature will always be inaccessible to human reason.<sup>112</sup> In heaven, the Holy Spirit leads the believer into intimate unity with the divine essence, but not an absorption into it.

### **Conclusion**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church will serve as a helpful tool when we look through postconciliar thoughts about the human person's journey back home, and the Spirit's and humanity's role in making this journey happen. We will see that, although postconciliar talk at a scholastic level about this journey, they remain true to the catechism. The catechism's teachings about the roles of humanity and the Spirit in returning humanity back to God and the means used by the Spirit in bringing it about are found in the teachings of the postconciliar, without much, if any deviation.

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<sup>112</sup> CCC, §206, 230–34, 237, 251. Not only God's essence but also His works will remain a mystery beyond words. The catechism acknowledges that from the beginning unto the end, the joint mission of the Trinitarian persons will always remain hidden. CCC, §702.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE SPIRIT SOTERIOLOGY OF KARL RAHNER

A few introductory comments and explanations of concepts are needed before we begin Rahner's version of the pilgrim's journey back to God. Karl Rahner was one of the most prominent postconciliar theologians. In 1962 he was appointed as an expert advisor to the Second Vatican Council.<sup>1</sup> During the council, Rahner worked on documents concerning the relationship between Scripture and Tradition, the relationship of the church to the modern world, and the possibility of salvation outside the church, an issue which played a major part in his pneumatology.

In his desire to make the doctrine of the Trinity more relevant to the believer, he proposed a spirit anthropology and pneumatology which describes how humans are brought back into the space of eternal communion with God the Father by the distinct relations and actions the Son and the Spirit have with humans. Rahner's neo-scholastic philosophy focuses on how grace speaks to the dynamics of divine self-communication to human nature—both Christ's and the saints'.

#### Challenges of Scholastic Thought

Rahner argued that the Augustinian scholastic's emphasis on the unified action of God captured in the phrase *opera trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt* led to a merely monotheistic view of God and tended to make the doctrine of the Trinity irrelevant to the believer.<sup>2</sup> Rahner wished to

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<sup>1</sup> There were two major theological parties at this council. One was known as the *ressourcement*, the other Neo-Thomists. The *ressourcement* group based their decisions on Scriptures and the Church Fathers. Among them were Yves Congar, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and John Ratzinger. Neo-Thomists considered world philosophies as a valid resource for council decisions. Among them were Karl Rahner, Walter Kasper, and David Coffey. George Weigel, *To Sanctify the World: The Vital Legacy of Vatican II* (New York: Basic Books), 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Catherine LaCugna argued that the method and theology of Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* marginalized the doctrine of the Trinity to the realm of abstraction. She noted, "Karl Rahner bluntly criticized Thomas and scholasticism in general for developing a doctrine of the Trinity that is focused on intradivine life, to the virtual



reverse this movement by revealing how all three person of the Trinity have a distinct role in placing the pilgrim on the cruciform bridge back to God and assisting his crossing of it.<sup>3</sup> There are signs his efforts have been effective.<sup>4</sup>

The emphasis on the unity of God over the persons of God began with Augustine. He lived in a time when Arian subordination of the Son to the Father was a threat in the West. In articulating the equality of the divine persons, he arguably emphasized the unity of God's essence and works to the detriment of the distinction of the persons and their proper works.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, for Rahner, Thomas Aquinas's (hereafter Thomas) discrete separation of the treatises on the One God (*De Deo Uno*) and the Triune God (*De Deo Trino*) further relegated the treatment of the Trinity proper to the intradivine life causing a logical separation between the mystery of God and the mystery of salvation.

Added to this was the scholastic doctrine of created grace as the effect of God's unified action in the world where all three work in unity to bring about creation, redemption, justification and sanctification. This emphasis on created grace further blurred personal

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exclusion of the activity of the persons in the economy of salvation." Catherine LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity & Christian Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 145. She then quotes Rahner's judgment of the *Summa Theologiae*'s separation of the treatises *On the One God* and *On the Triune God*: "Thus the treatise of the Trinity locks itself in even more splendid isolation, with the ensuing danger that the religious mind finds it devoid of interest." LaCugna, *God for Us*, 145.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations: God, Christ, Mary and Grace*, vol. 1, trans. Cornelius Ernst (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), 341.

<sup>4</sup> N.T. Wright writes, "You could sum all this up by saying that the doctrine of the Trinity, which is making quite a comeback in current theology, is essential if we are to tell the truth not only about God, and more particularly about Jesus, but also about ourselves." N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (New York: Harper One, 2008), 113–14. In other words, if the doctrine of the Trinity can reveal truths about us, it will, by default, become more relevant to the believer. Augustine tried to achieve this through his use of a psychological analogy using the human concepts of will, remembering, and understanding to explain the intradivine workings of the one Trinity.

<sup>5</sup> LaCugna also thought this move worked against the distinction of persons in the Trinity. She said, "Augustine has radically relocated the locus of God's economy and . . . has altered the theoretical basis for that economy. In the end (the focus on *ousia* versus *hypostasis*) solidified within Christian theology of God the disjunction between *theologia*, understood as the realm of intratrinitarian relations and person, and *oikonomia*, understand as the events of saving history." LaCugna, *God for Us*, 104.

Trinitarian distinctions in the economy. Created grace was seen as efficient causality.<sup>6</sup> Efficient causality refers to something produced or created (distinct from the uncreated divine essence) by all three persons working in unity. Rahner argued that when the relationship between God and humanity rests on created grace by efficient causality only, the works of the Trinity can only be “appropriated” to each person of the Trinity but not understood as properly distinct to each person.<sup>7</sup>

These theological emphases caused the distinction of persons within the Trinity to be emphasized at the expense of their proper works in the economy. In the church’s desire to protect the unity of the divine essence and its work, the laity became more monotheistic than Trinitarian, and their knowledge of the practical implications for each person of the Trinity’s work in their life was weakened. Thus, Rahner concludes that the focus on the Augustinian teaching of “one essence and the unified yet undifferentiated works of God” made Christians mere monotheists in their practical lives.<sup>8</sup>

### **Created, Uncreated Grace, and Quasi-Formality**

In describing God’s self-communication to humanity and the nature of humanity, Rahner

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<sup>6</sup> In neo-scholastic thought, created grace is a grace found in nature. It is distinct from uncreated grace which is only in the divine persons of the Trinity. Rahner proposes a supernatural grace in human nature which he calls quasi-formality, a grace which has the capability to find out truths about the Absolute. This approach would be rejected by Karl Barth, who taught that man has no capability of knowing God by nature alone. Karl Barth, “No!” in *The Living God: Readings in Christian Theology*, ed. Millard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 131–37.

<sup>7</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 1:343. The Incarnation tells us something not about God in general but specifically about the person of the Logos. It is an event that is not transferable to the Father or the Holy Spirit. Rahner says, “Hence there is at least *one* “mission” one presence in the world, *one* reality of salvation history which is not merely appropriated to some divine person, but which is proper to him . . . Here something occurs ‘outside’ the intra-divine life in the world itself, something which is not a mere effect of the efficient causality of the one triune God acting as one in the world, but something which belongs to the Logos alone, which is the history of one divine person, in contrast to the other divine persons.” Karl Rahner, *The Trinity: With and Introduction, Index, and Glossary* by Catherine LaCugna (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 23.

<sup>8</sup> Rahner, *Trinity*, 10.

combined Aristotelian categories of causality with the concept that man is made up of uncreated and created grace.<sup>9</sup> That which is uncreated grace in man is what Rahner calls the quasi-formal cause. That which is created grace is the human soul and free will. For Rahner, created grace is a product of efficient causality.

Through quasi formal causality, God shares something of Himself in humanity. Having something like himself in humanity, enables God to effectively communicate Himself to humanity.<sup>10</sup> Rahner writes about this close affinity, “The cipher of God himself is man, that is, the Son of Man, and the men who exist ultimately because there was to be a Son of Man . . . when God wants to be what is not God, man comes to be.”<sup>11</sup> In the creation of humanity, the divine “form” empties itself. It does this without creating something too different from itself.<sup>12</sup> Created humanity is a vessel in which God can empty himself.<sup>13</sup>

Rahner also describes this quasi-formal cause as an emanation of the formal cause of God. The formal cause is more perfect than what it emanates. Thus, the emanation in man (the quasi-

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<sup>9</sup> In an introduction to Rahner’s *Trinity*, LaCugna offers a helpful discussion of efficient, formal, and quasi-formal causality, explaining how these terms function in Rahner’s revision of a neo-scholastic account of the graced relationship between God and humanity. See Rahner, *Trinity*, xii-xiii.

<sup>10</sup> Rahner believes humanity is not only capable but desirous for this divine communication. He shows Kantian influence with this thought. Kant said in his *Dialectic of Pure and Practical Reason*, “Two things fill the mind with ever and increasing admiration and awe . . . the starry heavens above and the moral law within.” Cited in Mary Gregory and Andrews Reith, *Kant: Critique of Practical Reason*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 129. “God in his absolute being is related to the created existent in the mode of formal causality, that is, that he does not originally cause and produce something different from himself in the creature, but rather that he communicates his own divine reality and makes it a constitutive element in the fulfillment of the creature.” Karl Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Ideas of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1979), 121.

<sup>11</sup> Rahner, “What Does It Mean to Say: ‘God Became Man?’” in *The Modern Theologians Reader*, [hereafter *MTR*], ed. David F. Ford and Mike Highton (Malde, MA: Blackwell, 2012), 62. Furthermore he writes about the emptying of God, “This man (Logos Incarnate) is precisely as man the self-expression of God in his self-emptying, because God expresses precisely himself if he empties himself, if he discloses himself as love . . . The man Jesus must be the self-revelation of God through who he is and not only through his words, and this he really cannot be if precisely this humanity were not the expression of God.” Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 224.

<sup>12</sup> Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations: More Recent Writings*, vol. 4, trans. Kevin Smyth (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966), 231–32.

<sup>13</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 224.

formal cause) innately has the characteristics of its origin, although in diminished or deficient form.<sup>14</sup> Rahner refrains from calling this emanation a created grace or uncreated grace. He best describes it one step above created grace and one step below uncreated grace by calling it supernatural grace, a quasi-form of uncreated grace. In this supernatural grace of quasi-formal cause there exists a *Vorgriff* (pre-apprehension).<sup>15</sup> The quasi-formal cause is designed to receive God. The element of the *Vorgriff* found in the quasi-formal cause seeks the divine.<sup>16</sup> By the *Vorgriff*, the pilgrim also chooses to be obedient to the Absolute to which the *Vorgriff* directs it.<sup>17</sup>

However, to maintain creature—Creator distinction, Rahner prefaces the word formal with “quasi.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, this quasi-formal cause will never be transformed or glorified into the formal cause of divinity. Even when pilgrims enter the eternal communion of God the distinction between Creator and creature will remain for eternity.

Rahner holds that this quasi-formal cause, through its *Vorgriff*, has the capability to seek transcendence, to connect with the One in whose image man was made. Because of this, Rahner

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<sup>14</sup> Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, trans. William V. Dych (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 257.

<sup>15</sup> David Coffey expounds on Rahner’s thought. He agrees that quasi-formal causality is essentially assimilative, while the *Vorgriff*, the outing aspect, he considered a product of efficient causality. This would make sense because God cannot seek God. David Coffey, “Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit,” *Theological Studies* 47 (1986): 244–46. However, he was willing to consider the *Vorgriff* a deficient mode of quasi-formality David Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed? Some Basic Questions for Pneumatology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2005), 29–30.

<sup>16</sup> Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, 142–45.

<sup>17</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 306. Within the streams of neo-Thomism, scholars consider Karl Rahner an example of “transcendental Thomism.” Citing Vincelette, Rowland explains the term as follows: “The central conclusion of Transcendental Thomism is that the dynamism of a knowing subject toward Infinite and Absolute Being (i.e., God) is . . . an “a priori” condition of knowledge . . . The world is intelligent then to Transcendental Thomists because we either seek or actually ascend to God (perfectly intelligent being) in every act of knowing.” Tracey Rowland, *Catholic Theology* (New York: T&T Clark, 2017), 61. Rahner’s *Spirit in the World* taught that the human searching for meaning was rooted in the unlimited horizon of God’s own being experienced in the world.

<sup>18</sup> Sánchez explains that Rahner needs to preface the word “formal” (in formal causality) with “quasi” to retain the distinction between the Creator and creature. On the other hand, by using the word formal, Rahner stays away from the phrase “efficient causality” which scholastics see as an indivisible action done by all three persons and results in something different from the Creator. See Leopoldo A. Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God’s Spirit: Jesus’ Life in the Spirit as a Lens for Theology and Life* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015), 93.

has an anthropocentric view when it comes to knowing God. He teaches a form of “ascending” anthropology. “Ascending” anthropology happens when one faces the truth of one’s situation and destiny.<sup>19</sup> The *Vorgriff* presence within humanity causes people to raise the question of meaning. It is a process which starts with man and leads to God.<sup>20</sup> To be human, means to face the metaphysical questions of life and give an answer to them.<sup>21</sup> Rahner writes, “Man encounters himself when he finds himself in the world and when he asks about God; and when he asks about his essence, he always finds himself already in the world and on the way to God.”<sup>22</sup> Rahner’s *Vorgriff* makes it possible for anthropocentricity and theocentricity to be interchangeable when it comes to knowing God. In theocentricity, humanity comes to know God by God initiating the revelation. In anthropocentricity, humanity can come to know God by its searching for answers to the metaphysical questions of life. Thus, for Rahner, theology can happen from below as much as from above.<sup>23</sup>

Rahner proposes that the created grace entities of the human soul and free will, along with this supernatural grace of the quasi-formal cause and its *Vorgriff* can seek and attain fellowship with the Absolute. Rahner believed that a robust pneumatology, which gives distinction to the Spirit and reveals that the Spirit of God, among the three persons in the Trinity, has the greatest

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<sup>19</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:54. Rahner further says, “It forces upon him the dilemma of either throwing himself into the uncharted, unending adventure where he commits himself to the infinite, or—despairing at the thought and so embittered—of taking shelter in the suffocating den of his own finite perspicacity.” Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:58.

<sup>20</sup> For Rahner the question of meaning and the question of God are identical. Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, 21:205.

<sup>21</sup> Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations: Science and Theology*, vol. 21, trans. Hugh M. Riley (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 201.

<sup>22</sup> Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, 406.

<sup>23</sup> Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, xvi.

affinity with the supernatural grace of the quasi-formal cause, was needed.<sup>24</sup> Rahner states that, “there is no objection to saying that in this way only the Spirit dwells in the believer.”<sup>25</sup>

In God’s self-communication, He communicates His own reality to what has not full divine form without ceasing to be an infinite reality and absolute mystery, and without humanity ceasing to be a finite being different from God.<sup>26</sup> Rahner names this divine self-communication a “supernatural and gratuitous” form of grace which God gave to humanity prior to sin.<sup>27</sup> It is through this grace that God communicated Himself to humanity before the Fall, and still does so after the Fall. After the Fall, the purpose of God’s self-communication is to restore the creature’s communion with Him, to bring the pilgrim back to Eden, experience the beatific vision, and to see God face to face and live.

### **The Advantage of Rahner’s Maxim**

Rahner’s maxim, “The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity,” helps to accomplish the goal of making the Trinity relevant to the

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<sup>24</sup> The Spirit has the greatest affinity with the supernatural grace of the quasi-formal cause, because that “cause” is also spirit within man. Spirit talks to spirit. The Logos is the author of life and the image in which humanity was created. But life is given when God gave man the breath of life, the Spirit (Gen. 2:7). The quasi-formal cause within humanity has more in common with the Spirit than with the other two persons of the Trinity.

<sup>25</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 1:343–45; Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:156. This is a point where Rahner ventures off a little from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In the catechism, the image of God is the state of freedom humanity has which reflects the freedom God has. The likeness is the glory of God. In the Fall, humanity loses its divine likeness but retains the image though damaged. However, in the catechism the Spirit has more immediacy with the “likeness of God” than the “image of God.” CCC, §705. Rahner also defines the quasi-formal cause as a spirit. In his book, *Spirit in the World* he explains the title saying, “The present work is entitled *Spirit in the World*. By spirit I mean a power which reaches out beyond the world and knows the metaphysical.” Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, liii.

<sup>26</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 119. Rahner also stated that if humanity is to be able receive this communication of God it must have a “congeniality for it.” Humanity must have, “room, scope, understanding, and desire for it.” Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 1:311. Again, Coffey would say the room is a quasi-formal cause, the *Vorgriff* the efficient cause.

<sup>27</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 124.

pilgrim as he crosses the bridge.<sup>28</sup> The distinct works and personal revelations the economic Trinity have with the pilgrim correspond with who the triune God is in Godself, the immanent Trinity.<sup>29</sup> The pilgrim's personal relationship he has with each person of the economic Trinity during the crossing of the bridge, continues when the pilgrim gets to the end where he experiences the immanent Trinity.<sup>30</sup>

Rahner argues that the immanent Trinity would not really be self-communicating itself to humans as they crossed the bridge, if the economic Trinity was not the immanent.<sup>31</sup> Rahner adds, "Are we only able to say something about what God is for us, and not able to say anything about what is God in himself? But if we have understood what is meant by the absolutely unlimited transcendental of the human spirit, then we can say that the alternative of such a radical distinction between a statement about 'God in himself' and 'God for us' is not even legitimate."<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, Rahner's neo-scholastic thought addresses the question of human communion with the Trinity, of the pilgrim's journey to God, in three ways: (1) By not focusing on the

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<sup>28</sup> Rahner, *Trinity*, 22.

<sup>29</sup> Rahner's maxim, "The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice-versa," argues in support of this. Regin Prenter paraphrases this by saying "This whole doctrine concerning the immanent Trinity simply intends to say that the God who reveals himself in history is absolutely identical with the God who from eternity to eternity is God." Regin Prenter, *Creation and Redemption* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 50.

<sup>30</sup> "The Trinity is not merely a reality to be expressed in purely doctrinal terms: it takes place in us and does not first reach us in the form of statements communicated by revelation . . . We recognize that the Trinity itself as such is really possessed by us in the historic experience of salvation and grace which is given in Jesus and the Spirit of God working in us, we can always envisage the doctrine by having recourse to this experience." Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:98-99.

<sup>31</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 455. Placing the "hiddenness of God" in the Father enables Rahner to say that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice-versa. The Father is not fully revealed in the economic Trinity just as He is not revealed in the immanent. What we know about the Spirit and Christ in the economic Trinity is the way they are in the immanent Trinity. Thus, Luther is right when he consoles the sinner troubled about his eternal destination, by advising him, not to look at the "hiddenness of God" (which Rahner says resides in the Father), but trust in the God revealed through Christ. Martin Luther, "Bondage of the Will," in *Career of the Reformer III*, ed. Helmut Lehmann, vol. 33, *Luther's Works, American Edition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 145-46.

<sup>32</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 54-55.

emphasis Augustine put on the unity of the divine essence, but rather on the Augustinian framework that speaks of Trinitarian relations in terms of knowledge (the uncreated grace of Christ) and love (the uncreated grace of the Spirit); (2) by focusing on a spirit anthropology which describes a quasi-formal cause within humanity that makes reception of the divine self-communication possible, and allows for the existence of a *Vorgriff*, which makes humanity capable of responding to and seeking the transcendent One; (3) by arguing for the Logos' Incarnation as the highest instance<sup>33</sup> in history of divine self-communication to the human creature and the human creature's response in obedience (obedience of faith) to the same; (4) by focusing on the works of the economic Trinity as proper (and not merely appropriated) works, his maxim strengthens economic side of personal distinctions in the immanent Trinity.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Pilgrimage**

We now describe Rahner's view in the language of the pilgrim's journey away from God and back to God. At the beginning of the journey humanity has communion with the Triune God in the Garden of Eden. Rahner believed that before putting humanity in the Garden of Eden, God first created space for it. He did this by emptying or constricting Himself. The space created by His emptying gave room for creation and differentiated Him from it.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Here an agreement is found with the Catholic Catechism which states Jesus is the supreme revelation of God. *CCC*, §65. For Rahner, Jesus is the final goal of history, "In this history. . . there is already present the very thing towards which mankind is moving: the God-humanity of mankind in the one God-Man Jesus Christ." Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 170.

<sup>34</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:110. He further supports Scheeben's view on grace, believing it is gaining ground in theological circles. That view is that grace establishes a relationship humanity has with each of the three divine persons which is not merely appropriation, but something proper to each divine person. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:171.

<sup>35</sup> Rahner, "What Does It Mean to Say?" in *MTR*, 61. Rahner writes, "God creates by emptying himself, and therefore, of course, he himself is emptying." Here Rahner sets the table for the act of redemption in which God emptied Himself (Phil. 2:7). For Rahner, emptying is the essence or nature of God. Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 63.



Although Adam was created in the image of God, Rahner taught that Adam needed transformation. Thus, Rahner believed, that even if Adam had not sinned, Adam still would have “metaphorically” died. Rahner held that the time, given for Adam to practice the obedience of faith with the aid of the Spirit, would have still ended in a “metaphorical” death, even if he had not fallen.<sup>36</sup> If Adam had used his created grace of free will faithfully unto his transition, he would have been “glorified” into something final and definitive, and in this sense would have “died” to his original creation.<sup>37</sup>

Rahner defines death, “as the definitive consummation of the history of freedom.”<sup>38</sup> For Rahner it is in death where humanity is removed from all distractions of the world and thus can focus on and freely accept or deny God’s offer of Himself, and to make confession by the Holy Spirit that Jesus is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3).<sup>39</sup> However, because Adam fell, a change in the mode of death happened. His Fall created an unnatural and fearful mode of dying or “transitioning” to a fuller life God had planned for him.

After the Fall, this quasi-formality of the divine self-communication in humans—in continuity with neo-scholastic thought and staying true to the Catechism of the Catholic Church—was not totally lost or impaired, but only wounded. This wounding does not make humanity incapable of receiving God’s self-communication. Furthermore, this wounding or original sin is not something “imputed” to humanity by the deed of one man and passed on to his

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<sup>36</sup> “Obedience of faith” is a common phrase Rahner uses in his soteriology. He even notes that Apostles can err in their preaching when it does not exact the absolute obedience of faith. Rahner believed St. Paul considered this “the indispensable content of the Gospel.” Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 1:264.

<sup>37</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 115. See also Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:245.

<sup>38</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, 21:47. Rahner writes, “The achieved final validity of human existence which has grown to maturity in freedom comes to be through death, not after it.” Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 437.

<sup>39</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, 4:128.

descendants. Instead, a knowledge of original sin comes from a religious-existential interpretation of one's situation. Rahner states, "Everywhere man receives this grace of God in history and again and again allows it to become depraved through his own fault."<sup>40</sup> Rahner illustrates his thought this way:

When someone buys a banana, he does not reflect upon the fact that its price is tied to many presuppositions. To them belongs, under certain circumstances, the pitiful lot of banana pickers, which in turn is co-determined by social injustice, exploitation, or a centuries-old commercial policy. This person himself now participates in this situation of guilt to his own advantage. Where does this person's personal responsibility in taking advantage of such a situation co-determined by guilt end, and where does it begin? These are difficult and obscure questions . . . this means that the universality and the inescapability of this co-determination by guilt is inconceivable if it were not present at the very beginning of mankind's history of freedom.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, Rahner confesses fallen humanity retains a supernatural grace which it cannot lose, even in the state of sin and unbelief.<sup>42</sup> It maintains a fundamental unlimited transcendence and openness to Being through knowledge and freedom.<sup>43</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer explains Rahner's position as follows:

The ability to experience the transcendent, to hear God is the defining characteristic of human being: "man is spirit, that is, he lives his life in a perpetual reaching out to the absolute, in openness to God" . . . Christ represents the culmination of human openness, the realization of humanity's capacity for receiving God's self-communication . . . Christ is both the total openness of humanity to God and the total self-communication of God to humanity.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 157.

<sup>41</sup> This makes original sin exist in every person by one's own action. Awareness of its existence happens through religious existentialism. Adding to this, Rahner writes, "Personal guilt from an original act of freedom cannot be transmitted, for it is the existentiell 'no' of personal transcendence towards God or against him." Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 110–11, 114.

<sup>42</sup> The essence of this supernatural grace is God's self-communication in love. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 1:307, 4:183.

<sup>43</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, 21:42. This stays true to the Catholic Catechism which confesses repeatedly that humanity is gifted with a hunger for the transcendent. CCC, §367.

<sup>44</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, "Human Being, Individual and Social," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, [hereafter *CCCD*], ed. Colin Gunton (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997), 171. Here the thought is again that the Spirit moves the believer to imitate Christ but does not conform the believer to Christ.

In Rahner's thought, the partially corrupted quasi-formal cause within humans still hungers for the divine.<sup>45</sup> God's grace preserved humanity from radical damnation. His ability to preserve His image in humanity is most clearly seen in His absolute and irrevocable will that the Logos should become man as a member of the one, though sinful, humanity.<sup>46</sup> Thus, Rahner, with minor variations, stays in line with the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which argues that a knowledge of God is present in this fallen state of humanity.

Rahner also teaches that this fallen quasi-form in man is a finite and dynamic spirit which can experience growth during the journey. The history of the human spirit is the journey of the fallen pilgrim who becomes more self-aware of his being by experiencing the fear of nothingness. In the land East of Eden, this fear is heightened as humanity is continually being affected by the powers and forces from outside itself, which affect it in a way contrary to the freedom in which it was created.<sup>47</sup> Fear makes the pilgrim's spirit "suffer" experiences foreign to its nature (i.e., sickness, malady, fear of nothingness, death). A fear which is constantly heightened through the passing of time.

For Rahner, the spirit's self-awareness is the growth of self-emancipating subjectivity from the fear of nothingness. For the greater a pilgrim can free himself from this fear, the stronger is his transcendental experience of his dependence on the absoluteness of God to preserve him from a journey into nothingness.<sup>48</sup>

Rahner admits that awareness of this quasi-formal cause in humanity cannot be adequately

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<sup>45</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 1:309. Rahner argues that man's orientation toward God is not an accidental relation to humanity but is substantially present in it. It is what humanity experiences itself to be. It is something that humanity can deny and repress only at the cost of sin. See Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:170.

<sup>46</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, 4:218.

<sup>47</sup> Freedom is the main essence of the quasi-formal cause in man, that is, of what it means to be created in the image of God.

<sup>48</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:384. Here one sees a taste of Schleiermacher influence on Rahner.

given by its own existence.<sup>49</sup> Awareness must come to humanity from without, from the Spirit of God working through places like the world, the community, and the history of salvation which is transmitted in all cultures.<sup>50</sup> Savior figures are found in the history of many religions. This can be seen as an indication of the fact that humanity, moved always and everywhere by grace, anticipates, and looks for, that event or person in which its absolute hope becomes irreversible in history, and becomes manifest in its irreversibility.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the quasi-formal cause may look for the bridge, but it cannot find the cruciform bridge on its own. It can only find the bridge with the help of the self-communication of God which takes place through His Word and Spirit.

However, Rahner argues that the Spirit of God starts helping the pilgrim find the bridge before the Gospel is shared with him through culture. He writes, “But the grace of God does not only start to work for the first time, when the word of the Gospel reaches man through the official preaching. It precedes this word. It prepares the heart for this word by every experience of existence which takes place in the life of man. It is, in diverse ways of course, secretly, and powerfully active in what we call human culture.”<sup>52</sup> He adds,

The first requisite for man’s hearing the word of the gospel without misunderstanding is that his ears should be open for the word through which the silent mystery is present . . . the second is the power to hear words which reach the hearts, the center of man . . . We must learn how to listen under the severe discipline of the spirit and with a reverent heart which longs for the ‘striking’ word, the word that really strikes us and pierces the heart, so that mortally stricken and blissfully surprised, the heart may pour the libation of the muted mystery which it concealed, into the abyss of God’s

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<sup>49</sup> Rahner writes, “According to Catholic doctrine, it is impossible to fulfill for long the natural moral law as a concrete whole, without the help of divine grace.” Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, 4:403.

<sup>50</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:259. Rahner is not speaking exclusively of the story of Christian salvation. Most, if not all, cultures have redemption stories in their “mythologies.” An awakening of the presence of this created grace takes place in any story of salvation, even non-Christian ones. Furthermore, Rahner will use two different terms to describe this phenomenon. He will use the word “existential” to refer to an element in humanity’s ontological essence which orients humanity to transcendence and is present prior to the exercise of freedom. It becomes “existentiell” when the individual becomes aware of its existence and appropriates it in freedom. Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 16.

<sup>51</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 321.

<sup>52</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, 4:358.

eternal mystery and so, being freed, find blessedness . . . the third is the power of hearing the word which unites . . . The fourth is the capacity to recognize the inexpressible mystery in the word which speaks of its bodily form . . . of hearing the Word become flesh.<sup>53</sup>

The pilgrim cannot understand his gift of transcendence as something lived, experienced, and reflected upon, independently of history and culture.<sup>54</sup> For Rahner, the “universal history” of salvation, mediated by humanity’s supernatural transcendentalism is coexistent with the history of the world, and is at the same the history of revelation.<sup>55</sup> Rahner believed that knowledge is derived from the Spirit of grace and that humanity knows God implicitly in everything it knows.<sup>56</sup> This thought, that the Spirit works outside the church, gives a greater proper role to the Spirit.<sup>57</sup> One can become a “professing” Christian by the active searching for good through the spiritual transcendence which God has inherently bestowed on humanity. Explicit belief in Christ is not necessarily needed (though an implicit knowledge is assumed) for communion with God to become a reality. Here Rahner’s thoughts expand on the theology of the Second Vatican Council laid out in the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*:

Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst

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<sup>53</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:358–61.

<sup>54</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 140.

<sup>55</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 144. All of this is like the Spirit Chronology discussed in chapter six.

<sup>56</sup> Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, 226. Rahner ascribes three attributes to the quasi-formal cause in humanity. They are love, knowledge, and freedom. The greatest of these three is love, what he believed was the essence of God’s self-communication. He wrote, “Love is the central and abiding existential of man as he really is.” Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 1:312.

<sup>57</sup> “Catholic theologians do not have the right to assume that the knowledge of the true God does not occur at all in the history of human thought and religion outside of Christian revelation.” Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:186, “There is also grace outside the Church and its sacraments.” Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:179. “Because of God’s universal salvific will, a Christian has no right to limit the actual event of salvation to the explicit history of salvation in the Old and New Testament, despite the theological axiom which has been current from the time of the Fathers down to our own times, namely, that outside the church there is no salvation.” Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 147–48.

them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel. She knows that it is given by Him who enlightens all men so that they may finally have life.<sup>58</sup>

Using this presupposition, Rahner argues that the human word embodies the Spirit and not just the eternal Word of God. For Rahner, the Spirit brings a brightness and a secret promise in every word. Because of this, he believed that in every secular word the gracious incarnation of God's own abiding Word and of God can take place. All true listeners of the word, who listen to the inmost depths of every word, become aware of the presence of the word of eternal love by the fact that the word expresses man and his world.<sup>59</sup>

Rahner believed that the best type of human word which conveys this is the poetic form in contrast to narrative form. Poetry prepares humanity to hear God's message. Rahner believed that poetry gives the reader the power to abandon oneself in humble readiness, opens the ears of the human spirit to the word of eternal love, and opens the hearts of humanity to the inexpressible mystery of love, which became flesh in the word of man that gathers and unites all.<sup>60</sup> The poetic word never fails. It grows out of the divine word. Poetry is at its greatest when it causes man to radically face what he is.<sup>61</sup> In the end, Rahner confesses that it is only by the inner grace, the quasi-formal cause, that the Spirit enables one to hear the external, historical word of God in every word. It is an event which helps lead the pilgrim to the cruciform bridge.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> "Lumen Gentium," accessed November 26, 2021, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html). §16.

<sup>59</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:362. The Catechism of the Catholic Church confesses the same, see *CCC*, §43. However, Rahner does state that all words, even biblical ones, are limited in communication. He says, "Whence [the word] comes that with regard to its mode of signifying, every word (which is applied to metaphysical objects) is deficient." In Kantian language, the word is a phenomenon which can only signify the noumena, words can only shadow reality. Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, 198.

<sup>60</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:362–63.

<sup>61</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:364–65. According to Rahner, the secular word embodies the Logos. The secular word in the form of poetry embodies not the Spirit, but the activity of the Spirit, its love.

<sup>62</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:259.

## The Highest Revelation of God

Though God can communicate Himself through culture and human word, God's most effective self-communication takes place through His Word and Spirit. When God speaks, He exhales His breath, His Spirit. When God spoke at creation, both Word and Spirit were involved. After the Fall, God the Father continues to relate to those living East of Eden through the same means in which they were created, His Word and Spirit. Through them, God remains immanent in creation, but transcendent. Through them, God gives the divine communication that best activates the quasi-formal cause in humans, stimulates the *Vorgriff* in them, places them on the bridge, and brings them across it to the beatific vision.

Of the two modalities of divine self-communications, Rahner maintains the highest is Christ, the Word.<sup>63</sup> Jesus is the final and unsurpassable word of God's self-disclosure.<sup>64</sup> In this sense, he is the "absolute Savior," Savior God-Man who reaches fulfillment of His being through His death and resurrection.<sup>65</sup> Christ reveals God as more than just an eternal, omnipresent spirit. Christ reveals Him as an incarnate Being. According to Thomas' metaphysics of knowledge, the Incarnation summons humanity back into the here and now of this finite world, because the Eternal has entered His world so that humanity might find Him, and in Him might find themselves anew.<sup>66</sup> The Incarnation forms from the outset an essential and 'descending' Christology. In Christ, God has offered himself to us in history so that humanity may grasp the true God. Through Christ, believers come to understand that the incomprehensible abyss whom

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<sup>63</sup> "The Incarnation of God is the unique and highest instance of the actualization of the essence of human reality, which consists in this: that man is insofar, as he abandons himself to absolute mystery whom we call God." Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 218.

<sup>64</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:334.

<sup>65</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 280, 318.

<sup>66</sup> Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, 408.

the believer calls Father, has a Logos, who has the possibility of offering Himself to us in history.<sup>67</sup> It is for this reason that Rahner writes that Jesus Christ, “is God’s irrevocable promise of salvation.”<sup>68</sup> Rahner believes that due to humanity being created in the image of God, such a Christology cannot be developed without the use of transcendental anthropology.<sup>69</sup> Christology and anthropology go hand in hand. Indeed, after the Fall, some postconciliarists see anthropology as a form of deficient Christology, and Christology as the exemplar of a fulfilled anthropology.<sup>70</sup>

Through the communication of the Spirit to humanity, the event of immediacy to God takes place. When the Spirit is given, the believer participates in God’s being and becomes God’s child and a sibling of Christ here and now. Only at the end of the journey will become manifest what the believer already is.<sup>71</sup> They are siblings of Christ, conformed to His humility in this earthly life and conformed to His glory in the heavenly life.<sup>72</sup>

### **Soteriology**

Rahner argues that modern theology attenuates the proper work of the Spirit in bringing humanity to the bridge and leading them across it. Even before modern theology, Christology preceded and superseded pneumatology that improperly subordinated the Spirit to the Logos. His hope was that modern theology, with its doctrine of the universal salvific will of God, would lead to a more balanced pneumatology—Christology. This refashioning would promote a teaching of the divinizing grace for all humanity that gives the same level of responsibility for salvation to

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<sup>67</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 215. For Rahner, the hidden God resides in the person of the Father, not in the essence of the deity. The hiddenness of God is proper to the Father.

<sup>68</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:55.

<sup>69</sup> Rahner, “What Does It Mean to Say?” in *MTR*, 58.

<sup>70</sup> Cited in Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, trans. V. Green (New York: Paulist, 1976), 49.

<sup>71</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 120.

<sup>72</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 1:275.



the Logos and the Spirit, or at least a greater responsibility to the Spirit. A refashioning that makes the Spirit more relevant to the pilgrim's journey back to God. His hope was that this pneumatic orientation would become the fundamental point of departure for all theology, causing a radical understanding of Christology.<sup>73</sup> A stronger soteriological pneumatic orientation would also allow the teaching that the Spirit can reveal Christ apart from the church. It would hold fast to John 14:6, keeping Christ as the highest form of God's communication to humanity, while making the doctrine of Christian soteriology more inclusive.

This would also be in line with his Christology from below (anthropocentric) as humanity would grow in its experience of salvation and knowledge of the Trinity from the bottom up by the help of the quasi-formal cause in them and the aid of the Spirit, without the means of the church.<sup>74</sup> Rahner believed modern theology would be more open to his teachings because it leans more to an anthropocentric than a theocentric focus. An "anthropocentric" Christology starts with absolute love toward the neighbor. When one grounds a personal relationship to Jesus Christ from the specific unity between the love of God and the concrete love of neighbor, one comes to see that the love of neighbor, worked by His Spirit, is our mediation to God, and that personal love for Jesus expressed to our neighbor can be our permanent mediation to the immediacy of God.<sup>75</sup>

Second, for Rahner, a pneumatology which lets the Spirit speak through all the prophets

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<sup>73</sup> In the same way the Catechism of the Catholic Church confesses that justification and sanctification "properly" belong to the Spirit. CCC, §2003.

<sup>74</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 22:18. Rahner writes, "It is now evident that it is quite possible to have a Christology beginning 'from below', with the experience of Jesus, experiencing him as our salvation, that is, as the historical experience of God's self-promise." In other words, we come to know Christ and the Triune God by His working within us. We come to know the immanent Trinity through the economic Trinity, not vice-versa. Rahner puts it this way, "God for us is also that of God in himself." Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, 4:98–99, 102.

<sup>75</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 308.

and teaches that the Spirit has been poured out on all flesh shows that God's self-communication in Christ universally takes place.<sup>76</sup> The quasi-formal cause within humanity, along with the infused virtues of the Holy Spirit (faith, hope, and love, understood as the divine self-communication of the Spirit), causes humanity to be always, and of necessity, open to the absolute reality of God. The quasi-formal cause and the self-communication in the Spirit prepares humanity to say "yes" to God's highest form of self-communication, Jesus Christ.<sup>77</sup>

Third, it is by the Spirit that humanity is moved to surrender itself to Christ. It was by the Spirit that the human nature of Christ surrendered Himself to the Father for atonement (Heb. 9:14). By offering Himself to the Father through death, Jesus surrendered himself to the unforeseen and incalculable possibilities of His existence. The offering of Himself to the Father involved the freedom of His will. Rahner argues that the hypostatic union and the free surrendering of Christ to His Father at the cross makes it an objective redemption. The surrendering of Christ is the best example of the fulfillment of the divine self-communication to created reality and the creature's self-transcendence in the obedience of faith.<sup>78</sup>

Salvation then consists in surrendering to the absolute Savior God-Man. This surrendering encompasses forgiveness. A pilgrim who is forlorn in guilt will seek the mystery of his existence. This person wishes no longer to see himself as a self-centered, self-sufficient being and surrenders himself to God. God then forgives him by the giving of Himself. In this experience the person doesn't forgive himself but is forgiven. Only in this way can there really

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<sup>76</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:98.

<sup>77</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:155–56. Rahner writes, "In order to bring divine revelation to a non-Christian, who is not reached by Christian preaching, there have indeed been suggested private revelations or extraordinary illuminations especially at the hour of death." Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 314.

<sup>78</sup> He writes, "In the flesh, which [Christ] shared with us, he, the concretely and historically one, abolished sin by his *obedience*, (emphasis mine) and our situation became that of the redeemed." Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 1:280. Note that Rahner's view of redemption emphasizes Christ's obedience more than His blood.

be forgiveness.<sup>79</sup> Surrendering one's whole being to the ineffable God in Christ, is the essence of the blessed freedom experienced in the beatific vision. It is what glorifies the pilgrim into sainthood.<sup>80</sup>

For Rahner, the act of surrendering is the foundation of both objective and subjective justification. It was Christ's act of surrendering, with the help of the Spirit, to His Father's will unto the cross which makes His blood the source of objective justification. It is man's act of surrendering, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to the Father's will, which leads to subjective justification.

This act of surrendering to Christ must be done to be saved and can take place in the process of dying. As a matter of fact, Rahner believed that a pilgrim's true surrendering to the Father, can only take place while dying, just as it did for Christ.<sup>81</sup> He writes, "[Death] is the supreme act of man in which his whole previous life is gathered up in the final decision of his freedom and mastered, so that he ripens for his eternity."<sup>82</sup> This "total self-mastery. . . can be achieved by fallen man only in the act of death."<sup>83</sup>

Death sets one free from all distractions which lead the pilgrim away from saying yes to the beatific vision. Rahner further argues against an irreversible decision about Christ being made at the point of biological death, "True eschatological discourse must exclude the presumptuous knowledge of a universal apocatastasis and of the certainty of the salvation of the individual

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<sup>79</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 131.

<sup>80</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 1:374.

<sup>81</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:240; 4:128, 131. Rahner writes, "Through death there comes to be the final and definitive validity of man's existence which has been achieved and has come to maturity in freedom." Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 272.

<sup>82</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:128.

<sup>83</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:128.

before his death, as well as certain knowledge of a damnation which has actually ensued.”<sup>84</sup> He adds, “It must . . . be asked whether ‘death’ as the decisive caesura in the history of salvation (and hence in knowledge of one’s own present or future salvation) must always necessarily coincide with the moment to time when biological life ceases.”<sup>85</sup> If this is the case, a space has been created in the dying process (a space not to be confused with purgatory) where the Spirit can create an individual eschatological experience revealing the Trinity and the self-communication of God in the Risen Lord to give the dying one last opportunity to surrender to the mystery which saves. Rahner’s acknowledgment that that some of the dying will say “no” of Christ’s lordship, prevent Rahner from being a full-fledged “universalist.”<sup>86</sup>

Explaining this further, Rahner describes two eschatologies, an individual one and a collective one.<sup>87</sup> Eschatology, in one sense, is not just a preview of the future. Eschatology happens when “God has revealed to man his trinitarian self-disclosure and self-communication in the grace of the crucified and risen Lord, a revelation already actual though still only in faith . . . It is the view of the future which man needs for the spiritual decision of his freedom and his faith.”<sup>88</sup> For Rahner, individual eschatology and death are combined. Rahner believed an “individual eschatology” of Christ appears to all during the journey or at the end of the journey. In the process of dying all are given the option to say “yes” or “no” to Christ as the fulfillment of Truth.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:339.

<sup>85</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:339.

<sup>86</sup> Rahner observes that not all will be gifted by the Spirit to make this confession and thus there is the reality of condemnation. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:339. This statement raises the question, “Why some are saved and not others?”—an unanswered question in Rahner’s thoughts.

<sup>87</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 435–47.

<sup>88</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:334.

<sup>89</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, 21:13.

Thus, for Rahner, the pilgrim does not have to confess Christ explicitly, East of Eden, to be saved before death. One can still surrender to the ineffable God in another space and time He has created in the process of dying which continues after biological death. There, one can allow himself to fall into the incomprehensible and nameless mystery of God. Rahner's individual eschatology teaches a person can acknowledge Christ in the dying process and fall into a blessed and forgiving mystery which divinizes him. His collective eschatology teaches that all people living at the time that event happens will be given the same opportunity.

### **Ecclesiology**

In contrast to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Rahner says the event of God's self-communication does not require the instrumentality of the Church and its sacraments. God's self-communication can take place simply through the Uncreated grace of the Spirit working with the quasi-formal cause in humans, the created grace of free will, and the culture and arts to bring the pilgrim to the cruciform bride where at the end Christ will be revealed to them.<sup>90</sup>

Therefore, Rahner believes that a person is being prepared to answer "yes" to Christ by accepting his existence as a mystery which lies hidden in eternal love and eventually becomes manifest in the womb of death. Anyone who accepts his humanity fully and that of others has been prepared to surrender to the Son of Man, who dwells in that humanity, before or at death.<sup>91</sup> Rahner states, "An absolute love which gives itself radically and unconditionally to another person affirms Christ implicitly in faith and love."<sup>92</sup>

Because of this, Rahner believed that even atheists can be led to a saving faith in God if

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<sup>90</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 411.

<sup>91</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 228.

<sup>92</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 296.

they put no obstacles in the way of their search for meaning and transcendence.<sup>93</sup> Rahner writes, “Anyone who does not close himself to God in an ultimate act of his life and his freedom through free and personal sin for which he is really and subjectively guilty and for which he cannot shirk responsibility, this person finds his salvation.”<sup>94</sup> There is no religion which God cannot break through to reveal Himself. The “Absolute Savior” is present and operative in non-Christian believers and in non-Christian religions in and through His Spirit.<sup>95</sup>

Thus, the pilgrim has at his disposal a sort of sacramental instrumentality within himself which helps bring him to the bridge of salvation. In keeping with Rahner’s universalizing notion of human self-transcendence, when a pilgrim reaches the fellowship of the Trinity from outside the church, he will have the same fellowship with the Trinity as those who reach it through the church, if at the end the bridge where Christ is revealed to him, he says “yes” to His lordship.<sup>96</sup>

However, Rahner does not confess outright universalism.<sup>97</sup> A person in freedom can say “No!” to God’s offer of Himself in Christ, at the end of the bridge. If a “No” is given, the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is committed and guilt and eternal loss is experienced.<sup>98</sup> Rahner writes, “Eternity as the fruit of time means to come before God either to reach pure immediacy and closeness to him face to face in the absolute decision of love for him, or to be enveloped in the burning darkness of eternal god-lessness in the definitive closing of

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<sup>93</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations* 21:143–44.

<sup>94</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 143.

<sup>95</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 146, 316. “If then, there can be salvation and hence also faith everywhere in history, then a supernatural revelation of God to mankind must have been at work everywhere in the history of the human race.” Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 148.

<sup>96</sup> Rahner, Karl, Paul Imhof, Hubert Biallowons, and Harvey D. Egan, *Karl Rahner in Dialogue: Conversations and Interviews, 1965–1982* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 207.

<sup>97</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:112.

<sup>98</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:6. Rahner writes, “For it is only in a radical partnership with and immediacy to God in what we call grace and God’s self-communication that a person can grasp what guilt is: the closing of oneself to this offer of God’s self-communication.” Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 93.

one's heart against him."<sup>99</sup> He further writes, "A Christian is a person who believes that in the very brief course of his existence he really makes an ultimate and radical and irreversible decision in a matter which really concerns his ultimate and radical happiness, or his permanent and eternal loss."<sup>100</sup> In the end, these teachings of Rahner helped formulate Vatican II's statements that salvation can be found outside the church and that there are various degrees of valid revelation found in other religious traditions.

### Conclusion

Rahner maintains there are two distinct means or modes of God's self-communication to creation. God's twofold self-communication to the world, His two "missions" in the economy of salvation, are the existential mission of the 'Spirit' and the historical mission of the "Logos" or the "Son," which in no way diminish the original, incomprehensible, and abiding mystery of God as "Father." The historicity of God is experienced most clearly and comes to light in the Incarnation.<sup>101</sup> Rahner writes, "Insofar as [the Spirit] has come as the salvation which divinizes us in the innermost center of the existence of the individual person, we call him really and truly 'Holy Spirit' or 'Holy Ghost.' Insofar as in the concrete historicity of our existence one and the same God strictly as himself is present for us in Jesus Christ, and in himself, not in a representation, we call him 'Logos' or the Son in the absolute sense. Insofar as this very God, who comes to us as Spirit and Logos, is and always remains the ineffably and holy mystery, the

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<sup>99</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:351.

<sup>100</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 403.

<sup>101</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 142. For Lutherans, it would be the death and resurrection of Christ. Cyril of Alexandria agrees as he writes, "All the dead will rise because of the gift given to our entire nature on account of the grace of the resurrection." Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*. vol. 2, ed. David R. Maxwell, and Joel C. Elowsky (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 61. Although all will be raised, only those who "marvel at the Savior's resurrection and genuinely keep his commands will come out of the ground they are in 'to the resurrection of life.'" Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 1:285.

incomprehensible ground and origin of his coming in the Son and in the Spirit, we call him the one God, the Father.”<sup>102</sup> This gives us the economic Trinity.

In the economy, the Spirit is always and everywhere the fulfillment of the history of revelation and salvation. The grace of justification (understood by Rahner as the beginning of the sanctification process) takes place in the existential self-communication of God in the Holy Spirit.<sup>103</sup> However, Christ’s birth, death, and resurrection are the “final cause” (the teleology) of the communication of the Spirit to the world. This makes the Spirit the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Logos of God who became man. When the Spirit leads people to know this, He then leads them to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and confess Him as Lord (Phil. 3:10–14).<sup>104</sup>

Second, Rahner still maintains that a return to eternal communion with God is dependent upon adoring God explicitly in spirit and truth (John 4:24), entities which can be found even outside the realms of the church.<sup>105</sup> Third, Rahner believed that humanity still retains the freedom which comes with being created in the image of God even after the Fall. Freedom is a major essence of the image of God. To say that free will is no longer there, after the Fall, takes away what it means to be truly human. Rahner believed God would never allow that to happen to the one created in His image. Rahner will accept the phrase “by grace alone” if it means that a person really finds the bridge of salvation only through the grace and absolutely sovereign grace of God.<sup>106</sup> Thus, to maintain the balance between the freedom of man and the sovereignty of God,

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<sup>102</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 136.

<sup>103</sup> Rahner writes, “The possession of the Pneuma (and thus primarily uncreated grace) is conceived of in Scripture as the homogeneous germ and *commencement* of the beatific vision.” Rahner, *Theological Investigations* 1:334, (emphasis mine).

<sup>104</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 318.

<sup>105</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:149.

<sup>106</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 359–60. Rahner writes, “We can and must, therefore, hold the doctrine ‘by grace alone’ with an ardor which is both Christian and Catholic. And much of what provoked the



Rahner agrees that not only the offer of grace, but the free act of the believer's "yes" to the grace comes entirely from the grace of God working in him.<sup>107</sup> Human free will must be "graced" to be open to the Spirit's calling, calling which can happen even apart from the explicit Word. The act of this bestowal of grace comes only from God's absolute sovereignty. However, Rahner stresses this grace must be taught as a gift which makes a believer a willing, not a forced believer. God works through the "free will" within humanity that simply needs to be improved, but not regenerated, to bring people to Christ.<sup>108</sup>

Fourth, when the pilgrim does enter eternal communion with God, Rahner credits the "Spirit" for the event since the Spirit alone has the "immediacy to God Himself." Here, we see Rahner staying in line with the Catechism of the Catholic Church's teaching that the works of sanctification and justification (understood as making one righteous, not declaring one righteous), which take place as the pilgrim journeys across the bridge, belong to the Spirit.

Rahner states the relationship between justification and sanctification as follows:

. . . one must speak of two sides of one and the same process, not of two phases one after another . . . Justification may be understood as that objective and real transformation of the existential situation of each (and of "all") which is already realized by the Incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ [prior to a subjective decision . . . and a sacramental conferring (baptism) in the individual] . . . Prior to any subjective attitude, man *is* really different (from what he would be as mere creature and mere sinner), because redemption has taken place in Christ, because God loves

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protest of Evangelical Christianity at the time of the Reformation, for example, the doctrine of freedom, the doctrine of merit, and the doctrine of so-called infused grace, could perhaps at the time, and certainly can now be recognized as a mutual understanding and can be laid to rest."

<sup>107</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:206.

<sup>108</sup> Rahner states, "God can . . . prior to man's actual decision, absolutely and effectively will a definite good act of a man's freedom, and yet this act does not thereby cease to be free, nor does it follow that on account of the creature's freedom God merely has foreknowledge of his free action just because it happens and not also because he wills it. In this way God attains his will and man does freely what God of himself has unconditionally willed . . . Let us for convenience call this fact predestination, carefully excluding everything fatalistic, unfree, deterministic from this theological concept . . . predestination] remains hidden from us . . . any individual . . . is not simply included in God's predestining will in respect to Christ but relies upon a divine decision which must proceed for his especial benefit . . . we must work out our salvation in fear and trembling . . . we . . . must always say . . . I do not know whether I belong to the elect." Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 1:209–10.

him in Christ as long as he is on pilgrimage: so much so, that for all eternity, even in his damnation, man remains determined by this 'is'. . . if justification and sanctification are only two aspects of the one process, love must be included in this process as much as faith . . . faith, in so far as it justifies, is a faith informed by love, where love itself must be fully present . . . theologically speaking love is no more a work than faith . . . love is precisely the truest climax of what takes place in faith. It is not something which comes after faith, like a work. It is radical, loving, and total capitulation of man before God. It can only be accomplished by man when he gives up the sinful fearfulness of his self-centered autonomy to see and accept the fact that God loves him and has accepted him in Christ: which leaves him culpably stupid if he does not dare to orientate his love away from himself . . . the doctrine of Trent is far from proving that one should be able to indicate existentially the moment of entry into justification for the individual . . . Faith can exist as the initial working of grace and yet of itself does not justify.<sup>109</sup>

Rahner maintains an objective and subjective justification. The Incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ has created an ontological transformation of every being.<sup>110</sup> It puts all humanity on the cruciform bridge of salvation. Objective justification was accomplished by the surrendering of Christ to His Father at the cross, which comes before the event in which believers consciously ratify and make it their own existential situation (subjective justification, awareness that they are on the bridge and desire to cross it) by surrendering to Christ.<sup>111</sup> However, subjective justification is understood by Rahner to be a "sanctifying" process, performed properly by the Spirit.<sup>112</sup> Faith may be understood as the initial working of grace, the start of subjective justification, but faith in and of itself does not fully justify. It needs to be formed by love beginning with a surrender toward God.<sup>113</sup> Rahner argues that the Church is not able to prove the exact moment in this journey when one is "fully" justified or deified, whether it

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<sup>109</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:199–205.

<sup>110</sup> For Rahner, objective justification brings about an ontological change in human nature.

<sup>111</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:200.

<sup>112</sup> If justification is a sanctifying process, then it properly belongs to the Spirit. If it is declarative, it properly belongs to the Son.

<sup>113</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:204–5.

happens during the journey, as it did for Mary, or at the end of the journey.<sup>114</sup>

Some may have to journey over an extra section of the bridge called purgatory, where further sanctifying justification takes place. Rahner confesses, “It cannot be denied that there is an ‘intermediate state’ in the destiny of man between death and bodily fulfillment, unless one holds that what is saved is not what was to be saved, there can be no decisive objection to the notion that man reaches personal maturity in this ‘intermediate state.’”<sup>115</sup>

In the end, justification starts the process of deification which happens only in heaven. Deification is the “absolute self-communication” of God. He writes, “We can leave open at this point the more exact understanding of what salvation means, namely, the fact that it implies the *absolute self-communication* of God in himself as the innermost power of our existence and as our goal (emphasis mine).”<sup>116</sup>

Finally, concerning the end of the pilgrimage back to God, Rahner states that having received the absolute self-communication of God is nothing else than being transfigured in the whole bodily reality, that is, being raised from the dead and finally exalted. A person reaches fulfillment when he, as a concrete spirit and corporeal person, is fulfilled in God. Rahner writes, “The finite subject does not disappear in this most immediate manifestation of God and is not suppressed, but rather it reaches its fulfillment and hence its fullest autonomy as subject.”<sup>117</sup> In communion with the Trinity, the glorified believer experiences true freedom, no longer seeing

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<sup>114</sup> The only one Rahner believed was justified by obedience in faith before death was Mary. He writes, “[Mary’s] obedience in faith, without which she would not be the Mother of God, is itself a pure grace of God. . . . Mary is the Mother of the Incarnate Word in and through her obedience in faith . . . . Mary is she who is most perfectly Redeemed.” Rahner, *Theological Investigations* 1:203–9.

<sup>115</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:353.

<sup>116</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 205.

<sup>117</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:129, Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 84, 436.

God as sovereign because the wills of God and of the glorified pilgrim are one and the same.<sup>118</sup> In the new world with its gift of pure integrity, true freedom will once again absorb the whole being of humanity.<sup>119</sup>

Communion with God brings the person into one's final and definitive validity in a way that it can be called the resurrection of the flesh. But this is not merely said in words. It becomes tangible in faith as a reality which is already dawning in the resurrection of the crucified.<sup>120</sup> In this event the body is pulled along into communion with the Trinity and experiences an apotheosis the likes of which "a wretched materialism does not even dare to conceive."<sup>121</sup>

Yet, for Terrence Klein, Rahner does seek to conceive what such apotheosis entails. In his article, *Karl Rahner on the Soul* he proposes that Rahner makes a distinction between the words soul and spirit. The word spirit is used philosophically to refer to our disposition over and against the world. Humanity can know itself and the world. It can apprehend the world and not be reduced to the world. We are aware of ourselves and the act of knowing. The human spirit is "created grace," and is orientated toward the world. Within the soul dwells the "supernatural grace" of quasi-formal cause of God which orientates humanity toward transcendence.

The spirit and soul are not separated at death but retain their respective orientations. At death, the soul finds fulfillment in the communion of the Trinity, but the spirit remains orientated toward the world in a way that permeates all matter. The dead see the world the way the angels see it, intuitively, in a more direct manner. The spirit is united with the totality that is the redeemed and glorified cosmos, matter itself, thus giving the dead a much bigger "body" than it

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<sup>118</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 187–88.

<sup>119</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:393.

<sup>120</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 441.

<sup>121</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 21:54.

had before death. Klein argues that Rahner believed at the end of time, all matter will be drawn up into that Spirit which created it. It will retain its matter, but it will become a new heaven and new earth. This is Klein's attempt to explain Rahner's thoughts on the apotheosis which "a wretched materialism does not even dare to conceive."<sup>122</sup>

Rahner stays true to the Catechism of the Catholic Church in several ways. Differences between the two are subtle. Rahner argues that the image of God in humanity involves a quasi-form of God. The catechism refrains from making this equation. It confesses that the likeness of God refers to His glory, while the image consists of attributes that God and man have in common (i.e., freedom and reason).<sup>123</sup> The catechism is written after the time of Rahner and does not use his "quasi-form" language. In one way, the catechism speaks against this scholastic idea. It teaches, "[Creation and humanity] attest that they contain within themselves neither their first principle nor their final end, but rather they participate in Being itself."<sup>124</sup> For Rahner, the quasi-formal language was helpful to explain what the catechism confesses about how man's nature gravitates toward truth.<sup>125</sup>

A second disparity is that the catechism teaches a difference in the transition Adam would have experienced if he stayed faithful. It refrains from seeing this transition as a death.<sup>126</sup> It teaches that Adam would have experienced a transition to a higher glory.<sup>127</sup> Rahner taught that this transition was a "metaphorical" death saying, "It is to be taken for granted that man without

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<sup>122</sup> Terrance W. Klein, "Karl Rahner on the Soul," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 6, no. 1 (2008): 1–10.

<sup>123</sup> CCC, §356–57.

<sup>124</sup> CCC§ 34. One might say Rahner, and the Catechism may not disagree here as Rahner said the form of the first principle did not exist in humanity, but only a quasi-form did, and if this is understood as a mode of participation both are in agreement.

<sup>125</sup> CCC, §2467.

<sup>126</sup> CCC, §376.

<sup>127</sup> CCC, §374.

guilt would also have lived out his life in and through freedom and into something final and definitive, and in this sense would have ‘died.’”<sup>128</sup> Rahner was firm in his belief that the process of dying brings about a moment where one is removed from all distractions to make a decision for Christ. Even the sinless Adam would have had to go through a metaphorical process of dying where he would have decided for Christ to experience the transition to glory.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 115.

<sup>129</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, 4:128.

## CHAPTER THREE

### EXPOUNDING ON RAHNER: THE SPIRIT SOTERIOLOGY OF COFFEY, DEL COLLE, AND KASPER

Rahner's attempts to reframe and at times move beyond neo-scholastic categories to address the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing people to the beatific vision have become a sort of starting point among Catholic scholars working within neo-Thomist traditions. Rahner's thought is further developed in a more explicitly pneumatological direction by postconciliar Catholic theologians David Coffey, Walter Kasper, and Ralph Del Colle—all of whom see themselves working within and moving beyond Latin neo-scholastic categories, often using biblical narratives and insights from Eastern church fathers. Significantly, their Spirit-oriented proposals involve the use of Spirit Christology (the relationship the Spirit has with the Logos) as another lens to articulate the work of the Spirit in bringing people back Eden.

As seen in the previous chapter, the postconciliar turn represented by Rahner's universal account of divine self-communication and human self-transcendence yielded perspectives on spirit anthropology, namely, the dynamics of the human spirit working with the Holy Spirit in getting to the bridge to God and crossing it.<sup>1</sup>

Theologians, after Rahner, explored further this pneumatological dynamic in dialogue with Spirit Christology. In neo-scholastic circles, "grace" remains the main pneumatologically category for exploring the Spirit's proper role in an account of the pilgrim's journey toward

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<sup>1</sup> Although this chapter focuses on postconciliar theologians with a certain affinity to Rahnerian insights, it is important to acknowledge that Rahner has his own Catholic critics. In his *Principles of Catholic Theology*, Joseph Ratzinger, for instance, questions Rahner's thesis that Christianity is merely an explicit or more perfect expression of a more foundational universal human self-transcendence. He notes: "Is not the main point of the faith of both testaments that man is what he ought to be only by conversion, that is, when he ceases to be what he is? Does not Christianity become meaningless when it is reinstated in the universal, whereas what we really want is the new, the other, the saving trans-formation?" Cited in Tracy Rowland, *Catholic Theology* (New York: T&T Clark, 2017), 63.

communion with God. Postconciliar theologians tend to see such “grace” in more personal (rather than substantial) terms—generally speaking, as a designation for both the Spirit’s (uncreated grace’s) own indwelling in the believer and the presence of the Spirit’s supernatural gifts (created grace) in the believer.

Among postconciliar theologians, a spirit anthropology in Trinitarian perspective asks how the Spirit relates to the human’s spirit in his journey through the human’s originate, unregenerate, regenerate, and finally glorified state. For these theologians, the study of Spirit anthropology also involves how the way the Spirit dwells in the believer is different than the way the Spirit dwells in Christ’s human nature.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Spirit anthropology relates to Spirit Christology.<sup>3</sup>

The field of Spirit Christology, which emphasizes the Spirit’s activity in the human life of the Logos, has served as a systematic framework in postconciliar theologies. It reflects on the role the Spirit has in bringing about communion with God in a way that accounts for the human person’s distinct relationships with each person of the triune God as the pilgrim makes his way home. As we shall see, the field can interact with the Roman Catholic scholastic language of knowledge and love, which is used by neo-Thomists such as Karl Rahner, to express how God

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<sup>2</sup> As we shall see later in our discussion of David Coffey and others, an examination of Spirit anthropology as it relates to Spirit Christology, often includes neo-scholastic pneumatic categories such as created and uncreated grace. In a glossary of terms at the beginning of Rahner’s *Trinity*, Catherine LaCugna helpfully defines created grace as “supernatural gifts given by God beyond the natural capacity of human beings. Created grace is the result of God’s free self-communication in Word and Spirit and is available to all persons.” She also defines uncreated grace as “the very life of the triune God, given as divine self-communication.” Rahner, *Trinity*, 1–2. Rahner defines created grace as something different than God. He refers to the quasi-formal cause in man as a supernatural created grace, but still wishes to refer to it more as a formal cause than effective cause, because effective causes are too different from their Creator for the Creator to communicate Himself to it.

<sup>3</sup> Sánchez lists the principle of human participation in the Spirit of Christ as one of three axioms in the field of Spirit Christology. He lists the questions that this axiom raises in the field: “How is Jesus’ life in the Spirit different from and like his disciples’ life in the Spirit? What is the degree of discontinuity and continuity between the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the Son of God and the adopted sons (and daughters) of God? What are the Christlike ways of the Spirit, or ways the Spirit shapes Christ in human persons? How do we discern and walk in step with the Spirit in the world?” Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, xii.



reveals himself to humanity in a distinct twofold self-communication in the mysteries of the Incarnation of the Logos and the indwelling of the pilgrim by the Spirit.

In a contemporary Trinitarian framework and trajectory, which involves postconciliar developments in pneumatology and Spirit Christology, the story of human communion with the triune God, through the Spirit, accounts for the “proper” role the Holy Spirit has in (1) guiding humanity in its journey back to full communion with the Father in the Spirit of the Son, (2) the distinct relations and works among each of the persons of the Trinity which are involved in this journey, and (3) communicating Himself to the incarnate Son and the saints, while on their journeys to God, in a way that humans respond to this self-giving of the Spirit.

As in the case of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the theology of Karl Rahner, the metaphor of the Spirit as a “guide on a journey” has the potential to tell further the postconciliar story of the Spirit’s proper role in restoring human communion with the triune God. This story is articulated in a way which takes into consideration the three requirements listed above. All three persons working in the economic Trinity lead the pilgrim to the knowledge of God through distinct personal relationship with the pilgrim. When this happens, the pilgrim will truly love and experience the love of God the Father in the Spirit of the Son. We now turn to the post-Rahnerian Spirit soteriology of neo-Thomists Coffey, Del Colle, and Kasper.

### **David Coffey**

#### The Bestowal Model

David Coffey proposes a bestowal model to describe interactions within the economic and immanent Trinity. In his bestowal model of the immanent Trinity, Coffey brings out distinctions among the persons of the Trinity and makes it easier to ascribe proper economic works to the Spirit. In this model, the Father bestows the Spirit on the Son, and the Son accepts the Father’s

Spirit. Upon the Son's acceptance of the Spirit, the Son, in the Spirit, returns Himself to the Father. In accordance with Rahner's maxim, if the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity, the Spirit then must do a corresponding work in the economic Trinity. Accordingly, the Father bestows the Spirit to the journeying pilgrim, and in the Spirit, the pilgrim returns to the Father.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, Coffey's Trinitarian relationship model consists of both a bestowal and return aspect. In the immanent Trinity, the bestowal taxis is Father→ Spirit→ Son. The return taxis, which results from the bestowal taxis is Son→ Spirit→ Father. In the economic Trinity the Western bestowal order is Father & Son→ Spirit→ pilgrim. In the Eastern view it is Father→ Spirit→ pilgrim.<sup>5</sup> In the Western economic view, the return is pilgrim→ Spirit→ Son & Father. In the Eastern view, it is pilgrim→ Spirit→ Son → Father.<sup>6</sup>

Coffey's model, in collaboration with Rahner's maxim, helps to further establish the distinctions of the persons within the immanent Trinity and the distinct relationships the pilgrim has with each person of the Trinity through his journey in the economy. Coffey proposes that to be fully human the pilgrim must have these distinct relationships and not just a relationship with the one essence of God. In line with this tenet, Coffey disagrees with Rahner's conception that each person of the Trinity is a "subsistence" (or "manner of subsisting") because it weakens, for

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<sup>4</sup> However, a distinction takes place between the economic and immanent Trinity in the Western church through the filioque clause. In the economic Trinity, the Father and the Son bestow the Spirit to the pilgrim. In the immanent Trinity the Spirit is bestowed through only one agent, the Father.

<sup>5</sup> The Eastern view supports the teaching that the Spirit can work outside Christ and His body the church. However, for the pilgrim to return, the Spirit must lead him to the Father through the Son. Many Neo-Thomists are drawn to this understanding for its "universalizing" aspect while maintaining the teaching that Jesus alone saves.

<sup>6</sup> The Eastern church wishes to stress the Father as the origin of both Word and Spirit. They believe that the Western filioque takes away from the Father's identity as the unoriginate source of Word and Spirit. They would prefer to say that, just as only the Son is begotten from the Father, so also should it be said that only the Spirit proceeds from the Father. It is permissible to say that the Spirit proceeds through the Son, but not from Father AND Son. In the Western view, the filioque logically shows how the Spirit does not only relate to the Father but also to the Son in the one divine essence. In the Eastern view, the Spirit's procession from the Father as source has biblical support (John 15:26). The West points out how the Spirit also takes from the Son (John 16:15). These biblical passages, among others, have been applied to the immanent Trinity respectively by the East and the West.

him, the idea of a personal relationship. One cannot have a true relationship with a “subsistence.”<sup>7</sup>

To argue for a stronger concept of personhood in the Trinity than Rahner offers, Coffey must deal with Rahner’s objection against his ascribing a separate will to each divine person. Rahner argues that Coffey’s return model communicates two separate wills (i.e., that of the Father willing the Spirit to the Son, and that of the Son willing the Spirit to the Father). In framing a response, Coffey recognizes St. Bonaventure’s argument that if love is to be mutual it cannot be a single act. Two wills are involved in mutual love.<sup>8</sup>

Coffey agrees that Bonaventure is right in his reference to human lovers. However, Coffey observes that the analogy of being does not apply here since the lovers in the Trinity, the Father and the Son, are strictly one in the operation of the divine will.<sup>9</sup> Quoting William Hill, Coffey writes, “The members of the Trinity are now seen as constituting a community of persons in pure reciprocity, as subjects and centers of one divine conscious life . . . indeed, it is in virtue of that free interplay, wherein each person disposes himself towards the others in knowing and loving, that each person gains his unique identity.”<sup>10</sup>

Coffey also attempts to answer Rahner’s objection by arguing that the will of God is both essential and notional. It is notional regarding the relationship between Father and Son

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<sup>7</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 52–55. Rahner recognizes his description to be weak in that it is a conversion to phantasm, a Thomistic phrase used to describe when concrete words are used to express abstract concepts beyond human reason. Rahner’s view is set against a critique of the modern notion of the person as an individual subjectivity. For Rahner’s alternate explanation of the person as a “distinct manner subsisting,” see Rahner, *Trinity*, 106–14.

<sup>8</sup> David Coffey, *Deus Trinitas: The Doctrine of the Triune God* (New York: Oxford, 1999), 57. This is one of the reasons Rahner likes to use the word subsistence rather than person in describing the distinctions within the Trinity, although he is not against the language of person per se.

<sup>9</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 57.

<sup>10</sup> Cited in Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 49. Rahner specifically says, “There is only one real consciousness in God . . .” Rahner, *Trinity*, 107.

communicating two separate wills, but it is one in the essential aspect since the will to love generates from a single principle (*essentia*). Using Thomas in his defense, Coffey says, “Rahner I would presume, would have no difficulty accepting Thomas’ statement that in the Trinity there are *duo spirantes* (two who *spirate*) but only *uno spiratio* (one inspiration).”<sup>11</sup> The Spirit proceeds from Father and Son by a single will. If the Son and the Father are distinct but one in their spiration of the Spirit, then they can also be distinct but one in their will to love each other.<sup>12</sup>

Coffey admits that the Western procession model, according to which the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son from a single principle, speaks better to the operation of the persons in accordance with one will, one conscience. However, he argues that if one does this and retains only a procession model of the Trinity with no return, one must deal with the issue of divine self-love, namely, that God the Father, logically speaking, operates procession from selfish motivation. If there is only procession, then it must be understood that love proceeds from the Father for the purpose of loving Himself, since the Logos would not return that love.<sup>13</sup>

The return model, (also known as the mutual love model), with separate notional wills, communicates more of a true altruistic act. The Father begets the distinct Son and creates humanity for the purpose of emptying Himself to a distinct other with the hope of receiving love from them. Not only is this operation altruistic, but it also supports the self-awareness that

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<sup>11</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 56. Of course, this is only from the Western view. His argument would not be successful in the Eastern.

<sup>12</sup> This author proposes there are three consciousness, but one unified will and that in the sending of the Spirit, the will of the Spirit is involved as being submissive in the sending, the same way the Son shares how He submits to the Father’s will and in that submission reveals one will.

<sup>13</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 60. However, according to this logic, it is argued that the Father is selfish in creating the Son to have someone like Himself, love Him back.

humanity is created to be in a “real” relationship with God.<sup>14</sup>

Other than the “two-will” disagreement, Coffey supports Rahner’s thoughts on differentiation within the immanent and economic Trinity and the distinct works each person of the Trinity has. Coffey adds to the argument of distinction the concepts of ascending and descending Christology. He remarks how in the Gospel of John, which involves a descending Christology, signs of the procession model are discovered, with the Incarnation being the central focus. God descends to the world. However, in the Synoptic Gospels more emphasis is on an ascending Christology, according to which the world through Christ ascends to the Father. Such an ascending Christology speaks to a clearer personal distinction between the Son and the Father because the Father cannot ascend to Himself.<sup>15</sup>

Coffey also uses uncreated grace in support of this argument. Coffey defined uncreated grace, like Rahner, as that which pertains to the **eternal** supernatural activity both in essence and in each distinct person of the Godhead. God never existed as a monad. Coffey believes that confessing these eternal distinctions within the Deity prevents the Christian faith from being reduced to a mere monotheistic theology of grace.<sup>16</sup> He says about these eternal personal distinctions within the Trinity, “while it is true there is only one absolute self-presence of God (*essentia*) this does not prevent there being three relative self-presences in him.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> This speaks against the Aquinas idea that God has only a notional relationship with creation, a relationship in idea only and not one grounded in sensual reality. God has feelings and we can make Him angry or endear ourselves to Him by our behavior in a mysterious way that will not affect His immutability. A processional model only supports more a notional relationship, but a return model supports a real relationship.

<sup>15</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 58–61.

<sup>16</sup> Coffey, *Grace*, 27.

<sup>17</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 59. Coffey also states, “the Father and the Son are not two principles but a single principle, united not only in their divinity, but in their mutual love.” Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 50. Rahner has “subsistence” (or “manners of subsisting”), Barth has his “modes of being,” and Coffey offers, “self-presence” to describe each divine person of the Trinity. Coffey also states, “the Father and the Son are not two principles but a single principle, united not only in their divinity, but in their mutual love.” Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 50.

Coffey also supports Rahner's idea that God the Father directly communicates Himself to the Son the Spirit and indirectly to creation. The communication with creation takes place through the Incarnation of the Logos and the Holy Spirit's indwelling of the graced creature.<sup>18</sup> Agreeing with Rahner, Coffey states that the self-communication of God to the world (economic Trinity) presupposes and continues the primordial self-communication of God the Father to the Son and Spirit.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, Coffey supports Rahner's argument that if there is no differentiation of divine beings within God Himself, then the Spirit and the Son could not be true modes of self-communication of the deity. Instead, they would have to be neo-platonic intermediate beings and humans would not experience through them the self-communication of God.<sup>20</sup> The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity.

However, Coffey does note a distinction of communication between the economic and immanent Trinity. In the economic Trinity, the humanity of Jesus receives the Logos (union), and the Spirit rests on the Logos in this humanity and sanctifies it. The humanity of Christ is not part of the immanent Trinity.<sup>21</sup>

In speaking specifically to Spirit anthropology, Coffey addresses the distinct or proper role the Spirit has in relationship to the pilgrim. Coffey notes that out of the three persons of the

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<sup>18</sup> Coffey defines communication this way, "Communication is the act of the subject by that which is external to the subject, namely, the object, is drawn into union with the subject." Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 110.

<sup>19</sup> David Coffey, *Grace: The Gift of the Holy Spirit* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2011), 60. This follows Coffey's epistemological order of knowing the Trinity. It is first revealed through biblical revelation, which then moves one to the immanent model, then to the economic one. See Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 16–24.

<sup>20</sup> Coffey, *Deus Trinitas*, 23.

<sup>21</sup> To possibly clarify the proper relation the Spirit has with the Logos in the economic Trinity, Coffey argues that the humanity of Christ receives the Spirit in the hypostatic union (the union itself being unique to the Logos), but for Coffey this requires a sanctification of a human nature by the Spirit which disposes it for union with the Logos ("substantial sanctification"). See Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 107–10. Yet another distinction for Coffey is that in human persons the spirit dwells to unite them to the Son and the Father, but the same Spirit rests on the Logos only to unite him to the Father. Cf. Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 103–4.

Trinity, only the Holy Spirit stands in a purely passive receptive mode.<sup>22</sup> The human spirit (or the quasi-formal cause in humans) is created like the divine Spirit to be a receptive vessel for the Holy Spirit who prepares the pilgrim for sanctifying and justifying grace.<sup>23</sup>

There are two entries of the Spirit into the pilgrim. The first one prepares the quasi-formal cause in the person to “freely” offer its “womb” to the Spirit. This is known as prevenient grace. Prevenient grace is a created grace. It is an “efficient cause”, created by the Spirit working in conjunction with the other two persons of the Trinity. Coffey believes this grace moves the pilgrim’s will to freely accept the Spirit’s proper distinct work of indwelling.

He believes this view on human freedom provides a way for understanding the spiritual union of God and humans. It enables one to qualify the expression “receiving the Holy Spirit.”<sup>24</sup> By the first sending of the Spirit (prevenient grace), the Father and the Son prepare the believer for sanctifying grace and the proper work of the Spirit’s indwelling. The reception of the Spirit involves the pilgrim’s will. It is not brought about by supernatural existentialism.<sup>25</sup> As Mary was “favored” by “prevenient” created grace to say yes to the dwelling of the Spirit for the purpose of conceiving the Logos in her womb, so is humanity favored, by the same, to say yes to the indwelling of the Spirit in its womb of quasi-formality for the purpose of bringing the indwelling of the Logos into the human heart.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Coffey quotes Hilberath to explain this, “[The Spirit] reveals himself as the always already opened space for interpersonal encounter in person.” Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 54. Of course, Rahner does not disagree with the assessment that the Spirit has more immediacy to the human spirit than any of the other two persons of the Trinity. See page 53.

<sup>23</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 38.

<sup>24</sup> Coffey, *Grace*, 70.

<sup>25</sup> Supernatural existentialism is when the Spirit move humans toward God without consent of the human will. For some Neo-Thomists, it wrongly favors God sovereignty over human free will.

<sup>26</sup> David Coffey, “The Whole Rahner on the Supernatural Existence,” *Theological Studies* 65 (2004): 114–15.

Christ does not enter the pilgrim on His own.<sup>27</sup> The Spirit brings Him. Through the Spirit's proper work, Christ enters the pilgrim, and the pilgrim participates in Christ's return to the Father. In this return, the pilgrim participates in their mutual love and is made holy, making him full.<sup>28</sup>

Coffey finds support for attributing the indwelling of uncreated grace in humanity to the Spirit only in the encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem*. There it states that the Holy Spirit is singled out as that person of the Trinity who, by its indwelling, introduces us into the trinitarian life of grace.<sup>29</sup> Agreeing with Rahner, Coffey says that the Holy Spirit can actively communicate himself to humanity, without visible means, through simple transcendent moments.<sup>30</sup> When the Spirit acts apart from categorical means, He proceeds only from the Father and known only as the Spirit of the Father.

However, when the Spirit works categorically and sacramentally, He proceeds from the Father and the Son, or through the Son, and is known as the Spirit of Christ. Where these sacraments are proclaimed and administered, there occurs an offer by the risen visible Christ to the believer or potential believer. If accepted, the pilgrim is drawn into a brotherhood, a union with the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God the Father.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 80.

<sup>28</sup> Coffey, *Grace*, 196–97.

<sup>29</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 57.

<sup>30</sup> Against the thought that the Spirit's passivity in His proceeding from both Father and the Son does not leave room for His active role in the economy, Coffey writes, "the Holy Spirit alone exercises quasi-formal causality in grace, and hence unites himself with the human spirit in a unique way that allows him to mediate the presence and action of the Father and the Son." Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 102; In Lutheran pneumatology, Prenter states that any Spirit which works independent of the outward Word is not the Spirit of Jesus Christ. See Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, trans. John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1953), 107. One may ask could it be that the Spirit of the Father can work outside the Word? Does the Spirit have to process through the Son to come to humans? We will take up these matters later.

<sup>31</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 99.



For Coffey, the sacraments offer the Spirit of Christ and are a conveyor of grace which ask for a response from the receiver. However, in agreement with Rahner, the Spirit of the Father can work outside the church and use the multifarious events of secular life as ways of summoning humans to faith. The argument in the East that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father enables a dichotomy between workings of the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of Christ, and allows for relatively independent missions in the economy.

Coffey argues that the theophanies in the Old Testament give biblical grounds for a single procession of the Spirit from the Father.<sup>32</sup> The theophanies reveal that God can communicate to humans through the Spirit of Father without means.<sup>33</sup> Coffey also agrees with Rahner that the Spirit of the Father can show its presence in the pilgrim's life through the pilgrim's loving of the neighbor and the Absolute.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, through the Spirit of Christ, working through Word and Sacrament, Christ explicitly reveals Himself as the Son of God and Redeemer.<sup>35</sup>

For some critics, this argument of the Spirit of the Father makes the Spirit's work of leading people to the cross, or even Christ, superfluous. However, both Rahner and Coffey argue that the cross of Christ's sacrifice is implicitly found in this love toward neighbor. Through the neighbor, the non-Christian can engage in "Christian" love ignorantly, and in the end will not

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<sup>32</sup> Coffey, *Grace*, 11. Like Balaam in Num. 22:21–39.

<sup>33</sup> Humanity has an element of created grace which contains the images of God's love, knowledge, and freedom. The Fall damaged, but did not destroy, this created grace along with its elements.

<sup>34</sup> Coffey, *Grace*, 184.

<sup>35</sup> According to Aristotelian terms, if God were to create through efficient causality, He would have posited in existence something other than Himself which would make the created being not capable of receiving the beatific vision. Coffey, "Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," 243. Coffey also remarks, "divine action ad extra was understood scholastically as an exercise of divine 'efficient' causality. If God acted, ad extra, this action inevitably terminated in a new creation of some sort." Coffey, "*Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*," 13–14. For Rahner, to communicate means to give to the receiver something of oneself, received in the same manner as it was given. An illustration given is that of communication taking place between human and human versus communication between human and animal. In the former, the human word is received as a human word, while in the latter it is not and is a "deficient mode" of communication. However, for salvation, the pilgrim must eventually know the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Christ through an encounter with Christ by the Incarnate Word or the Written Word. Coffey, *Grace*, 60.

only come to know Christ and the Spirit of Christ but surrender to them when he does. The bridge of salvation is not only cruciform in shape, but also in nature. Those who journey on it will experience sacrifice, if not for Christ directly, indirectly through their neighbor.

Thus, Coffey, along with Rahner, acknowledges that to be saved the pilgrim must eventually see the Spirit Father as also the Spirit of Christ on his journey and surrender to His lordship.<sup>36</sup> Only the Spirit of Christ proper can lead a pilgrim to this confession. This means that the Spirit's work is always orientated (implicitly or explicitly) toward bringing the pilgrim to the knowledge of Christ and incorporate them into His mystical body cause.<sup>37</sup> Coffey calls this the entelechy of the Spirit, its final cause.<sup>38</sup>

Coffey teaches that the Spirit's entelechy is not fulfilled by simply grasping an "idealization" of Jesus. An encounter with the actual historical person of Christ must take place if not through the Word, then through transcendence.<sup>39</sup> Coffey believed that if humans never deny or put a roadblock to the efforts of the Spirit bringing them across the bridge, they will experience an encounter with the historical Christ, either categorically or immediately, and experience true glorification. Coffey writes, "the faith-encounter with the historical Christ is

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<sup>36</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 35.

<sup>37</sup> Coffey, *Grace*, 222. Again, associating the Spirit with His work in created matter, Coffey notes that the Spirit has by nature an inner orientation to the Logos. But because of God's will for the Logos to become incarnate, the Spirit now possesses an historical orientation it did not have. In the economic Trinity, the Spirit drives believing humans to the historical incarnate Christ. It did this before the Incarnation took place through the gift of prophecy. The role of the Holy Spirit is then to unite them in a mystical manner to Christ so that they live in Him. Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 76–77, 79.

<sup>38</sup> Entelechy is the vital principle which guides the development and functioning of the Spirit. For Coffey, Christ is the entelechy of the Spirit. Otherwise stated, the Spirit's end goal is to bring people to Christ. For Coffey, if a person dies before the Spirit leads the individual to the historical Christ, the "entelechy process" itself will be sufficient for salvation. See Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 76, 81, 96.

<sup>39</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 93–94. Coffey adds, "While Christ the Word comes as offer and truth, that is, in history, the Holy Spirit as entelechy comes as acceptance and love, that is, in our acceptance and love, our transcendence specified by Christ . . . if God is to communicate himself to the world at all, it will by the Father's simultaneous communication of his Word and his Spirit, in history and transcendence, respectively." Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 95. In other words, the "final cause" of transcendence is the Word, a "final cause" revealed to the pilgrim at the end of the journey for the pilgrim to accept.

complete when enacted in the Spirit of Christ as entelechy, but if the former is not given it the experience of the would-be believer, the latter suffices on its own.”<sup>40</sup>

Coffey is not universalistic. Rahner and Coffey state that humans may be lost if at their death they complete their destruction by rejecting God’s offer of Himself in Christ, an offer they both believe will be given to all people at death or before. Whatever the pilgrim decides at this moment is known only to God.<sup>41</sup>

### Coffey’s Spirit Christology and Spirit Anthropology

Coffey remarks that the creation of the humanity of Christ occurs ex-nihilo while in Spirit anthropology the humanity of fallen man is “recreated” in grace.<sup>42</sup> Coffey agrees with Rahner that the three persons of the Trinity are involved in making and bringing the humanity of Christ into union with the Trinity. However, in general humanity, Coffey argues that the union between the quasi-formal cause found within humans and the Father and the Son occurs by the work of the Holy Spirit alone.<sup>43</sup>

There are other distinctions between Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology. One is in the way the Spirit relates to the humanity of Christ versus that of the pilgrim on his journey. First, in the Incarnation, the persons of the Godhead working in unity, create and bring the humanity (soul and body – ex nihilo) of Christ into union with the Logos (hypostatic union) and eventually back to the Father. With the journeying pilgrim, the Spirit has the proper work of

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<sup>40</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 88. This may give the idea that there are two levels of heaven with those who come to know the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ having the greater experience. However, a person brought to purgatory by the Spirit of Father, for instance, may come to grasp the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ while there and move on. Thus, Coffey and Rahner, believe that a person will need to say “yes” to God’s offer of Himself in Christ to experience the beatific vision.

<sup>41</sup> Coffey, *Grace*, 291.

<sup>42</sup> Coffey, “Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit,” 236.

<sup>43</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 32–33.

bringing the “created grace of humanity” (something previously existing) into union with the Father through the Son.<sup>44</sup> The Spirit does this in conjunction with the pilgrim’s damaged but capable free will. Here Coffey does apply the analogy of being. As he puts it, “the sanctification wrought in the world corresponds to the mediating role of the same Spirit in the Trinity itself, where he rests on the Son only to unite him to the Father, source of holiness.”<sup>45</sup>

Second, in Christ, the Spirit rests on the Logos, but dwells in Christ’s flesh.<sup>46</sup> In the hypostatic union, the Logos is the person of Christ. In general humanity, the Holy Spirit does not rest upon it but dwells in it, recreates it, and makes it adopted children of God—a difference of kind between humanity and Christ.<sup>47</sup> Thus, in the pilgrim, the Spirit brings a unity with Christ and dwells in him in a way which maintains the identity of the pilgrim. Coffey further argues that this indwelling of the Spirit in the pilgrim is to be understood as a human possession.<sup>48</sup> The created grace of free will in the pilgrim enables him to accept and possess the uncreated grace of the Spirit.

In the end, Coffey agrees with Rahner that human beings cannot orient themselves to God, cannot put themselves on the bridge and cross it by the mere powers of their nature. For this to

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<sup>44</sup> Coffey, “Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit,” 235–37, 242.

<sup>45</sup> Coffey, *Did Your Receive the Holy Spirit*, 104.

<sup>46</sup> Luther said that the human nature of Christ had a growing, dynamic relationship with the Spirit. He argued that with the development of His reason, he became stronger in the Spirit and filled with wisdom before God. Martin Luther, *Sermons by Martin Luther*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. John Nichola Lenker (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 306.

<sup>47</sup> Coffey adds, “We do not become this unique Son (Jesus): rather we become sons and daughters *in* the Son.” Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 34, 111. For Rahner, God’s saving will is revealed in Christ’s death, but it is in the resurrection event that God, through the Holy Spirit, adopts believers. Rahner writes, “The resurrection of Christ is essentially, and not merely though being juridically accepted by God, the event in which God irrevocably adopts the creature as his own reality, by his own divine primordial act, as he had “already” done in the incarnation of the Logos. It is likewise the event in which God so divinizes and transfigures the creature that this glorification is accomplished as the total acceptance of this divine assumption by the freedom of the creature itself.” Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:128–29.

<sup>48</sup> Prenter would disagree here. He argues that it is the Spirit and his gifts who take possession of the believer. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 199.

happen they need God's uncreated grace of the Holy Spirit to work with the supernatural grace of quasi-formality and the created grace of free will in humanity to bring them to the knowledge of Christ and submit to Him. This can be done immediately through human self-transcendence or categorically through the Word and Sacrament.<sup>49</sup> If done mediately, the pilgrim is given explicit knowledge and faith in Christ. If done immediately, Coffey believes, the Spirit of God will eventually introduce the human pilgrim to the other two persons of the Trinity before or at death. When one submits to their Lordship, one is brought into the beatific vision.

### **Walter Kasper**

#### The Enlightenment Influence

Kasper's pneumatology is done against the background of the Enlightenment. He believed the Enlightenment had a negative influence on Christian thought. During that time a new worldview was emerging that humans, and not God, were the measure of all things, opening the door for misguided pluralism to take place. This increased confusion for the pilgrim on what God's will is.

In the Enlightenment, religion became a matter of the heart leading to a decline of absolute truth, a lesser Creator-creature distinction, and an emptying of objective religion.<sup>50</sup> It became very difficult to speak intelligibly about God and the Trinitarian ontology when objective truth was questioned. Furthermore, Kasper argues that this movement caused everything about absolute truth to descend into an abyss of nothingness. He believed that the death of objective truth, based on the "subjective being" of God, led to the death of humanity.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Coffey, "Proper Mission of the Holy Spirit," 230, 245.

<sup>50</sup> Walter Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 10, 152. What Kasper means by objective religion is that there is a true objective faith which does not vary among humans.

<sup>51</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 11. Kasper means by this, that the only true perspective is God's perspective.

Kasper argues that the divine Absolute is found in the subjective being of God (in God, Absolute and Subjective are identical). Kasper writes, “The acknowledgment of God’s absolute subjectivity does not mean a suppression of our subjectivity; on the contrary, this acknowledgment redeems, liberates, and fulfills humanity . . . the meaning of humanity . . . consists in the glorification of the triune God and through this glorification we are incorporated into the intra-trinitarian glorification, and we have communion with God.”<sup>52</sup>

Kasper acknowledges that Rahner’s theology had an affinity with this Enlightenment thought, as it had an anthropological “subjective” starting point. However, he believes Rahner handles it in a way that still points to a necessary objective Absolute, a distinct Supreme God from which objective truth comes.<sup>53</sup> A Spiritual bestowed objective truth helps the pilgrim journey on the correct path to God. Preserving the Being of God as the source of objective truth also gives the pilgrim a sense of proper transcendence and dignity.<sup>54</sup>

Kasper, like Rahner, believes that death leads humans to realize the existence of this objective truth. In death, humans come to know they do not belong to themselves and that they and God are both mysteries which cannot be mastered.<sup>55</sup>

Kasper, along with Rahner, believes that humanity is created to have communion with the Absolute. Humanity transcends toward the Absolute by possessing an innate pre-apprehension toward the divine.<sup>56</sup> Kasper uses Rahner’s *Vorgriff* to name this pre-apprehension. The *Vorgriff* makes it possible for the pilgrim to experience a relationship with the Absolute. Those that

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<sup>52</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 304.

<sup>53</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 106.

<sup>54</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 15.

<sup>55</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 86.

<sup>56</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 14–15. As we saw in the previous chapter, Rahner calls this pre-apprehension *Vorgriff*. He believed this trait dwelt in the quasi-formal cause of humanity.

suppress this pre-apprehension are troubled atheists, people incapable of making the Absolute real to oneself. By their suppression, they silence the transcendent call of God, resisting the call to the bridge, leading to the fear of emptiness and meaninglessness.<sup>57</sup> Kasper says about this *Vorgriff*:

Man can never completely know . . . reality as a whole; reality always proves larger, broader, and deeper than man's reach, until in death man finally succumbs to reality. But even the details of reality man can likewise never penetrate; he can never completely comprehend them . . . Is man's situation therefore meaningless and absurd? The suspicion of meaninglessness that was fostered by nihilism at the collapse of idealism is countered by our experience that partial fragmentary meaning is available . . . Every experience of partial meaning proves to be a hope inspired pre-apprehension of the unconditioned meaning of the whole . . . However, above all, the meaningfulness of the whole cannot come from finite man, but only from a meaning and a spirit that embraces both man and the world, from a spirit which is at the same time all determining reality and thus from what in the language of religion we call God.<sup>58</sup>

Kasper states this *Vorgriff* does not consist of humanity penetrating the divinity (ascending), but the divinity penetrating humanity (descending):

Thanks to Karl Rahner . . . we now have a more profound theology of mystery. He has shown that while the tradition does maintain the incomprehensibility of God, it does not give this a determining role in the formation of a system . . . Rahner's own point of departure is the human being as a being of mystery. In every concept they have, human beings are directed beyond all concepts to a nameless reality that cannot be circumscribed or comprehended. Mystery is the a priori condition for all categorical knowledge . . . Man's fulfillment consists not in penetrating the mystery of God but rather in having this mystery come definitively into his ken, that God is a Freedom which is reserved to itself and withdrawn from our grasp.<sup>59</sup>

### Relationships with the Trinity

Like other postconciliar theologians, Kasper teaches that the pilgrim has a relationship with each distinct person of the Trinity as he journeys over the cruciform bridge. Awareness of these distinct relationships with the persons of the immanent Trinity contributes to an

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<sup>57</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 20. Rahner argues that every individual whether he realizes it or not, whether he wills it or not, must with transcendental necessity direct his life to the Absolute. Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 53.

<sup>58</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 108.

<sup>59</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 108.

appreciation for them. To highlight these distinctions, Kasper gives a stronger definition of divine personhood than Rahner. Kasper, like Coffey, has issues with Rahner's terminology for the Trinitarian person. Kasper believes Rahner's theology comes more from an anthropological basis. It pictures man's subjectivity well, but it does not give "subjective" existence to the entities within the Trinity. Particularly, Kasper argues that Rahner's nomenclature of "subsistence" to describe each entity of the Trinity, does not give proper full "subjectivity" to each person in the Trinity.<sup>60</sup> Kasper avoids using any nomenclature to define each person of the Trinity. He does not define whether each person is a mode of subsistence (Rahner), a mode of being (Barth), or a self-presence (Coffey). Kasper simply argues that without multiplicity in unity, God would be an isolated being who would need creation as a counterpart to be a God of love, and thereby lose divine aseity.<sup>61</sup>

Like Coffey, Kasper argues that Rahner's line of thinking on divine personhood gets in the way of the pilgrim's doxology. He observes that, "we cannot invoke, adore, and glorify distinct matters of subsisting."<sup>62</sup> Humans are created to worship Trinitarian persons, not Trinitarians subsistences! Kasper writes, "If the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity, then deficiencies in the doctrine of the immanent Trinity must necessarily influence the understanding of the Trinity in the history of salvation."<sup>63</sup> Using terminology that does not give full subjectivity to each person of Trinity could lead back to an unhealthy Western scholastic emphasis on the essence of the Godhead to the detriment of the persons of the Trinity.

The God whose name means being-for-us and being-with-us communicates that the

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<sup>60</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 302.

<sup>61</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 241.

<sup>62</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 302.

<sup>63</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 302.



dynamic loving relationship between distinct Trinitarian Beings takes priority over substance metaphysics. God is more of a verb than a noun in both the immanent and economic Trinity.<sup>64</sup> It is love in action. Kasper argues that the confession of the Trinity, the proclamation of the goodness of God and His freedom in love can redeem “fallen” love. This redeeming love is given to the pilgrim by Jesus in the Holy Spirit.<sup>65</sup> He writes, “A preaching and teaching about God that spoke of God in himself without saying what it means for me and for us would be irrelevant and suspect of being an ideology.”<sup>66</sup>

Kasper agrees that the event which highlighted personal distinctions in the Trinity the most was the Incarnation. Differing from Coffey, Kasper believes it does not bring a distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity.<sup>67</sup> For Kasper, a kerygmatic proclamation, emphasizing Christology from above, can be effective in establishing the Incarnation as the personal distinction of the Logos from the other two persons in the immanent Trinity and not just the economic one.

A second proper work the Logos does for humanity is redemption. It builds the bridge back to God. In the act of redemption, God’s Being in Jesus is understood not as a mere static existence but as a dynamic personal relation with the Father. This dynamic relation appears most clearly in Paul’s theology of the cross. If Christology is to start from below, it starts not with the transcendence of humans, but from the reality of the theology of the cross.<sup>68</sup> Apart from the

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<sup>64</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 156. This would mean distinctions in the Trinity are better established by the actions toward each other and creation than their “notional” relationships.

<sup>65</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 316.

<sup>66</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 158.

<sup>67</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 274–75.

<sup>68</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 166, 138.

cross, any form of Christology from below becomes philosophical and is doomed to failure.<sup>69</sup>

Kasper states that God has chosen to reveal Himself through the cross. It is the center of world history before the beginning of history (Rev. 13:8).<sup>70</sup> The confession of Jesus as God is based not in abstract idealistic speculation, but in the concrete historical reality of the risen Redeemer.<sup>71</sup>

Jesus Christ is redemption in person. Redemption cannot be separated from His person and fate.<sup>72</sup>

In the proper works of Incarnation and Redemption, the Logos takes on the whole range of human experiences, especially that of abandonment by God experienced in the farthest eastern space away from God; hell. Jesus Christ is the distinct form where God experiences, “human weakness, riches in poverty, love in abandonment, fullness in emptiness, life in death.”<sup>73</sup> In the Incarnation and Redemption God does not only understand humanity (anthropology). He experiences it.<sup>74</sup>

Concerning the proper work of the Spirit, Kasper notes that scholastic theology has trouble associating the Spirit with an event which gives its mission clarity and makes Him distinct from the other persons, like the Incarnation and Redemption do for the Logos. Kasper proposes that a proper work of the Spirit is to reveal to the pilgrim that He is equated with what is innermost and

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<sup>69</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 247. Rahner agrees, because he too believes that any pilgrim at the end must accept Christ and the cross as God’s offer of Himself. The quasi-formal cause in humans, for Rahner, is not enough to get past the portals of heaven.

<sup>70</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 167, 192.

<sup>71</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 169.

<sup>72</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 206.

<sup>73</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 172.

<sup>74</sup> However, how God experiences humanity in Christ has been debatable. Kasper shares how the Geissen school teaches that the Logos renounces the use of divine attributes. The Tübingen school says He hid them. Luther’s communication of idioms does not make the issue any better. For Kasper it makes it worse. He asks, “If the humanity of Jesus participates in the attributes proper to the divine majesty, how is it possible to maintain that Jesus is authentically human? If on the other hand, the divinity itself suffers, how are we to maintain the abandonment of Jesus on the cross by God?” Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 191.

hidden of God (1 Cor. 2:10).<sup>75</sup> A second work is to reveal that He is the love of God (1 John 4:16). In this revelation, the pilgrim sees the Spirit having the proper role of acting freely in love in creation and history to bring creation across the bridge into the community of the Trinity.<sup>76</sup> Kasper thinks the pilgrim needs to be made aware of the true understanding of this love. Love is the substance of the Holy Spirit. It is the foundation of unity within the Trinity. By emphasizing the distinctions of persons in the Trinity over its substance, one sees an intimate communion of Father, Son, and Spirit, that is defined by love.<sup>77</sup> For love to be experienced it must have community. This exists in both the immanent and economic Trinity. Furthermore, realization for a person happens through relationships, first to himself and second to the other.<sup>78</sup> The “I” must have a community to empty itself to a “Thou.” Jesus is the eternal Thou of the Father whom the Father can love.<sup>79</sup> He believes that the unity experienced in the immanent Trinity is the deepest nature of unity existing. It becomes the ground for the unity which the Spirit works in the church.

This unity of love found within the Trinity flows outside of the immanent Trinity into the economic Trinity where creation and the pilgrim are found. It invites creation to share in this communal experience with the persons of the Trinity, while remaining distinct from the Creator.<sup>80</sup> It is the movement of that love outside the Trinity to a distinct creation which makes

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<sup>75</sup> For Rahner, the hiddenness of God is in the Father, not the Spirit.

<sup>76</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 217, 257. In his book, *The God of Jesus Christ*, Kasper notes that the East speaks only of a procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, but also state that the Spirit rests on the Word and reveals Him. He believes this maintains the position of the Father as sole source within the Godhead and highlights the relation of the Spirit to the world more clearly than in the West. He believes the Western Filioque causes a possible danger of turning the life of God in the Holy Spirit as something self-enclosed (in the immanent Trinity) and not as something turning outward to the world and history (in the economic Trinity).

<sup>77</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 305.

<sup>78</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 246. We cannot truly know ourselves without others.

<sup>79</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 243.

<sup>80</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 307. For Coffey, it is the Holy Spirit which flows out of the Trinity to bring humanity into the Trinity. Kasper’s processional element is love. If love is the essence of the Spirit, then Kasper and Coffey are on the same page.

the doctrine of the Trinity most relevant to the pilgrim. The main benefit for the pilgrim lies not in confessing the trinitarian doctrine of God in Himself, but in His communion with creation.<sup>81</sup>

For Kasper, the meaning of being is experienced by receiving this love and sharing this love by emptying oneself to others as the Father does toward the Son and the Son toward the Father. Jesus' love is the true answer to the pilgrim's hope, who finds fulfillment only in the unconditional and definitive acceptance of this love.<sup>82</sup> As one hears more about how each person of the Trinity surrenders and empties Himself to the distinct Other, the pilgrim is moved to greater human actualization by being encouraged to practice this humility and selfless service to others.<sup>83</sup> The ultimate reality of being is found in the pouring out of love to others as is done within the immanent Trinity. The Spirit causes the love of Jesus to be a dynamic entity moving pilgrims to sacrifice for Christ and others as they cross the cruciform bridge.

The Spirit of Love, the center of Jesus' existence, is the bond which holds all things together and gives meaning to everything, while allowing the distinction between the divine persons and creation to remain.<sup>84</sup> This love is unfathomable because of its mysterious ability to unite what is distinct while keeping personal distinctions and personal freedom.<sup>85</sup> The Spirit of Love can break into creation apart from the church. However, its identity as the Spirit of Christ is

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<sup>81</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 304.

<sup>82</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 143. Broadly speaking, Kasper aligns more with Coffey than Rahner as human fulfillment is found in acceptance of God's offer of Himself in love, understood to be the Spirit. In Rahner's thought fulfillment is found in the acceptance of God's offer of Himself in Jesus Christ. Yet in all authors Christ remains the entelechy of the Spirit.

<sup>83</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 310–11.

<sup>84</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 190–91. This brings an interesting interpretative thought in relation to Col. 1:17. If love is proper to the Spirit, then logically speaking, one wonder if Kasper must say that the holding together of the universe is the proper work of the Spirit and not the Son.

<sup>85</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 249.

better revealed when it breaks into creation through the church.<sup>86</sup> Kasper continues, “The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, even if he constantly opens out the future afresh, he does not lead beyond Christ, but ever deeper into Christ’s mystery.”<sup>87</sup>

A second distinct work of the Spirit comes through the teaching that the pilgrim’s unification with the Trinity is brought about by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in him. Echoing Rahner, Kasper argues that if such indwelling is understood as brought about, or assisted by created grace, a product of efficient causality, then the economic Trinity would be deprived of its unity with the immanent Trinity. This is because created grace does not exist in the immanent Trinity and second, created grace is an efficient causality where in the Trinity there is only formal causality. To maintain Rahner’s maxim, Kasper leans toward super existentialism where the Spirit works through the quasi-formal cause in man alone, bringing about a drawing to God without the consent of the efficient causality of human free will. Thus, Kasper diminishes the role of the human will in redemption (almost becoming Lutheran).<sup>88</sup>

A third distinct work of the Spirit is established by re-examining the Filioque. The clause arguably blurs the distinctive work of the Spirit in bringing humanity to the beatific vision because it confesses that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.<sup>89</sup> The clause blurs the uniqueness of the Spirit because it communicates that there is no distinction in the Spirit’s

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<sup>86</sup> Kasper acknowledges this insight brings up questions. He writes, “1. What is the relation between the Spirit of Jesus and the human spirit, which is operative in the history of religions? 2. What is the relation between the Spirit of Jesus Christ and the Spirit which is active in the Church and in individual believers? In what way, therefore, is Jesus Christ the head of all men and the head of the church?” Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 266.

<sup>87</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 258.

<sup>88</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 274–75. This is because man is brought into the community of God by something other than God. It seems like Kasper challenges the anthropocentric view of Rahner here. Rahner plays the middle ground by calling the self-orientation to God a quasi-form of “uncreated grace.” Kasper appears to argue against Rahner’s thought that something within “unregenerate” humanity can be considered even a quasi-form of “uncreated grace.” Self-orientation if it exists, is for Kasper a purely effective cause, a creation of created grace.

<sup>89</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 222.

relation from the Father and from the Son (since the Spirit proceeds from both in a single act of spiration). In response, Kasper asserts that the Spirit can work through the Father only, and when it does, it works differently than when it is working through the Father and the Son.

Kasper notes that the Eastern view of the procession of the Spirit from the Father alone gives grounds for this thought. In other words, we might say that there are two relatively independent missions of the Son and the Spirit from the Father. Kasper explains that as the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit has a distinct universal activity in creation, nature, and history. The Spirit is at work in those who open themselves to it, recognize the obligation to seek truth, and open themselves to love God and their neighbor. The Spirit of God the Father is at work giving knowledge of God and His love wherever this happens in the various religions and cultures of humanity. Grounds for this idea, that knowledge of God can originate outside the church is found in Thomas' thought that God is implicitly known in every act of knowing. Kasper writes:

Here Thomas presupposes, of course, that the message of God as man's salvation is known to all human beings. If then there is a human being who lives in the primeval forest or among wild beasts and has not heard this message, God will certainly convey to him by an interior enlightenment the revelation of what is necessary for salvation, or else he will send the person an evangelist.<sup>90</sup>

However, Kasper says that if this interior enlightenment happens, the Spirit of God the Father is usually disfigured, distorted, disguised, and misunderstood, leading to a wrongful understanding of the Deity. The Deity is thus only clearly understood through the Spirit of Christ.<sup>91</sup> Kasper teaches that the Spirit will eventually lead those, who have come to this "disfigured" truth, to know the truth in Jesus. In the end, the Spirit of God the Father will be known to be the Spirit of

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<sup>90</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 49.

<sup>91</sup> "Consequently, the influence of God's Spirit appears in the history of making only in a disfigured and disguised, easily misunderstood and distorted way. The history of religions and cultures is profoundly ambivalent." Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 266–67.

Christ in “deified” humans.<sup>92</sup> Kasper writes:

The Spirit of Christ is indeed at work everywhere where men seek to transcend their life towards an ultimate meaning of their existence and where, in the hope of being finally and absolutely accepted, they seek to accept themselves and their fellow men. But all these *anonymous ways* to Christ attain their ultimate clarity and fulfilment only in an explicit encounter with him. The church cannot regard itself as a closed system. It must enter on a spiritual exchange and intellectual discussion with the world. In this, it must on the one hand pay heed to the external prophecy of the world, yet on the other bear witness that in Jesus Christ alone the hopes of mankind have fulfilled in a unique and unsurpassable way.<sup>93</sup>

A fourth distinction for Kasper takes place by answering the question of, “Do the gifts of the Spirit and the person of the Spirit dwell in the pilgrim or just the Spirit’s gifts?” Kasper illustrates this point through Gregory Palamas (AD 1296–1357). To maintain the truth that humanity, not even sinless humanity may have access and participate in the essence of God, Palamas argued that God has made it possible for humanity to participate in his uncreated energies that radiate from his essence and so experience not the substance of God, but the likeness of God as man did in the beginning and become deified. Palamas’ views are best illustrated when he wrote the following about the “energy” teaching of Cyril of Alexandria, “You should understand his teaching in this sense: it is the powers and essential energies of God which pour out [from the Father and Son], not the divine hypostasis of the Spirit. What the Fathers called *energeia* is the supernatural action of God, which is his Spirit—Father, Son and Spirit are the first subject, his power and his act. or else they spoke of the energies of the Spirit and meant by this his gifts, given to believers, but caused by him.”<sup>94</sup> In another writing, Palamas makes clear in what option he believes. He writes, “The grace is therefore uncreated and it is

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<sup>92</sup> The doctrine of purgatory would help support Kasper’s thought. The Spirit of God will take the one who has transcendental knowledge of God to purgatory and there help the person become aware of the Spirit’s identity as the Spirit of Christ enabling the individual believer to behold the beatific vision and become an ideal human being.

<sup>93</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 268 (emphasis mine).

<sup>94</sup> Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith (New York: Crossroad, 2013), 3:64.

what the Son gives, sends and grants to his disciples; it is not the Spirit himself, but a deifying gift which is an energy that is not only uncreated, but also inseparable from the Holy Spirit.”<sup>95</sup> Although Palamas may give the uncreated attribute to these energies, Kasper thinks it is not enough to describe what truly dwells in the pilgrim. For Kasper, to argue that only the uncreated energies of the Spirit and not the uncreated Spirit dwells in the pilgrim, makes it impossible to maintain Rahner’s maxim that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity because uncreated energies are not the communications of the Spirit’s self. In the immanent Trinity the communication which takes place there is that of the Spirit, not His energies.<sup>96</sup> For Rahner’s maxim to stay true, the same must be said about the communication of the Spirit in the economic Trinity. Thus, Kasper argues that the pilgrim receives the self-communication of the Spirit and not just His gifts. Furthermore, the indwelling of the person and not just His gifts, establishes a stronger distinction of the person and work of the Spirit. Kasper utilizes Rahner’s thought to argue against Palamas:

Rahner believes salvation occurs when man’s indigent relatedness to an absolute mystery is filled by the irreducibly free and gracious self-communication (*The uncreated grace of the Holy Spirit not just His gifts*) . . . The doctrine of the Trinity emerges from this concept of self-communication by way of a kind of transcendental reflection on the conditions of its possibility . . . Rahner’s starting point for a systematic understanding of the Trinity is the basic concept of his theology of grace: the concept of self-communication . . . this self-communication in the history of salvation would not be truly God’s self-communication unless it belonged to God in himself, that is, unless the economic Trinity were also the immanent Trinity.<sup>97</sup>

Fifth, out of the three divine persons, only the Spirit’s indwelling makes the pilgrim a child of God. When the Holy Spirit communicates itself to the person of the pilgrim, it makes the pilgrim a child of God by adoption. The pilgrim is not a natural born child of God, like Jesus. For

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<sup>95</sup> Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3:63.

<sup>96</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 220.

<sup>97</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 301.



Kasper, this self-communication of the Spirit places the pilgrim on the cruciform bridge, brings salvation to a close, and manifests that the economic and immanent Trinity form a unity.<sup>98</sup>

In Spirit Christology, this self-communication of the Spirit to Christ is different than the self-communication to the rest of humanity. In Spirit Christology, the Spirit communicates itself only to the human nature of Christ, not to His person. Instead, the Logos does this in the Incarnation. This makes Jesus a Son of God by nature. The Spirit does not dwell within the Logos. It simply rests upon it. In relationship to Christ, the Spirit's distinct role is to create a space for the Logos in the sanctified "flesh" of Christ. The humanity of Christ, which the Spirit prepared for the Logos, and in it which it dwells and not rests, consists of a genuine human and creaturely self-conscious reality which is open to God.<sup>99</sup> The extremity of emptiness in this humanity enabled Jesus<sup>100</sup> to become the vessel of God's fullness.<sup>101</sup> In a pneumatological extension of Rahner's depiction of Christ as the greatest instance of a human reception of God's self-communication, Kasper writes, "By wholly filling Jesus' humanity, the Spirit endows it with the openness by which it can freely and wholly constitute a mould (sic) and receptacle for God's self-communication."<sup>102</sup> The trinitarian confession reveals that God in Jesus Christ has proved himself to be the self-communicating love to humanity<sup>103</sup> and through the Spirit, the God of love dwells within humanity.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 274–75.

<sup>99</sup> Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 303.

<sup>100</sup> Scholars use the word Jesus to refer to the Incarnate one when they wish to emphasize His humanity, they use the word Christ to emphasize His divinity.

<sup>101</sup> Col. 2:9.

<sup>102</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 251.

<sup>103</sup> Jesus is known to be the vessel through which the Spirit of love is outpoured. Love is the essence of the Spirit which Jesus gives.

<sup>104</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 172.

Coffey would later offer a rationale for Kasper's argument about the Spirit's disposition of the Christ's humanity for the union as the exemplar of the saints' sanctification. Coffey writes, "In the Incarnation the Holy Spirit in the one act creates and sanctifies the sacred humanity and unites it in person to the pre-existence divine Son. This makes the Father's sanctification of Jesus by the Holy Spirit the paradigm of all sanctification taking place in the world."<sup>105</sup> Coffey argued that the Spirit's sanctification of Christ's humanity (unlike that of Mary and the saints) is of a "substantial" as opposed to "accidental" nature. The former is an ontological transformation that creates the humanity for the person of the Logos, while the latter transforms human persons ontologically while leaving their personhood intact."<sup>106</sup> In Spirit anthropology, the pilgrim's human nature receives the Spirit, and still retains his identity. In Spirit Christology, Christ's human nature has no identity apart from the Logos.

For Kasper, another comparison between Spirit anthropology and Spirit Christology is made through the emptiness of Jesus' human nature before His Father and that of Mary before the same. This indicates that a human to be filled with Spirit of God by grace and can become adopted children of God.<sup>107</sup>

In conclusion, Kasper strongly asserts that pneumatology cannot be discussed apart from Christology if the pilgrim is to be led on the right path of his relationships with each person of the Trinity. He writes, "A Christology in a pneumatological perspective is therefore what best enables us to combine both the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ. It can show how the Spirit who is operative in Christ in his fullness, is at work in varying degrees everywhere in the

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<sup>105</sup> Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 110.

<sup>106</sup> See Coffey, *Did You Receive the Holy Spirit*, 106–7.

<sup>107</sup> Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 228 and Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 51, 118.

history of mankind, and how Jesus Christ is the goal and head of all humanity.”<sup>108</sup> Only in Jesus does the Spirit find its full effect and expression. This can happen at the “transcendent” moment at death or before death at the time the pilgrim allows himself to be laid hold of by Christ’s Spirit in faith. This happens through Word and Sacrament. Through them, he journeys into the Church, his mother, which leads him to the cruciform bridge and helps him to cross it.<sup>109</sup>

### **Ralph Del Colle**

#### The Distinctions with the Trinity

Ralph Del Colle’s study of Spirit Christology, *Christ and the Spirit*, presents a wonderful overview of Catholic neo-scholastic and postconciliar developments on personal distinctions within the Trinity and insights on Spirit soteriology grounded in the interrelated operations of the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>110</sup> He too wishes to make the Trinity relevant to the pilgrim during his journey. For Del Colle, this is best done by emphasizing personal distinctions in the Trinity and the distinct relations they have with the pilgrim.

In chapter two, he notes two scholastic thoughts which blur the personal distinctions in the Trinity and their personal relationships with the pilgrim. The first is how Thomas wished to keep a unity of consciousness and nature within God by defining a Trinitarian person as a “subsisting relation.” A phrase which attenuates the understanding of the personhood of the members of the

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<sup>108</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 267–68. In his book, *The God of Jesus Christ*, Kasper acknowledges the difficulty of speaking about pneumatology in today’s times. However, he attributes that to the intellectual situation of the age, which opposes belief in spirits, and to the age’s overall lack of spirit. He argues that the positivist “spirit” used by “science” demanded the renunciation of the concept of spirit because of its multiple meanings and the impossibility of qualifying it. He does not see the blame lying with ecclesial and theological traditions. See Kasper, *God of Jesus Christ*, 198.

<sup>109</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 268.

<sup>110</sup> Ralph Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit: Spirit-Christology in Trinitarian Perspective* (New York: Oxford, 1994).

Trinity and their distinctions.<sup>111</sup>

Second, Del Colle argued that the scholastic phrase *omnia opera Trinitas sunt indivisa* favored the unity of the divine essence over the distinction of persons. Del Colle challenges this scholastic emphasis on *omnia opera Trinitas sunt indivisa*, which favored that the relationships of the persons of the Trinity are “notional” in nature. Del Colle argues that there exists a distinction of persons *esse in* that is more than a notional *relationis oppositio* that parallels the *esse ad*. Del Colle posits that confessing distinct relationships in the *esse in*, better helps fulfill Rahner’s maxim.<sup>112</sup>

Del Colle believed differentiations within the Trinity can be further clarified by showing how in Spirit Christology, the Spirit and Logos work together, but distinctly, in the areas of the Incarnation, Redemption, Soteriology, and Ecclesiology. When these issues are brought to light, the pilgrim is informed of the distinct relationship each person of the Trinity has with him.<sup>113</sup>

Del Colle observes that the scholastic era caused the Spirit’s role in building the bridge of salvation to be overshadowed by the focus scholasticism had on the proper work of the Logos in the Incarnation. It was more focused on Logos Christology. Indeed, in the Incarnation, the Logos performs part of its mission for humanity through the hypostatic union.<sup>114</sup> But in Spirit Christology we learn that the Spirit also has a place in the economy of salvation. The Spirit does its mission through dwelling in Christ, being the source of Christ’s powers (Matt. 12:28) and

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<sup>111</sup> Following Thomas, we noted earlier how Rahner wished to avoid the idea of two wills in the Godhead by this terminology. Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 37

<sup>112</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 85.

<sup>113</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 115

<sup>114</sup> Del Colle refers to the work of neo-scholastic theologian Matthias Scheeben’s thoughts on the word “mission” to describe the proper works of each person. Del Colle recognizes an important distinction between the economic and immanent Trinity takes place when using the word mission. It is not a word associated with “generation” and “procession” in the immanent Trinity, words associated with “relational opposition,” and communicate ontological necessity. It communicates intentionality. Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 43, 106.

leading Christ to the cross. In Spirit anthropology, the Spirit has the role of bringing about a graced union with the pilgrim. One that puts the pilgrim on the bridge.<sup>115</sup>

Del Colle, in his Spirit Christology, sees the interrelated mission of the Son and the Spirit at work in the mystery of the Incarnation. In the Incarnation, the grace of union between the Logos and human nature of Christ actuates a passive potency for existence, humiliation, and suffering, what Lutherans call the passive obedience of Christ. On the other hand, the dwelling of the Spirit in Christ's human nature actuates an active potency directed toward fulfilling His Father's will, helping Christ's human nature to fulfill the obedience of faith, what Lutherans call the active obedience of Christ.<sup>116</sup> The Logos carries out the passive obedience, the Spirit the active. Both the Spirit and the Logos are eternally actualized, but the historical hypostatic union is not. It has a beginning and is progressively actualized by the Spirit (not the Logos) in Christ's life (Luke 2:52) and ministry and only fully realized through His death and resurrection. At the cross, Jesus completes the obedience of faith through the Logos and the Spirit.<sup>117</sup> They both work together, in Jesus, to build the bridge back to God.

The Logos serves as the foundation to make Jesus Christ the Redeemer. But it is the Holy Spirit who makes Christ's redemption "the efficacious and a reconciling presence of God in the world."<sup>118</sup> Del Colle argues that a proper Spirit Christology that is able "to link the indwelling of the Spirit in the soul of the just person with his presence and efficacy in the hypostatic union,"

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<sup>115</sup> To create clearer distinctions of persons, especially that of the Spirit in the Trinity, Del Colle argues that habitual grace (the presence of the Spirit in the humanity of Christ) which, in scholastic thought, served only as the basis for the perfection of the human operation and mission of the Logos, must also be seen as having a "proper" role of preparing a human nature for the Logos as Kasper argues. Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 71, 127.

<sup>116</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 123.

<sup>117</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 126.

<sup>118</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 78.

offers a dogmatic construct where these two sets of relations are properly joined.<sup>119</sup> By the Spirit and the Logos, working in Jesus, objective justification is attained. By the Spirit and the Logos, working in humanity, subjective justification is attained. This subjective justification is accomplished by Christ being the bearer and sender of the Holy Spirit to the church and the saints. Spirit Christology makes Spirit anthropology possible. The Spirit and the Logos make believers children of God by adoption, places them on the bridge and helps them to cross it.<sup>120</sup>

Following Coffey's bestowal and return model in the immanent Trinity, Del Colle describes the return aspect as an expression of the Son's love for the Father in which He, through the Spirit, recapitulates all creation into the communion of the Trinity.<sup>121</sup> In this return, the Spirit has the distinct work of bringing about unification with God and humanity.<sup>122</sup> The Spirit brings about this unification with the Father by uniting the pilgrim with its essence of love. The dwelling of love in the pilgrim is more than an "infused virtue" (a created grace distinct from the Spirit). It is the presence of the uncreated grace of the Spirit.<sup>123</sup>

If the Trinity in general and not the Holy Spirit in particular was said to dwell within the pilgrim, a basis for a differentiation and proper work (*proprium*) of the third person—as opposed to a merely appropriated work—in the pneumatological mission is greatly weakened.<sup>124</sup> In this return, both the Logos and the Spirit are present in the pilgrim, but the working of the divine

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<sup>119</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 77.

<sup>120</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 82.

<sup>121</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 125. The word "bestowal" communicates a specific target, meaning the Spirit is not saving people at random, but humans who he has specifically targeted. The word "bestowal" also communicates a return to the Father. One is bestowed for the purpose of bestowing it back to the giver. For Del Colle, the bestowal model is more related to Christ's experience of being united with the Father, which corresponds with the Christian thought that by grace the Christian experiences a union with God. Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 127.

<sup>122</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 127.

<sup>123</sup> See Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 47–48.

<sup>124</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 92.

presence in the pilgrim is preeminently given to the Holy Spirit whose “mission actualizes union with God.”<sup>125</sup> The Spirit plays a bigger role in getting pilgrims on the bridge because it has a greater affinity with the human spirit.

Thinking this way, Del Colle supports Matthias Scheeben’s proposal for a “non-exclusive proprium” of the Spirit, which argues that the Holy Spirit is front and center, in relationship to the Logos and in the divine inhabitation of the believer.<sup>126</sup> For Del Colle, sanctification needs to be exclusively understood as the proper work of the Spirit.<sup>127</sup> Without this distinction, the Spirit becomes wrongfully subordinated to the Son, leading to uneven balance of pneumatology to Christology.<sup>128</sup> The pilgrim would adopt an unhealthy Christomonistic account of her journey to God, one without the Spirit’s sanctifying work of uniting believers to Christ and through Him to the Father.

An ascription of proper operations to each person in the immanent and economic Trinity strengthens the differentiated self-communication of God. Del Colle states, “What believers receive as the grace of God through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is constitutive of the person of Christ and consistent with the self-communication of God, itself an expression of the intra-trinitarian relations.”<sup>129</sup> The missions of the Son and the Spirit are distinct and complementary. Spirit Christology sets the foundation for soteriology, but Spirit anthropology enacts it.

The Spirit and the Logos continue their conjunctive but distinctive work in the church. As

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<sup>125</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 131.

<sup>126</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 44. It is “non-exclusive” because the inhabitation can also be ascribed to the whole Trinity.

<sup>127</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 58.

<sup>128</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 57.

<sup>129</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 126.

the Logos formed the body of Christ, so it does with His body the church.<sup>130</sup> As the Holy Spirit (uncreated grace) dwells in the body of Christ, so it does the in the body of Christ, His church. By its indwelling in the church, the Holy Spirit, conforms the pilgrim to Christ through the Word and sacraments. Thus, the Logos and the Spirit work together and distinctly in the Incarnation, Redemption, Salvation, and the Church.<sup>131</sup> If the presence of the Spirit (*Spiritus praesens*) is absorbed by Christ in these works, the pneumatological mission to make Christ's redemption efficacious for the pilgrim becomes empty. On the other hand, if the presence of Christ (*Christus praesens*) is absorbed by the Spirit, the incarnational and sacramental theology that points to Christ's redemption becomes empty.<sup>132</sup>

#### The Relationship between Spirit Christology and Spirit Anthropology

In Spirit Christology, Jesus Christ is a child of the Father non-sacramentally. His relation as a Son of the Father is worked out immediately by the direct union with the Logos.<sup>133</sup> Christ is already homoousias with the Father and is Son by nature.<sup>134</sup> On the other hand, in Spirit anthropology, the pilgrim is dependent on the mediation of the Spirit to become a child of God. Through the Spirit, the pilgrim becomes a child of the Father not by nature, but by adoption. The intentional bestowal of the Spirit upon the pilgrim to make him an adopted child of God is founded on the Logos' proper work in the act of Redemption.<sup>135</sup>

In Spirit anthropology, the pilgrim is drawn into the filial relationship of Christ to the

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<sup>130</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 56.

<sup>131</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 78.

<sup>132</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 78.

<sup>133</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 118.

<sup>134</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 118.

<sup>135</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 102–3.



Father and is made a child *in* the Son by adoption. If the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, this would mean the adopted child shares in the effect of the spiration of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, namely, in the Spirit's love back to the Father.<sup>136</sup> As partakers in the filial effects of spiration, the pilgrim also shares in the charity of Christ and the Holy Spirit by emptying himself to God and to one another. This insight on how “the state of grace must be ‘filial’ in character implies that the Christian’s experience of God is itself trinitarian.”<sup>137</sup> Drawing from the theology of Mersch, Del Colle writes, “Grace, which regenerates, adopts, and divinizes believers, unites them with Christ both in His filial relation to the Father and in his spirational relation to the Holy Spirit.”<sup>138</sup> The sacred humanity of Christ and the divinized humanity of baptized pilgrims share in the singular relationship of the Logos to the Father and the Spirit. However, Del Colle describes a difference between the Spirit’s presence in the Son and in the sons: “The sacred humanity is united with the Son so that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, whereas the just person is only brought into union with the Holy Spirit, without constituting an Incarnation of the third person.”<sup>139</sup>

The Spirit, through Christ, distinctly brings about the Creator’s original intent of a supernatural union between humanity and God.<sup>140</sup> Therefore, in the act of adoption, the Holy Spirit and the Logos are seen working together, but distinctly. Del Colle writes,

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<sup>136</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 54–55.

<sup>137</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 58.

<sup>138</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 58.

<sup>139</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 111. For Rahner, the Logos utilizes a distinct ability which the Spirit does not. The Logos wills to exteriorize itself and empty itself into the non-divine in a unique way. The Logos can make the finite capable of the infinite and thus the human nature of Christ is the concrete real symbol of the Logos, causing the Logos in the immanent and the economic Trinity to be the same. Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 114. However, the dwelling of the Spirit in the pilgrim never becomes the concrete real symbol of the Holy Spirit. This brings about proper distinctions in how each person dwells in human flesh and allows the subjectivity of the believer to remain.

<sup>140</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 44–45.

In the reception of grace and in the revelation of God as the divine self-communication through the trinitarian missions, the Holy Spirit emerges as the agent of divine operation toward created reality. Its culmination is in the divine sonship of Jesus, who in his love for the Father is the sacramental mediator of our adoption as sons and daughters of God. Both the person and mission of Christ and that of the believer's participation in the divine sending into the world are thoroughly pneumatological in nature. Therefore, by virtue of divine revelation and redemption both Son and Spirit are distinguished and yet united.<sup>141</sup>

Second, in Spirit Christology, the Spirit works differently with the human nature of Christ than with the pilgrim's nature. In the Incarnation, a newly created human nature is sanctified by the Spirit and assumed by the Logos.<sup>142</sup> In Spirit anthropology, the Spirit, sanctifies a previous created fallen human nature to say "yes" to receiving its grace and indwelling which unites the pilgrim with the Logos and Father.<sup>143</sup>

Del Colle uses the nomenclature "self-donation" to describe how the Spirit empowers the previously fallen human will to receive the indwelling of Christ and Spirit.<sup>144</sup> Del Colle explains by saying that justification and sanctification are enacted by "created actuation by uncreated act."<sup>145</sup> This term means that the Spirit who is both Uncreated Grace and Uncreated act, actuates

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<sup>141</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 133.

<sup>142</sup> Prevenient and sanctifying grace are products of efficient causality. The Spirit creates in human beings something different from itself and that is a human will that says "yes" to Christ and the Spirit. In the Incarnation, the humanity was prepared by the Spirit to say, "yes" to the Logos.

<sup>143</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 56, 110. Del Colle notes how neo-scholastic theologian Emile Mersch sees the Holy Spirit as the quasi-efficient cause in correlation with the Son as the quasi-formal principle of the church's inner life. Otherwise stated, the church is graced to contain the quasi form of Christ, but the reception of this quasi-form of Christ is actuated by a quasi-efficient causality created by the Spirit (called quasi because it is created by only one divine person). This thought supports the case for distinctions within the immanent and economic Trinity. Mersch argues this justifies multiplicity in simplicity when talking about the one grace of Christ. Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 52. Del Colle compares this thought to Rahner's category of quasi-formal causality for speaking about the graced relationship between God and humanity. A quasi-formal cause (a quasi-uncreated grace) within human nature serves as the foundation for a union with the Logos to take place. But the union is activated by something the Spirit creates through quasi-efficiency. Del Colle also refers to neo-scholastics de la Taille and Donnelly, who argue the same point but add that the effects of divine communication also involve a *tractio* through which the creature is drawn "into the inner circuit of proper divine trinitarian life." However, the danger of the word *tractio* is that it eliminates intentionality.

<sup>144</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 68. It is understood as a self-donation, because the Spirit does not create the human will of the pilgrim as it did for the Logos. The Spirit works upon a previously created will.

<sup>145</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 84.

the created grace of free will to believe in Christ. Del Colles sees faith as “quasi-formal causality of grace.”<sup>146</sup> The term offers a way to posit a relationship between the Spirit and the creature which allows the pilgrim to retain his subjectivity, especially that of his free will. The Spirit accomplishes justification and sanctification by actuating the free will of created grace in humanity.

Thus, Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology accomplish the same work when it comes to human free will. In Spirit Christology, the Holy Spirit, through habitual (sanctifying) grace, enables Christ’s human will to be actualized by cooperating with and becoming one with His Father’s will throughout Christ’s ministry.<sup>147</sup> In Spirit anthropology, the Spirit works the same in the pilgrim during his journey back to Eden. The real agent moving the human will of Christ and the believer to become one with the Father’s is the Holy Spirit.

Finally, Del Colle shares an uncomfortability with the Rahner’s equating the phrase “quasi-formal” with the image of God in humanity. The equation does a disservice to the image of God because it communicates a reduction of the divine being, which speaks against the immutability of God.<sup>148</sup> He cites William J. Hill for support. Hill says that “the union with the divine persons in their proper missions to creation includes both an essential and personal dimension.”<sup>149</sup> The

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<sup>146</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 84. However, calling it quasi-formal would imply that faith is found in the Trinitarian persons, which is not the case. Faith is something outside of them and must be classified as an efficient cause.

<sup>147</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 124.

<sup>148</sup> Del Colle notes that Matthias Scheeben disagrees. For Scheeben, the Holy Spirit can work both as an efficient (working in unit with the other two persons to create something distinct from themselves) and formal (uncreated grace) cause in its relationship with humanity. The efficient cause the Triune God creates is an openness to their reception. The Spirit is distinctly present in the creature without assuming it under a hypostasis. It has an anhypostatic union with the pilgrim, unlike the enhypostatic union the Logos has with his assumed human nature. Thus, the pilgrim retains a distinctive subjective being with its own will. Created grace comes before uncreated grace in this model. Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 41–45.

<sup>149</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 130. Hill shares concerns about the quasi-formal cause and the thought of it acting alone in bringing about union with the divine. First, he argues that this could lead to the belief that form

essential dimension must only be described in terms of effective causality. If the image of God is understood as an essence *like* God's, but not God's, Hill argues that essence then must be understood as a product of efficient causality. For Hill, the word *like* does not equate itself with formal, nor quasi-formal, causality.<sup>150</sup>

Del Colle responds to Hill's objection by referring to his "quasi-formal causality of grace."<sup>151</sup> The Spirit, working through the human will by "quasi-formal causality of grace or created action by Uncreated act," produces in the pilgrim the intentional acts of knowledge and love found in the immanent Trinity.<sup>152</sup> Here, the created grace of free will is like, but not equal to God's freedom. The created grace of free will is empowered to faith by the Uncreated grace of the Spirit acting upon it. This action of the Spirit brings intentionality to the relationship the pilgrim has with the Logos and the Father just as the Spirit brings intentionality to the relationship the Father and the Son have with each other in the immanent Trinity. For Del Colle, the event of intentionality in divine and human relations, working through the efficient causality of human free will, better maintains Rahner's axiom. It is the intentionality, not the form of God or the quasi-form of God, which bridges the economic and immanent Trinity together. Since the time of creation, they have been and will still be different in the future. But both can experience

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(God) needs to be reunited with the quasi-form in creatures for completion. This would mean that there is no intentionality from God in this relationship and it makes God dependent upon creation for completion. Second, the use of quasi-formal causality to speak of the graced human's relationship to God, asserts that an "ontic" union between the divine persons and the just soul makes the union come about by natural affinity rather than by intentionality from the creature. It does not do justice to the integrity of the creature's distinct independent existence if by such language it communicates that uncreated grace is prior to created grace. In other words, Hill argues that the pilgrim must exist first, as a subject in his own right. The efficient cause of created grace then acts upon him for the purpose of moving him to will the reception of uncreated grace. Finally, Hill believes, unlike Rahner, that quasi-formality makes the distinction between Creator and creature less than what God intended it to be.

<sup>150</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 130. Hill speaks against the quasi-formal cause of Rahner for two reasons. One is that it makes the Trinity dependent on the creature for self-enactment and wholeness. Second, it compromises the creature's independence and integrity.

<sup>151</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 84.

<sup>152</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 77, 131.

the same intentionality.

The Father creates this human intentional knowledge of and love for Himself and the Son by the sending of His Spirit categorically (through the church and the sacraments). Love for the Spirit then follows. The Father also can send His Spirit transcendently or immediately as He did with His Son in the economic Trinity, in which case knowledge of and love for the Spirit comes first.<sup>153</sup>

#### Del Colle on David Coffey

Among all neo-scholastic theologians, Del Colle argues that David Coffey's bestowal model of the Trinity best addresses the theological basis for Trinitarian distinctions and gives a proper (and not merely appropriated) role to the Spirit in bringing humanity into the fellowship of the Trinity.<sup>154</sup> He appreciates the intentionality of the Coffey model. The procession model alone does not communicate an intentional and gratuitous action of the divine. It communicates procession must simply happen with no intended target, like rays from the sun. On the other hand, the word "bestowal" communicates intentionality. The Father chooses to bestow the Spirit on the Son. The Son is the intended target of the Father's action. The Son chooses to accept the Spirit and returns with it to the Father. The Father is the intended target of the Son's action. In the bestowal model applied to the economic Trinity, a free will of graciousness is intentionally communicated to creation.<sup>155</sup> God bestows His Spirit upon the pilgrim, not due to necessity, but because He wills to do it in love.

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<sup>153</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 125. About this knowledge and love, Del Colle asks what type of relationship the divine has with the pilgrim through them. Is it simply a dynamic intentionality of knowing and loving (Hill) or the static actual presence of knowledge and love (Coffey)? It could be both in that the Spirit is the source of the dynamic acts of knowing and loving, where the Son is the static presence of knowledge and love in the pilgrim.

<sup>154</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 195.

<sup>155</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 119.

Second, Coffey's bestowal model of the Trinity gives the Spirit the distinct role of being the mutual love between the Father and the Son in the immanent Trinity. In the economic Trinity the humanity of the Logos is now added. In His humanity, the Son becomes both the receiver of the Spirit (from the Father) and giver of this personal love (Spirit) to the Father and to humanity.<sup>156</sup> Although Augustine speaks of the Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and the Son in the one divine essence, he does not ground this insight in biblical narrative. By speaking of the Holy Spirit more economically "as the Father's love for Jesus and the same Spirit as his answering love for the Father," Coffey represents a true development in the Augustinian teaching.<sup>157</sup>

This bestowal or mutual model includes a centripetal orientation in the immanent Trinity. It brings the Son and Spirit back to the Father. In the economic Trinity, the centripetal motion is mirrored as it brings the pilgrim to the Father in the Spirit of the Son. Accordingly, in the bestowal model "both the mediate and immediate nature of the believer's relationship to God is brought out, which also demonstrates the continuity and distinction on the pneumatological plane between the immanent (Spirit of God) and economic (Spirit of Christ) Trinity, each correlated with its appropriated Christological truth—i.e., the love of the incarnate Son for the Father being a manifestation of the love of the eternal Son for the Father."<sup>158</sup> Pneumatology is "the key for the return of all things to God."<sup>159</sup>

Third, Coffey's mutual love theory shows a distinction of operations when the Spirit

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<sup>156</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 110.

<sup>157</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 127.

<sup>158</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 128.

<sup>159</sup> "Only if the Father and the Son mutually bestow the Spirit on one another is there a basis in the immanent trinity for this economic manifestation of the divine persons, wherein pneumatology is the key for the return of all things to God." Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 103.

proceeds from the Father alone (East) versus when it proceeds from both the Father and Son (Western Filioque). The Father works transhistorically through the Spirit to bring the pilgrim back to the Trinity, while the Father through the Son does it categorically and historically. The Incarnate Son offers the Spirit through His historical person and actions, and if a person accepts the offer of Christ, the bestowal of the Spirit becomes the work of Christ. This causes the Spirit to be known as the Spirit of Christ and the Father. However, Coffey's theory also gives room for the Father alone to bestow the Spirit to the pilgrim. When this happens, it is known as the Spirit of the Father or Spirit of God.<sup>160</sup>

In his final assessment of neo-scholastic developments toward a Catholic Spirit Christology, Del Colle asks a soteriological question relevant to an account of the Spirit's role in the pilgrim's journey to God. "Who are the agents of transformation—Christ, the Spirit, the human?"<sup>161</sup> Del Colle argues that the Holy Spirit is "the agent of inclusion, conversion, and transfiguration."<sup>162</sup> He is the source of the Uncreated act which brings about conversion. He is the true source who includes the pilgrim into God's family by adoption, converts him into faith, and deifies him. He places the pilgrim on the cruciform bridge and leads him across it.

For Del Colle, humans are initiated into a "process" of salvation that corresponds to the distinct, yet complementary, Christological and pneumatological missions. He explains, "As bearers of the Spirit, they enter into this process of inclusion, conversion, and transfiguration, in a fundamental sense through their identification with Christ in baptism (justification/regeneration) and in a processive and discrete sense through their immersion into

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<sup>160</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 125.

<sup>161</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 202.

<sup>162</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 209–10.

the life of the Spirit (sanctification/mission).”<sup>163</sup> Salvation is identification with Christ, “the human ground in God for the ultimate transfiguration of created reality,” which the Spirit brings about when He, in cooperation with man, “unites the human with Christ through the divine inhabitation.”<sup>164</sup>

### Conclusion

The postconciliar scholars featured in this chapter all have something to say about how Rahner’s maxim relates to the pilgrim’s journey back to God through Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology. Coffey connects the economic and immanent aspects of the Trinity through his procession and bestowal models (the latter featuring the Spirit in an active role). Kasper emphasizes the distinct persons and relations in both aspects of the Trinity. Del Colle stresses the intentionality of relationships found in both aspects of the Trinity through pneumatology. Del Colle has reservations about Rahner’s language of quasi-formality because it communicates God’s form is diminished in the human creature and thus speaks against the immutability of God.

Kasper builds on and moves beyond Rahner by interpreting the self-communication of God in a stronger pneumatological way. Rahner’s idea that the hypostatic union is the highest instance of divine self-communication and human self-transcendence is enhanced by Kasper who says that the Spirit brings about this union. Kasper argues that the Spirit prepares the human nature of Jesus for union with the Logos. For Coffey, the Incarnation causes a distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity. For Kasper, it does not.

Coffey builds on and goes beyond Kasper by providing a more thorough explanation of the way the Spirit sanctifies the human Jesus for union with the Logos and how the Spirit prepares

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<sup>163</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 205.

<sup>164</sup> Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 205.



the believer for the indwelling of Christ and itself (the Spirit). He distinguishes the relationship the Spirit has with Christ and the one it has with believers. With Christ, it is substantial; with believers, it is accidental. However, Aristotelian language may not suffice here as it may lead to the ineffable question of whether an accident can be separated from its substance? An indwelling of the Spirit in the flesh of Christ and its resting on the Logos versus an indwelling of the Spirit in the believer only, best describes the difference between Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology.

Furthermore, Coffey provides a thorough account of the development of neo-scholastic thought on the relationship between Christ and the Spirit, especially on the role of the Spirit in Christ and the saints. But Coffey provides the Trinitarian framework for human participation in the Spirit whom Christ bears and gives. He does so in his bestowal and return model (also called mutual love model) of the Trinity. As the Spirit is bestowed and returned in the immanent Trinity, so is the Spirit bestowed on humanity and returns to the Father and the Son with those who are graced with faith.

Coffey also picks up on Rahner's notion of the Spirit as the entelechy of Christ. Coffey professes the quasi-formal cause within humanity enables the Spirit to communicate to humanity apart from means. The theophanies in the Old Testament indicate this. Coffey adds Aristotelian "final cause" with "formal cause" to argue that the final cause of humanity is the beatific vision. Coffey argues that if man does not put a roadblock to the efforts of the Spirit working in him with or without means, he will experience an encounter with the historical Christ, fulfilling its entelechy. The Spirit will work *ex opere operato*. If the human person does not raise a roadblock to the Spirit's efforts, the Spirit will eventually lead him to Christ through the church or transcendence.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A LUTHERAN RESPONSE: PART 1–THE CONFESSIONS AND LUTHER

#### Introduction

Luther's and the Lutheran Confessions' responses to the scholastics still serve as a foundation for offering a response to the postconciliar proposals today regarding Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology. However, to fully engage scholastic and postconciliar thought in these areas, one needs familiarity with Aristotelian language and offer a robust pneumatology which speaks to the Spirit's role in justification and sanctification.

#### The Image of God

A major focus of neo-scholastic theology is pneumatology, particularly in the context of the theology of grace. Neo-Scholasticism differs little from scholasticism in seeking to defend free will in conversion and its view on the corruption of human nature. Thus, although four hundred years separates neo-scholastic theology from scholastic theology, there are striking similarities between them.

Some neo-scholastics consider the human will to be the essence of the image of God. To be human, means to have God's image of freedom. God is the freest Being. He can choose or not choose to do anything. God chose to create. He did not create because of necessity. For scholastics and neo-scholastics, believing that things happen to humans by necessity compromises this image of God and leads to fatalism. For them, faith in the human freedom over spiritual matters makes humanity more accountable.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This thought goes back to the early church father of Cyril of Alexandria who stated in his commentary on the Gospel of St. John, "The word of doctrine requires that free will and free choice be preserved to the human soul, that it may ask for the just rewards of its good deeds, or if it falls from what is right and heedlessly transgresses the

Luther, in describing the image of God in humanity, strove to avoid philosophical and scholastic Aristotelian language. He wrote, “Inasmuch as we seem scarcely to perceive the material cause [of man] sufficiently, for philosophy does not know the efficient cause for certain, nor likewise the final cause . . . Indeed, concerning the formal cause which they call soul, there is not and never will be agreement among the philosophers.”<sup>2</sup> He added, “The entire Ethics of Aristotle is the worst enemy of grace. This is in opposition to the scholastics . . . Indeed, no one can become a theologian unless he becomes one without Aristotle . . . Briefly, the whole Aristotle is to theology as darkness is to light.”<sup>3</sup> However, Luther and the Confessors knew, that to successfully debate the scholastics, they would need to use Aristotelian language.

Among the church fathers, Luther favored St. Augustine and his analogical thoughts on the image of God. Augustine considered the image of God reflected in the concept of humanity having three parts, but one person. Those three parts were, “the soul—memory, the mind or intellect, and will.”<sup>4</sup> Luther expounded on this analogy, “And so the similitude of God consists in this, that the memory is proved with hope, the intellect with faith, and the will with love.”<sup>5</sup>

Personally, Luther stated that the words “image” and “likeness of God” in Gen. 1:27

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decree of the lawgiver, that it may receive the most reasonable punishment.” Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 1:226.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, “The Disputation Concerning Man,” in *Career of the Reformer IV*, ed. Helmut Lehmann, vol. 34, in *Luther’s Works, American Edition* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 138. Here Luther uses the phrase “formal cause” but does not refer to the formal cause as being a formal cause or even quasi-formal cause of God’s being, as done in neo-scholastic thought. Instead, he simply uses it to describe the substance which gives “form” to humanity.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther, “The Disputation Against Scholastic Theology,” in *Career of the Reformer I*, ed. Helmut Lehmann, vol. 31, in *Luther’s Works, American Edition* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), 12. He also stated, “Nothing so inflames my feelings as that actor (Aristotle) who with his Greek mask mimics the Church. If there were but a time, I would like to expose him and show his ignominy to the entire world.” E.G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), 296.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, vol. 1, in *Luther’s Works, American Edition* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1954), 60.

<sup>5</sup> LW 1:60.

communicated at least six different thoughts. First, it was to communicate Moses' desire to emphasize how the creation of man brought joy to God.<sup>6</sup> Second, it meant God created humanity righteous and holy. Humanity knew God and His will and was perfectly happy with knowing only that.<sup>7</sup> The Confessors, using the same biblical text, defined the image of God much this way when they wrote, "What else does this mean [Gen.1:27] except that a wisdom and righteousness that would grasp God and reflect God was implanted in humankind, that is, humankind received gifts like the knowledge of God, fear of God, trust in God, and the like?"<sup>8</sup>

Third, it meant God created man with reason. This made humanity the most important and highest in rank among all creatures. Reason is something divine.<sup>9</sup> Fourth, it meant that God created Adam without fear of death and without anxiety.<sup>10</sup> Fifth, that God created Adam with superb physical and mental skills. His intellect was clear. His memory was pristine. Luther writes, "I am fully convinced that before Adam's sin his eyes were so sharp and clear that they surpassed those of the lynx and eagle. He was stronger than the lions and the bears . . . he handled them the way we handle puppies."<sup>11</sup>

Finally, that God created Adam with an immortality that was not fixed. The good angels in

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<sup>6</sup> LW 1:68. Francis Pieper taught that the image consists of a reflection of God's wisdom and lordship. It does not consist of God's aseity. It consisted of a right disposition of his intellect and will, the knowledge of God, and the will to do God's will. For Pieper, the seat of the divine image is in the human soul. The knowledge of God and holiness inhere in the soul. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), 1:515–17, 521.

<sup>7</sup> *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, 115.

<sup>8</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession II.18 in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 115.

<sup>9</sup> LW 34:137.

<sup>10</sup> Luther writes, "Therefore my understanding of the image of God is this: that Adam had it in his being and that he not only knew God and believed that He was good, but that he also lived a life that was wholly good; that is, he was without the fear of death or of any other danger, and was content with God's favor . . . when we speak about that image, we are speaking about something unknown." LW 1:62–63.

<sup>11</sup> LW 1:62.

heaven had fixed immortality, but Adam did not.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Luther would refer to Adam being created with a hope for a fail-safe immortality. This hope would be fulfilled through the obedience of faith.<sup>13</sup> Luther describes what this fail-safe immortality would look like, “After this physical life was to come a spiritual life, in which he would neither make use of physical food nor do the other things which are customary in this life but would live an angelic and spiritual life.”<sup>14</sup> But the question remains, when would this translation from the physical to the spiritual life take place? Luther said it would take place when God reached the appointed number of saints. He quotes Peter Lombard, “Even if Adam had not fallen through his sin, still, after the appointed number of saints had been attained, God would have translated them from this animal life to the spiritual life.”<sup>15</sup> Luther adds to this, “At a predetermined time, after the number of saints had become full, these physical activities would have come to an end; and Adam, together with his descendants, would have been translated to the eternal and spiritual life.”<sup>16</sup>

The obedience needed to attain this immortality consisted of fulfilling God’s command not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. About this command, Luther writes, “Adam had need of this command . . . namely, that there should be an outward form or worship and an

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<sup>12</sup> LW 1:56–57, 81, 116, 177, 194. Luther wrote, “Man was created in the image of God, in the image of righteousness, of course, of divine holiness and truth, but in such a way that he could lose it, as he did lose, moreover in paradise and has now recovered it through Christ.” Martin Luther, “The Disputation Concerning Justification,” in *Career of the Reformer IV*, ed. Helmet Lehmann, vol. 34, in *Luther’s Works, American Edition* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 177.

<sup>13</sup> LW 1:111.

<sup>14</sup> LW 1:65.

<sup>15</sup> LW 1:56.

<sup>16</sup> LW 1:56. Rahner argued that Adam would experience translation to higher glory if he would have fulfilled the obedience of faith. A translation that was a figurative death which would not be feared by sinless Adam. The Fall brought fear and anxiety over death to humanity. Something Luther agrees with. One issue with Lombard’s and Luther’s thought here is that if translation waited upon the appointed number of saints being attained, what would have happened if just one of those saints, other than Adam had fallen? Would the fall of that saint affect all humanity? Would only the fall of Adam affect all humanity since he would have been the head of humanity?

outward work of obedience toward God.”<sup>17</sup> However, the childlike innocence in which God created Adam, made it possible for him to be deceived by Satan and become disobedient. Luther envisioned a conversation God had with Adam before the Fall, “Your life is, as it were, placed in the middle: you can remain in it and afterwards be carried to an immortality that cannot be lost; contrariwise, if you do not obey, you will become a victim of death and lose your immortality.”<sup>18</sup>

In the end, Luther said a full understanding of what the image of God is, will only take place at the end of time.<sup>19</sup> For now, humanity can know its principal part only when it sees its origin as coming from God.<sup>20</sup>

### **God’s Self-Communication**

Throughout the pilgrim’s journey, Luther acknowledges a self-communication of God takes place through Christ and the Spirit. In explaining the First Article of the Apostles Creed, Luther writes, “We see how the Father has given to us himself with all creation and has abundantly provided for us in this life, apart from the fact that he has also showered us with inexpressible eternal blessings through his Son and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>21</sup> Speaking to the Second Article, Luther writes, “We see what we have from God over and above the temporal goods mentioned above, namely, how he has given himself completely to us, withholding nothing.”<sup>22</sup>

For Luther, God’s self-communication takes place through the Word and Spirit. According to Luther, in Gen. 3:8, we are told that Adam heard the Word of God, in the Garden, in the

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<sup>17</sup> *LW* 1:109.

<sup>18</sup> *LW* 1:111.

<sup>19</sup> *LW* 1:65

<sup>20</sup> *LW* 34:138.

<sup>21</sup> *LC* II.24 in Kolb and Wengert, 433.

<sup>22</sup> *LC* II.26 in Kolb and Wengert, 434.

“*ruach*,” the Spirit of the Day (It is the same word used to describe the “*ruach*” of God which hovered over the waters in Gen. 1:2.) Luther said that the Spirit cloaked Himself in the breeze due to the now fallen condition of Adam.<sup>23</sup>

Today, that Word and Spirit communicate to creation through the Gospel. The Gospel reveals who God is and what He has done for humanity in creation, redemption, and sanctification. Through the Gospel, the Spirit works to justify and sanctify. He does this by revealing Christ and telling of His work of redemption. Luther calls this the first principle of Christian doctrine.<sup>24</sup>

According to Luther, God reveals Himself in no other way than through the Gospel. He writes, “Although [God] is present in all creatures, and I might find him in stone, in fire, in water, or even in a rope. For he certainly is there, yet he does not wish that I seek him there apart from the Word . . . He is present everywhere, but he does not wish that you grope for him everywhere. Grope where the Word is, and there you will lay hold of him in the right way. Otherwise, you are tempting God and committing idolatry.”<sup>25</sup>

Effective self-communication of God through the Gospel involves two parts. The first is the outward proclamation of the Word and administration of the Sacraments. The second is the inward work of the Holy Spirit who leads the pilgrim to repentance and faith in the Gospel. The outward precedes the inward. According to Luther, no one receives the Spirit apart from the

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<sup>23</sup> LW 1:11.

<sup>24</sup> Martin Luther, “The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ Against the Fanatics,” in *Word and Sacrament II*, ed. Helmut Lehmann, vol. 36, *Luther’s Works, American Edition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), 352.

<sup>25</sup> LW 33:47, 36:342. Here Luther makes a judgment that God is present in all creatures, but he does not clarify how one is to understand that presence, whether it is a “formal” or “quasi-formal” cause of divinity or entirely something else.

Word and Sacrament or understand His Word apart from the Spirit.<sup>26</sup>

Luther maintained that God communicated to His creation exclusively through these means. In the Smalcald Articles he wrote, “Therefore we should and must insist that God does not want to deal with us human beings, except by means of his external Word and sacrament. Everything that boasts of being from the Spirit apart from such a Word and sacrament is of the devil.”<sup>27</sup> The Confessors spoke likewise. They taught that there are only two efficient causes for conversion, the Holy Spirit and God’s Word.<sup>28</sup>

Luther and the Confessors teach that not all who receive the communication of God are bestowed the righteousness of faith which is nothing more than the forgiveness of sins and the gracious adoption of the poor sinner into God’s family for the sake of Christ’s obedience and merit alone. It comes from grace apart from the law.<sup>29</sup> In Aristotelian language, since it is not a form of God’s essence, we might say it is a gift of efficient causality.

However, He bestows this righteousness only to those whom He has predestined for salvation.<sup>30</sup> The Augsburg Confession states, “Through these [Word and sacraments], as through

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<sup>26</sup> Martin Luther, “Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments,” in *Church and Ministry II*, ed. Helmut Lehmann, vol. 40, *Luther’s Works, American Edition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958), 146. *LW* 33:28, 137. Luther in his *Bondage of the Will* written in 1525 acknowledges a problem with Cornelius in Acts 10. “Granted [Cornelius] was not yet baptized and had not yet heard the word concerning the risen Christ, does it follow from this that he was without the Holy Spirit? In that case, you will have to say also that John the Baptist and his parents, and even Christ’s mother and Simeon, were without the Holy Spirit. But let us take our leave of such deep gloom.” *LW* 33:220. However, he gives a more consistent testimony in the Smalcald Articles written in 1537. There he writes, “Cornelius had long since heard from the Jews about a future Messiah, through whom he would be justified before God. His prayers and alms were acceptable in such faith . . . Without such a preceding Word or hearing he could neither believe nor be righteous.” Smalcald Articles VIII. 8 in Kolb and Wengert, 322.

<sup>27</sup> SA VIII. 9–13 in Kolb and Wengert, 323. For Luther, the only one who received the full self-communication of God apart from these means was Jesus Christ. *LW* 40:195

<sup>28</sup> Epitome of the Book of Concord II. 19 in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2000), 494.

<sup>29</sup> *LW* 33:263.

<sup>30</sup> “It has thus pleased God to impart the Spirit, not without the Word, but through the Word, so as to have us as cooperators with him when we sound forth outwardly what he himself alone breathes inwardly *wherever he wills* (emphasis mine), thus doing things that he could of course do without the Word, though he does not will so to do.”



means, he gives the Holy Spirit who produces [righteous] faith, *where and when he wills* in those who hear the Gospel.” (emphasis mine).<sup>31</sup>

The Confessions add that this righteousness of faith has three objects; “the promise itself; the fact that the promise is free; and the merits of Christ as the payment and atoning sacrifice.”<sup>32</sup> It is the obedient faith which justifies (Rom. 1:5).<sup>33</sup> By the righteousness of faith, the pilgrim becomes obedient to God’s will and plan to save and bless him. Luther reveals how the will of the pilgrim becomes one with God’s will in the act of obedient repentance. He wrote, “For the Lord hates this body of sin and is preparing to remake it into another: therefore, He commands us to hate it also, to destroy and put it to death and to seek an escape from it and ‘the coming of His kingdom.’”<sup>34</sup>

Eventually, an indwelling of the righteousness of God in the pilgrim takes place, but only after God has first bestowed the gift of righteousness of faith by efficient causality.<sup>35</sup> This prized righteousness of God is something God alone possesses. The believer has it as a gift. Luther writes, “The righteousness of God’ in Latin means the righteousness that God possesses, but a Hebrew would understand it as the righteousness that we have from God and in the sight of God.”<sup>36</sup> After receiving this righteousness, it is proper to say that the pilgrim has the indwelling “form” or “image” of God.<sup>37</sup>

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LW 33:155.

<sup>31</sup> Augsburg Confession V.1–3 in Kolb and Wengert, 40.

<sup>32</sup> Ap IV. 53 in Kolb and Wengert, 128.

<sup>33</sup> “The obedience of faith is not rendered by works but by faith alone.” LW 31:350.

<sup>34</sup> Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, ed. Hilton Oswald, vol. 25, *Luther’s Works, American Edition* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 309.

<sup>35</sup> Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord III. 54 in Kolb and Wengert, 571–72.

<sup>36</sup> LW 33:265. Luther acknowledges that unregenerate man is devoid of this righteousness.

<sup>37</sup> Martin Luther, “Freedom of a Christian,” in *Career of the Reformer I*, ed. Helmet Lehmann, vol. 31, *Luther’s Works, American Edition* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), 349.

Luther said this form consists of, “wisdom, power, righteousness, goodness—and freedom.”<sup>38</sup> Luther called this righteous form of God, in the believer, an alien righteousness.<sup>39</sup> It is alien because it is Christ’s righteousness, not that of the believer. This righteousness swallows up all sins in a moment, making this righteousness declarative<sup>40</sup> and imputative, bringing an ontological change to human nature in the eyes of God.<sup>41</sup> However, Luther said there is a second aspect to this alien righteousness of Christ. In the sinful believing pilgrim, it is not complete.<sup>42</sup> The first aspect of alien righteousness places the pilgrim on the bridge. The second aspect is developed as the pilgrim crosses the bridge.

The Confessions agree about these two aspects of alien righteousness, “It is correct to say that in this life believers who have become righteous through faith in Christ have first of all the righteousness of faith that is reckoned to them and then thereafter the righteousness of new obedience or good works that are begun in them. But these two kinds of righteousness dare not

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<sup>38</sup> Martin Luther, “Two Kinds of Righteousness,” in *Career of the Reformer I*, ed. Helmut Lehman, vol. 31, *Luther’s Works American Edition* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg 1957), 301.

<sup>39</sup> *LW* 31:297.

<sup>40</sup> The Confessions indicate it is declarative righteousness. “We believe, teach, and confess that according to the usage of Holy Scripture the word ‘to justify’ in this article means ‘to absolve,’ that is, to pronounce free from sin.” They rejected the phrase, “[being] made righteous before God in fact on account of the love and virtues which are infused by the Holy Spirit and through the works which result from this infusion.” Ep III. 7, 15 in Kolb and Wengert, 495–97. “We are accepted as children of God for the sake of Christ’s obedience alone, which is reckoned as righteousness through faith alone out of sheer grace . . . Only because of His obedience does God the Father forgive our sins by grace . . . this righteousness is conveyed to us by the Holy Spirit through the gospel and in the Sacraments . . . the word justify here means to pronounce righteous and free from sins and to count as freed from the eternal punishment of sin because of Christ’s righteousness, which is reckoned to faith by God.” SD III. 10–17 in Kolb and Wengert, 563–64.

<sup>41</sup> Luther says justification is declarative and imputative. He writes, “The word purifying, moreover, in Acts is the word for imputing. To purify the heart is to impute purification to the heart.” *LW* 34:168. Luther taught that righteousness is by Christ alone. Martin Luther, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John Chapters 6–8*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, vol. 23, *Luther’s Works, American Edition* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), 24. Schwiebert noted that Luther believed that in justification a psychological mystery took place. It involved a personal union with God causing an ethical regeneration which expresses itself in a life of thankful service to one’s neighbor. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times*, 291.

<sup>42</sup> In his Large Catechism, Luther wrote about the status of the pilgrim on the return to Eden, “Now, however, we remain only halfway pure and holy” Large Catechism II. 58 in Kolb and Wengert, 438, and *LW* 31:299–301.

be mixed with each other or simultaneously introduced into the article on justification by faith before God. For because this righteousness that is begun in us—this renewal— is imperfect and impure in this life because of our flesh, a person cannot use it in any way to stand before God’s judgment throne.”<sup>43</sup>

Until the full restoration of Christ’s righteousness takes place, the Spirit continues to perfect this form of righteousness through confession and absolution as the pilgrim journeys over the cruciform bridge back to God. Because the bridge is cruciform in shape, Luther taught that this journey does not come without resistance. He said, “The flesh must be dragged along and compelled by the spirit to obediently follow, in spite of resistance and trembling. It must be forced into submission until it is finally overcome.”<sup>44</sup> This continual sanctifying hatred and condemnation of self comes only by the grace of God.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, the Spirit perfects this form of righteousness through the strengthening of faith in Christ which produces acts of love and sacrifice toward the neighbor.<sup>46</sup> Luther wrote,

So, a Christian, like Christ his head, is filled and made rich by faith and should be content with this form of God which he has obtained by faith; only, as I have said, he should increase this faith until it is made perfect. For this faith is his life, righteousness, and his salvation . . . Although the Christian is thus free from all works, he ought in this liberty to empty himself, take upon himself the form of a servant, be made in the likeness of men, be found in human form, and to serve, help, and in every way deal with his neighbor, as he sees that God through Christ has dealt and still deals with him.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, the second aspect of the alien righteousness of Christ in the believer concretely takes the

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<sup>43</sup> SD III. 32 in Kolb and Wengert, 567.

<sup>44</sup> Martin Luther, *Sermons of Martin Luther*, vol. 8, ed. and trans. John Nicholas Lenker (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 153.

<sup>45</sup> LW 25:381–83 381–83. If grace and the Holy Spirit are the same, then one concludes it is the essence of the Spirit which brings repentance.

<sup>46</sup> LW 31:301.

<sup>47</sup> LW 31:366.

shape of the cruciform bridge as the believer serves his neighbor in love. It produces in the believer the continuous act of emptying oneself to the neighbor, just as Christ and the Father empty themselves to each other, creating another similarity between the economic and immanent Trinity. This Christlike emptying in love requires the Spirit's own indwelling presence in the believer. The indwelling Spirit moves the pilgrim with a love that makes one free, joyful, conquerors of all tribulations, servants of our neighbors and lords of all.<sup>48</sup>

Through these means, God also reveals to the elect His being as Triune. Luther concluded that the three persons of the Trinity work indivisibly as one in the acts of creation, redemption, and sanctification. However, he also described each person as having proper works. He states,

Moses employs these three words—"God said," "He made," "He saw"—as if in this manner he wanted to point to the three Persons of the divine majesty. By the term, 'He said' the Father is denoted. He begets the Word in eternity and in time establishes this world through that Word. Therefore, they have attributed the verb 'made' to the Person of the Son. The Son has in Himself not only the image of the Divine Majesty but also the image of all created things. Therefore, He bestows existence on things . . . To these . . . is joined the Third Person, the Holy Spirit, who 'sees' the created things and approves them.<sup>49</sup>

He further taught no one can clearly and successfully divide God subjectively into three persons. Thus, in describing the distinctions of persons in the Trinity, Luther stays away from neo-scholastic language. He does not use words like "subsistence" (Thomas). For Luther, the understanding of the intra-divine relationships is beyond human comprehension. In a sermon he gave on Trinity Sunday in 1522 he said about the Trinity, "[The word] Trinity is nowhere to be found in Scriptures but has been conceived and invented by man. For this reason, it sounds cold, and we had better speak of 'God' than of the Trinity."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>LW 31:367.

<sup>49</sup> LW 1:50.

<sup>50</sup> Martin Luther, *Sermon on Trinity Sunday*, Sermons of Martin Luther, vol. 3, ed. and trans. John Nicholas Lenker (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 406–7.

Furthermore, Luther typically speaks about the Trinity in the language of the church. He writes, “The Father is not known except in the Son and through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, as there is one God objectively, so also subjectively . . . far as His substance or essence is concerned, He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct Persons in one Godhead.”<sup>51</sup> He also lists the intra-divine relationships saying, “the Word is begotten from the substance of the Father and the Holy Spirit is the delight of the Father.”<sup>52</sup> In doing so, he uses traditional processional language (“begotten from the substance of the Father”) and more relational language (“the delight of the Father”).

In discussions about the Trinity, Luther thought it best to focus on what we do know, namely, Jesus Christ in whom the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are located.<sup>53</sup> Luther taught that it is through Christ that we come to the knowledge of the immanent Trinity’s existence. He stated, “The Scriptures gradually and beautifully lead us to Christ; first revealing him to us as a man, then as the lord of all creatures, and finally as God. Thus, we are successfully led to the true knowledge of God. But the philosophers and the wise men of this world would begin at the top and so they have become fools. We must begin at the bottom and gradually advance in knowledge.”<sup>54</sup>

### **Life East of Eden**

Luther, in his *Bondage of the Will*, said that in spiritual matters the will was never free

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<sup>51</sup> LW 1:58.

<sup>52</sup> LW 1:60.

<sup>53</sup> “One must be called off and restrained from busying itself with the investigation of these secrets of God’s majesty, which it is impossible to penetrate because he dwells in light inaccessible . . . Let [the Christian] occupy itself instead with God incarnate, or as Paul puts it, with Jesus crucified, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, though in hidden manner.” LW 33:145–46.

<sup>54</sup> Luther, *Sermon on Trinity Sunday*, 3: 409–10.

before or after the Fall. It is either subject to God or Satan and cannot subsist on its own.<sup>55</sup> In the Fall, the Spirit departed from humanity, and Satan and chaos filled the vacuum.<sup>56</sup>

In the Confessions, original sin is the opposite of original righteousness.<sup>57</sup> It contains ignorance of God, contempt for God, no fear and trust in God, and the inability to love God. The Confessors write in the Apology, “For human nature is enslaved and held captive by the devil.”<sup>58</sup> In the Epitome of the Formula of Concord they add, “[Original sin] is not a slight corruption of human nature, but rather a corruption so deep that there is nothing sound or uncorrupted left in the human body or soul, in its internal or external powers.”<sup>59</sup> In the Formula of Concord, the Confessors list several biblical passages which clearly testify that humanity is the devil’s captive.<sup>60</sup>

Luther agreed with the scholastics that having an intellect and will is part of what it means to be human.<sup>61</sup> However, the Fall impaired them beyond humanity’s ability to fix.<sup>62</sup> Now all humanity is conceived with this impairment.<sup>63</sup> Despite this severe impairment, Luther taught that fallen reason was still the most beautiful and excellent of all created things.<sup>64</sup> Despite this, Luther

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<sup>55</sup> “For you would not call a slave free, who acts under the sovereign authority of his master; and still less rightly can we call a man or angel free, when they live under the absolute sovereignty of God (not to mention sin and death) in such a way that they cannot subsist for a moment by their own strength.” *LW* 33:103. “The omnipotence and the foreknowledge of God, I say, completely abolish the dogma of free choice.” *LW* 33:189, 191.

<sup>56</sup> “For what is the whole human race without the Spirit but the kingdom of the devil, a confused chaos of darkness.” *LW* 33:98, 175. “Free choice, when it is devoid of the glory God, is perpetually guilty of the sin of unbelief, together with all its powers, efforts, and enterprise.” *LW* 33:266, 278.

<sup>57</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession II. 27–29 in Kolb and Wengert, 116.

<sup>58</sup> Ap II. 47 in Kolb and Wengert, 119.

<sup>59</sup> Ep. I. 8–10 in Kolb and Wengert, 488–89.

<sup>60</sup> SD II. 30 in Kolb and Wengert, 550.

<sup>61</sup> *LW* 33:284.

<sup>62</sup> *LW* 1:64.

<sup>63</sup> “Original sin [is] born in us after Adam’s fall, and not only something personal but also natural. *LW* 34:154.

<sup>64</sup> *LW* 34:138–39.

said that the Fall blinded people from seeing God and made people captive to do only the devil's will.<sup>65</sup> Luther writes, "Now, Satan and man, having fallen from God and been deserted by God, cannot will good, that is, things which please God or which God wills; but instead they are continually turned in the direction of their own desires, so that they are unable not to seek the things of self."<sup>66</sup> Thus, the Fall made humanity subject to the powers that are unconquerable by the human will and intellect alone.<sup>67</sup>

### **Return to Eden: Luther's Spirit Soteriology**

Luther disagreed with the scholastic's opinion on the capability of the human will to overcome these enemy powers. In his Spirit anthropology, the human will plays no part in conversion. The scholastic Erasmus believed differently. For him the will, though damaged, still could play a role in human conversion. He stated, "The proneness to evil which is in most men does not take away free choice altogether."<sup>68</sup> In contrast, Luther believed that if there is any proneness in man, it was only toward evil.<sup>69</sup> Luther confessed total depravity.<sup>70</sup> Only the Spirit could put a pilgrim on the cruciform bridge.

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<sup>65</sup> SD II. 44 in Kolb and Wengert, 552. "A man should know that with regard to his faculties and possessions he has the right to use, to do, or to leave undone, according to his own free choice, though even this is controlled by the free choice of God alone, who acts in whatever way he pleases. On the other hand, in relation to God, or in matters pertaining to salvation or damnation, a man has no free choice, but is a captive, subject and slave either of the will of God or the will of Satan." *LW* 33:70.

<sup>66</sup> *LW* 33:175–76.

<sup>67</sup> *LW* 34:138

<sup>68</sup> *LW* 33:215.

<sup>69</sup> "Scripture intends this proneness to signify the persistent attraction and drive of the will toward evil." *LW* 33:216.

<sup>70</sup> "Whether now the governing part of man is included in the whole man, the whole people, or the whole race of men, we give the Sophists leave to doubt and debate; as for ourselves, we know that in the whole human race are included body and soul with all their powers and works, all virtues and vices, all wisdom and folly, all righteousness and unrighteousness. They are all flesh, because they all savor of the flesh, that is, of the things that are their won, and they are devoid of the glory of God and the Spirit of God . . . Could men strive after virtue who not even know what virtue was?" *LW* 33:225.

The ability the scholastics gave to the intellect and will of humanity, according to Luther, was not biblically proper.<sup>71</sup> Luther qualified the Augustinian aphorism, “God, who created you without you, will not save you without you.”<sup>72</sup> He said the statement was true if understood that “Works are necessary to salvation, but they do not cause salvation, because faith alone gives life. On account of the hypocrites, we must say that good works are necessary to salvation.”<sup>73</sup> Luther summarized the scholastic teaching using Aristotelian language, “From here the conclusion was drawn that free will cooperated as the preceding and efficient cause of salvation.”<sup>74</sup>

In *The Bondage of the Will*, Luther stated strong words against any human capability of returning to God, “All men are devoid of the knowledge of God and full of contempt for him, and they all turn aside to evil and are worthless as regards the good . . . Agree now . . . that the most excellent thing in all men [i.e., reason and will] is not only ungodly, but ignorant of God, contemptuous of God, inclined to evil and worthless as regards the good.”<sup>75</sup> Luther adds, “Those who say that the light of God’s countenance is in man, as an imprint on us, that is, free will which forms the precept right and the will good . . . neither understand what man is nor do they know what they are talking about.”<sup>76</sup>

For Luther, the preceding and efficient cause of salvation solely belonged to Uncreated grace, to God alone. To give any credit for salvation to the created grace of fallen human will and intellect compromises the very meaning of grace. Luther states it this way,

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<sup>71</sup> LW 33:228–29. Luther centered his arguments for total depravity on the writings of St. Paul. He said, “Paul almost everywhere uses Hebraisms, so that the meaning is: ‘All men are ungodly and wicked, and in their wickedness, they suppress the truth, hence they are all deserving of wrath.’” LW 33:248.

<sup>72</sup> LW 34:165.

<sup>73</sup> LW 34:65.

<sup>74</sup> LW 1:60–61.

<sup>75</sup> LW 33:254.

<sup>76</sup> LW 34:139.



For God’s solicitude in promising grace to recall and restore the sinner is a sufficiently strong and reliable argument that free choice by itself cannot but go from bad to worse and (as Scripture says) fall down into hell, unless you credit God with such levity as to pour out words of promise in profusion for the mere pleasure of talking, and not because they in any way are necessary for our salvation.<sup>77</sup>

The Confessions agreed,

Scholastic theologians have taught pure error and blindness against this article: That after the fall of Adam the natural powers of the human being have remained whole and uncorrupted, and that each human being possesses by nature sound reason and a good will as the philosophers teach . . . That if humans do as much as is in their power, then God will certainly give grace to them . . . if these teachings were right, then Christ had died in vain. For there would be no defect or sin in humankind for which he had to die—or else he would have died only for the body and not for the soul, because the soul would be healthy and only the body would be subject to death.<sup>78</sup>

Furthermore, the Confessions state, “It is our teaching, faith and confession that human reason and understanding are blind in spiritual matters and understand nothing on the basis of their own powers in spiritual matters the understanding and reason of mankind are completely blind and by their own powers understand nothing . . . [and] that the unregenerated human will is not only turned away from God but has also become God’s enemy.”<sup>79</sup> The Confessions conclude, “Now the scholastics mingled Christian teaching with philosophical views about the perfection of nature and attributed more than was proper to the freedom of the will and to ‘elicited acts.’”<sup>80</sup>

The word scholastics used to describe the element in the human will which was bent toward evil but not sinful is concupiscence.<sup>81</sup> The scholastics argued that this concupiscence has a capability to hunger and thirst for God, a *Vorgriff* if you will. Luther taught on concupiscence,

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<sup>77</sup> LW 33:138.

<sup>78</sup> SA I. 3–11 in Kolb and Wengert, 311.

<sup>79</sup> Ep II. 2–3 in Kolb and Wengert, 491–92.

<sup>80</sup> Ap II.12 in Kolb and Wengert, 114.

<sup>81</sup> LW 34:186.

“According to the scholastics, concupiscence is a kind of indifferent affection which does not damn us, and which is neither advantageous nor injurious to us.”<sup>82</sup> In his *Disputation Against the Scholastics*, Luther further argues, “Some scholastics define original sin feebly and almost obscurely as concupiscence. Others define it as the absence of original righteousness which ought to be in us . . . a large part of them hold that it is the gross evil of lust on account of original sin; and after remission they call it only a punishment, an infirmity, and tinder.”<sup>83</sup> The Confessors describe the scholastic view on concupiscence this way, “Thomas says, ‘Original sin denotes the absence of original righteousness together with a disordered disposition [*habitus*] among the parts of the soul. Consequently, it is not pure privation, it is indeed a corrupt disposition [*habitus*].’”<sup>84</sup>

Luther added that humanity does not have a *Vorgriff* for the true God. He uses the writings of St. Paul in Rom. 3:19–23 for support, “What stronger or graver terms could have been used than that all the whole world is guilty, all children of men are turned aside and worthless, no one fears God, no one is not wicked, no one understands, no one seeks for God?”<sup>85</sup> If there was any *Vorgriff*, any concupiscence, any inclination in man, it was bent only toward evil. Luther defined concupiscence as part of original sin. He writes,

When the sophists speak of original sin, they are speaking only of wretched and hideous lust or concupiscence. But original sin really means that human nature has completely fallen; that the intellect has become darkened, so that we no longer know

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<sup>82</sup> LW 34:185. Speaking against Erasmus, “You imagine the human will as something standing on neutral ground and left to its own devices, find it easy to imagine also that there can be an endeavor of the will either direction . . . Free choice must be nothing but a captive beast of burden for Satan, which can only be set free if the devil is first cast out by the finger of God (Lk. 11:20).” LW 33:237. Furthermore, in his commentary on Psalm 143 he writes, “[The scholastics say] ‘Yes, but the inclination is not a mortal sin’ They insist that they are not blind.” Martin Luther, *Commentary on Psalms*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, vol. 14, *Luther’s Works, American Edition* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), 205.

<sup>83</sup> LW 34:154.

<sup>84</sup> Ap II. 27 in Kolb and Wengert, 116.

<sup>85</sup> LW 33:257.

God and His will and no longer perceive the works of God; furthermore, that the will is extraordinarily depraved, so that we do not trust the mercy of God and do not fear God but are unconcerned, disregard the Word and will of God, and follow the desire and the impulses of the flesh.<sup>86</sup>

The fallen human will can play no part in justification. Using the language of causality, Luther stated, “Where justification is between God and man, this is from [an] efficient cause,” meaning that something outside of humanity creates it and the human will is not involved.<sup>87</sup> Luther clearly spoke against the scholastic thought that there was any formal or quasi-formal cause within humanity that played a role in conversion. Arguing against this scholastic thought, Luther writes, “The obedience of the law is not in us; where it is, it is so impure it cannot justify.”<sup>88</sup> Instead, in the act of justification God, in His grace, lays hold of a person, who because of his sins, is in flight from God. He pours out His mercy on him saying, “You shall not die.” He then bestows upon him the Holy Spirit. Luther says, “He leads man down to hell and back again.”<sup>89</sup> For Luther, it was vitally important to get right what God does (and humanity does not) in conversion if one wanted to live a godly life.<sup>90</sup>

The Confessors said likewise. They confess that there are only two efficient causes for conversion; the Holy Spirit and the instrument of the Holy Spirit, God’s Word.<sup>91</sup> In the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, they reject the human will as a third efficient cause of

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<sup>86</sup> *LW* 1:114. Luther, in his debate with Erasmus on human free will, said, “Diatribes contends that by this passage [Dt. 30:11] it is declared not only that what is commanded is implanted in us, but also that it is like going downhill, i.e., is easy or at least not difficult.” *LW* 33:141.

<sup>87</sup> *LW* 34:162.

<sup>88</sup> *LW* 34:162.

<sup>89</sup> *LW* 34:172. Luther further adds, “God slays man by the revelation of sin through the Holy Spirit.” *LW* 34:173.

<sup>90</sup> *LW* 33:35. “Very great care must always be exercised so that no man in a false confidence imagines that by such works he will be justified or acquire merit or be saved; for this is the work of faith alone, as I have repeatedly said.” *LW* 31:369–70.

<sup>91</sup> Ep II. 19 in Kolb and Wengert, 494.

conversion.<sup>92</sup> However, after conversion, they allow for the regenerated will to work alongside the Spirit in the process of sanctification.<sup>93</sup> Citing the Fathers, they wrote, “When the Fathers defend free will, they mean that it is capable of being free in the sense that it can be converted by grace to the good and become truly free in the way it was created to be originally.”<sup>94</sup> Luther agreed, stating that once regenerated, the will becomes cooperative with the Spirit.<sup>95</sup> This regenerated human will is stronger than the one the sinless First Adam had.<sup>96</sup>

Thus, the Confessors taught that original sin consists of deficiency of righteousness AND an inclination bent only toward evil. They both need Christ’s grace and a drowning by the Holy Spirit.<sup>97</sup> The Confessors believed that the scholastics spoke a contradiction when they confessed concupiscence as a human inclination which the individual can turn toward good or evil and not part of original sin. They write,

Indeed, they attribute to human nature the unimpaired powers to love God above all things and to keep the commandments of God “according to the substance of the act.” Nor do they see how they contradict themselves. For what else is the ability to love

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<sup>92</sup> “In our schools young people have also been greatly misled by the teaching of the three cause of our conversion to God (the Word of God as it is preached and heard, the Holy Spirit, and the human will) and how these three causes relate to each other.” SD II. 90 in Kolb and Wengert, 561.

<sup>93</sup> Staying true to Aristotelian language, since the regenerated will is a formal cause within humanity, the Confessors should have stated that the cause of conversion are two efficient causes, the Spirit and the Word, and that an effect of conversion entails one more efficient cause; the regenerated human will.

<sup>94</sup>SD II. 23 in Kolb and Wengert, 548. The confessors equate grace with the Holy Spirit Himself, attributing the work of repentance and conversion to the Holy Spirit who drowns the recalcitrant will of the Old Adam and gives birth to a cooperative will of the New Man. The will cannot become cooperative without this operation of the Spirit.

<sup>95</sup> “If God works in us, the will is changed, and being gently breathed upon the Spirit of God, it again wills and acts from pure willingness and inclination and of its own accord, not from compulsion, so that it cannot be turned another way by any opposition, nor be overcome or compelled even by the gates of hell but it goes on willing and delighting in and loving the good, just as before it willed and delighted in and loved evil.” *LW* 33:65–66. Luther adds, “The fact that after the Fall our will is impelled to better desires, comes from heaven; the fact that with tears, alms, and prayers we attain grace that makes us acceptable to God, this too is from heaven.” *LW* 33:284.

<sup>96</sup> “[Adam] was not impotent when he had the assistance of grace, yet by means of this precept God shows him plainly enough how impotent he would be in the absence of grace. But if that man, even when the Spirit was present, was not able with a new will to will a good newly proposed to him (that is obedience) because the Spirit did not add it to him, what should we be able to do without the Spirit in respect of a good that we have lost?” *LW* 33:124.

<sup>97</sup> Ap II.2–49 in Kolb and Wengert, 112–19.

God above all things with one's own power and to keep the commandments of God than original righteousness? What becomes of original sin if human nature by itself has the power to love God above all things, as the scholastics confidently affirm? What need will there be of the grace of Christ if we can become righteous by our own righteousness? What need will there be of for the Holy Spirit if by our human power alone we can love God above all things and keep God's commandments?<sup>98</sup>

Luther confessed the same. He argued that if one believes the will can contribute to conversion, without first a drowning of it by the Holy Spirit, then it follows that Christ did not need to redeem the will with the rest of the human nature.<sup>99</sup> Second, if the will was not in need of redemption, God then would be unjust in condemning the will of the unbeliever. Thus, to remain just in His punishment, God would have to separate the human will from the unbelieving human being before condemning him. Luther said this was impossible. Using their argument against them, Luther said to the scholastics that if it was possible for one to be devoid of one's will in this manner, one would no longer be human.<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, Luther and the Confessors argued against the Palamite thought that any talk of grace involved in conversion was that of the fruit of the Spirit, rather than the essence of the Spirit (that is, the Spirit as God Himself) was not biblically correct.<sup>101</sup> Seeing grace as only a fruit

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<sup>98</sup> Ap II. 9–10 in Kolb and Wengert, 113–14.

<sup>99</sup> “Even the whole man, and the most excellent thing in man is said to be flesh, does it necessarily follow that whatever is flesh must also be called ungodly? We call ungodly anyone who is without the Spirit of God . . . it plainly follows that whatever is flesh is ungodly and under the wrath of God and a stranger to the kingdom of God . . . Are we to rate the price of his blood so low as to say that it has redeemed only what is lowest in man, and that what is most excellent in man can take care of itself and has no need of Christ?” *LW* 33:227, 282.

<sup>100</sup> “And if that is so, then [free will] is undoubtedly good, holy, and righteous, and ought not to be damned but separated from the man who is to be damned. This, however, cannot be done, and if it could, a man no longer possessed free choice would not be a man at all . . . God damns none but the ungodly, so therefore it [free will] is ungodly. . . If this power were not unbelieving and ungodly, John should not have said of the whole man that he is judged already, but with regard to what is best and most excellent in him, he is not judged, because this strives after faith, or rather, already believes.” *LW* 33:283.

<sup>101</sup> “But when a man has no doubt that everything depends on the will of God, then he completely despairs of himself and chooses nothing for himself but waits for God to work; then he has come close to grace and can be saved. It is thus for the sake of the elect that these things are published in order that being humbled and brought back to nothingness by this means they may be saved . . . Thus, when God makes alive, he does it by killing, when he justifies, he does it by making men guilty, when he exalts to heaven, he does it bringing down to hell.” *LW* 33:62.

of the Spirit made it too easy to see that the will was not in need of regeneration. It could give the impression that the Spirit was merely an aid to the human will in conversion rather than the driving divine agent at work in conversion. Luther clearly says that grace which enacts conversion is the essence of the Spirit, not its fruit. He writes, “When [God] acts by the Spirit of grace in those whom he has justified, that is, in his Kingdom, he actuates and moves them in a similar way, and they inasmuch as they are his new creation, follow and cooperate, or rather as Paul says, they are led.”<sup>102</sup> Conversion is by only Uncreated act. Therefore, Luther attributed conversion to the power of the Holy Spirit alone. It works the fear of God and gives the gift of repentance only through the Word. He writes, “Only one thing is necessary for Christian life, righteousness, and freedom . . . where the Word of God is missing there is no help at all for the soul.”<sup>103</sup>

Only in sanctification can Luther agree with Del Colle that it happens by “created actuation by Uncreated act.” In sanctification, the Spirit brings about the sanctifying fruits of good works, which involve the human will.<sup>104</sup> The Confessors wrote, “Good works do not precede faith, nor does sanctification precede justification.”<sup>105</sup> Luther says, “God has created and preserved us, that he might work in us, and we might cooperate with him, whether outside his Kingdom through his general omnipotence, or inside his Kingdom by the special virtues of his Spirit . . . *The Spirit* alone does both of these things [justification and preservation] in us, recreating us without us and

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<sup>102</sup> LW 33:242.

<sup>103</sup> LW 31:345. He also confesses, “To become children of God [St. John] says [is] by a power divinely bestowed on us, not by a power of free choice inherent in us.” LW 33:157.

<sup>104</sup> “The good law and that in which one lives is the love of God, spread abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.” LW 31:15.

<sup>105</sup> SD III.41 in Kolb and Wengert, 569. One can say that a “sanctifying repentance” comes before justification, a preparation to receive Christ in one’s being in the same way the flesh of Jesus was prepared by the Spirit to receive the Logos.

preserving us without our help in our recreated states.” (emphasis mine)<sup>106</sup> Thus, only a drowned and re-created human will can participate in trusting God.

Thus, Luther teaches that once the Spirit is present in the pilgrim, it is never idle, but produces fruits.<sup>107</sup> He writes, “The grace of God is never present in such a way that it is inactive, but it is a living, active, and operative spirit; nor can it through the absolute power of God act so that an act of love may be present without the presence of the grace of God.”<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, the Holy Spirit conforms the inner man of the pilgrim during his crossing of the cruciform bridge back to Eden. Luther teaches,

In this life he must control his own body and have dealings with men. Here the works begin; here a man cannot enjoy leisure, here he must indeed take care to discipline his body by fasting, watching, labors, and other reasonable discipline and to subject it to the Spirit so that it will obey and conform to the inner man and faith and not revolt against faith and hinder the inner man, as it is the nature of the body to do if it is not held in check.<sup>109</sup>

This conformation brought about by the Spirit brings a different focus of life to the regenerated pilgrim. The pilgrim no longer lives “in and for” himself but lives “in and for” Christ through faith and “in and for” his neighbor through love. By faith he lives beyond himself into God. But with love, he descends beneath himself into his neighbor.<sup>110</sup>

In this life, the fullness of God’s kingdom remains hidden even to the believer. A partial knowledge is comprehended in faith and in the Word and Sacrament. When Christ finally delivers us into the Kingdom of His Father, the believer will behold Him most clearly. The

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<sup>106</sup> *LW* 33:243.

<sup>107</sup> *LC II*. 53 in Kolb and Wengert, 438.

<sup>108</sup> *LW* 31:13.

<sup>109</sup> *LW* 31:358–59.

<sup>110</sup> *LW* 31:371.

kingdom will no longer be a kingdom of faith, but a kingdom of clarity and manifest being.<sup>111</sup>

Thus, the Lutherans differed with the scholastics over Spirit anthropology. Lutherans argued the human will plays no part in getting the pilgrim to the bridge. The scholastics say it does. To get a further understanding of this, we look at the debate Luther had with the scholastic Erasmus over this issue.

### **Luther's Spirit Soteriology in the Debate with Erasmus**

The scholastic Erasmus defined the human will as humanity's power to freely apply oneself to things which lead to or turn away from eternal salvation.<sup>112</sup> Erasmus appealed to the Church Fathers who taught there is a certain seed of virtue, a *Vorgriff*, if you will, implanted in humanity. Erasmus conceded that fallen humanity also has grosser affections which tempt it to do the opposite. Nevertheless, he believed fallen humanity does have a seed that seeks virtue.<sup>113</sup>

Speaking against this, Luther said, "Those who say that natural things have remained untainted after the fall philosophize impiously in opposition to theology."<sup>114</sup> Adding some irony to the debate he furthered argued, "It would be foolish of God to reveal righteousness to men if they either knew it already or possessed the seeds of it."<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, "Our friends say that it is a very little thing, and almost nothing, by which we merit grace . . . Paul asserts that

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<sup>111</sup> Martin Luther, *1 Corinthians 7, 1 Corinthians 15 Lectures on 1 Timothy*, ed. Hilton Oswald, vol. 28, *Luther's Works, American Edition* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1973), 124–25.

<sup>112</sup> *LW* 33:102–3.

<sup>113</sup> *LW* 33:223.

<sup>114</sup> *LW* 34:139. In that same treatise, Luther takes another swipe at using Aristotle for this debate. He wrote, "So also, those who introduce Aristotle (who knows nothings of theological man) to witness that reason aspires to the best things [philosophize impiously]." The Confessors rejected the idea that original sin is only an outward obstacle to good spiritual powers and not a spoiling or lack of powers. They maintained human nature and its essence are entirely corrupt and rejected the thought that a person still has something good in him, even in spiritual things. If there was any seed in humanity, it was the seed of original sin which is a source of all other actual sins. See Ep I. 16 in Kolb and Wengert, 489–90.

<sup>115</sup> *LW* 33:249.



justification is freely bestowed on all who are justified, he leaves no one to work, or earn, or prepare himself, and he leaves no work that can be called congruous or condign.”<sup>116</sup> Luther believed that such scholastic talk was a denial of Christ and a compromise on the meaning of the word grace. The scholastic talk communicated a merit of worthiness rather than a gift of grace.<sup>117</sup>

Erasmus, in no way, intended to disparage grace. He simply wanted to establish a point of human responsibility.<sup>118</sup> Erasmus tried to find the delicate balance between human accountability and God’s sovereignty. This was something Luther and the Confessors said could not be found.<sup>119</sup>

Erasmus argued that the Scriptures tell us that God receives the willing. He argued that the Scriptures supported the idea that the will is a cause, but not the sole cause, of conversion. Luther responded by saying that the will is not the cause of conversion whatsoever. The Holy Spirit is. He works in, with, and under the will to lead the pilgrim to accept grace and the Spirit’s and Christ’s indwelling.<sup>120</sup>

Luther added that Erasmus’ thought made an improper distinction within humanity. The “seeds,” as defined by Erasmus, would not need redemption. Christ therefore would not have redeemed all parts of human nature. Putting a sarcastic interpretation on John 3:36, Luther said,

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<sup>116</sup> *LW* 33:268.

<sup>117</sup> *LW* 33:280.

<sup>118</sup> *LW* 33:103.

<sup>119</sup> The Confessors recognized this attempt by the Scholastics. They wrote, “The opponents . . . make a big point that too much should not be granted to the free will as with the Pelagians nor should all freedom be denied it as with the Manichaeans.” Ap XVIII. 1–2, in Kolb and Wengert, 233. The Confessors lumped the Pelagians with the scholastics saying that both parties taught that people could love God, fulfill His commandments, and merit grace and justification without the Holy Spirit.

<sup>120</sup> *LW* 34:173, 196. Speaking against the scholastics, Luther said, “[The scholastics] do not construe faith in Christ as the true spiritual indwelling of Christ in us and our indwelling in Christ; but they imagine that this historical faith imparts everlasting life . . . Contemplation and shadowy and erratic thoughts, which are but an imaginary indwelling and nothing but thoughts, will not do here.” *LW* 23:144.

“Upon him means that whereas the wrath of God rests upon the grosser passions of man, [but] upon his power of free choice, which is to say his will and reason, there rests grace and eternal life.”<sup>121</sup>

A second argument of Erasmus was that God has bestowed humanity with two graces and desires to bestow a third. The first grace has been bestowed upon all of humanity since the time of creation. It is called common grace. This grace is implanted by nature. It is corrupted by sin, but not extinguished.

After redemption, God bestows the second grace upon those willing to receive it.<sup>122</sup> This grace is congruent merit.<sup>123</sup> It arouses the pilgrim to repentance and causes the pilgrim to become agitated over his sin. It echoes Del Colle’s thought of “created actuation by Uncreated act.” However, it does not eradicate his sin. With this grace, the pilgrim strives toward God with alms, prayers, the study of God’s Word, hearing sermons, doing good deeds, and asking for godly men to pray for him. It inclines one to love God more readily and cheerfully. By this grace, the pilgrim does good things and strives to live the obedience of faith. If the will ever resists God’s offer of grace given because of congruent merit, Erasmus taught it deserves to be deserted by grace and then will do nothing but evil.

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<sup>121</sup> *LW* 33:284.

<sup>122</sup> Occam, another Scholastic, argued that the Holy Spirit was not necessary for the performance of a good work. A person could do a good work, without any divine assistance, which merited primary grace. *LW* 34:187.

<sup>123</sup> Congruent merit is a scholastic word used to describe merit given to someone out of the kindness of the giver’s heart and thus not earned. An example of this is a child cleaning a room without expecting a reward from parents and without being told to do so. The parent says, “Oh, how sweet,” and rewards the child. Thus, if God sees people doing good things, He rewards them with this merit out of the kindness of His heart, for their unsolicited good deeds. ON the other hand, condign merit takes place when the pilgrim performs the solicited deeds of God to God’s satisfaction. In condign merit, the believer is defied because he has earned salvation. The Confessors spoke against congruent and condign merit. For the Confessors, there is no difference between congruent and condign merit. Both contain elements of work righteousness. Ap IV. 19–21, in Kolb and Wengert, 123. They argued that it was foolish to believe that people under eternal wrath can merit forgiveness of sins by an act of love. Ap IV. 36 in Kolb and Wengert, 126. Furthermore, they disagreed that the atoning work of Christ merited the habit of love (primary grace), given to those who congruently earned it through common grace. Ap IV. 81 in Kolb and Wengert, 133.

Thus, when Erasmus spoke of free choice of doing anything good, he connected it with this special grace. Grace and free will do the same work, yet between the two, Erasmus acknowledged grace is the leader.<sup>124</sup> For the pilgrim's efforts, working with this gift of special grace, God, because of His faithfulness to His promises, is now obligated to award him at the end of journey, the highest form of grace. This is condign merit, the gift of deification, the grace of full justification.<sup>125</sup>

Luther said Erasmus' thoughts here would be agreeable in the realm of sanctification, but not in the realm of justification. He countered Erasmus' language of using the expression "apply itself" in conjunction with free choice. He wrote, "when you say it can 'apply itself' you completely exclude the Holy Spirit with all his power, as superfluous and unnecessary."<sup>126</sup> Luther believed Erasmus had given too much credit to human free will in the conversion process. Luther asked how something that is displeasing, disobedient, and hostile to God, even incapable of any obedience to God, can possibly strive toward the good?<sup>127</sup> The scholastic thought cheapens the grace of God when conversion can happen anywhere and everywhere by humanity's "puny" endeavor, when, according to Luther, it can happen only through the grace of Christ. He hoped

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<sup>124</sup> LW 33:78.

<sup>125</sup> The doctrine of congruent and condign merit was a problem for Luther. The doctrine was introduced by Duns Scotus who believed that humanity had lost "supernatural righteousness" in the Fall but still had a free will which it could use to love God. Humanity still had enough free will to earn *Meritum de Congruo*, where after doing so, God would grant His "grace freely given," with which humanity could receive *Meritum De Condigno*, full justification. However, when asked about predestination, he maintained that it was an arbitrary decision. Luther never was sure he had earned the *Meritum de Congruo*. Under this system, Luther could never confess that he loved God. Instead, he hated Him. The arbitrary decision of predestination for Luther became his hidden God which concerned him unto his dying day. See Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times*, 169–74.

<sup>126</sup> LW 33:109. Luther said, "Otherwise, if by the addition of inference and similes invented by human reason these [biblical] texts [used by Erasmus prove anything, they prove this, that free choice consists not simply of some little bit of endeavor or desire, but of a full and free ability and power to do everything without the grace of God, with the Holy Spirit." LW 33:144.

<sup>127</sup> LW 33:274–75.

that the defenders of free choice would realize they were denying Christ.<sup>128</sup>

To sum up Erasmus' second argument for the freedom of the will, Erasmus said there is a natural grace, a stimulating congruent grace that stimulates the will toward good and leads to salvation being deserved (condign or merited) because of one's righteous works.<sup>129</sup> Those denying congruent grace still have reason and will, common grace, that is obscured but not extinguished. But even in those who deny the congruent grace, there is still an effective endeavor (*Vorgriff*) toward good within common grace.<sup>130</sup>

Luther keyed in on the view that the will of common grace can seek good but is ineffective of receiving salvation without the Spirit and congruent grace. He argued that to say free choice has an ineffective power apart from grace is a contradiction in terms. It is as saying there is a free choice which is not truly free.<sup>131</sup> If Erasmus meant by this phrase that the will is a resistant aptitude, one opposed to God, a will that needed to die, and not just be boosted, Luther would have no objections. Luther stated humanity has no capability of pursuing the righteousness of God without first being regenerated by the Spirit.<sup>132</sup>

But Luther knew this was not the case. He said the only way around this obstacle is to give "efficacy" a new meaning and understand it as a "perfection," within humanity which did not need redemption. Luther believed that free choice is a formal cause found only in God, for only He can do and does what He wants. Humanity, not even sinless, cannot. If it was taught that

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<sup>128</sup> LW 33:279. The Confessors also spoke against the idea that the will has some ability to merit grace by its endeavoring. We reject the phrase "God draws, but He draws those who are willing," or, "The human will is not idle in conversion but also is doing something. Ep II. 16 in Kolb and Wengert, 493.

<sup>129</sup> LW 33:78–79.

<sup>130</sup> LW 33:66.

<sup>131</sup> The Confessors entirely rejected the thought that a person from his own natural powers can start the conversion process by doing good deeds, but because of human weakness, the Holy Spirit must complete it. See SD II. 76 in Kolb and Wengert, 558–9.

<sup>132</sup> LW 33:264.

humanity had this formal cause in itself, it would be the greatest possible sacrilege.<sup>133</sup>

Erasmus countered Luther by arguing that “ineffective” means the human will can still have power toward good. People can endeavor toward transcendence (or in postconciliar language, a *Vorgriff*), or desire for something which they cannot accomplish on their own. Erasmus gave the example of a boy who desires to move a boat but cannot do it on his own. The boy has some strength, but not enough, and he is ineffective without assistance. Luther responds by saying, “What is ineffective but simply no power at all? What advantage to it is its endeavoring if it does not succeed in reaching its goal?”<sup>134</sup> Luther was adamant that an endeavor cannot obtain the grace of God, or even turn toward God.<sup>135</sup>

In a third argument, Erasmus appealed to the Church Father Origen. Origen believed in the tripartite composition of the human being (soul, spirit, flesh), with the flesh corrupted by sin and incapable of turning toward the spirit. However, the soul stood in the middle, and as the governing part of humanity, could turn humanity either way. Erasmus argued, “Not all human desire is flesh, but there is that in man which is called soul, and there is that which is called spirit (the *Vorgriff*), with which we strive after virtue, and which they call reason . . . or governing part of the soul.”<sup>136</sup>

Luther countered by saying, “Meanwhile you seek to make full use of the authority of the Fathers who say that there are certain seeds of virtue implanted in the minds of men. First, if that

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<sup>133</sup> *LW* 33:67–68. Here, Rahner and Luther may see an ecumenical agreement. Calling free will a quasi-formal cause within humanity indicates the free will of God and humanity are alike but not the same. The free will of humanity has limitations which God’s will does not have. Of course, this is why Rahner adds the preface “quasi” to the formal cause.

<sup>134</sup> *LW* 33:67–68, 239.

<sup>135</sup> *LW* 31:10–11. The phrase Luther uses of “which is in one,” communicates that he understands Scholastics believe that there is a formal cause (divine or other) within humanity which contributes to conversion.

<sup>136</sup> *LW* 33:223.

is what you want, as far as we are concerned you may use or abuse the authority of the Fathers, but you should take note of what you believe when you believe men who are expressing their own ideas without the Word of God.”<sup>137</sup> Luther said that Origen’s theory was only a dream which he never proved.<sup>138</sup>

A fourth argument consisted of Erasmus’ view on the role of faith in conversion. Erasmus was willing to agree with Luther that faith justifies if faith was understood only as a start to full justification.<sup>139</sup> He was willing to give high praise to faith because of its “beginning” role in the justification process. But faith had to be accompanied by renewal and love infused by the Holy Spirit, for full justification.<sup>140</sup> Faith alone did not promise deification. Erasmus argued that love, not faith, is considered the greatest power toward justification (1 Cor. 13:13). Faith only begins the deification process, love completes it.<sup>141</sup> Of course, for Luther, this was an improper mixing of justification and sanctification. Erasmus may have had better luck with Luther if he would have instead keyed in on the two aspects of Luther’s alien righteousness.<sup>142</sup> Luther believed the

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<sup>137</sup> *LW* 33:228–29.

<sup>138</sup> *LW* 33:275.

<sup>139</sup> “Full” justification in Roman Catholic thought is equated with deification. Luther taught them to be separate. He taught that justification assured one of forthcoming deification.

<sup>140</sup> *Ap* IV. 71–2 in Kolb and Wengert, 132. Erasmus wrote about faith that it begins the forgiveness of sins but works obtain salvation. *LW* 34:163. Luther commented, “They say further that God wills that from the grace infused into us, we should do good works.” *LW* 34:188.

<sup>141</sup> *LW* 34:188. Here one may consider an ecumenical thought. If love and grace are considered the essence of the Spirit (that is, the person of the Spirit itself at work for us), and not just the fruit of the Spirit, a Lutheran could say faith is a fruit of love. It is clear faith is only a fruit of the Spirit and not its essence. The Spirit needs not faith. But throughout the Scriptures, it can be clearly seen that love is the essence of the Spirit and not only a fruit (1 John 4:8). Thus, when the Spirit works repentance in the pilgrim, one can say, “love” and “grace” work repentance.

<sup>142</sup> The second form of Luther’s alien righteousness has much in common with the Catholic’s view of progressive justification. However, in Lutheran terms it is called sanctification. The Confessors had no problem giving a role to progressive spiritual growth in the sanctified live of the pilgrim, but they rejected any idea of it playing a role in justification. *Ap* IV. 125 in Kolb and Wengert, 140. The only elements necessary for justification are God’s grace, Christ’s merit, and faith. Love is a fruit that follows justification. To make love part of the justification process, they believed, was to introduce work righteousness. See *SD* III. 28–9 in Kolb and Wengert, 566–7. Justification for them was declarative. See *SD* III. 62 in Kolb and Wengert, 573. The Confessors wrote, “Because faith truly brings the Holy Spirit and produces a new life in our hearts, it must also produce spiritual

first aspect of alien righteousness accomplished declarative justification. However, he did admit there was a second aspect to it that continues to grow into perfection until death. Luther addressed this growth period as man's proper righteousness.<sup>143</sup> If Erasmus would have agreed to Luther's view of "declarative" alien righteousness, progress toward agreement might have been made. However, Erasmus, along with his scholastic leanings could not admit God assures salvation before death. The view of equating deification with "full" justification prevents Erasmus from agreeing to this.

A fifth argument between the two was over the role of contrition. Erasmus argued that common grace can perform the act of contrition on its own. When it does, it congruently merits forgiveness of sins. Luther argued that the human work of contrition is not the cause for the gift of forgiveness. The cause is the Holy Spirit.<sup>144</sup> It is the Holy Spirit alone who brings contrition to humanity. Luther believed that no one, on his own, could mortify the flesh, bear the cross, get to the cruciform bridge, and follow the example of Christ without the Spirit. The old nature is not put to death through the human work of contrition. Mortification of the flesh happens only by the Spirit through the Word of God.<sup>145</sup>

A sixth argument Erasmus proposed for the freedom of the will is the way Scripture talked about conversion. Several biblical verses can be shown to indicate that the will can look for and

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impulses in our hearts. The prophet shows what those impulses are when he says, 'I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.' Therefore, after we have been justified and reborn by faith, we begin to fear and love God, to pray for and expect help from him, to thank and praise him, and to obey him in our afflictions. We also begin to love our neighbor because our hearts have spiritual and holy impulses." See Ap V.125 in Kolb and Wengert, 140.

<sup>143</sup> *LW* 31:299.

<sup>144</sup> *LW* 34:171, 173.

<sup>145</sup> *LW* 40:149.

turn toward God. Erasmus argued that God draws the willing.<sup>146</sup> However, Luther said all of Erasmus' biblical examples involved the imperative, subjunctive, or optative verb, not the indicative. They signify not what we do or can do, but what we ought to do and what is demanded of us. They make us aware of our impotence and sin. They are spoken not to affirm the power of human will, but to enlighten blind reason and make it see that its own light is no light, and that the virtue of the will is no virtue.<sup>147</sup> Luther stated, "A teaching that can rise no higher than to insist you must live piously on earth, doing what is right, is a teaching that has an earthly origin. Such a teaching sounds good, but it cannot be carried out. It forever remains an imperative command or a recommended and desirable 'ought,' but it can never attain the indicative 'done.'"<sup>148</sup>

One biblical example Luther pointed to was Zech. 1:3. God tells his people to return to Him and He will return to them. Luther points out that in this verse Erasmus equates "return" with "endeavor." Endeavor means a desire for completion, but not completion. Thus, to stay consistent with this meaning, it would translate that God also endeavors to return, but is powerless to achieve it. Luther ironically tells Erasmus that if his understanding of endeavoring means to strive for something which one cannot attain, the same must be said about God's endeavor, a ridiculous conclusion. Luther believed the word "return" has two uses in the Scriptures, one legal, the other evangelical. In its legal use, it is an expression of an exacting and

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<sup>146</sup> The Confessors also spoke against this. "We reject . . . [the phrases] that 'God draws, but He draws those who are willing'; . . . and 'The human will is not idle in conversion but also is doing something.'" Ep II. 16 in Kolb and Wengert, 493.

<sup>147</sup> LW 33:127, 144. Luther, "That is how it is in Scriptures too; there also expressions like these [imperatives] are used in order to show what can be done in us by the power of God, and what we cannot do ourselves. LW 33:148.

<sup>148</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Ascension Day Sermon 1533*, ed. and trans. Eugene F. A. Klug, vol. 2, in *Sermons of Martin Luther: The House Postils* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 129.



imperious command, which requires not merely an endeavor but a change of the whole life.<sup>149</sup> This change cannot be worked by humanity. It can be achieved only by the evangelical Spirit.

A second biblical example was Luther's use of St. Paul who spoke against free choice when he taught that through the law one does not become righteous but instead becomes aware of sin. Nowhere does St. Paul concede power to the will's ability to strive toward the good.<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, St. Paul makes it clear that all humanity's works and endeavors are condemned. If one thinks the will works in cooperation with the Spirit in conversion, then the righteousness of faith is not reckoned to that individual, and conversion comes about by obligation, not grace (Rom. 4:3–4). In the end, Luther believed that the words of the prophets include both actuality and potentiality, and when they say that man is to seek God, they are saying he cannot seek God.<sup>151</sup>

### **The Paradoxical Tensions of Luther caused by His Spirit Soteriology**

Can Luther's thoughts on Spirit anthropology be made compatible with postconciliar's concern about the salvation of those outside the church? It first must be said that Luther's Spirit anthropology created a tension between God's sovereignty and human responsibility when it comes to conversion.<sup>152</sup> He said about this relationship, "The best and infallible preparation for grace and the sole means of obtaining grace is the eternal election and predestination of God . . . . And this is false, that doing all that one is able to do can remove the obstacles to grace."<sup>153</sup> When

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<sup>149</sup> *LW* 33:134.

<sup>150</sup> *LW* 33:261.

<sup>151</sup> *LW* 33:255.

<sup>152</sup> The Scholastics and Neo-Scholastics resolve this by giving some responsibility of conversion to the human will.

<sup>153</sup> *LW* 31:11.

asked how the Spirit comes to us, Luther answered, “[Christ said] ‘He who eats My flesh.’ You must hear the Gospel from Him; you must let yourself be taught and instructed; you must not resist the message. Then the Holy Spirit can be effective in you through the Word and implant and impress Christ in your heart, with the result that henceforth you speak differently, believe differently, suffer differently, do good works differently . . .”<sup>154</sup>

Luther’s thoughts on predestination, that the Spirit works conversion only in the elect, begs the question why are some saved and not others? Why are some gifted with the presence of the Word and others are not? Why do some respond positively to the message and others do not? To this question, the Confessors taught that rejection of God’s offer lies with human responsibility and not the sovereignty of God.<sup>155</sup> Ultimately, Luther responded that the answer to all these questions lies with God’s election. He said, “In this Word the Spirit comes and gives faith *where and to whom he wills* .”<sup>156</sup> Here a bestowal model describes Luther’s view better than a processional model. The bestowal model is a more personal approach. God specifically targets certain people to receive His Spirit which works conversion and returns them back to Him. A processional model, “a shotgun approach,” is impersonal and shows less intentionality. In the Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:1–9) the shotgun approach is used, but only those seeds targeted toward good soil took root. Luther, in his *Bondage to the Will*, wrote about this mystery of election, “But why does he not at the same time change evil wills that he moves? This belongs to the secrets of his majesty, where his judgments are incomprehensible.”<sup>157</sup>

But how can God be just when He condemns those whom He does not elect? Luther said

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<sup>154</sup> LW 23:151.

<sup>155</sup> SD XI. 41 in Kolb and Wengert, 647.

<sup>156</sup> LW 40:149. (emphasis mine).

<sup>157</sup> LW 33:180.

there is a difference between righteousness as understood by human standards and righteousness as understood by divine standards. He wrote, “For if his righteousness were such that it could be judged to be righteous by human standards, it would clearly not be divine and would in no way differ from human righteousness . . . In all other matters we grant God his divine majesty, and only in respect of his judgment are we prepared to deny it.”<sup>158</sup> He adds, “Faith and the Spirit judge differently, for they believe that God is good even if he should send all men to perdition.”<sup>159</sup>

Luther said this paradox between divine sovereignty and human responsibility leads to much sweating and toiling. One thinks it is solved by giving some responsibility to the human will for either conversion or condemnation. This maintains the goodness of God and gives fault to unbelieving humanity, and thus not to God, for its condemnation. However, Luther says the answer does not lie there. It lies between the ordained and the absolute will of God. A concept based on Luther’s distinction between the revealed and hidden will of God. The ordained will of God gives order to creation and reveals His will to save all people through Christ. It is the shotgun method. However, the absolute will is targeted but not revealed. It interrupts the order of creation through miracles and includes the hidden doctrine of predestination.<sup>160</sup>

Luther strove to bring more clarity to this paradox by proposing there are three lights, namely, the ones of nature, of grace and of glory. The light of nature enables one to say whether a certain action is just or unjust. However, it struggles to understand why innocent people suffer,

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<sup>158</sup> *LW* 33:290.

<sup>159</sup> *LW* 33:174.

<sup>160</sup> “Luther was familiar with this distinction . . . when it played an unhappy part in his own spiritual experience . . . When Luther sought to work out his salvation in terms of God’s ordained will, he became obsessed by the terrifying fear that he might be predestinated by God’s absolute will, not to salvation, but damnation.” *LW* 33:190.

and evil people prosper. This is solved by the light of grace. The light of grace reveals that justice will be served in the end (Ps. 73:1–17).<sup>161</sup> However, the light of grace cannot understand how God can damn one who is unable by any power of his own to do anything but sin and be guilty. Luther says at this point, “Both the light of nature and the light of grace tell us that it is not the fault of the unhappy man, but of an unjust God; for they cannot judge otherwise of a God who crowns one ungodly man freely and apart from merits, yet damns another who may well be less, or at least not more, ungodly.”<sup>162</sup> It is the third light, the light of glory, that solves this problem. Luther continues, “That light will show us that the God whose judgment here is one of incomprehensible righteousness is a God of most perfect and manifest righteousness. In the meantime, we can only believe this, being admonished, and confirmed by the light of grace, which performs a similar miracle in relation to the light of nature.”<sup>163</sup> Luther argued that the scholastic view on human responsibility to solve this paradox leaned toward work righteousness and still left unanswered questions when it came to conversion. He wrote,

For suppose they do attribute as little as possible to free choice, nevertheless they teach that by means of this minimum we can attain righteousness and grace. Nor have they any other way of solving the problem of why God justifies one man and abandons another than by positing free choice and inferring that one has endeavored while the other has not, and that God respects the one for his endeavor but despises the other, and he would be unjust if he did anything else . . . When they say that the man who endeavors finds favor with God, while the one who does not endeavor does not find favor, is not this plainly a case of condign merit? Are they not making God a respect of works, merits, and persons? They say that one man lacks grace by his own fault, because he has not striven after it, while the other, because he has striven obtains grace, as he would not have done if he had not striven. If this is not condign merit, I should like to know what there is that deserves the name.<sup>164</sup>

But what about those who lived in the far corners of the world who had not heard the Gospel?

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<sup>161</sup> Job, in his complaints against God, needed growth in the light of grace.

<sup>162</sup> *LW* 33:292.

<sup>163</sup> *LW* 33:292.

<sup>164</sup> *LW* 33:267.

Can Luther, like the postconciliar, give any hope to those who die outside the church? How can God be just if He condemned them for something that was not their fault? According to Klaus Shultz, Luther believed that God has gotten His Word out to all the corners of the world through the unique transient ministry of apostles. The extraordinary mission fashion of Matthew 28:18–20 no longer existed.<sup>165</sup> Thus, if people were not Christians, it was their fault.

Luther's view was that Christianity had fulfilled its universal calling. He said, "The Gospel has been preached, and upon it the kingdom of God has been firmly established in all places under heaven."<sup>166</sup> The other sheep of the Good Shepherd have been brought in.<sup>167</sup> In his Ascension Day Sermon of 1533, he preached, "Even though the apostles were not able to personally go to all parts of the world and did not get to see every nook and cranny of it, nevertheless, their proclamation did go out into all the world as Ps. 19:3–4 indicates, 'There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the earth.'<sup>168</sup> Thus, Luther was at peace when asked about the destiny of those who had not heard the Gospel. For him, all had heard it and if they were lost it was on account of their rejection.<sup>169</sup>

However, according to Gustav Warneck, Luther at one point in time, acknowledged a point of agreement with the postconciliar. Luther believed God may have other "diver" means to communicate Himself, other than the Gospel, but was reserved to say what those diver means

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<sup>165</sup> Klaus Detlev Schulz, "Luther Missiology in the 16th and 17th Centuries," *The 35th Annual Reformation Lectures Lutheran Missiology* (2002): 14–15. Argument for this can be found in one's understanding of Acts 2:5.

<sup>166</sup> Gustav Warneck, *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions from the Reformation to the Present Time* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1901), 12–13.

<sup>167</sup> Warneck, *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions*, 13.

<sup>168</sup> Luther, *Ascension Day Sermon, 1533*, 127. Luther uses allegory to a major degree here. The Psalm text he uses literally refers to the heavens, firmaments, and the course of the sun which all humanity sees.

<sup>169</sup> Warneck, *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions*, 12–13.

could be. However, Luther said, “God, to be sure, has everywhere His elect, whom by diver means He leads to faith; but how He brings this to pass, that is matter of His sovereign grace—a human missionary agency does not lie in the plan of His decree.”<sup>170</sup>

### Conclusion

Luther and the Confessions argue for total depravity against the scholastics. They recognize with the scholastics that free will is part of the image of God which was not destroyed in the fall. However, for Luther and the Confessors, sin damaged free will to the extent that it could only decide against God. The free will stands in need of experiencing a death and renewal. The scholastics could not agree with that. The will only needed a “boost.” Luther and the Confessions agree with the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which states that the image of God is the “ability to know and love God and share in God’s life,” and that man is “capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession, and of freely giving himself and entering communion with others.”<sup>171</sup> But Luther and the Confessors taught that humanity had no power on its own to do this and also refrained from utilizing Aristotelian language to describe these mysteries. He saw the teachings of Aristotle to be an “enemy of grace.” However, he was very familiar with Aristotelian terms and used them when he faced the scholastics.

Luther agrees with the Catechism and neo-scholastic Rahner about the sinless Adam experiencing a transition to a higher form of life if Adam would not have fallen. For Luther and the Confessors, the self-communication of God takes place through the Word and Spirit. Luther

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<sup>170</sup> Warneck, *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions*, 15–16. One example Luther gave of this is how God used hunger to drive Abraham to Egypt where he gave witness of the Triune God to the Egyptians. Eugene W. Bunkowske, “Was Luther a Missionary?” *CTQ*, 49 no. 2–3 (April 1985): 162. One thing to investigate here is if this thought of Luther was modified when he went against the Enthusiasts.

<sup>171</sup> CCC, §356–57.

argued against the Spirit working apart from the means of grace. In his day, the presence of the Enthusiasts might have caused him to be wary of any thought about the Spirit working apart from them. Believers stood in need of a means to know God, while Jesus did not. But, as mentioned before, there was a time in which Luther did confess God could use other “diver” means to bring people to faith.

Luther also taught a Spirit anthropology that spoke of an indwelling of the Spirit and Christ in the believer. However, unlike the scholastics, there is no quasi-form in man that can help bring this about. For Luther and the scholastics, the Spirit and Christ dwell in the believer according to formal causality. In other words, the Spirit itself dwells in the believer, not just its fruits. However, for Luther, faith is an efficient cause, something which the divine persons create together in the believer, which is different than themselves. Faith does not exist in the Trinity and is therefore not a formal cause in the persons of the Trinity.

Finally, Luther spoke heavily against equating full justification with deification. The thought speaks against the idea of a God who wishes to have His people be at peace with Him and not hold them in suspense. For Luther and the Confessors, the believer is justified and promised deification when brought to faith, when placed on the cruciform bridge to communion with God by the Spirit. Faith is not the beginning of the justification process. It completes justification and assures deification. Justifying faith does not need to be completed by love for assurance of deification.

The thoughts of Luther and the Confessors against the scholastic thought of their day are still relevant for the modern-day Lutheran to use in communication with the neo-scholastics. There is nothing new under the sun (Eccl. 1:9). To have ecumenical dialogue, the modern-day Lutheran needs to be versified, like Luther, in Aristotelian language. The issues Luther faced

with them are much the same we face with the neo-scholastics regarding the image of God, free will, and the work of the Spirit in the act of conversion, justification, and sanctification.



**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**A LUTHERAN RESPONSE PART 2**

**Prenter**

Life In the Garden of Eden

Lutheran theologians Regin Prenter and Leopoldo Sánchez bring a robust and balanced Spirit soteriology to our discussion. Prenter believed God created humanity with a “shadow” of the Logos’ image. This shadow enabled humanity to have a relationship with its Creator. One of the Spirit’s roles is to make humanity aware of this shadow.<sup>1</sup>

Prenter’s Spirit anthropology shows that this shadow of the Logos’ image within man consists of two spiritual states. One is *spiritus* where the Spirit of God rules the whole person.<sup>2</sup> This was the state Adam had before the Fall. In this state the will of humanity and God were one.<sup>3</sup> God gave Adam and Eve His Spirit to empower them to live in conformity with His will. God was the sole determiner of how humanity should act, and humanity willingly submitted to His direction.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the First Adam, needed not the knowledge of good and evil, because he knew God’s will. At this point, he could say with the Second Adam, “My will is to do the will of the one who created me (paraphrase of John 6:38).” In freedom, humanity united itself with the absolute authority of its Creator.<sup>5</sup> By the power of the Spirit, humanity had sinless faith in, love

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<sup>1</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 47, 370–71. When speaking of the works of the divine person, Prenter will use the word “appropriate” more than “proper” but sometimes in his wording of the works of the persons, the word “proper” fits better.

<sup>2</sup> Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, trans. John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1953), 78, 274, 299–300. For Prenter, full actualization of regenerated believers includes more than just the indwelling of the Spirit. Prenter says the Spirit of God has not reached its goal with humans until it includes their glorified body in his plans.

<sup>3</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 260–61.

<sup>4</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 272.

<sup>5</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 268.

for, and knowledge of God.<sup>6</sup>

Created to live upon the earth and under heaven, human nature was orientated toward earth and heaven.<sup>7</sup> Prenter avoids using any Aristotelian causal language to describe this orientation. He simply calls the first orientation reason; the second, conscious. Reason is directed toward earth. Conscious is humanity's power of self-transcendence directed toward its Creator, making its existence whole. In the state of *spiritus*, humanity, by the grace of the Spirit, is directed toward heaven to be ruled by it.<sup>8</sup>

#### God's Self-Communication of His Triune Nature

Prenter taught that God reveals Himself through biblical history. In this history, God reveals Himself to be three persons but one divine being through the works of creation, redemption, and renewal. Prenter follows the standard line of thought, which is the Father creates, the Son redeems, and the Spirit sanctifies (He prefers the word "renew" here).<sup>9</sup> He is a disciple of the *opera ad extra sunt indivisa*. He states, "Every divine work is the work of the one triune God."<sup>10</sup> Thus, the works are appropriated to each person, not proper. Prenter writes, "When we view some of these works in the name of the Father, others in the name of the Son, and still others in the name of the Holy Spirit, the meaning of these 'appropriations' is simply that the action of the one God extends itself throughout a history of revelation which through various temporally unconnected acts enables us to know the saving action of the one God

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<sup>6</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 252.

<sup>7</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 262.

<sup>8</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 263–64.

<sup>9</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 47.

<sup>10</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 47.

through the course of this history.”<sup>11</sup>

Alongside this, Prenter agrees with Rahner that the incarnate Christ is indeed the highest self-communication of God to humanity. He writes, “Only in this hidden state in the flesh [incarnate Christ] does God reveal himself in this age.”<sup>12</sup> However, this self-communication does not point to an idealistic Christ which the human person is to imitate, but to a historical, realistic Christ who the Spirit forms in the believer. An idealistic Christ leads only to imitating Christ. It wrongfully changes the Gospel to Law.<sup>13</sup>

### Life in the Land East of Eden

In the temptation, humanity was convinced that it could become like God and be the determiner of good and evil. Humanity no longer needed God for matters of moral judgment. It decided to have a separate and contrary will to God’s will. In the Fall, humanity ordered the Spirit of obedience to leave.<sup>14</sup> The departure of the Spirit caused humanity to experience a death in the relationship with its Creator Spirit. However, God didn’t bring immediate physical death to humanity. Instead, God chose to allow humanity to live on its rebellion, letting it become more deeply involved in the corruption of sin, until the appointed time for deliverance came.

Second, through the Fall, the image of God in humanity became corrupt.<sup>15</sup> The conscious was no longer orientated to the true God. In the perfect image, humanity desired dependence and fellowship with God. In the corrupted image, humanity seeks independence from God.<sup>16</sup> Prenter

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<sup>11</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 47.

<sup>12</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 155.

<sup>13</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 165–66, 170.

<sup>14</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 155.

<sup>15</sup> Regin Prenter, *The Word and the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1965), 159.

<sup>16</sup> Prenter, *Word and the Spirit*, 162, Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 6.

calls this corrupted desire concupiscence.

Humanity, in the land East of Eden, now experiences the second spiritual state of Spirit anthropology, the *caro*. It is the old self, where humanity lacks the Spirit of God and experiences guilt and shame because of it.<sup>17</sup> Now humanity serves itself.<sup>18</sup> Prenter states that the experience of a guilt-consciousness stems from being turned toward self. He argues against any psychological explanation of a guilt which stems from a particular ascertainable cause.<sup>19</sup> In the Fall, humanity's will becomes evil and keeps obedience to the Creator from being willing and unqualified.<sup>20</sup> In this fallen state, humanity is not able to solve the riddle of its existence and heal its experience of despair. In the end, humanity would capitulate to meaningless, unless God visits it.<sup>21</sup>

#### Prenter's Views on Scholastic Thought

Prenter's major problem with the scholastic and neo-scholastic thoughts on the nature of humanity, after the Fall, lies in the scholastic teaching of an existing "affinity" between the spiritual nature of man and the Spirit of God. In his Spirit anthropology, he denies such affinity exists.<sup>22</sup> Again, humans either have God's Spirit, in which case they are conformed to Christ, or they are flesh, *caro*. The human spirit is incapable of making any movement toward God on its

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<sup>17</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 5, 26.

<sup>18</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 272, 285. This curvature is part of concupiscence. It is identical with pride and self-love; thus, it is not considered neutral as in Roman Catholicism. See Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 286.

<sup>19</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 107. One of those explanations comes from Carl Jung who argued that guilt was first experienced when man started seeing his fellowman to be used for selfish gains. Prenter also states that any despair experienced by humanity which metaphysics expose is not equated with the true contrition and sorrow that can be experienced only by the efficient cause of the Holy Spirit, working through the Law in the sinner. See Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 156.

<sup>20</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 205.

<sup>21</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 206.

<sup>22</sup> See Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 43, and Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 26.

own.<sup>23</sup> One cannot ascend to heaven by piety.<sup>24</sup>

Prenter has a balanced Spirit anthropology. He taught that the Spirit and Christ descend from heaven into our weakness. They unite themselves to humanity through the means of grace.<sup>25</sup> Once they dwell in the believer, the Spirit makes the believer aware of Christ's presence and Christ makes the believer aware of the Spirit's presence and the created gift of faith within him.<sup>26</sup> However, the believer is not to see them as his possessions.<sup>27</sup>

If one is to equate this dwelling of the Spirit with the scholastic phrase of infused grace, which leads to love of God and His will, Prenter has no objections.<sup>28</sup> He agreed to this nomenclature if *caritas*, love for God, if it is not understood as a natural idealistic urge or a quasi-formal cause in man, but as the fusion of God's alien and proper works in humans which comes from outside of humanity. For him, it comes after justification, not before.

One can get a taste of how Prenter would have responded to postconciliar thought of quasi-formality by his response to Schleiermacher's idealism of "God-consciousness." Schleiermacher taught that God-consciousness is found universally in all humanity and is *identical* (emphasis mine) with the divine itself, something akin to Rahner's quasi-formal cause.<sup>29</sup> For Schleiermacher, redemption is a psychological process, erasing any concepts of redemption and

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<sup>23</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 26.

<sup>24</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 179.

<sup>25</sup> Prenter, *Word and the Spirit*, 2.

<sup>26</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 357, *Spiritus Creator*, 28, 33–35.

<sup>27</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 453, 485.

<sup>28</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 21, 23. In scholasticism, a created grace is given to man. However, in Rahner's neo-scholastic thought it is held that the quasi-formal cause of divinity within humanity, is a spiritual quasi-form of uncreated grace which lifts man to the transcendent level. Thus, Rahner understands it as having more affinity with the Spirit than with any other of the persons of the Trinity.

<sup>29</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 354. One could almost equate this consciousness with Rahner's quasi-formal cause.

Redeemer from their supernaturalistic content. One simply needs to “appropriate” the God-consciousness of Christ to restore it back to its rightful position, as Christ did (causing Christ to be an idealistic Christ to be imitated by man). However, unlike post conciliar thought, there is no need for supernatural divine help. Proper repositioning of the God-consciousness unto salvation can be attained even without knowing Christ, something like Rahner’s anonymous Christian thought.<sup>30</sup>

However, just like Luther spoke against Erasmus’ view on the state of the human will, Prenter believed that Schleiermacher’s view on God-consciousness wrongly leads one to conclude that there is a part of human nature which is not in need of redemption.<sup>31</sup> Prenter acknowledges there is a God consciousness in fallen humanity which strives for transcendence. However, he qualifies it by saying that sinful human transcendence is not capable of leading to the Absolute. God is in the heart of all, but humanity’s insight into that presence is not clear enough to distinguish what is a dream and what is the mark of the Creator.<sup>32</sup> Corrupt transcendence in humanity can only lead to a disguised mythology. God-consciousness is corrupted by sin and in need of redemption like any other part of human nature.<sup>33</sup> Only when the Spirit of God sanctifies this transcendency can it be directed toward the true God, the Absolute Other, and surrender to it.<sup>34</sup> Only by the presence of the Spirit, not by any quasi-formal cause of God or natural idealistic urge in man, can one groan for God and come to know Him. Prenter

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<sup>30</sup> See Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 350. 352.

<sup>31</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 24. This is like what Luther argued against Erasmus regarding Erasmus’ view on free will.

<sup>32</sup> Prenter, *Word and the Spirit*, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 40–41, and Prenter, *Word and the Spirit*, 39–40. Luther had Erasmus as his opponent in this debate. Prenter has Schleiermacher. Both of which contain elements of Rahner’s later quasi-formal thought.

<sup>34</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 150, 155–56.

writes, “Nature cannot lift itself up to the level of the supernatural, but the supernatural must on the other hand bend down to nature and lift it up to its own level.”<sup>35</sup>

### Prenter’s Spirit Christology/Anthropology

God, in His grace, sought to retain connection with His creation living East of Eden and return it to Eden through His Spirit working through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Through these events of Christ, the Spirit becomes known as the Spirit of Christ.<sup>36</sup> The Father sends the Spirit of Christ to work with His Son through the Word and Sacrament for the justification and sanctification of humanity. Through the Word, the Spirit and Christ guide the preaching of the church. In the church, the body of Christ, they serve as the interpreter and proclaimer of the Word and administrator of the Sacraments. The pilgrim needs their help to hear the message right.<sup>37</sup>

Prenter’s Spirit Christology teaches a distinction between the Spirit and the Son by how the Spirit relates to the Son. For Prenter, the uncreated grace of the Spirit does not dwell in the Logos, but rests upon it.<sup>38</sup> It does not need to conform the will of the Logos. In Spirit Christology, the Spirit dwells in the human nature of Christ and works to conform its will with that of the Logos. Luther described this relation as “the grace of Christ” or the favor of God in Christ. Prenter equates the favor of God with the Spirit of God.

The favor of God in Christ existed in the Old Testament patriarchs. Prenter teaches that the favor given to the patriarchs of Noah, Abraham, and Mary involved the working of the Spirit and

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<sup>35</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 19–20.

<sup>36</sup> Sánchez supports this when he argues Christ receives the “promise” of the Spirit from the Father to gather the nations in the apostolic church through Word and Sacrament. Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 46. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 141.

<sup>37</sup> Prenter, *Word and the Spirit*, 5–6, 9. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 242.

<sup>38</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 454.

the pre-incarnate Christ. Affirming this mutual working of the Spirit and the Logos in the Old Testament communicates that the patriarchs were justified by faith in the promise of the coming Christ.<sup>39</sup> In discussing this faith, Prenter uses a similar term with the neo-scholastics. He calls faith an “unconditional surrender of man to God’s sovereign grace.”<sup>40</sup>

By bringing this created gift of faith to humanity, the Spirit turns Christ from being an abstract idealistic thought to historical reality for both the Old and New Testament church.<sup>41</sup> Prenter states that the Spirit has always worked categorically to bring this faith to people. He writes, “Christ is promised in both [Testaments] but in the Old Testament Christ is hidden under the ‘figure,’ the type of him which constitutes the temporal content of the promise, while in the promise of the New Testament he is present as the incarnated Word.”<sup>42</sup>

In Prenter’s Spirit anthropology, the Spirit of Christ puts man on the cruciform bridge, creates a real historical relationship with Christ and conforms the believer to Christ’s death and resurrection as the pilgrims crosses the bridge. It does not present Christ only as a teacher or example to follow, an “idealism” to imitate.<sup>43</sup> Imitation piety is a human endeavor. It attacks the doctrine of the Trinity and grace as it gives too much credit to humanity, and limits the domain of the divine work of the Son and the Spirit, robbing them of their divine honor, lessening their

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<sup>39</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 141–42. Spirit anthropology usually refers to the Spirit bringing about the dwelling of Christ in man. Prenter though speaks that the Logos and Spirit independently bring about their own indwelling in humanity.

<sup>40</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 134.

<sup>41</sup> See Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 42, 54, 61, 72. Prenter argues there is a distinction of actions in the Spirit’s acts of justification and sanctification. In justification, the Spirit *leads* us to the living Christ by first leading us to struggle against original sin without the presence of Christ so that we might ultimately be led to rise with Christ. In sanctification, the Spirit leads us to struggle against actual sins with the presence of the risen Christ. Thus, it is the distinct work of the Spirit to lead and unite us to Christ, whether in justification or sanctification. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 81–82, 92.

<sup>42</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 141 (cf. 158).

<sup>43</sup> See Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 57–58, 61.



works, and causing less distinction of persons in the Trinity.<sup>44</sup> The work of the Spirit is to conform the believer into Christ, not just to enable the believer to imitate Christ's life.<sup>45</sup>

Second, in Prenter's Spirit anthropology, he talks of proper works. The proper works of the Spirit and Christ are distinguished. The crucified and risen Christ is the form. The Spirit is the former. This proper work of conforming the sinner to Christ shows the Spirit's personal distinction from the person of Christ.<sup>46</sup> It brings the "alien righteousness" of Christ to the pilgrim. This alien righteousness sets the pilgrim free from condemnation and from bondage to the Law. It is an imputed, not just declarative righteousness.<sup>47</sup> It brings an ontological change in the believer as it brings the dwelling of Christ and the Spirit in the pilgrim.<sup>48</sup> When their dwelling takes place in the believer the believer is justified and is given the promise of deification.

Third, in his Spirit anthropology, Prenter states that the "naked" favor of God can only dwell in Christ. It cannot ever dwell in humanity. However, when that favor is clothed with Christ it can. This teaching works against Rahner's anonymous Christian theory in that, according to postconciliar theologian, the favor of God, the Spirit of God, or a quasi-form of it, can dwell in humanity apart from Christ and produce divine love. For Prenter, the Spirit of God, may lead people to Christ, but cannot have a saving relationship with humans unless clothed with Christ.<sup>49</sup> This relational understanding creates a greater distinction between Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology.

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<sup>44</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 51, 177, 179–80.

<sup>45</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 452, 461.

<sup>46</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 182.

<sup>47</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 389–90.

<sup>48</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 445. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 227.

<sup>49</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 41. This teaching works against Rahner's anonymous Christian theory in that, according to postconciliar theologian, the favor of God, the Spirit of God, can dwell in us apart from Christ and produce divine love.

Prenter teaches another difference between Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology through the measure of the Spirit which dwells in each. Although the Spirit is subjectively present in both the human nature of Christ and that of the believer, it is in different degrees. Christ has full measure of the Spirit. The believer does not. However, this difference of degrees will last for a brief time.<sup>50</sup> According to Prenter, when looking through an eschatological lens, regenerated believers are cleansed of all sin, have the “full measure” of the Spirit and are fully conformed to Christ. Until then, believers receive the Spirit as first fruits<sup>51</sup> toward total conformation to Christ.<sup>52</sup> This process seeks not only to align the will of the pilgrim with that of the Father but also carry out that will by performing works of love for his neighbor in this life, a life that is still hidden until the resurrection, but is visible when the believer fulfills his vocation by living a life that shows what it means to be human as he journeys over the bridge.<sup>53</sup> Thus, the Spirit of Christ is the supernatural power by which a believer is conformed to Christ for the purpose of the highest good, the beatific vision.<sup>54</sup>

The Father, through Spirit Christology, restores humanity to fullness and into His communion through conforming the believer by placing him on the cruciform bridge and leading him across it. St. Paul testifies to this by teaching that the pilgrim is conformed to Christ’s death and resurrection.<sup>55</sup> This doctrine of conformation adds a helpful interpretative angle on Job. His crossing of the cruciform bridge was most difficult. Job’s story though is a great example of how

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<sup>50</sup> See Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 36–37.

<sup>51</sup> First fruits here mean a partial measure of the Spirit.

<sup>52</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 226, 229.

<sup>53</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 300.

<sup>54</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 8, 9–10, 19, 21, 25, 99.

<sup>55</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 213, Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 22. Conformation is different than the scholastic and neo-scholastic thought which teaches that the Spirit drives humanity to imitate Christ.

God uses sufferings as a means by which one is conformed with the crucified Jesus and reveals the vindication the pilgrim receives when reaching the end of the bridge by being fully conformed with the raised Jesus Christ.<sup>56</sup> This also sheds light on Acts 14:22 where it is said, “through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” The bridge between humanity and God is cruciform in shape and nature. For God to cross over it to humanity in the person of Jesus Christ meant suffering and death. For humanity to cross over it to God means the same. The crossing of God brings justification. The crossing of the pilgrim brings sanctification.

### Spirit Christology in Sacramentology

The Spirit of Christ also conforms believers to Christ’s death and resurrection through the means of grace. The means of grace dispense the gifts attained at the cross that justify, sanctify, and eventually deify.<sup>57</sup> The Spirit is not an impersonal force of energy, nor is He a “transcendent cause of a sublimated idealism.” Instead, the Spirit is the direct, realistic presence of God dwelling in the believer who makes the believer’s and God’s will one. He serves as the sphere in which Christ is present with the believer and moves the believer to faith in, love for, knowledge of, and fellowship with God.<sup>58</sup>

Prenter argues that a strong emphasis on liturgical worship best emphasizes these activities of the Spirit in the lives of the faithful through sacramentology.<sup>59</sup> In the created space of the church, the Spirit makes the redemptive work of Christ and its sanctifying work a present reality. Just as the Spirit draws the regenerated believer to Christ, it also draws, gathers, and enlightens

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<sup>56</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 215.

<sup>57</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 16.

<sup>58</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 54, 61, 78, 99–100.

<sup>59</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 170. Prenter means by liturgical worship, a liturgical service that puts emphasis on the sacraments and not just the Word. Including in this, is an emphasis on confession and absolution.

the believer to this body of Christ and into the community of the Trinity. In this body of Christ, justification and sanctification are bestowed upon believers through Word and Sacrament.<sup>60</sup> They serve a believer's growth in the life of Christ and lead to a full union of love between Christ and His church.<sup>61</sup>

The Spirit, through the Word, calls the unbaptized to Baptism, then the baptized to Communion. In the Sacrament of Baptism, the Spirit unites the baptized into the body of Christ the church.<sup>62</sup> It brings about the real resurrection of the New Man.<sup>63</sup> In the Sacrament of Baptism, the Spirit prepares and creates space in the human heart for its and Christ's dwelling. After the act of Baptism, the believer, with the help of the Spirit, retains salvation by repeating the conversion event through Confession and Absolution, tying baptism, confession, and absolution together.<sup>64</sup>

Through the Lord's Supper, the Spirit continues this process of conformation to Christ.<sup>65</sup> Through the Sacrament of the Altar, uncreated grace is given where the love of Christ grows within the believer and empowers the believer to gain victories over selfishness and self-righteousness as he journeys over the bridge.

This differs from scholastic thought where it is understood the Sacrament bestows created grace. Created grace is something created by all three persons of the Trinity and is different from themselves. Scholastics believe the created grace given in the sacrament, enables humanity to

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<sup>60</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 242–45.

<sup>61</sup> Prenter, *Word and the Spirit*, 27.

<sup>62</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 243.

<sup>63</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 83, 94.

<sup>64</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 39.

<sup>65</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 509.

attain to, and live in, accordance with a supernatural knowledge.<sup>66</sup> This view gives more credit to human effort in the sanctification process. The Sacrament of the Altar is performed to merit the created grace necessary to go onward toward God and strengthen one in the imitation of Christ. Prenter argues that when a rational teaching of the means of grace like this is given, grace becomes a means of serving the piety of the law and the sovereignty of the Spirit is forfeited. Furthermore, created grace is there because man willed it by the performance of the action (*ex opere operato*) and not by the Spirit's volition.<sup>67</sup> For Prenter, uncreated grace is in the Sacrament because of the Spirit's volition alone.<sup>68</sup> Seeing the grace given in the Sacrament as created, and not uncreated, gives too much credit to human effort in sanctification.

Prenter adds that Spirit Christology takes on a new form in Sacramentology. In Sacramentology, the Logos and Spirit reside not in a human body but in the human word and created elements like bread, water, and wine. As the human nature of Christ was the form in which the Logos and Spirit dwelt, so now the human word and the created elements in the Sacraments become the form for their dwelling. As the Spirit brings about a union between the Logos and the visible flesh of Christ, so in the Sacraments, the Holy Spirit brings about a union of the promises of God with visible signs of water, bread, and wine; to evoke faith, hope, and love in the believer.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 165.

<sup>67</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 167, 303. Prenter writes, "The doctrine of the real presence is a protest in the name of the doctrine of justification against all works-righteousness in the Lord's Supper, whether it be in the form of the sacrifice of the mass, according to which the Lord's Supper is our sacrifice made valid through the priest's correct consecration and the correct performance of the rite, or is to be in the form of spiritualism which denies any real presence of Christ, so that it becomes our own religious devotion which is to bring about his presence." Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 344.

<sup>68</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 161.

<sup>69</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 120, 155, 158, 160–61. The signs of baptism and the Lord's Supper are also signs of Christ's humanity in the here and now. See Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 157, 168.

Through the Word, the Spirit recapitulates its work of creation from *ex nihilo*. He makes man nothing so he can be something. In regeneration, the Spirit takes the elect into himself and preserves him in the Word while bringing death to the Old Adam.<sup>70</sup> Man is totally depraved and dependent on God for salvation. Prenter writes,

Where the Gospel is thus proclaimed, the old man with his self-righteousness is destroyed, and the new man arises, in order through repentance and hope—under confession of sin and a constant renunciation of all of his own righteousness, and under a constant prayerful striving for the life and righteousness of Christ—to enter upon the journey away from the kingdom of sin and condemnation and forward toward the consummation in full reliance upon the covenant of baptism.<sup>71</sup>

The Spirit works through two forms of the Word to do this, the outer and inner. Through the outward Word, God draws the believer to Himself.<sup>72</sup> The outward word involves the proclamation of His promises. As an outward Word, it is the word of man. Christ incarnates Himself in this outward Word to communicate Himself to His creation.<sup>73</sup> For example, a major outward word in which Christ communicated Himself to His people in the Mosaic covenant was Yahweh, the ineffable name. The proclamation of the outer Word precedes the coming of the Spirit and the gift of justifying faith.<sup>74</sup> Working through the outer Word, the Spirit graces the believer to see Christ as God's inner living Word and places the believer on the bridge back to God.<sup>75</sup> Without the Spirit, this outward Word does not become the "inward Word" of fulfillment

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<sup>70</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 192.

<sup>71</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 486.

<sup>72</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 109.

<sup>73</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 102–3, 111, 128, Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 173. For Luther, the outward Word is the incarnation of the Spirit. However, John 1 tells us that the Logos, not the Spirit, became incarnate. If one is looking for an incarnate form of the Spirit, the idea of the Spirit being incarnate in the love of Jesus makes more sense—as the postconciliar theologian Coffey might put it. Prenter holds that the outward Word is that body by which the risen Christ is present.

<sup>74</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 85.

<sup>75</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 106.

that brings the hearer to faith in Christ.<sup>76</sup>

Once a person is graced to see the outer Word as God's inner Word, the Spirit begins the process of regeneration through the two great doctrines of the Bible, Law and Gospel. In the Law, the Spirit and the Logos reveal the righteous anger of God against sin and execute justice against it (Rom. 6:23). In judgment against sin, the Logos is not clothed with the grace it had in the Incarnation (John 1:17). Thus, the person experiences the full brunt of the Law the Logos gave Moses (Exod. 24, Gal. 3:19).<sup>77</sup> In the Law, the Logos and Spirit reveal God in unapproachable majesty and in His naked wrath.<sup>78</sup> This is God's alien work. It is alien because God does something foreign to His nature. He brings death to His creature. The Old Adam resists this death with all its might.<sup>79</sup>

Prenter's Spirit anthropology says this death of the *caro* is the proper work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit smashes, destroys, removes any human experience and reason to make room for righteous faith.<sup>80</sup> By slaying the *caro* the pilgrim is set free from his bondage of self-love.<sup>81</sup> In the entire process, the Spirit remains pure.<sup>82</sup> No other spirit can accomplish this regeneration. Any

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<sup>76</sup> See Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 112–15.

<sup>77</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 219. Any human "transcendent" approach to God apart from the Logos being clothed in Christ will lead to a wrathful God in the end. Prenter would argue against Rahner's "quasi-formal" cause within humanity which Rahner believed could lead to the Absolute. The Greek word *μεσίτης* in Gal. 3:19 is translated as mediator and refers only to Christ where it appears in the Bible (1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 8:6, 9:15, 12:24).

<sup>78</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 207, 216.

<sup>79</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 79.

<sup>80</sup> This brings in the scholastic thought on concupiscence. In Lutheran thought it is understood to be a desire totally corrupted by sin which only leans toward evil (Ap II. 4–50 in Kolb and Wengert, 112–28). For regeneration to take place, in Lutheran thought, it must be smashed. In scholastic thought it is thought to be a desire, not totally corrupted by sin, which can still lean toward good and can be helped by grace to reach self-knowledge of God. Cf. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 191.

<sup>81</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 562.

<sup>82</sup> It was the same with Christ. When impure lepers or bleeders touched Him, He remained pure and bestowed cleansing.

other spirit only brings work righteousness.<sup>83</sup> Prenter teaches that the spirit of fallen humanity is one of those wrongful spirits. Contrary to Rahner, Prenter sees a wrongful spirit at work in the writings of secular poets and philosophers. The philosopher seeks the infinity of the outer life, the poet, of the inner life. The poet looks for the individual experience and seeks to extract the fullness of life from it. However, both lead to a dead end and are incapable of drowning the *caro*.<sup>84</sup>

After the drowning of the *caro* the believer receives life giving and obedient faith.<sup>85</sup> When the Spirit finishes its work through the Law, He next brings to the believer the Incarnate Christ through whom grace is bestowed.<sup>86</sup> Bringing the Gospel to His creatures is God's proper work. The Gospel pronounces a forgiveness of sin which radically conflicts with the guilt-consciousness of fallen humanity.<sup>87</sup> Through the Gospel, the Spirit directs the repentant person toward something other than himself, Jesus Christ. The Gospel announces that the will has been set free to cross the bridge and come to Christ.<sup>88</sup> This life-giving Word and the Spirit comes from outside of man, as an efficient cause.<sup>89</sup> For Prenter, man has no *a priori* affinity with either of

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<sup>83</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 108. If Prenter was to encounter Rahner's quasi-formal thought, he probably would have put it in the category of spiritualism. Any idealistic thought which teaches humans to strive for the Absolute without the true Spirit leads to a dead end, even if it is a quasi-formal cause of divinity in humans.

<sup>84</sup> Prenter, *Word and the Spirit*, 20. Here, Prenter specifically counters Rahner's thoughts on this.

<sup>85</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 47, Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 560.

<sup>86</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 221.

<sup>87</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 152.

<sup>88</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 484.

<sup>89</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 338–42. For Prenter, the distinction between the divine and human nature in Christ must be maintained to communicate that even in the Son of Man, the human nature was helpless to assist in the act of atonement. In Roman Catholic thought, the human nature is understood to assist and that is one reason why in their Mass they have a sacrificial aspect. The priest serves as representative of Christ's human nature role in offering the sacrifice for sin, giving a sacrificial aspect to their understanding of the Sacrament. However, in Lutheran thought, since the human will of Christ is without sin, and did submit itself to the divine will, one can disagree with Prenter's assessment here. The sinful will of humanity is incapable of offering, but the sinless human will, by the aid of the Spirit, of Christ is not.



them. In the end, the Spirit works enlightenment and knowledge of God's will and bestows faith through Law and Gospel.<sup>90</sup> This faith justifies the believer.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, through Law and Gospel, the Spirit brings an ontological change to the believer by dwelling in the believer along with Christ. Their dwelling forms a mystical union with the believer which makes the believer a consecrated temple for their substantial presence. They influence the believer to do good works.<sup>92</sup> Through this process, the pilgrim comes to know his true self.<sup>93</sup>

Regeneration continues through the process of sanctification. In sanctification, the Spirit continues to work in the believer a conformity to Christ. Conformity to Christ is real life.<sup>94</sup> It is the proper work of the Spirit.<sup>95</sup> The Spirit works to conform the believer's will with Christ's and produces the content of the Christian life through the created gifts of grace known as love, faith, and hope. Conformation is progress toward eternal life, a growth of righteousness, and an

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<sup>90</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 186.

<sup>91</sup> The scholastic thought on how the Spirit of Christ brings people back into communion with God confuses the taxis (order) of justification and sanctification. Scholasticism confesses a justifying faith, but by that they mean faith becomes only a road to justification. It does not fully justify the moment it is granted. A person only becomes "fully" justified in heaven. The created gift of faith starts the process, but only the uncreated grace of love completes it. Prenter goes on to say that unlike the scholastic thought where infused love comes before faith, Lutheran thought posits that faith comes before infused love. The Word of God brings faith, the promises of God bring the Spirit. On the one hand, the Spirit brings people to the Word, but on the other hand, the Word brings the Spirit to the people. One has an active role of the Spirit, the other passive. Prenter writes, "It may also be stated thus that the Spirit is given to us because we already are children of God and not slaves (Gal. 4:6–7) even though it is also true that it is only the Spirit which makes us God's children." Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 84–85. Luther adds, "[The scholastics] confess that faith in Christ helps, but at the same time they state that the Lord did not exclude other methods. Thus, they manufacture many ways there are to lead to eternal life, among which are intercessions of the saints, the veneration of the Virgin Mary, the monastic vocation, and the observance of their ordinances." *LW* 23:137.

<sup>92</sup> At the beginning of creation, Adam had the image of the Logos (but not the Logos) and the Spirit. It was not enough to say "No" to temptation. In justification, because of the Incarnation, the believer receives the true Logos and the Spirit which sanctifies.

<sup>93</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 247.

<sup>94</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 228.

<sup>95</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 8–9, 181, 186, 278–89 and Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 443, 474. For Prenter, justification and sanctification are joined together by the Spirit. For Luther, this joining is accomplished through his concept of alien righteousness. It brings justification when brought to faith, but alien righteousness is not complete until Christ is fully formed in the believer in heaven (another way of phrasing sanctification).

expulsion of sin.<sup>96</sup> The death of the Old Adam and the rebirth of the New Adam continues in the act of conformation through confession and absolution. There the Spirit continues to work liberation from work righteousness, conforms the believer to Christ, and leads the pilgrim into the agape of God.<sup>97</sup>

In the process of conformation, the Spirit works alongside the regenerated will to fight against sin and death as the believer is being transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.<sup>98</sup> For this reason, Prenter argues against any talk that empirical piety is created by the Holy Spirit alone. If this is done, the regenerated will of the believer then becomes abolished. In the conformation process, the distinctions between the wills of the Spirit, Christ, and the believer remain.

Furthermore, the Spirit conforms the believer in Christ's sacrificial love toward the Father and the neighbor.<sup>99</sup> The believer dies to himself and has nothing left but faith and the love of Christ for God and neighbor.<sup>100</sup> This makes the believer a participant in God's activity toward the world.<sup>101</sup> The sacrificial love the pilgrim experiences toward the Trinity is extended to the pilgrim's Christian brothers and sisters.<sup>102</sup> Prenter says this sacrificial death is not a work of the

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<sup>96</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 199.

<sup>97</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 245.

<sup>98</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 233–34. The Spirit goes about creating space for regenerated believers to do the works of God (Eph. 2:10). He draws the believer not only into the community of the Trinity, but also into God's service for the neighbor. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 235–36, 250–51.

<sup>99</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 488–89, 499. This sounds much like Roman Catholic thought. However, in Catholic thought, faith alone does not justify and give assurance of salvation. Justification takes place in Roman thought only when the image of God is fully restored in heaven. For Rahner, love comes in the form of submission. For Luther it was unconditional surrender. Prenter, *Word and the Spirit*, 89. Luther, Prenter and Rahner would agree that this happens when everything is taken away from us in death. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 134.

<sup>100</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 490.

<sup>101</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 250.

<sup>102</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 330–31.

self as in heroic sacrifice. It is not self-chosen but imposed by the Spirit.<sup>103</sup> Sanctification is not a human work but something that happens to the believer.

Besides the Word and Sacraments, Prenter taught the Spirit works conformation to Christ through prayer. In prayer the believer addresses God and thanks Him for the Gospel received and opens himself to receiving more of Christ's love.<sup>104</sup> In prayer, the Spirit drives us toward Christ. It causes the believer to have a real and not an "ideal" relationship with Christ.<sup>105</sup> Through prayer the inner conflict between the Old and New Adam is intensified where the Spirit calls forth the unutterable sigh from the pilgrim for deliverance to the Father and Christ.<sup>106</sup> In all of this, the Spirit's task of conformation will not be complete until there is no longer any resistance to God's love and will, which will only take place in heaven.

These activities of the Spirit, help to clearly distinguish it as a person separate from the Father and the Son.<sup>107</sup> The Holy Spirit is that person who links God's wrath with His love, Law with Gospel, and justification with sanctification.<sup>108</sup> Seeing the Spirit as the unifier of these events helps to prevent the wrongful thoughts of modalism and tritheism. It helps to preserve the rightful unity of God and the downward trinitarian motion of His love toward creation. In this work, the Spirit makes no room for the human person's upward effort toward God.<sup>109</sup> Only after

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<sup>103</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 490.

<sup>104</sup> Prenter, *The Word and the Spirit*, 115–19.

<sup>105</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 87–90.

<sup>106</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 209, 211–12.

<sup>107</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 182–83.

<sup>108</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 207–25, 240, 294. Sanctification is to follow justification; however, the question remains what does Prenter call the work of the Spirit which leads to justification? Could it be resolved by saying that the Spirit's work leading to justification is God's alien work and that justification and sanctification both belong to God's proper work? In another section, Prenter says the person of the Trinity who decides when the Word becomes Law or Gospel is the Holy Spirit.

<sup>109</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 241, 257.

it has descended into the believer does the Spirit make room for the human will to cooperate in faith and good works. Throughout regeneration, the Spirit always expresses the same will and purpose of the Father and Son, whether it is wrath or grace.<sup>110</sup>

In summary, the act of redemption accomplished through Spirit Christology, enables the Spirit to bring the justifying dwelling of Christ and itself, and the created gifts of faith and hope, to humanity. The Spirit makes the believer one with Christ's humanity and conforms the believer in Christ and His sacrificial death and resurrection.<sup>111</sup> Through faith in the crucified and risen one, the believer is led from death to life, from condemnation to acquittal. The journey across the bridge involves repentance and hope. The believer hopes that he will visibly see what is now hidden in the land East of Eden, namely, Christ glorified and the possession of eternal life (Col. 3:1–4).<sup>112</sup> His hope is expressed through prayer. In prayer, the pilgrim hopes and reaches for growth in the righteousness of Christ.<sup>113</sup> Finally, when the pilgrim dies at the end of the journey, he does not die alone. He dies with Jesus as a participant with Him in His supreme forgiving sacrifice and in His resurrection.<sup>114</sup>

However, Prenter acknowledges that saving justification is based upon predestination. The Spirit, who works justification, is given when and where He chooses.<sup>115</sup> In the Incarnation of the Logos, all people saw the person of Christ outwardly, but the Spirit did not gift all to see the Logos in Christ. This took place in many of the Pharisees. Many of them did not believe in Him,

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<sup>110</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 416, 419.

<sup>111</sup> Prenter, *The Word and the Spirit*, 31.

<sup>112</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 484.

<sup>113</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 483, 485.

<sup>114</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 410.

<sup>115</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 175, 449. "The Spirit is over the Word (when talking about His sovereignty), and in another case, the Spirit is in the Word (when talking about the means of grace)." Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 25. See Prenter, *Word and the Spirit*, 1.

but because of the sovereignty of the Spirit, Paul and a group of others did (Acts 15:5). The Spirit of Christ is needed to see Him as He is (Mt. 16:7).<sup>116</sup> Why some receive it this way and others do not is left to the incomprehensibility of God.

At the end of the journey, no creature will avoid the Creator. All roads lead back to Him. But whether the creature sees Him as He is—hidden majesty in eternal power and holy mercy—is entirely dependent upon the Creator’s own majestic, yet merciful will, to bestow a person with life-giving and obedient faith.<sup>117</sup> This creates a paradox between the Spirit’s sovereignty and the human will as it did for Luther. The doctrine of predestination establishes room for the Spirit to bring to fruition in sinners the evangelical character of the Gospel, where God does everything in saving humans.<sup>118</sup> However, the paradox of why some are gifted, and not others, is left to the unfathomable mystery of predestination. Assurance of predestination can only be given through the objective justification of Christ.<sup>119</sup> One can go back to the promises of God to know one is on the bridge. Doubts about those promises may arise, but it is only outright denial of those promises which gets one kicked off the bridge. God is not capricious. If He put you on the bridge, He will carry you through (Phil. 1:6).

### The End of the Journey

The basis of the final judgment is faith in Christ. However, faith finds its conclusive

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<sup>116</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 102, 108, 111, 257, 263–65, 277, 289 What this means in the sacraments is the same. The signs are not enough. They must be accompanied by faith in the promises which they offer. Again, the Spirit is the person who makes Christ the living Christ in the Sacrament and provides the faith in the promises of the Sacrament to make it an efficacious work of God, not man. In another section, Prenter identifies the outward Word with Christ and the inner Word with God’s own voice, mediated by the Spirit. For Luther, Prenter acknowledges the outward Word is the incarnate Christ and the inward Word is the body by which the risen Christ is present among believers.

<sup>117</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 222.

<sup>118</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 200, 202.

<sup>119</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 106.

expression in the doctrine of predestination.<sup>120</sup> Election is determined by the Spirit who produces faith through the Gospel, “when and where He pleases.” Those who are graced to die in faith, according to Prenter, continue to have a relationship with the militant church. The sainted pilgrim in heaven continues to celebrate the Sacrament of the Altar with the pilgrims on earth. But for Prenter, the sainted pilgrim does not yet dwell in the triumphant church where all are risen and have glorified bodies. Instead, the pilgrim dwells in the “waiting church” until the Last Day. Because of this, the prayers of the members in the church militant and the waiting church for the coming of the church triumphant are united (See Rev. 6:10).<sup>121</sup>

On the Last Day, the Spirit of God will lead the pilgrim, whether in the militant or waiting church, to the beatific vision found in the church triumphant. The beatific vision does not involve a mystical ascent to God’s eternal majesty, but a vision of God’s glory in the person of Jesus Christ. Here, the entelechy of the Spirit remains the same as in neo-scholastic thought. Its purpose is to reveal Christ as Lord and Savior. If a person fails to confess Christ and surrender to Christ, that person stands condemned on his own account.<sup>122</sup>

In the beatific vision, the pilgrim enters the fellowship of the immanent Trinity. There the pilgrim experiences the immanent Trinity in eternal motion. To use Luther’s imperfect analogy, they will witness the Father as the mover, the Son as that which is moved, and the Spirit who rests upon the movement. The pilgrim comes to know about this immanent Trinity through the

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<sup>120</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 56, 574. For Prenter and Rahner, condemnation is sin’s absolute fortification against the offer of salvation. The difference is that Rahner believes in a human will which has some power to say yes to the offer on its own, favoring human accountability. For Prenter, the “yes” only comes by the power and grace of the Spirit, favoring Spirit sovereignty.

<sup>121</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 569–72.

<sup>122</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 575–76.

economic Trinity.<sup>123</sup> The revealer of them both is the Spirit through Word and Sacrament.<sup>124</sup>

In the church triumphant, the pilgrim will know more about the immanent Trinity, but not everything. There will always be the “hidden God.”<sup>125</sup> Finally, the resurrection of the body assures us that the fellowship with the immanent Trinity will be with a glorified human body and soul. That is, we will experience the beatific vision in the body (Job 19:26) with other resurrected bodies and experience there what it truly means to be human.

To sum up, Prenter describes the Holy Spirit’s role is to conform man to Christ’s death and resurrection. He calls his view a realism of revelation and the scholastics a *caritas* idealism.<sup>126</sup> However, whereas Prenter helps us to contrast these views from the anthropological side, he does not deal directly with postconciliar theologians’ approaches to the question of human participation in God through a strong Spirit Christology in Trinitarian perspective. For that engagement, we turn to the work of Leopoldo Sánchez.

### **Sánchez’s Spirit Christology**

When speaking about the presence of the Spirit in Christ and the saints, Sánchez makes a distinction between Kasper’s postconciliar approach and his own. He observes that in Kasper’s pneumatological interpretation of Rahner’s view of the hypostatic union (incarnation), according to which Jesus is “the paradigm” for human reception of the divine self-communication, “we (like Jesus) have an innate, grace-given role (self-transcendence)—even if a little one—to play in

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<sup>123</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 186–89.

<sup>124</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 174–77. Jenson would say the same when he argues that God is an event. David B. Hart, “The Lively God of Robert Jenson,” *First Things* 156 (Oct. 2005): 28–34.

<sup>125</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 174.

<sup>126</sup> See Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 18–27.

making God's gracious presence in us possible."<sup>127</sup> Sánchez counters Kasper's view. He holds the Lutheran line that human nature is totally deprived and does not even have a "little" responsibility in the conversion process. For Sánchez the Son's Incarnation by the Spirit "is not merely the culmination in history of the Spirit's general work in creation whereby all human creatures are given a partial disposition or affinity towards God."<sup>128</sup> Instead, "Jesus' unique reception of the Spirit of God from conception allows for the fulfillment of the Father's original plan for His creatures frustrated by their rebellion, for it serves as the unparalleled condition for the Holy Spirit's gracious indwelling of the saints as a gift from the Father through the anointed, crucified, and risen Son."<sup>129</sup> In the process of this indwelling, the Old Adam dies, and contributes nothing to salvation. In the process of indwelling, the Spirit raises a New Adam and gives it the gift of justifying faith.

Thus, his Spirit Christology reveals how the Spirit takes an active role in working with Christ to bring humanity back into fellowship with God. In doing so, the Spirit does not seek the human spirit's affinity with Himself but brings the spiritually dead person back to life. Echoing Prenter's distinction between conformity to Christ (associated with Luther) and imitation of Christ (associated with the scholastics), Sánchez highlights the Spirit's role in conforming sinners to Christ's death and resurrection, instead of "placing the weight of discourse on our human potential for receiving God's Spirit."<sup>130</sup> Spirit Christology is an invitation to discern, journey with, and pray to the Spirit, which for Sánchez means especially being conformed to Christ in His death and resurrection by the Spirit through the spoken, Spirit-empowered, Word of

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<sup>127</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 188–89.

<sup>128</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 189.

<sup>129</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 189.

<sup>130</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 189.



God that kills and makes alive.

Approaching Spirit Christology “from below,” Sánchez follows the man Jesus as He relates to His Father and to the believer through the Spirit in the work of salvation.<sup>131</sup> In the land East of Eden, Jesus lives in the Spirit for our sake. The Spirit is not merely “God’s transcendent (other-worldly) and active immanent (worldly) presence in and toward creation,” but a divine person in its own right.<sup>132</sup> Sánchez seeks to preserve the distinctions between by the divine persons by insisting that “the Logos is not the Holy Spirit, and vice versa. And yet the Logos can be said to exist as one in whom the Spirit of the Father rests, just as the Holy Spirit can be said to exist as one who proceeds from the Father through (or and) the Son.”<sup>133</sup> Sánchez’ approach “from below” works through the order of knowledge without jettisoning basic commitments to a Trinitarian theology “from above.”<sup>134</sup>

Sánchez fears that without a robust pneumatology grounded in Christ’s own life in the Spirit, one is left with a search for spiritual life based on mere feeling. Thus, he defines the formative benefit of Spirit Christology for discerning the spiritual life in this way:

Spirit Christology grounds sanctification not in general human experience or spiritual feeling but in a human participation by grace in the same Spirit whom the Son bears in His life and mission, and then upon completion of His paschal mystery gives to others. Spirit Christology is a means to make the doctrine of the Trinity practical by locating it in the economy of God’s actions by His Spirit in the life of His Son and our lives.<sup>135</sup>

As we saw above, for Sánchez, a proper Spirit Christology is cruciform in nature and shape as it

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<sup>131</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 158.

<sup>132</sup> See Sánchez’ critique of Lampe’s post-Trinitarian (non-Trinitarian) approach to Spirit Christology. Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 151.

<sup>133</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 156–57.

<sup>134</sup> For the distinction between the orders of knowledge and being, see Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 157–64.

<sup>135</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 166.

promotes dying and being raised with Christ. But this form of life is not possible in the believer unless Christ's own life in the Spirit has a cruciform trajectory—a life for which Jesus is anointed with the Spirit at the Jordan. Through baptism, believers are anointed with the same Spirit and thus initiated into the cruciform life to share in Christ's death and resurrection through daily repentance, sacrifice for others, and through sharing in His glory in the presence of the Father.<sup>136</sup>

Sánchez' makes the strongest tie between the economic Trinity and immanent Trinity at the cross. Reflecting on the Spirit in John 19:30, where Jesus "handed over the *pneuma*," Sánchez writes, "In an economic sense, the Holy Spirit is the paschal fruit, the gift of the crucified Christ to the church."<sup>137</sup> At the cross, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit appears as its "fruit . . . the overflow or outpouring of Jesus' self-giving to the Father unto death."<sup>138</sup> This is in line with postconciliar theologian Coffey's thought that in the immanent Trinity the Father gives the Holy Spirit and the Son returns it.<sup>139</sup> However, Sánchez adds a little nuance to this thought through his *in spiritu* model of the Trinity. This illustrates how the Son's sacrificial life **IN** the Spirit corresponds to (without being identical with) his own eternal life **IN** the Spirit. Sánchez writes:

The deepest truth regarding the Logos' distinct self-subsistence (individual aspect) and being from before (static aspect) whether in the intradivine life as God the Son or in the economy of salvation as incarnate Son (God-man) is that he exists in openness towards (dynamic aspect) and thus in relation to (ecstatic aspect) God the Father and us freely and out of love. *In the Spirit* (emphasis mine) the Son exists before his

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<sup>136</sup> See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 66–76, 189–94.

<sup>137</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 69.

<sup>138</sup> Here Sánchez agrees with other contemporary readings of the passage, such as Coffey's. See Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 106–7.

<sup>139</sup> Coffey writes, "The Father bestows the Holy Spirit on Jesus as his love for him . . . Jesus further appropriates this unique Gift of the Spirit . . . in the course of his life through his unfailing obedience and answering love of the Father, and in his death definitively returns to the Father in love by returning the Holy Spirit to him (though without thereby losing it himself). From this truly biblical theology the Holy Spirit emerges as the mutual love of the Father and the Son, even though, as Augustine pointed out, nowhere does Scripture actually call the Spirit love." Cited in Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 107.

Father and in his mission lives out that life before the Father for our sake without ceasing to be himself.<sup>140</sup>

In the economy, Jesus continues to give the Spirit. However, in the economy He gives the Spirit not only to the Father but to the world at the cross. His Spirit Christology does not only promote reflection on the mystery of the salvation but also links it to the mystery of the Trinity. Thus, Sánchez' Spirit Christology, much like postconciliar theologians, desires to assign proper works to each person of the Trinity and seeks to strengthen the distinctions of works in the economic Trinity and the relationship the believer has with each person.<sup>141</sup> In terms of Christ's own life in the Spirit, Sánchez writes:

The Son's *proprium* is to unite humanity unto himself and the Holy Spirit's *proprium* is to indwell and sanctify that humanity . . . The Father sends his Holy Spirit to sanctify the Son's humanity from the first moment of incarnation/conception and to dwell in it throughout all moments of his life and mission. This sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit is the *proprium* of the Father in the economy.<sup>142</sup>

For Sánchez, "Spirit Christology is a means to make the doctrine of the Trinity practical by locating it in the economy of God's actions by His Spirit in the life of his Son and in our lives."<sup>143</sup> The Father becomes relevant to the pilgrim through His work of sending the Son and the Spirit for his sake. The Logos becomes relevant to the pilgrim through the Incarnation,

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<sup>140</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 45, 82, 105, 131–32. For Sánchez, the Spirit's indwelling in the incarnate Son can only be referred to as occurring in the economic Trinity, but not in the immanent one. For the immanent Trinity, Sánchez speaks of the Spirit's resting on the Son of the Son's existing in the Spirit. This would be one example where Rahner's axiom does not apply. However, the Spirit's resting on the Son can be applied both economically and immanently. In this way, there is a correspondence between the economic and immanent Trinity. Moreover, according to Sánchez, in the Logos, the Spirit rests but does not "indwell" in the manner He does in the incarnate Son. In the economy, Sánchez can speak of the Spirit's resting or even dwelling in the Logos if such indwelling does not replace the Logos' unique assumption of a human nature unto His person.

<sup>141</sup> See Sánchez' summary of Del Colle and Coffey on the proper work of the Spirit in the sanctification of the human nature of the Son and the adopted sons. Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 110.

<sup>142</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 97. As a reminder, the word *appropriated* is used when emphasizing the "*opera ad extra indivisa sunt*." The word *proper* is used when emphasizing personal distinctions within the Trinity. See Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 109–10.

<sup>143</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 166.

assuming human nature to redeem it. The Spirit becomes relevant through the gift of grace that is the Spirit himself, who dwells in and is given through Christ to the believer to sanctify him and bring him back with (and through) Christ to the Father. We might say that salvation depends on faith in the self-communicating Father who saves us in His Son and Spirit, or on faith in the Son who bears and gives the Spirit of the Father for our sake. Knowing how all three persons are involved in the building of the bridge from God to man, helps make the Trinity relevant to the believer.

As we mentioned earlier, Sánchez echoes Prenter when observing that Spirit Christology reveals how the Spirit conforms the believer to Christ rather than drives him to imitate Christ as he crosses the bridge. Imitation language calls a person to be like the Jesus that is “out there,” and the move is then for humans to bridge this gap with some help from the Spirit. He writes: “The more formative language of conformation accents how the Spirit bridges this gap between Jesus ‘out there’ and us ‘over here’ by working Christ’s life ‘in here,’ that is, in and through us.”<sup>144</sup> Sánchez argues that such a formative Spirit Christology helps counter the charge that the Lutheran stress on justification prevents it from taking sanctification seriously.<sup>145</sup>

Spirit Christology links Christology and ecclesiology because the same Spirit whom Christ bears, He also gives to His church.<sup>146</sup> In the anointed and sinless humanity of Christ, the new Adam, the Spirit again becomes accustomed to dwelling in the race of Adam.<sup>147</sup> But what means

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<sup>144</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 169. He explains: “I am not against the notion of *imitatio Christi* per se, but I am aware that at times this language can make Christlikeness solely our human responsibility. For this reason, I prefer to speak of *conformitas Christi*, of the Spirit’s sculpting work of conforming humans to Christ’s life. As new creatures in Christ, we are called to cooperate with the Spirit, but always under the Spirit’s ongoing initiative and action in our lives” (Ibid., 169).

<sup>145</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 237.

<sup>146</sup> Sánchez notes patristic agreement on this basic teaching. See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 74–75.

<sup>147</sup> On Irenaeus’ theology of recapitulation, according to which the Spirit lost by Adam after the fall returns to

does Christ use to give His Spirit to humanity? As we noted earlier, for Luther and the Lutheran Confessors, the Spirit creates the church, where the Word and Sacrament are found, and through which Christ bestows His Spirit and His gifts to His Father's children. In the church or under the auspices of the church, the outward Word is proclaimed and prepares the womb of the human heart to receive Christ and the Spirit. In conversion, the human heart mirrors the way Mary's womb was prepared to receive the Spirit in the Annunciation and Christ in human flesh. For Prenter, Luther's pneumatological "incarnationalism" would have us look for the Spirit in the outward Word, in the external "signs" of Christ's "humanity" among us that precede and make room for the Spirit's coming to work faith inwardly in our hearts.<sup>148</sup>

The Holy Spirit is not a foreign element to the Word, and no one is to seek God outside of the outer Word.<sup>149</sup> Prenter notes that even though the Spirit in his hiddenness is "not bound *in* the Word," the Spirit "as the revealing Spirit . . . cannot be without the Word."<sup>150</sup> The Spirit's proper work is to lead one to see or expect the fulfillment of the outer (outward) Word's promise in the inner Word, namely, in the Spirit's conformation of the believer to Christ through death and renewal.<sup>151</sup> What Sánchez' Spirit Christology clarifies is that "Luther's affirmation of the Holy

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humanity through the Father's anointing of the new Adam, the incarnate Christ, with the Spirit, see Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 12–20; on the sinlessness of Christ, Sánchez writes, "In a Spirit-oriented Christology, the sanctifying presence of the Spirit in the Logos's assumed humanity will have a place in the reality of his sinlessness, which in turn should be seen in view of the fulfillment of his saving work for sinful humanity through his death and resurrection." *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>148</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 291–92.

<sup>149</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 292.

<sup>150</sup> Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 122; see also Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 226; But can the Spirit seek us apart from the Word? This is something the thesis will address later (Isa. 65:1, John 3:8, Col. 4:3). In an ecumenical thought, if Rahner's individual eschatology holds true, he and Prenter would agree. For Rahner says the same, that salvation cannot be experienced without a revelation of the Incarnate Word.

<sup>151</sup> Prenter's distinction between the outward Word as promise and its fulfillment in the inner Word may help explain the gap of time between what happens in between the coming of the Word and Spirit in the Book of Acts. Sometimes the Word is there before the Spirit, but because the Word is bound to the Spirit, the Spirit shortly follows (Acts 8:14–17, 10:38–48). Prenter says the same, "The interval of time signifies that the connection between the

Spirit's work through the *external* word . . . assumes *first* the Spirit's inseparable connection to Christ and his words of life."<sup>152</sup>

Sánchez is critical of any Logos and Spirit Christologies that do not involve the death of the old Adam and a new Adam made alive with Christ. Particularly, he speaks against any Spirit Christologies, including those of a postconciliar streak like Kasper's, which have too high of a view of the freedom of the will and do not properly account for the Spirit's monergism in bringing the spiritually dead back to life through the Word.<sup>153</sup> The sovereignty of the Spirit over the totally depraved human spirit remain basic premises of his theology as they do with Prenter and the Lutheran Confessions.

However, it is important to note that the presence of the Word does not always assure that the Spirit is working regeneration.<sup>154</sup> The Spirit is not bound in the Word. The Spirit has its own existence and identity apart from the Spoken and Incarnate Word. And yet the Spirit becomes the "revealed and revealing" Spirit through the means of grace. The Word and Sacrament are the incarnational character of the Spirit and foster a sacramental view of life in the Spirit of Christ.<sup>155</sup>

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Spirit and the outward Word is not a necessary metaphysical connection but a connection between the promise and its fulfillment, between the prayer and the answer to prayer. This interval of time is necessary in order to make room for the motion of faith away from all *sensus proprius*, away from all self-righteousness to Christ." See Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 126.

<sup>152</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 227. Sánchez explains further: "The inseparability of the Holy Spirit and the word of God that is heard and spoken in the proclamation, as well as felt and tasted in, with, and under the water and the bread and wine, is entirely dependent upon the inseparable fellowship of the Spirit and the Word made flesh. There is no greater sacrament and sign of salvation than the incarnate Christ in whom the Spirit dwells and through whom the Spirit is given." *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>153</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 186–89.

<sup>154</sup> For instance, the Spirit may be working judgment through the Word. God's Word accomplishes that which it is sent out to do. It can work either rebirth or judgment (Isa. 55:11). What the Spirit accomplishes in each person who hears the Word is dependent upon the mystery of predestination.

<sup>155</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 226–37.

## In Spiritu

Sánchez' Spirit Christology of how the Spirit and Christ relate in the building of the bridge from God to man is further explained through his two concepts of *in spiritu* and the *genus pneumatikon*. We will deal with the first concept in this section, and with the second one in the next. Through the *in spiritu* concept, Sánchez wants to draw attention to the Son's identity in pneumatological terms. Quite simply, the Son lives and works "in the Spirit." This statement has Trinitarian and soteriological implications. The concept affirms the Holy Spirit's distinct personal identity in the self-communication of God (in the Spirit) to the incarnate Logos and its active role in His life and mission for our salvation.<sup>156</sup> Accordingly, "the Spirit's presence in the incarnate Son points to the intrinsic *pro nobis* character of the Incarnation, to its soteriological orientation towards all events in Jesus' life and work carried out *in the Spirit*, namely, in loving obedience to the Father and as our Servant."<sup>157</sup>

The Son's life in the Spirit in the economy corresponds to (but is not identical with) His existence in the Spirit in the immanent Trinity. Sánchez speaks of the Son's existence in the Spirit, while safeguarding the uniqueness of each person within the Trinitarian reciprocity or perichoresis.<sup>158</sup> The perichoretic framework gives the Holy Spirit a distinctive mediating role in the begetting of the Son in eternity and in time. *In spiritu* the Father begets the Son, and *in spiritu* the Son is begotten of the Father—the Spirit being their mutual love.<sup>159</sup> *In spiritu* the

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<sup>156</sup> See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 38–39.

<sup>157</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 45.

<sup>158</sup> See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 133.

<sup>159</sup> Sánchez sees an affinity between his *in spiritu* model of the Trinity and Coffey's mutual love model of the Trinity. See Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 112, 116n.1; In response to Skip Jenkins' critique that his language of the Spirit's perfecting the Father's love for the Son in the immanent Trinity is "an inappropriate extension of economic form into the immanent life of God," Sánchez responds that the Spirit perfects the Father's love for the Son in an analogical sense, namely, "in the sense of 'bringing to its proper term' the Father's love for the Son." *Ibid.*, 147.

Logos returns to the Father. Sanchez finds echoes of the *in spiritu* model in the East and the West. He writes:

In the spirit of Greek theology, we found the source of love in the Father, its manifestation in the Son, and its perfection in the Spirit. In the spirit of Latin theology, we found the source of divine charity in the mutual love between the Father and Son and its completion in the Holy Spirit as their bond of love which brings to full circle the interior life of the Trinity.<sup>160</sup>

Echoing postconciliar theologian Coffey's concern for affirming both procession and mutual love (bestowal and return) models of the Trinity, Sánchez' *in spiritu* maintains the classic taxis or order of the processional model, "but also gives the Holy Spirit its constitutive role in the perfection or completion of the Father's love for the Son and in the Son's reciprocal love for the Father in the mystery of the Incarnation."<sup>161</sup> For Sánchez, Spirit Christology "does not have to set itself against the logical priority of the Son over the Spirit, either in the immanent or economic Trinity."<sup>162</sup> While some postconciliar theologians like Kasper and Coffey argue that the taxis is inverted to Father—Spirit—Son in the Incarnation because the Spirit sanctifies the human nature of Jesus before union with the Logos takes place, Sánchez argues that the taxis remains Father—Son—Spirit because logically speaking (although not in terms of time) the Logos' assumption of a human nature precedes its sanctification by the Holy Spirit.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 132; Richard of St. Victor extends the Latin angle to talk about how that love is ecstatic going outside the immanent trinity to the economic Trinity for the purpose of bringing creation into it. For Sanchez' treatment of Richard of St. Victor's theme of Trinitarian love in relation to St. Augustine's mutual love analogy for the Spirit, see Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 123–26.

<sup>161</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 162–63; According to Sánchez, Moltmann argues that "the classic model of the Trinity is 'necessary' in the church's reflection because it clarifies that the messianic history of Jesus—including his being sent by the Father, his being anointed with the Spirit sent by the Father upon him, and his sending of the Spirit who proceeds from the Father to others—is none other than 'the history of God.'" Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 100.

<sup>162</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 164.

<sup>163</sup> Sánchez disagrees here with Kasper who argues that the habitual grace of the Spirit in Christ precedes the grace of the Logos' union with the flesh of Christ in time. Sánchez says this wrongfully alters the taxis to Father—Spirit—Son. See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 57, 128; I would agree with Sánchez this to be the case only in the immanent Trinity, which exists outside of space and time, and that logically the Son must be "begotten" first



Furthermore, for Sánchez, a logical priority of the Son's mission over the Spirit's in the Incarnation, based on the hypostatic union's logical priority over the Spirit's sanctification of the assumed human nature, does not take away from the active and distinct role of the Spirit in the humanity of Christ. The Spirit remains connected with Christ in His life and mission in the economic Trinity, enabling and working with Him to relate to humanity in the land East of Eden.<sup>164</sup>

Second, *in spiritu* language reminds us that the Spirit perfects the human nature of the Logos. The *in spiritu* concept teaches a simultaneous entry of both into the flesh of Christ. The Logos, in the Spirit, enters the womb of Mary. Sánchez speaks of the Spirit's perfection of the Son's humanity in two senses. In a "static" ontological sense, "sanctification simply means that the Holy Spirit dwells fully and without measure in the humanity of the Son from conception. In this sense, the Son's humanity is sinless or preserved from sin from the beginning of his human existence."<sup>165</sup> In a more historical or "dynamic" sense, the Son allows the Spirit to empower and lead Him in His humiliation or kenosis.<sup>166</sup> Central to Sanchez' Spirit-oriented reading of the events of Christ's life is the idea that such events do not merely reveal to others that the Son is

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in order for the Spirit to proceed to Him, but in the economic Trinity, Kasper could rightfully argue God submits Himself to time and space, where the Spirit proceeds to the flesh of Christ in the womb of Mary before the Logos does. Coffey also focuses on the proper work of the Holy Spirit to create and sanctify a human nature in a way that makes possible the Incarnation and the unification of believers with Christ. Coffey's taxis is then Father—Spirit—Son, although only in the procession model and not in the return model of the Trinity. However, if the Son is involved in sending the Spirit to prepare this humanity, or the Logos comes in the Spirit when conception takes place, one could argue with Sánchez that the classic taxis remains in the economic Trinity.

<sup>164</sup> As Sánchez puts it, the Spirit does not simply come "after Christ" but is "already *in* Christ, in Christ's own human life and history." Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 169. Prenter's view that the Spirit and Christ, though distinct, work together in the economy, might argue a better case for human life begins at conception. Working together at the conception, the Spirit brings life to the embryo of Jesus, but the Logos brings human identity to that embryo, making it human from the time of conception.

<sup>165</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 148.

<sup>166</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 148.

God, but also that in such events the Spirit actually does something to the Son in His humanity.<sup>167</sup> The Spirit's sanctification of the Son's human nature allows Him to obediently follow the will of His Father during His human history.<sup>168</sup> Christ lets the Spirit be the driver in His life and mission while remaining a distinct personal subject of His actions.<sup>169</sup> *In spiritu*, Jesus offers Himself as a sacrifice for our sins (Heb. 9:14).<sup>170</sup> *In spiritu*, Jesus is raised from the dead (Rom. 1:4; 8:11).<sup>171</sup> Through the resurrection of Christ, Jesus becomes the *primogenitus*, the firstborn among many brethren, so that we, like Him, might be raised from the dead *in spiritu*. He becomes the archetype for our redemption, just as He was the archetype for creation. In all these events, the Spirit does not merely reveal Jesus as the Son (Logos) of God but constitutes Jesus' identity as the receiver, bearer, and giver of the Spirit.

Third, *in spiritu* language helps to clarify the identity and non-identity of Jesus. The Logos

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<sup>167</sup> Sánchez offers a pneumatic reading of the conception, anointing, exaltation, paschal mystery, and atonement of Jesus. See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 30–85.

<sup>168</sup> Gerald Hawthorne teaches that Jesus was holy, but not perfected in holiness. The former was the result of the creative work of the Spirit. The latter was something that only Jesus himself could achieve by the choices he made throughout his life. Full communion with God was achieved by His obedience. Gerald Hawthorne, *The Presence & The Power: The Significance of the Holy Spirit in the Life and Mission of Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Sock, 1991), 85 (cf. 102). See Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 43, 46.

<sup>169</sup> James Dunn says, "The son obeys the Father's will. The Spirit drives forth." James Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 66. See Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 38. Hawthorne says the kenosis of Jesus meant that He put away his divine attributes and became dependent on the Spirit's divine attributes to carry him through His Father's mission. Hawthorne, *Presence & the Power*, 208, 211–12. The Logos assumed human nature and all its limitations. See Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 38, 43, 46.

<sup>170</sup> Reflecting on Heb. 9:14, Moltmann observes: "The Spirit is not only the power that makes him ready to surrender his life to the Father but also that power that itself sustains this surrender . . . in the strength of the indwelling and sympathetic divine Spirit, Jesus endures the God-forsakenness vicariously, on behalf of the God-forsaken world; and by doing so he brings the world God's intimate nearness . . . In the Spirit, Jesus dies lovingly for us to bring us to God's embrace; in the Spirit, his resurrection has the power to sustain our lives beyond death so that we might share in God's own life." Cited in Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 98–99.

<sup>171</sup> Reflecting on Ps.2:7, Hilary of Poitiers speaks of four "births" of Christ: "1) in eternity as Son of God, begotten of the Father; 2) in Bethlehem as incarnate Son of God, born of Mary according to his humanity; 3) in the Jordan as Son of God, reborn in his humanity for obedience to God for our sake; and 4) at the resurrection as Son of God, fully reborn in his glorified humanity for us." See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 49.

is Christ. The Spirit is present in Christ but is not Christ. The Spirit dynamically and ecstatically dwells in Christ throughout His life and mission and thus Christ lives his whole life and does all his work *in spiritu* both in faithfulness to the Father and in service to us. In a Spirit Christology, “we can affirm both the incarnate Logos’ individual inner constitution as God-man at an absolute point in time and the Spirit’s dynamic and ecstatic presence in the incarnate Logos throughout his life and mission in obedience to the Father and also for us and for our salvation.”<sup>172</sup>

This language of identity and non-identity greatly helps when talking about the two wills of Christ. In the person of Christ, the will of the Logos is carried out through his human will. However, it is also true that the Spirit, having sanctified the human will, makes it come to agreement with the divine will.<sup>173</sup> Thus, the Logos communicates His essential attributes to Christ’s human nature by virtue of the hypostatic union (grace of union), and the Holy Spirit endows the human nature with its own presence and supernatural created gifts (habitual grace).<sup>174</sup> However, a distinction takes place in the life of believers and the Logos regarding their bearing of the Spirit. The substantial essence of the believer (his humanity) remains his personal identity and the Spirit “accidentally” indwells in him, whereas the Logos has the Spirit by nature (or substantially).<sup>175</sup>

Fourth, the concept of *in spiritu* show how Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology are related. The *in spiritu* has a centripetal and centrifugal motion, which for Sánchez means that the

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<sup>172</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 156. Sánchez, using Aristotelian terms, argues that there is an accidental and not just substantial event in the life of Christ. The substantial would be the Logos who alone assumes the human nature. The Spirit has an accidental relationship. It is not “substantially” incarnated in Christ. Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 96, 155–56.

<sup>173</sup> See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 166. Here Sánchez says the Spirit is the driving force of the human nature of Christ, although all the persons of the Trinity are also involved in all their works. Del Colle says the Logos is the driving force of the “person” of Christ. Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 36, 66.

<sup>174</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 128.

<sup>175</sup> Here Sánchez follows Coffey. See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 96.

Spirit sanctifies the believer, respectively, to discern the Spirit in her own life and to reach out to others in the Spirit.<sup>176</sup> We might also say with Prenter that, centripetally, the believer participates by faith in Christ's death and resurrection; centrifugally, the believer participates in their mission to establish God's kingdom in our midst through prayer and service.<sup>177</sup> This mission first started when Christ was anointed by the Spirit in His baptism to bring the kingdom of God to earth by proclaiming good news to the poor, the captives, and the sick.<sup>178</sup> Luther taught the same.<sup>179</sup>

*In spiritu* the pilgrim also shares in the prayers of Christ in a way which he comes to know himself. This relational aspect is intrinsic to knowledge of Christ and oneself. The Spirit's work of incorporating the believer into the life of Christ helps the believer to know that the one for whom he intercedes is not immune to suffering. Jesus was no stranger to suffering as He suffered and died for the world. The believer prays to one who trusted in the Father for deliverance from suffering. By the power of the Spirit, the believer in his prayers unites with this same hope and trust in God during his sufferings.<sup>180</sup> Luther commented that Jesus will give His believers a Spirit of compassion who will teach them the Father's will and the Spirit of supplication who will enable them to call on God. Grace and supplication are tied together in such a way that proper prayer consists of grace convincing the believer he has a merciful God in Christ and that he can

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<sup>176</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 170.

<sup>177</sup> See Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 275. Prenter argues that talk of causality is permissible here. He proposes that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural cause of "true" empirical piety in Christians. Here he makes a distinction by saying that "Christ in us" is not identical with all real divine influences in the soul. That influence belongs to the Spirit. However, the piety is not identical to the Spirit either, but is the fruit of the Spirit. See Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 66–68.

<sup>178</sup> See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 52–53, 169.

<sup>179</sup> *LW* 23:21.

<sup>180</sup> D. Brent Laytham writes, "Those who pray, 'Deliver us from evil,' share in Jesus' gift of the Spirit and, therefore, in his victory over the devil and thus God's kingdom of power and glory." D. Brent Laytham, "But if . . . by the Spirit of God': Reading Matthew's Lord Prayer as Spirit Christology," *Journal of Theological Investigations* 12, no. 1 (2018): 38.

call Him Father. By the Spirit of supplication, God lets us converse with Him through prayer, and by the Spirit of Grace, He speaks with us.<sup>181</sup>

Through their lives in prayer *in spiritu*, believers participate in Christ's identity as a son of the Father.<sup>182</sup> Prayer reassures the believer he has been brought into an intimate relationship with the Father of Christ.<sup>183</sup> In this relationship, he is encouraged by the Spirit of the Son to address God as "Abba Father." Thus, the Christ-given Spirit drives the believer to communicate with the Father through prayer and many times prays for the believer when he is at loss for words.<sup>184</sup> Prayer helps the believer grow in true personhood as an adopted son (or daughter) by his strengthening relation with the Father. Jesus' prayer life, which is an expression of His "filial trust," shows us who we truly were made to be, namely, children who "trust in a loving Father who has given us the Spirit of his Son to enter a reciprocal I-Thou relation with him characterized by faith on our side and love on his side."<sup>185</sup>

### Genus Pneumatikon

The second concept to help explain Sanchez' Spirit Christology is his proposal for the addition of a *genus pneumatikon* (also known as *genus habitualis*) in Lutheran Christology. Sánchez defines this as "the type or kind (*genus*) of the communication of attributes that focuses on the supernatural presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, in, with, and through the human life and history of the Logos . . . This genus highlights the incarnate Logos' work of salvation through His Spirit-indwelt humanity and His identity as receiver, bearer, and giver of the

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<sup>181</sup> See Martin Luther, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John 14–16*, vol. 24, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, in *Luther's Works American Edition* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1961), 405, 419.

<sup>182</sup> For prayer as a participation in Christ's sonship, see Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 195–218.

<sup>183</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 212–13.

<sup>184</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 196, 210.

<sup>185</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 217.

Spirit.”<sup>186</sup> In Sánchez’ Spirit Christology, the Spirit descends or acts upon Christ (the incarnate Logos) to actualize Him, that is, to actively work in, with, and through Christ in His “becoming throughout his entire human history.”<sup>187</sup> The *genus pneumatikon* highlights this actualizing activity of the Spirit in Christ, which “points to the intrinsic *pro nobis* character of the Incarnation, to its soteriological orientation towards all events in Jesus’ life and work carried out *in the Spirit*, namely, in loving obedience to the Father and as our Servant.”<sup>188</sup> Because the *genus* also shows that Christ bears the Spirit to give the Spirit to others, it gives Christians “a firmer Christological framework and ground to speak of the movement of the person of the Holy Spirit in and from Christ for the sake of the world,” making the Trinity relevant to the life of the Christian in the land East of Eden.<sup>189</sup>

Sánchez sees his *genus* as a more adequate framework to speak of the relation between Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology through the distinct movement of the person and work of the Holy Spirit in Christ and in human beings. Whereas in what Lutheran theologian Martin Chemnitz offers through the *genus maiestaticum*, where the Logos shares its divine attributes with the human nature of Christ, in the *genus pneumatikon* the Spirit does likewise.<sup>190</sup> Otherwise stated, the *genus pneumatikon* highlights what the humanity of the Son receives from the Spirit—namely, the Holy Spirit itself and its gifts—for our salvation.<sup>191</sup> Thus, Christ acts in and

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<sup>186</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 244.

<sup>187</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 45.

<sup>188</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 45; Prenter states that the Spirit is a dynamic presence in the believer. It is the “dynamis of faith.” It moves us to prayer, to repentance, confession, and absolution. See Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 66–68, 79. In parallel with Sánchez, the Spirit has also a dynamic presence in Christ. The Logos is the ontic and static. Christ did things in and through the Spirit (Matt. 12:28).

<sup>189</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 179.

<sup>190</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 126–27. For Sánchez, these are “complementary” *genera*, one is Spirit-oriented and the other Logos-oriented.

<sup>191</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 116, 128.

by the Holy Spirit with respect to the assumed human nature in a way that Christ and the Spirit distinctly cooperate in the work of salvation. Sánchez writes, “In the Son’s kenosis or humiliation he is conceived, sanctified, strengthened, advanced in wisdom, and moved to be obedient unto death by the strengthening of the Spirit. And the Son does this willingly for us and for our salvation.”<sup>192</sup> Along with the Spirit, who dwells in His human nature, Christ’s human will works “under” and “with” His divine will in the work of salvation.<sup>193</sup>

In the *genus pneumatikon* the Holy Spirit communicates its habitual gifts of wisdom and strength to the human nature of Christ to carry out redemption.<sup>194</sup> These habitual gifts can experience growth. But the Spirit does not act independently of the Logos. Both the Logos and the Spirit work together and have active roles in salvation, in the building of the bridge from God to man.

The *genus pneumatikon* highlights the continuity between the distinct presence of the Spirit in the Son and its presence in the adopted sons and daughters.<sup>195</sup> However, since Christ bears the

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<sup>192</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 129.

<sup>193</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 129.

<sup>194</sup> This brings a debate on which person sanctifies the human nature of Christ. For instance, Cyril of Alexandria stated that although the Holy Spirit made the body for the Logos, it was the Logos that made the human nature of Christ holy, immortal, and incorruptible. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 1:240, 2:80. The Lutheran tradition represented by Martin Chemnitz shares this view. Sánchez points out how, for instance, in the proto-Pentecostal tradition represented by Edward Irving, the Spirit is assigned the role of sanctifying Christ’s human nature. Sánchez says about Irving’s thought, “As God, the Son is already inherently holy, immortal, and incorruptible, but as a human being, the Son must receive these powers through the Holy Spirit . . . Jesus is not holy because of the union of the Son with human nature (hypostatic union) but because of the Holy Spirit’s union with (or more precisely, inhabitation or indwelling of) his human soul . . . Irving attributes this harmony of wills in Christ’s person not to the hypostatic union but to the Holy Spirit’s indwelling and empowerment of his humanity.” Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 143; Following Chemnitz, Sánchez’s own position is that the Logos both acts “directly through his humanity after the personal union” and, “through his Spirit-indwelt humanity” always. Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 130.

<sup>195</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 178–79; Sánchez states that Logos Christology highlights the difference between Jesus and humans, while Spirit Christology highlights the relative continuity between Jesus and the saints. Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 169.

Spirit without measure, He has these gifts at a much greater level than believers.<sup>196</sup> The uncreated grace of the Spirit dwelling in the believer creates the supernatural love for, knowledge of, and trust in God (1 Cor. 1:11–14). The Spirit (*genus habitualis*) gives “created” supernatural gifts to Christ’s human nature, such as making it sinless from conception, but Christ still matured or grew in living a sinless life by His obedience unto death. Christ matured in the gift of obedience so that the bridge of salvation would become complete (Heb. 5:8–9).<sup>197</sup> The saints need these supernatural gifts as well in this fallen world. They especially need the supernatural gift of kerygma from the Spirit of Christ, that is, the gift of pronouncing the forgiveness of sins under the authority of Jesus.<sup>198</sup>

Thus, when Christ came to live with His creation in the land East of Eden, He remained distinct from human creation in two ways. One is that He is the Logos, and the believer is not.<sup>199</sup> Second, He is different in degree of the possession of the Spirit.<sup>200</sup> He has the Spirit in full measure. The believers do not. We might add that first distinction between Christ and the saints will remain even after the saints are brought back into the Garden of Eden. That is because, although both will have full measure of the Spirit there, the identity of Christ is the Logos while for the saints it is their own creaturely identity. Believers are not absorbed into a “Nirvana.”

The *genus pneumatikon* of Sánchez explains how the pilgrim in the land East of Eden can

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<sup>196</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 177.

<sup>197</sup> “The divine Logos allows the Holy Spirit to sanctify and perfect his humanity, to make it holy, so that it may be the Logos’s instrument of salvation for all humanity.” Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 175. As to the created gifts, scholastics would argue that all three persons are involved in their creation. Sánchez does not argue against this but proposes that the giving of these gifts to humanity, in the land East of Eden, should be solely ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The Logos is not in need of these gifts. It has them substantially and is perfected in them.

<sup>198</sup> “The Son who receives the Holy Spirit without measure from the Father in order to proclaim words of eternal life also hands over the same Spirit to the disciples so that they might absolve people of their sins.” Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 178.

<sup>199</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 131.

<sup>200</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 131.



share in some of the Son's mysteries, while journeying home, including that of His prayer life, which fosters an intimate life with the Father in the Spirit of the Son.<sup>201</sup> Echoing Prenter, Sánchez also argues that through this *genus* we can show how the Spirit does not just empower the pilgrim to imitate Christ but conforms him to Christ.<sup>202</sup> As Sánchez puts it, "Christ's life in the Spirit determines and shapes what life in the Spirit looks like for the Christian."<sup>203</sup>

Sánchez describes how man's conformity in Christ is worked by the Spirit as he journeys over the bridge back to Eden. He does this through three models of sanctification. In the baptismal or renewal model the pilgrim is conformed to Christ by death and resurrection.<sup>204</sup> In the second model, the dramatic model of war between good and evil, the Spirit brings the pilgrim into the temptations of Christ, where he fights in Christ's name against spiritual attacks with the Word of God and prayer.<sup>205</sup> Here Sánchez refers to Luther's teaching that God conforms His

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<sup>201</sup> See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 209–16.

<sup>202</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 169; Prenter believes that man is capable of imitating Christ but conformation to Christ is something only the Spirit can bring. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 58; In neo-scholastic thought the emphasis is on imitation with a significant role given to the free will. Conformity language stresses the Spirit's work through the Word in the context of His sovereignty; Among Protestant scholars, G.W. H. Lampe teaches that Jesus acts as one possessed by Spirit which makes him a model of divine self-giving and human self-transcendence that other humans can replicate. Gerald Hawthorne gives Jesus as a model saying, "their Savior because of who he was and because of his own complete obedience to the Father's will . . . [he is] the supreme example for them of what is possible in human life because of his own total dependence upon the Spirit of God." Hawthorne, *The Presence & The Power*, 234. Lucy Peppiatt also arguably supports "imitation" theology when she writes, "Spirit Christology not only lends theological significance to human being, but by acknowledging Jesus' existence and his humanity as prototypical, we also understand that the fulfilled human existence in Christ by the Spirit becomes the goal of Christian life." Lucy Peppiatt, "Spirit Christology and Mission" (PhD diss., University of Otago, 2010), 126. Yet she believes that the heavy emphasis on human freedom and individuality in the West can benefit from a view of mission "in which human agency is held in dialectical tension with grace and sovereignty of God and the empowering of the Spirit." Cited in Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 161.

<sup>203</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 236.

<sup>204</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 230–31; Sánchez develops this model under the renewal model in Leopoldo A. Sánchez M., *Sculptor Spirit: Models of Sanctification from Spirit Christology* (Downers Grove, IL.: IVP Academic, 2019), 66–88; Using conformation language, D. Lyle Dabney writes, "The Spirit's kenosis in the crucified Christ's experience of 'death, hell, and the grave' opens the door for assurance that the same Spirit will accompany God's suffering people in their experience of forsakenness, conforming them to Christ's cry of dereliction in anticipation of the resurrection. We do not die alone." D. Lyle Dabney, "The Advent of the Spirit: The Turn to Pneumatology in the Theology of Jürgen Moltmann," *Asbury Theological Journal* 48, no. 1 (1993): 98.

<sup>205</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 232–34; Sánchez develops this model in *Sculptor Spirit*, 89–114.

children to Christ through a cycle of *tentatio*, *oratio*, and *meditatio*. Through the attacks of the devil, God seeks to guide His children to put their lives in His hands through prayer and find strength in His Word, just as Jesus did in the temptation.<sup>206</sup> The third model of life in the Spirit of Christ is the eucharistic (or sacrificial) model. It focuses on the believer's life of faith active in works, which he offers as a thanksgiving (or eucharistic sacrifice) to God for Christ's atoning sacrifice and its benefits for us.<sup>207</sup> The Spirit shapes the believer to be a living sacrifice for a hurting world. These models of sanctification help the believer to know what life in the Spirit looks like for him.

In the end, Spirit Christology teaches that despite Christ's uniqueness as bearer and giver of the Spirit, believers in the land East of Eden can participate in the supernatural habitual gifts of Christ's human nature by the grace of adoption in the same Spirit who dwelt in Christ's humanity. Jesus relates to God in a distinctive way that enables believers to participate in His identity as a Son of the Father derivatively through the Spirit. This thesis drives Sánchez's work. In the end, the *genus pneumatikon* lays a foundation for speaking about the presence of the Spirit in Christ's saints, highlighting the pneumatological link between Christ's and the Christian's life in the Spirit. In a broader Trinitarian framework, the *genus* is grounded in an understanding of the Spirit's indwelling in Christ and the believer as a "*personal reality*."<sup>208</sup> Echoing Rahner and

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<sup>206</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 233. We might add that, in the Lord's Prayer, Christ tells the believer to ask the Father not to do this to him ("lead us not into temptation"). Jesus knows the challenges of being tempted. However, if the Father does allow it, the pilgrim is to believe it is done for his spiritual growth, not his failure.

<sup>207</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 234–35; Sánchez develops this model under the sacrificial model in *Sculptor Spirit*, 115–43; Prenter brings some of these themes together when he writes about forgiveness of sins and communion: "Both expressions signify the unity with Christ in the struggle against sin, death, and the devil." Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 150; Also, Prenter says we are driven by the Spirit to sacrifice for our neighbor in the same Christ was driven into the wilderness to face temptation, not begrudgingly, but willingly and freely. See Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, 236; Sánchez later adds two more models of life in the Spirit of Christ, namely, the hospitality and devotional models. See Sánchez, *Sculptor Spirit*, 144–93.

<sup>208</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 212.

postconciliar theologians after him, Sánchez explains:

As we said before in the case of the Logos, it is not the one divine essence that, by God's [efficient] causality, is communicated to his assumed humanity. Rather, it is the person of the Logos alone who assumes a human nature (not the Father, not the Spirit). Similarly, in the case of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it is not the one divine substance that by God's efficient causality—and thus without personal differentiation—is given to the incarnate Logos *and* to us. Rather, it is the *person* of the Holy Spirit who indwells both the incarnate Son in all fullness and also the sons of God by grace, bringing them into an intimate relationship with their common Father. Indwelling is not a substantial reality, but a personal one.<sup>209</sup>

Finally, when the pilgrim enters the land of the New Eden, he will do so with a glorified body and soul. Reflecting on texts such as 1 Cor. 15:20–23 and Rom. 1:3–4 (8:11), Sánchez assigns this participation in Christ's resurrected and glorified flesh to the same Spirit in whom Christ himself is raised from the dead according to the flesh.<sup>210</sup> A Logos-oriented reading of Christ's resurrection highlights the Logos' raising of his own flesh from the dead. This takes place through the Logos' full use of his divine majesty communicated to his assumed humanity in the hypostatic union (*genus maiestaticum*).<sup>211</sup> While Sánchez is not against this reading, he finds that a complementary Spirit-oriented reading of Christ's resurrection by the Father **THROUGH** the Spirit is needed for humans to be able to share in Christ's resurrection by the Father's same Spirit, better connecting Spirit Christology with Spirit anthropology.<sup>212</sup>

Admittedly, Sánchez does not locate Christ's resurrection explicitly in his *in spiritu* model of the Trinity or in his proposed *genus pneumatikon* (or *genus habitualis*). Based on his whole Spirit Christology, however, we conclude that Sánchez implicitly grounds the resurrection of the saints in the likeness of Christ in His own resurrection *in spiritu*. Moreover, we can also

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<sup>209</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 212–13.

<sup>210</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 71–74.

<sup>211</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 47–48.

<sup>212</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 48, 74.

conclude that Sánchez sees our sharing in Christ's resurrection not only as the result of the communication of His divine power to our human flesh but also as the result of the communication to the saints of His Spirit itself and its supernatural created gift of new life in Christ. In this sense, the Logos' own human journey in the Spirit makes possible our own journey and final return to the Father in the same Spirit.

### **Conclusion**

Although Prenter (1907–1990) and Rahner (1904–1984) were contemporaries, Prenter does not directly engage Rahner and other postconciliarists. Instead, his focus is on scholastic thought. However, Prenter can be helpful in the ecumenical dialogue with postconciliarists by extracting some of his thoughts against scholasticism and Schleiermacher. Against scholastic thought, Prenter argues for total depravity and Spirit sovereignty. If Prenter were to have engaged postconciliar thought, he would have argued against the affinity between the fallen state of man and the Spirit of God. A quasi-formal cause which orientates man toward God would not exist for Prenter. The fallen state of man, which Prenter called *caro*, is incapable of having any orientation to the true God. For Prenter to acknowledge a quasi-formal cause or a Schleiermacher God-consciousness within humanity would mean there is a part of man that does not stand in need of redemption. This would make God unjust in the condemnation of the unbeliever unless God could extract that part of man which did not need redemption. Luther and Prenter both believed such extraction to be impossible.

Prenter would have seen postconciliar thought on the anonymous Christian as promoting an idealistic Christ. Prenter taught and believed that an encounter with the historical Christ in faith was necessary for proper justification. This historical encounter is possible only through the means of grace. Any spirit working apart from them, is not the Spirit of Christ, thus leading to a

false god. For Prenter, justification and sanctification are accomplished through conformation to the historical death and resurrection of Christ, and not by imitation to an idealistic Christ. Prenter believed an idealistic Christ turns the Gospel into Law and diminishes total depravity.

Regarding Spirit anthropology, Prenter speaks against Coffey's thought of seeing the Spirit as being in possession of the believer or standing at the "beckoning" of the human being. He would argue against any concept of created grace bestowed upon the believer just because the believer simply performed the mass. Both speak against Spirit sovereignty. For Prenter, scholastic created grace speaks against total depravity. Instead, he would support the idea that uncreated grace, the Spirit, is given at the sacrament, if the Spirit *chooses* to be given, who then helps sustain the believer in his pilgrimage.

However, Prenter does support a postconciliar concern for emphasizing the distinctiveness of the person of the Spirit. He does this by his teaching on how the Spirit has a distinct role in the prayer life of the Christian and the process of conforming him to Christ. Prenter does also speak about a space and time between biological death and entry into the triumphant church. However, he calls it the waiting church and pictures it much differently than purgatory or the space and time of the dying where every human receives an eschatological vision to deny or believe in Christ (which Rahner proposes).

However, what is lacking in Prenter is a robust Spirit Christology which can also address postconciliar thoughts. For this, we turned to Sánchez. Through his Spirit Christology, he addresses four postconciliar concerns, that is, Spirit anthropology, the personal distinction of the Spirit, staying true to Rahner's maxim, and making the Trinity relevant to the life of the pilgrim through pneumatology. Regarding Spirit anthropology, Sánchez supports Prenter's conformation teaching. He speaks against seeing the relationship the Spirit has with Christ as a model or

paradigm on the human reception of divine self-communication. The words model and paradigm hint of idealism and speak more to imitation of Christ rather than conformation to Christ. In returning humanity back to God, the Spirit does not look for affinity with a spirit in man (quasi-formal cause). Instead, the Spirit returns the pilgrim back to God through conformation to Christ's death and resurrection, making the spiritually dead become alive. Thus, Jesus' unique reception of the Spirit brings about redemption and makes it possible for the Spirit to dwell within human flesh to work this conformation. Spirit Christology reveals to us justification as the constitution of and bridge to salvation. Spirit anthropology reveals to the pilgrim how the Spirit puts the pilgrim on that bridge and sanctifies him as walks across it back home to God.

Sánchez also addresses Spirit anthropology through his *genus pneumatikon*. This concept gives a framework to speak of the movement of the person and work of the Spirit in and from Christ to the believer. It highlights the humanity of the Son's reception of the Spirit and the working of the Spirit in that humanity for salvation. The Spirit helps Christ's human wisdom and stature to grow (Luke 2:52). It gives gifts to the humanity of Christ and enables the growth of these supernatural gifts of faith, hope, love, and obedience.<sup>213</sup> Because of the Incarnation and the act of redemption, the Spirit and these supernatural gifts are also bestowed upon the believer. The Spirit brings the growth of these gifts to the pilgrim through the experience of renewal (death and resurrection), drama in the struggle with the devil, and sacrifice for neighbor as it returns the pilgrim to God. To connect the pilgrim to the supernatural gift of bodily resurrection, Sánchez believes it best to credit Christ's resurrection to the Spirit's power rather than to the Logos (Rom. 8:11). Since the identity of the pilgrim is not the Logos as it is for Christ, a Spirit-orientated reading of the resurrection, which teaches the commonality the pilgrim has with the

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<sup>213</sup> The Logos is not in need of this gifts.

humanity of Christ in the indwelling of the Spirit, better teaches the pilgrim's sharing in the bodily resurrection of Christ through the Spirit. This teaching of the *genus pneumatikon* also addresses the postconciliar concern of making the Trinity relevant to the life of the pilgrim through pneumatology.

Sánchez *in spiritu* model addresses the postconciliar concern of faithfulness to Rahner's maxim. Sánchez finds the strongest connection between the economic and immanent Trinity lies not in the person of Christ, but in the work of Christ at the cross. There Christ outpoured the Spirit in the economic Trinity to creation the way He outpours the Spirit to the Father in the immanent Trinity. He counters the postconciliar concern that the Incarnation brings about a taxis in the economic Trinity which is not consistent with the taxis in the immanent Trinity. He does this by putting forth the idea that in the Incarnation, the Logos assumption of human nature "supernaturally" precedes the sanctification of that human nature by the Spirit. His *in spiritu* model also agrees with Coffey's bestowal and return model as it teaches the Father and the Son, through bestowal and return of the Spirit, love one another *in spiritu*, arguing that *in spiritu* the Father and the Son's love for each other is completed.<sup>214</sup>

Furthermore, in bringing distinction to the person and work of the Spirit, Sánchez teaches that the Son's work is to unite humanity with Himself which He does through the Incarnation. The Spirit's distinct work is to sanctify the human nature of Christ ontologically in the Incarnation and dynamically through his growing obedience to His Father's will to bring about

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<sup>214</sup> This raises a few questions. Does this mean the Father and Son are capable of committing an "uncompleted act?" If an attribute of being a person means to initiate love to another and receive love from another what does this say about the personhood of the Spirit? To whom does the Spirit initiate love? From whom does the Spirit receive love? Might it better be described as triangular? In counseling, triangulation is a negative behavior, where two are set against one. But in the Trinity might it be seen as a positive behavior where the Father with the Spirit love the Son, and the Spirit with the Son love the Father, and the Father with the Son love the Spirit? Instead of *in spiritu* might one, to give greater distinction to the personhood of the Spirit, say *cum spiritu*?

redemption and the gift of the Spirit. Through the gift of the Spirit, Christ also sanctifies believers to bring about subjective redemption and sanctification in their lives.

In the end, both Prenter and Sánchez contribute greatly to a contemporary Lutheran assessment of postconciliar thought on humanity's journey back to God by establishing common ground and boundaries.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

In this chapter, we recapitulate our Lutheran assessment of postconciliar thought on pneumatology. This will serve as a conclusion to our arguments. Then we propose to close the chapter by reflecting on a question of interest among postconciliar theologians, namely, whether it is possible for humans to journey to God without an explicit proclamation of Christ. While Lutherans agree that the sovereign Spirit can work outside of means, they focus on the revealed (or revealing) Spirit who reveals Christ through the means of Word and Sacrament. We propose a historiographical response to the postconciliar question that does not question the Lutheran distinction between the hidden and the revealed God, but rather reflects on how the Spirit can work through the personal history of the elect to prepare their hearts to receive the revealed Christ, and lead to the lifesaving reception of the Spirit where it becomes known as the Spirit of Christ.

### **Conclusion**

#### Recapitulation of Research

Throughout this thesis we have talked about how the journey back to God is articulated through Spirit Christology and Spirit anthropology. The journey involves traversing over a cruciform bridge in shape and nature. Spirit Christology involves the discussion of how the bridge is built by the distinct persons and works of the Logos and Spirit in the person of Christ. The postconciliarists sought to find a stronger balance between pneumatology and Christology in the building of this bridge. They believed that over the years, the church has leaned too much in favor of a Logos Christology at the expense of Spirit Christology. For Rahner and Coffey, a stronger pneumatic orientation would enable the cruciform bridge to be more inclusive by teaching that the Spirit can work outside the church to prepare people to meet and believe in

Christ for salvation before or during the dying process. According to Rahner, non-Christian dying individuals do not need to wait for collective eschatology to meet Christ. The Spirit gives the dying person an individual eschatological moment where he meets Christ in glory and is given a chance to surrender to His Lordship. Coffey describes this encounter as the entelechy of the Spirit. It is the distinct work of the person of the Spirit to lead all people to this encounter.

Kasper focuses more on the relationship the Spirit has in the work of the Incarnation and the relationship the Spirit and Logos have in Christ in building the cruciform bridge to God. He believed that through a stronger pneumatic orientation, the pilgrim sees how the building of the bridge is found on the love (i.e., the Spirit) existing within both the immanent and economic Trinity. Del Colle expands on Kasper's thoughts by sharing how the Spirit and the Logos work together not only in the Incarnation, but also in the act of Redemption. For Del Colle, the Spirit is the driving force which moves Christ to the cross. The Logos provides the material for the sacrifice. The Spirit is the one who offers it (Heb. 9:14).

In the building of the cruciform bridge to God, the church is also formed. As the Logos served as the form within the body Christ, so it also serves as the form for His body, the church. As the Spirit dwelt in the body of Christ, conforming it to be the perfect sacrifice by obedience to the Father's will, so it also dwells in Christ's body the church, conforming those in the church to the Father's will through Word and Sacrament.

From the Lutheran perspective, Prenter focuses more on Spirit anthropology than Spirit Christology. One of the distinct works of the Spirit, for Prenter, in building the cruciform bridge to God, is to make Christ an historical reality to the pilgrim. Prenter speaks against any idealistic teaching of Christ, arguing it confuses Law and Gospel and leads to work righteousness and wrongful universalism. Furthermore, Prenter does emphasize, that in the building of the bridge to

God, there is a distinction of persons between the Holy Spirit and the Logos in Christ. He speaks like Del Colle in the teaching that the Logos is the form, the Spirit is the former, forming not the will of the Logos, but the will of Christ's humanity to the will of the Father.

The Lutheran offering the most robust balanced Spirit Christology to date and to this discussion is Sánchez. In his Spirit Christology, Sánchez brings a clearer distinction between the person and works of the Spirit and the Logos in the building of the bridge to God. He brings up how this bridge is built *in spiritu*. This means that all actions done within the immanent and economic Trinity are done in, with, and under the Spirit. The Spirit is involved in the begetting of the Son, the incarnation of the Son, the act of Redemption, and in the love the Father and the Son have for each other and creation.

His *genus pneumatikon* highlights the incarnate Logos' work of salvation through His Spirit-indwelt humanity and His identity as receiver, bearer, and giver of the Spirit. It gives Christians a firmer Christological framework and ground to speak of the movement of the person of the Holy Spirit in and from Christ for the sake of the world. It highlights what the humanity of the Son receives from the Spirit—namely, the Holy Spirit itself and its gifts—for our salvation, for the building of the bridge to communion with God.

Once again, Spirit Christology deals with how the Spirit works with the Logos in Christ to build the cruciform bridge between God and man. Spirit anthropology deals with how the Spirit gets man to that bridge and assists him in crossing it. Postconciliarists seek to modernize the scholastic talk Luther faced with Erasmus over the issue of conversion. Erasmus argued that the human will can play a part in the conversion process, in getting to cruciform bridge. Starting with Rahner, the postconciliarists took this to a higher level by combining Aristotelian causality with Thomistic views on anthropology and grace to the conversation. Rahner said there is an

element within man, called the quasi-formal cause of God, which was not damaged by sin to the point of being totally helpless in getting to the bridge. The *Vorgriff* element within the quasi-formal cause of God can experience transcendence and seek answers to the metaphysical questions of life. Rahner says the pilgrim is placed on the bridge to God once this transcendent seeking takes place. Once brought to the bridge by this method, the quasi-formal cause, being a spiritual entity, receives the saving Spirit apart from Christ. After being placed there, the Spirit leads the pilgrim across the bridge with the hope that at the end Christ will be revealed to the pilgrim causing the pilgrim to surrender to Christ leading to his salvation.

The postconciliar theologian David Coffey supports Rahner's thoughts on the ability of humanity to get to the bridge, with the assisting help of the Spirit, even without the knowledge of Christ. However, Coffey labels this ability "created grace" rather than quasi-formal cause. Once there, the Spirit dwells in the pilgrim to assist him across the bridge with the hope of having the pilgrim surrender to Christ at some point in time or end of the journey. Coffey holds that the mission of the Spirit is to make this happen. He calls it the entelechy of the Spirit.

Kasper agrees with Coffey and Rahner over man's ability to get to the bridge with the help of the Spirit. However, wanting to remain true to Rahner's maxim, he does not want to call this ability "created grace." Created grace is an efficient causality term. As such, it is not found within the immanent Trinity. Therefore, he agrees with Rahner that man that can help with conversion because of a quasi-formal cause of divinity within him. However, his thought that God serves almost like a "tractor beam" in bringing man to the bridge has caused some to criticize him for a super existential view on conversion where humanity is not seen as a willing participant.

Although Kasper may agree that man has some ability to help in conversion, he does have

issues with both Coffey's and Rahner's thoughts that this can be done without knowledge of Christ. Kasper argued that any anthropocentric soteriology is philosophical and is doomed to failure. He is one of those concerned that the thoughts of Coffey and Rahner make the cross of Christ superfluous to Christian soteriology. Finally, Kasper says that once upon the bridge, the journey across it is marked by love toward God and neighbor. It is a love brought about by the indwelling of the Spirit, and not just His gifts or energies, in the pilgrim.

Del Colle speaks the same about man's ability to get to the bridge. He agrees with Rahner that of the persons of the Trinity, the Spirit has the biggest role in getting man to the cruciform bridge. However, he disagrees with saying this ability comes from a quasi-formal cause within man. Del Colle is uncomfortable with such terminology because it implies a compromise of God's immutability. Also understanding Kasper's concern with the phrase created grace, Del Colle wishes to call the faith which places man on the bridge a "quasi-formal causality of grace." He describes faith as a created actuation by uncreated act. This means that the act of faith in humanity is created by the act of an uncreated being, differing from Lutherans only on the idea that the created grace of free will is not totally deprived. Finally, once upon the bridge, the pilgrim becomes an adopted child of God. Using this terminology, Del Colle seeks to emphasize the distinction between the pilgrim and the person of Christ. Christ is a child of God by nature. The pilgrim is a child of God by adoption.

We have looked at Spirit soteriology—that is, the means and methods the Spirit uses to bring humanity back into the fellowship of the Trinity—in postconciliar Catholic theologians after Rahner and assessed their anthropological, Trinitarian, and Spirit Christological assumptions from a Lutheran perspective. Through Spirit Christology, we learn that it is the Logos Himself (not His image in humans) who in conjunction with the Spirit builds the bridge

from God to man by carrying out the obedience of faith (Phil. 2:8). In Christ's redemption path in the Spirit, Christ recapitulates Israel's and Adam's historical disobedience by becoming faithful to the Father and giving back to humanity the Spirit once lost by Adam's sin.<sup>1</sup> Against the postconciliar idea that the gift of the Spirit comes in part through our will and obedience, Sánchez' Spirit Christology highlights that the Spirit, who brings us to the Father, comes freely through Christ. His Spirit saves by raising the spiritually dead back to life.<sup>2</sup>

Through Prenter's Spirit anthropology, we have seen the difference between believing that the Spirit moves the pilgrim to imitate Christ (*imitatio Christi*) versus believing that the Spirit conforms him to Christ (*conformitas Christi*) on the journey back to God. Imitation means to follow an ideal Christ as our example of obedience to the law. In this view, a personal encounter with the risen Christ through the Word in the Gospel is not prominent. Imitation language leans more into the role human responsibility has in the paradox between God's sovereignty and human responsibility regarding salvation. The act of conformation leans more into God's sovereignty, but in a way that directs sinners to seek the revealing Spirit in the proclamation of Christ. Whereas imitation leads to the knowledge of God through contemplation of Christ's human obedience, conformation leads to such knowledge through a relationship with the Creator Spirit who makes Christ present to us in the Word.<sup>3</sup>

Conformity requires an encounter with the historical Christ. His Spirit brings this about by leading the pilgrim to die with Christ and be raised with Christ to new life. This encounter and

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<sup>1</sup> See Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 230–34.

<sup>2</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 188–89.

<sup>3</sup> Beasley-Murray notes that “for the Hebrew knowledge means experiencing something . . . knowledge of God for the Greeks is primarily contemplation of the divine reality; for the Hebrew it means entering into a relationship with God.” The scholastics follow more of the Greek thought, the Lutherans the Hebrew. George R Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. David A Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, 36 (Waco, TX.: Word, 1987), 170.

process of conformation to Christ cannot be done without God gracing the individual with His Spirit's presence. In this encounter with Jesus Christ, humans encounter God. Jesus is figuratively "heaven." He is the kingdom of God where God meets His creation (Luke 17:21). The fullness of the deity dwells in Christ (Col. 2:9) and the baptized believer has Christ living in him (Gal. 2:20). Christ brings the kingdom of God by His Spirit (Matt. 12:28). He also sends the Spirit to dwell in His disciples (John 14:16–17).

Furthermore, in Christ, the believer encounters two persons of the Trinity, the Logos and the Spirit. Through the Spirit's work of conformation to Christ, believers or the elect are translated into children of God. Their stories are taken up into the story of Christ.<sup>4</sup> Peppiatt shares how Spirit Christology supports this. She notes that Spirit Christology has an emphasis on humility, vulnerability, and solidarity that does not present the truth as a propositional claim to be imitated but embodies it as a way of life. It evokes a Spirit-empowered faith response which conforms the believer to a lifelong Christlike discipleship as he crosses the bridge back to God.<sup>5</sup>

#### Further Areas of Research

In conclusion, our Lutheran assessment of Catholic theology has focused on how postconciliar theologians working in the neo-Thomistic tradition after Rahner articulate the story of humanity's journey back to the Triune God through the lens of a Spirit soteriology. We delved into proposals by Kasper, Del Colle, and Coffey, particularly their Spirit anthropology and Spirit Christology. Given our focus, we did not look at the potential pneumatological contributions to our question from other important postconciliar theologians who do not build on Rahner's work,

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<sup>4</sup> See Vanhoozer, "Human Being, Individual and Social," in *CCCD*, 165; cf. Trevor Hart, "Redemption and Fall," in *CCCD*, 193, 203; "The aim of the human being is . . . to be transformed into a son or daughter of God and live like the Son, according to the Son, and with the Son, 'reproducing his image.'" Elsa Tamez, "The Amnesty of Grace," in *MTR*, 290.

<sup>5</sup> Sánchez, *Introduction to Spirit Christology*, 162–63.

such as Yves Congar, Hans Urs von Balthasar, or Joseph Ratzinger, those known as ressourcement theologians. Further Lutheran assessment on the broader pneumatological teaching of the postconciliar era, including not only key theologians' writings but papal documents such as encyclicals and popular expressions of pneumatic religiosity such as the Catholic renewal movement, remains an ongoing ecumenical task that our study can encourage given its overall pneumatologically-oriented trajectory.

Our Lutheran assessment of postconciliar Spirit soteriology focused on questions related to the relationship between divine grace and the human will in the human person's return to God the Father through His Son in the Spirit. Relevant areas of inquiry to understand postconciliar thought included the relationship between the economic and immanent Trinity, divine causality (and its use of Aristotelian categories), the human will in conversion (especially, after the Fall), and the proper works of the Spirit in the Incarnation and the indwelling of Christ in the saints. Other questions of significance to postconciliar theologians that were touched on but can be expanded further include the relation between justification and sanctification and the relation between sanctification and deification in Spirit soteriology. One question that is of particular interest to postconciliar theologians after Rahner is the extent to which the Spirit can point people to communion with God apart from an explicit proclamation of Christ. It is to this question that we offer a response in the remaining part of this chapter.

### **Spirit Chronology**

#### The Father's Two Parts of Speech

We have now seen how Spirit Christology builds the cruciform bridge back to God and how through Spirit anthropology man is brought to this bridge. This thesis proposes another metaphor to describe the cooperative act of redemption the Son and the Spirit accomplish on



building this bridge and getting man to it. It is called Spirit Chronology. In Spirit Chronology the Son and the Spirit still serve as the self-communication of the Father to creation. However, a second metaphor is useful to describe this self-communication. A complete sentence usually needs a noun and a verb. In Spirit Chronology, the Logos is the noun, and the Spirit is the verb.<sup>6</sup> As the noun, Jesus is the objective pole of revelation and justification. As the verb, the Spirit is the subjective pole of human apprehension.<sup>7</sup> As the verb gives life to the sentence, the Spirit gives life and energy to the communication of God, making it dynamic and capable of apprehension in history. Our analogy of the noun and the verb allows for a Trinitarian distinction in describing the workings in “time” of the Logos and Spirit of God in making the plan of salvation a reality (Gal. 4:4) and in bringing time to its divinely appointed end.

Sometimes a sentence can get by without a noun, like in the cohortative, jussive, and imperative forms. These are sentences where commands are given with the noun hidden but implied. For example, in the act of creation, God uses the jussive, “Let there be light!” When God communicates to man with the noun being hidden, the verb, the Spirit, causes trembling and fear in the receiver as the Spirit reveals the naked wrath of God against sinful creation. To call upon Luther, we might say that when God communicates to us with the “noun” hidden, we experience the wrath of God.<sup>8</sup>

However, when the noun is revealed, the Spirit of God becomes known as the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9) and we experience the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Before the Incarnation

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<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Wainright argues that the Spirit energizes what is made through the divine Word. The Spirit is the action word. Jesus is the substantive noun. Geoffrey Wainright, “The Holy Spirit,” in *CCCD*, 282. St. Augustine said, “Just as human custom speaks with words, so does the divine power speak with deeds.” Cited in Henri de Lubac, “Allegory, Sense of Faith” in *MTR*, 49.

<sup>7</sup> Kathryn Tanner, “Jesus Christ,” in *CCCD*, 267.

<sup>8</sup> LC III 65 in Kolb and Wengert, 439–40.

took place, God spoke to the Old Testament patriarchs with the “noun” being revealed through prophecy. St. Peter said that when the Spirit of God spoke through the prophets about the Messianic promises, they were inspired by the Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:10–11). The Spirit of Christ was already at work in preparing the way for the Incarnation of Christ whose day was foreseen by Abraham.<sup>9</sup> This vision was granted to Abraham by the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup> The Spirit prepared Abraham through his history to say “yes” to God’s call in Gen. 12.<sup>11</sup> Philo of Alexandria notes that Abraham, as a monotheistic believer, knew by grace that if he stayed among his polytheistic family, he would be incapable of arriving at the proper discovery of the true God.<sup>12</sup> Abraham needed to separate himself from them. The Spirit and the pre-incarnate Son—revealed or unrevealed “noun”—were already at work in building the cruciform bridge in the “time” of Abraham. In other areas of the Old Testament, they can also be seen at work in building the bridge through the “times” of even non-believers like Balaam (Num. 22–24) and Cyrus (Is. 45).

#### Spirit Chronology: The Verb with the Hidden Noun

The Logos is history (Rev. 22:13) without its presence not clearly visible. Spirit Chronology is deficient Spirit Christology. History cannot happen without the Word, either oral or written. Theologians gathered at the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order agreed that the actions of God within the history of His people and the fulfillment of His actions in the

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<sup>9</sup> Wainwright, “The Holy Spirit,” in *CCCD*, 283.

<sup>10</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On the Virtues*, in *WPh*, §217.

<sup>11</sup> Philo of Alexandria says that Abraham was prepared to say “yes” to God by visions and dreams where the Word is spoken. Philo of Alexandria, *Hypothetica: Apology for the Jews*, in *WPh*, §6.1.

<sup>12</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On the Virtues*, in *WPh*, §214. Josephus says the same. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, in *The Works of Josephus*, 1:154–57.

person of Christ, looks to the consummation of the victory of the Lord at the end of time.<sup>13</sup> Time has a targeted destination. In Spirit Christology, we saw how the Spirit works through Christ to build the cruciform bridge. Spirit Chronology, we explore how the Spirit of God works in the “times” of people to build this bridge.<sup>14</sup>

The Spirit is God’s dynamic power in history (i.e., the Logos is the material, the Spirit the energy). Christ becomes the Messiah as time was steered toward His crucifixion through the Spirit’s eschatological power.<sup>15</sup> The Spirit continues to move time toward its final confirmation and the truth of His revelation.<sup>16</sup>

The Spirit can do this through dreams given to pagans. In the story where Laban tracks down Jacob, God appears to Laban in a dream and tells him not to speak good or bad (Gen. 32:24). The Septuagint says only “evil.” Josephus says that God warns him, in that dream, not to speak wrathful against him.<sup>17</sup> The Legends of the Jews mention that Laban intended on killing Jacob when he saw him.<sup>18</sup> The Legends further add that God spoke to the pagan Laban in a dream because, “This message from heaven came to Laban during the night, for when, in

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<sup>13</sup> Faith Order Commission, “Scripture, Tradition, and Traditions,” in *MTR*, 341.

<sup>14</sup> A perfect biblical example of this is the book of Esther. There God’s name is never mentioned but it is clearly implied that He is working behind the scenes through His Spirit (Esther 4:13–15). The only problem is that this event is outside the “string,” that is, Jesus and the cross would have happened even if Esther had not existed, since she and her uncle were both Benjamites (Esther 2:5) and not Judahites, unless one of those saved by her actions was an ancestor of Christ. The book is not clear on this question. In the New Testament, we are never told whether Jesus celebrated the Feast of Purim. Some say it might have been the unknown feast He celebrated in John 5:1.

<sup>15</sup> Sánchez, *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver*, 35.

<sup>16</sup> See Wolfhart Pannenberg, “The World as History of God and the Unity of the Divine Essence,” in *MTR*, 83. Moltmann argued that to “think of God in history” leads to theism and atheism. To “think of history in God” and specifically to “history in Christ,” leads to new creation and the understanding that all the sufferings of humanity are embodied in the sufferings and death of Christ. See Jürgen Moltmann, “The Resurrection and Future of Jesus Christ,” in *MTR*, 93.

<sup>17</sup> Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, in *The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 1:313.

<sup>18</sup> *Legends of the Jews*, “The Covenant with Laban,” §2, <https://sacred-texts.com/jud/loj/loj108.htm>, accessed February 16, 2024.

extraordinary cases, God finds it necessary to reveal Himself unto the heathen, He does it only in the dark, clandestinely as it were, while He shows Himself to the prophets of the Jews openly, during daylight.”<sup>19</sup> The Spirit of God communicates to Laban with the Logos not revealed.<sup>20</sup> However, the Spirit communicates itself well enough that Laban, who is pagan, knows that this dream comes from Jacob’s God not his own (Gen. 31:29). Through this dream, Jacob’s life is spared, allowing time to continue to march toward its divinely appointed destination.

We see the Spirit working also through the prophet Jonah to bring time to its destiny. Jonah was reluctant to proclaim God’s Word upon Nineveh. Even though the Word was a word of judgment, Jonah knew that when the Word of God is proclaimed, it can move the hearts of people to a saving repentance. He saw Nineveh as a future threat to the people of Israel. He was right. They would eventually rise and destroy Israel. It was their destiny. Not wanting to give Nineveh a chance of saving repentance, Jonah ran from his calling. God caught up with him. The boat in which he was a passenger met a violent storm. The sailing crew believed it was from the hand of one of the gods. They called on their gods to still the storm to no avail. They surmised, somehow, that one of them had to be responsible for this occurrence. They cast lots and it fell on Jonah. Jonah gave them an explanation. He confessed he worshiped not just an Elohim, but Yahweh, the ineffable name. The name the “Angel of the Lord” called Himself before Moses.

Before throwing Jonah overboard, these “pagans” specifically then called on Yahweh, asking Him not to punish them for what they were about to do. After throwing Jonah overboard, the storm stilled, and these “pagans” offered Yahweh sacrifices and made vows unto Him (Jonah 1:16). Jonah cared enough for them that he gave them the ineffable name to save them from

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<sup>19</sup> *Legends of the Jews*, “The Covenant with Laban,” §2, <https://sacred-texts.com/jud/loj/loj108.htm>, accessed February 16, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> The same can be said in the dreams of Pharaoh (Gen. 41:1–7) and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan.2:1–49).

death.

After arriving in Nineveh, Jonah never proclaimed to the Ninevites the ineffable name. His hatred for the Ninevites prevailed. The only recorded words of Jonah to the Ninevites were, “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” That’s it. He gives no divine name, not even calling the cause of the overthrow an Elohim. Somehow, the Ninevites, without the help of Jonah, believed the prophecy of Jonah could be diverted by repentance. Somehow the king recognized the threat of punishment was legit. God had indirectly worked through his history to respond with repentance to this call without the direct mention of His name. The king orders acts of repentance and throws out the question, “Who knows? God (Elohim in Hebrew) may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish (Jonah 3:9)?”

We are told Yahweh does offer grace to them to Jonah’s frustration. Here the Spirit of God worked repentance without clear reference to Yahweh, that preserved them from destruction. The Spirit of God was working history. God’s plan for the Assyrians was to use them as a future disciplinary rod for His children (Isa. 10). Israel’s journey over the cruciform bridge to God involved experiencing the cross of exile. However, the sins of the Ninevites were becoming so great that God, to prevent Him from taking the same action against them that He took against Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:20–22), moved them to a repentance without clear revelation of Himself that would stay His wrath so He might preserve them for His later purpose.

Next, we move to study how the times of Judas and Pilate helped lead time to the cross. F.F. Bruce notes that Jesus had twelve disciples. Eleven of them were from the North. Those eleven were not embedded in the political messianic expectations as taught by the religious leaders in the South. Their history made them more open to the new wine Jesus would proclaim about the kingdom and the Messiah. It was new wine that could not be put into the old wineskins

of the political messianic expectations. Out of the twelve, the only southerner embedded in this teaching was Judas.<sup>21</sup> Thus, when Judas met Jesus, Judas had hoped that Jesus would be the one to deliver Israel. However, as Jesus shared that the coming of the kingdom was near, Judas, because of his personal history, could not believe it. On Palm Sunday Jesus was joyously welcomed as a prophet in their midst. The hopes of Judas must have been high that day. But they were quickly dashed when in short time, Jesus did not make a public speech denouncing Roman authority. Instead, Jesus went to clear out the temple and further agitate rulers of His people. Judas saw Jesus alienating the people that he believed were needed for a successful revolt against Rome. Furthermore, Jesus had no army, not even a ragtag one. When one of the disciples offered two swords, Jesus told him they were enough as if they would not be needed at all. Judas must have saw Jesus as a messianic imposter who needed to be stopped before a massacre of the Jews by the Romans took place.

He went to the religious leaders and asked what they would give him if he would tell them where they could find Jesus alone to arrest Him without incident. If Judas really was after the money, he could have asked for more than the price for a slave. The request was done simply to give credibility to his “betrayal.” It was his hope to save Israel and keep Jesus from the pain of the cross. His plan then was to stop Jesus from leading a failing revolt that would destroy Israel and lead to His crucifixion.

Judas simply wanted Jesus stopped, not killed. Thus, when word came to Judas that Jesus was condemned, Matthew writes the following words, “When Judas, who had betrayed him, **saw that Jesus was condemned**, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. ‘I have sinned,’ he said, ‘for I have betrayed innocent blood.’”

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<sup>21</sup> See F.F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 183–84.

‘What is that to us?’ they replied. ‘That’s your responsibility.’ So, Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hung himself.” (Matt. 27:3–5). The plan backfired. What he hoped to save Jesus from, happened to him anyway. His conscience could not take the killing of an innocent man. Jesus knew this and this is the reason He said, “It would have been better for him if he had never been born.” (Matt. 26:24).

Then there is Pontius Pilate. Pilate’s history involved negative encounters with the Jews. Josephus shares at least two of them. One is the time he used money from the temple treasury to build aqueducts for the region which caused a stir among them.<sup>22</sup> A second one is where he tried to place Roman shields with offensive emblems in the temple grounds.<sup>23</sup> Philo of Alexandria adds extra information on this maneuver by Pilate. When Pilate refused to take the shields down, the Jews wrote a letter to Pilate’s superior, Tiberias, sharing what Pilate was doing. Tiberias was so angry to hear about this that he wrote back immediately. Philo says the contents of the letter consisted of Tiberias, “reproaching and reviling [Pilate] in the most bitter manner for his act of unprecedented audacity and wickedness and commanding him immediately to take down the shields and to convey them away from the metropolis of Judaea to Caesarea.”<sup>24</sup> Philo goes on to say that the letter included threats against Pilate. The history of Pilate had set the table for himself when he met the author of history, Jesus Christ. Scriptures tell us that Pilate wished to release Jesus (John 19:12). However, in that same verse the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.” The matter was settled. Pilate’s history made him a willing accomplice to history’s destination to the cross. He knew, that if Tiberias would hear from the Jews about his letting go of a person

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<sup>22</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, in *Works of Josephus*, 18:60–62.

<sup>23</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, in *Works of Josephus*, 18:55–59.

<sup>24</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Letter to Gaius*, in *WPh*, §300–305.

accused of treason, it would be the end of him. Then, when he saw a riot begin to take place, something he and his legions were in Jerusalem to prevent, he handed Jesus over to them to be crucified (Mt. 27:24).

Here Spirit Chronology was at work in Judas and Pilate to make them willing accomplices to time's destiny of the cross. None acted under compulsion or necessity.<sup>25</sup> This theory brings new light to the paradox of God's sovereignty versus human responsibility as history is guided toward its destination through Spirit Chronology. The Spirit of God working through time leads a person to freely choose the actions which bring about God's plan for history and be accountable for them.<sup>26</sup>

The entelechy of the Spirit of God was to bring time to the cross, which it accomplished. The Spirit worked through the good and the bad to do this.<sup>27</sup> It was done in a way where the instrument through which the Spirit worked became a willing participant in ordained history, just as a believer becomes a willing participant in sanctification through the Spirit's help (Psa. 139:13, 16; Jer. 1:5).<sup>28</sup> This working out of time's destination happens without the "bad" having to be predestined to condemnation. Just because God chose to work through Jacob and not Esau to bring about His plan for history, does not mean Esau was predestined for condemnation (Rom.

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<sup>25</sup> If anything, it could be argued that he acted under contingent necessity. His acts were of necessity because of the condition in which he was thrown. They were not acts of necessity of consequence. Contingent necessity speaks more to free will and human accountability. Necessity of consequence speaks more to fatalism. "Not all that happens is in accordance with God's will because God has stood back, making metaphysical room for creaturely action." John Polkinghorne, "Belief in God in an Age of Science," in *MTR*, 211.

<sup>26</sup> Schleiermacher, for instance, taught that our experiences demonstrate an awareness of, and dependency on, God. Colin Gunton, "Historical and Systematic Theology," in *CCCD*, 13. "My life history leads through moments of decision in which I must somehow determine what both I and those with whom I am related are to be." Schubert Ogden, "The Reality of God," in *MTR*, 130.

<sup>27</sup> "God's Word breaks open closed situations and creates, through this 'interruption' the opportunity of free personal response." Vanhoozer, "Human Beings, Individual and Social," in *CCCD*, 182.

<sup>28</sup> "[Creation] is the work of God the Spirit, by relating the world to God the Father through Jesus Christ, to enable the created order to be truly itself, and so to move to the completeness which God intends for it." Colin Gunton, "The Doctrine of Creation," in *CCCD*, 142.



9).

Spirit Chronology also prepares people for an encounter with Christ—or to use Rahner’s controversial language—how the Spirit can make an “anonymous” Christian a known Christian. Spirit Chronology prepares people to encounter Christ through transcendent moments in arts, culture, and personal history experienced in birth, suffering, and death—moments where people are drawn to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of life.

Jeremy Bigbie shows how Spirit Chronology is revealed in the arts. Through the arts, human creatures exercise the creative aspect of God’s image. Through the arts, the Spirit makes interaction take place among the artist, others, the physical world, and the Creator. Art that is truly inspired by the Spirit of God does not look back to a lost paradise, but to the final transfiguration of the cosmos, the *telos* of history.<sup>29</sup> Art that is inspired calls the attention of the viewer to the Creator and not the creation or the artist. The doxology of creation and creative art finds its consummation in Christ who returns all things to His Father.<sup>30</sup>

Spirit Chronology also takes place through personal history. Paul Tillich in a sermon titled *Right to Hope* expresses this. He writes,

We experience the presence of the eternal in us and in our world here and now. We experience it in moments of silence and in hours of creativity. We experience it in the conflicts of our conscience and in the hours of peace with ourselves, we experience it in the unconditional seriousness of the moral command and in the ecstasy of love. We experience it when we discover a lasting truth and feel the need for a great sacrifice. We experience it in the beauty that life reveals as well as in its demonic darkness. We experience it in moments in which we feel: This is a holy place, a holy thing, a holy person, a holy time; it transcends the ordinary experiences; it gives more, it demands more, it points to the ultimate mystery of my existence, of all existence; it shows me

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<sup>29</sup> Jeremy Bigbie, “Christ and the Cultures: Christianity and the Arts,” in *CCCD*, 115–16.

<sup>30</sup> Bigbie, “Christ and the Cultures: Christianity and the Arts,” in *CCCD*, 109.

that my finitude, my transitoriness, my being, surrendered to the flux of things, is only one side of my being and that man is both in and above finitude.<sup>31</sup>

The Spirit works through the personal history of the elect to prepare their hearts to receive the revealed noun, Christ. After this reception, the Spirit becomes known as the Spirit of Christ. Even the disciples of Christ were molded by the Spirit through their history and their relationship with the incarnate Christ before they came to the full knowledge of the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ at Pentecost.<sup>32</sup>

A modern-day example of Spirit Chronology at work comes from Kim Yong-Bock. He argued that the history of Israel and Korea revealed the nature of evil and the awareness of God. This was done through the historical suffering Israel experienced through Egypt and Korea through Japan. The historical suffering made the encounter with God in His judgment and deliverance personal and historical for them. Young-Bock writes, “They [Israelites and Koreans] believed that their historical suffering was not merely because of their political weakness, but that it had a biblical significance, namely, that of God’s judgment and deliverance of His people . . . The language of the Bible was directly applied to the history of the Korean people. It was becoming a historical language and not just a ‘churchy’ language.”<sup>33</sup>

Spirit Chronology can involve God communicating to His creation outside the church through transcendental events like dreams and visions to either build the bridge or bring people to the bridge. R. Tuck notes that God may adapt visions to the circumstances of each historical

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<sup>31</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Right to Hope*, accessed October 31, 2023, [https://richardmburgess.com/assets/docs/rom\\_8\\_Tillich\\_-\\_Right\\_to\\_Hope.202131455.pdf](https://richardmburgess.com/assets/docs/rom_8_Tillich_-_Right_to_Hope.202131455.pdf). According to some Ecclesiastes 3:11 is translated as, “[God] has also set eternity in the human heart.” The Masoretic Text has the Hebrew word “*Olam*.” The LXX has “*aeon*.” However, the Latin Vulgate has “*Mundum* (world).” Kittle argues the word should be “*Ebodah*,” meaning work. Brenton, in his translation of the LXX translates the word as “world” but in a subscript he acknowledges the Greek text has eternity.

<sup>32</sup> Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel’s Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 337.

<sup>33</sup> Kim Yong-Bock, “The Language of Korean Christianity,” in *MTR*, 321.

age.<sup>34</sup> Divine communications, contacts of the Spirit with the human spirit, can happen without any earthly symbols. For example, the Spirit spoke to the boy Samuel with an audible voice (1 Sam. 2:4, 6, 8). Here the noun was hidden. Later He spoke to Samuel in an embodied voice, the revealed noun, which identified Him as the Lord to Samuel (1 Sam. 2:10). The author notes, as a modern-day example, how we often hear of dying friends seeing somethings which those around their deathbeds cannot catch the faintest glimpse. There are many stories of Muslims who are converting to the Christian faith because of present-day theophanies where they are directed to encounter Christ through a church or through a Christian missionary.<sup>35</sup>

Another story is how the Gedeo people in Ethiopia were prepared for an encounter with the historical Christ through a dream. They shared a common belief in a benevolent omnipotent Creator of all named Magano. However, they were concerned about the dark side of this Being named *Sheit'an*. They believed that to get closer to Magano, *Sheit'an* needed to be appeased by sacrifices. One day, one of the Gedeos named Warrasa, began asking for a personal revelation of Magano. During one of his prayers, he had a vision. He saw two white-skinned strangers come to live in an odd shiny-roofed housed under a large sycamore tree at the edge of his village. He heard a voice (verb revealed, noun hidden) say, “These men will bring you a message from Magano, the God you seek. Wait for them.” Warrasa waited eight years during which time soothsayers prophesied that strangers would come.

In 1948, two Canadian missionaries arrived and lived under the sycamore tree of which he

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<sup>34</sup> R. Tuck, *Isaiah*, Pulpit Commentary, eds. H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 122–23.

<sup>35</sup> “Millions of Muslims are Converting to Christianity After Having . . .,” YouTube, accessed January 24, 2024, 2021. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RL2MM\\_efr6Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RL2MM_efr6Y).

dreamed. The Gedeos believed these were the ones Warrasa saw in his vision.<sup>36</sup> Through them they met Christ and became Christians. It seems that when God predestinates one to salvation, He will work through Spirit Chronology to prepare one for the meeting with the historical Christ that saves.

Although the Spirit of God talked about in this manner can be equated with the Rahner's Spirit in the World, a danger with Spirit Chronology is to confuse the Spirit **IN** the World with the Spirit **OF** the World. Geoffrey Wainwright gives fair warning to this thought when he writes,

We must guard against a tendency to substitute a "private" spirit, the spirit of the world or other spirits, for the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son. Our tradition is rich in respect for local and national culture, but we find it impossible to invoke the spirits of "earth, air, water and sea creatures." Pneumatology is inseparable from Christology or from the doctrine of the Holy Trinity confessed by the church on the basis of divine revelation . . . As the assembly discussed the process of listening to the Spirit at work in every culture, we cautioned, with others, that discernment is required to identify the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ and thus to develop criteria for and limits to the theological diversity. We argued for high Christology to serve as the only authentic Christian base for dialogue with persons of other living faiths . . . One Western defense of the filioque, perhaps offered a posteriori, has been its usefulness in keeping the Spirit together with the Word.<sup>37</sup>

Scripture gives examples on how to prevent this confusion from happening (1 Cor. 12:3, 1 John 4:2). In 1 Cor. 12:3, Paul tells us that no one speaking by the Spirit of God can say, "Jesus be cursed." Balaam experienced this truth in the Old Testament as he, by the Spirit of God, was not able to curse Israel (Num. 22:11–12, 23:8, 11–12), God's firstborn Son (Exod. 4:22–23). Paul also tells us that it is only by the Holy Spirit that one can say, "Jesus is Lord." Admittedly, evil spirits can confess that Jesus is the Son of God (Matt. 8:29; Mark 1:24). However, they will not surrender to Him as their Lord or confess Him as their Savior. Only by the power of the Holy

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<sup>36</sup> See Steve Urban, *Mere Christianity Study Guide: A Bible Study on the C.S. Lewis Book Mere Christianity* (Mount Juliet, TN: Brown Chair Books, 2016), 119–20.

<sup>37</sup> Wainwright, "The Holy Spirit," in *CCCD*, 293.

Spirit does the believer surrender to Christ and call Him Lord and Savior.

It must be admitted that Spirit Chronology favors God's sovereignty over human responsibility. This Christian author was thrown into a Christian family into a predominant Christian country.<sup>38</sup> Where would this author be if he would have been thrown into a Muslim family into a predominant Muslim country? Could the Spirit of God still work in that culture to lead the author to surrender to Christ by either a missionary, dream, or a time before or after death? The answer is yes, if God willed the author's salvation, but what if God had not chosen to do so? We must admit that, ultimately, the Spirit of God blows where it wills (John 3:8). To echo Prenter, there is a hiddenness to the Spirit's sovereign work that must be acknowledged.

#### The Movement of Spirit Chronology toward Spirit Christology

The Christian faith is grounded in history as confessed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creed's reference to Christ crucifixion under Pontius Pilate.<sup>39</sup> The revelation of the Trinity is also grounded in history. The naming of the Triune God is the faithful attempt to represent the One known in the person of Jesus and in the life of church by grounding the divine beings in the covenant history of Israel.<sup>40</sup>

The Triune God uses two aspects of history: space and time, for His purpose. God created a space for sinful humanity. East of Eden, to dwell with Him in a veiled form without being consumed by His holiness. He also created time, in this space, for His people to come repentance

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<sup>38</sup> The "thrown" terminology comes from Martin Heidegger who used the "throwness" to describe how a human being is thrown into a world that was before them and into which they were not asked to come. See Jerrold Seigel, *The Idea of Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe Since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2007), 570.

<sup>39</sup> See Bruce D. Marshall, "Christ and The Cultures: The Jewish People and Christian Theology," in *CCCD*, 96.

<sup>40</sup> Ralph Del Colle, "The Triune God," in *CCCD*, 122. Hegel taught that history is the "unfolding of the Spirit," which works through culture and social institutions. See Vanhoozer, "Human Being, Individual and Social," in *CCCD*, 168.

and faith in Christ and to know the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Christ. He has blessed His people in the space and time in the land East of Eden with the Word and Sacrament, where He continues to veil Himself, to accomplish this. The Father works through space and time to bring them to their appointed destiny, the space of Calvary, the event of the crucifixion.<sup>41</sup>

At the cross, eternity breaks into the temporal, as it did in creation, bringing creation and redemption together. The eternal God causes the temporal to no longer flow into a hapless void but into intentional events which drives the course of history to its destiny. The primary intentional event is the cross where the act of redemption restores the relationship creation had with the Father before the Fall. In the cross, God communicates His love to humanity and fulfills their need for His help. When God brings humanity into this “Christian covenant” of history, humanity becomes whole. He did this even in the Old Testament where the saints looked toward the fulfillment of promises as reflected with the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22). God does this in the New Testament as the saints now have a future which has a metaphysical dimension that looks for eschatological fulfillment beyond time and space.<sup>42</sup>

Spirit Chronology fulfills history and seeks to reveal the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Christ. History will eventually lead everyone before Christ (John 12:32; 2 Cor. 5:10). The Spirit of God can work repentance which prevents destruction as it did for the Ninevites, but it alone cannot work repentance unto salvation. For the Spirit to do this, it must become known as the

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<sup>41</sup> Thomas Aquinas taught that Christ is the road to God. See Gerard Loughlin, “Basis and Authority of Doctrine,” in *CCCD*, 45. “It is God’s address to us in Jesus Christ that draws us forward eschatologically toward our destiny as human creatures.” Vanhoozer, “Human Beings, Individual and Social,” in *CCCD*, 183. Moltmann says, “The question concerning the future of world history arise in the form of the question as to the destiny of Israel and the nations and are answered at this cardinal point in history constituted by the crucifixion of Christ by Jews and Gentiles and his resurrection for Jews and Gentiles . . . The concrete history of God in the death of Jesus on the cross on Golgotha therefore contains within itself all the depths and abysses of human history and therefore can be understood as the history of history.” Jürgen Moltmann, “The Resurrection and the Future of Jesus Christ,” in *MTR*, 88.

<sup>42</sup> Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, 234, 239, 456–57.

Spirit of Christ. Both noun and verb must be revealed for salvation to take place.

When this happens, the believer is gifted with *pneumatikos*, a spiritual devotion to true divine and eternal interests. Before this, the human being has only the spirit of *psychikos*, a condition devoid of the Spirit which is devoted to the sensual.<sup>43</sup> A change from the *psychikos* to the *pneumatikos* is only done by the revelation of the proper noun Christ. When the Spirit of God is known as the Spirit of Christ, a believer does not imitate Christ but is conformed to Christ. Imitation of Christ leads to work righteousness and favors universalism because it teaches people can imitate an idea of the righteousness of Christ for salvation without knowing Christ.

It is important to note that postconciliar theologians such as Rahner and Coffey admit that some will reject the offer of grace. A major part of the image of God for postconciliarists is the freedom the Creator has. The doctrines of predestination and universalism compromise this freedom. Predestination takes all free will away regarding salvation. Universalism takes away the freedom of the human being to say, “No!” to God’s offer. For postconciliarists, the unforgivable sin of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, of saying no to the Spirit’s revelation of Christ, can take place in the dying process.<sup>44</sup>

In the dying process (which for Rahner is a process that continues after biological death), God has created another space and time, where the Spirit can lead the dying to see the glorified Christ and gives opportunity for everyone to submit to His Lordship and confess Him as Savior. Condemnation happens when one says “No,” to Christ’s offer in this space and time. A person may be an “anonymous” Christian before death. One cannot remain anonymous after death. The

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<sup>43</sup> See R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1943), 617. W. Barclay says the same when he writes, “The flesh is man as he is apart from Jesus Christ and His Spirit.” Richard Longenecker *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 41 (Dallas, TX.: Word, 1990), 240. Longenecker says the Christian is grounded in *pneumatikos* and guided by this Spirit to express love toward others. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 240–41.

<sup>44</sup> Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 4:128, 334, 339.

postconciliar's view on the human will prevents their soteriology from falling into a radical form of universalism.

On the plus side, this post conciliar metaphysical thought can bring comfort to those grieving. To believe in this space and time for an encounter with Christ after biological death can be immensely helpful in pastoral counsel with those who mourn the death of unbaptized babies, agnostic spouses, and survivors of suicide victims. The Scriptures do not explicitly speak against this thought. The amount of life after death experiences that have been recorded seem to support it.

#### The Movement Back to God through Spirit Chronology

All persons of the Triune God were involved in the creation of space and time through which history and humanity pass. However, it is the Spirit which impels humanity through them, just as it impelled Jesus to enter the space and time of the Conception (Luke 2:30–35), the Anointing (Matt. 3:13–17), the Temptation (Mark 1:12), the Crucifixion (Heb. 9:14) and the Resurrection (Rom. 8:11). The Spirit works humanity through these created spaces and times to bring human history toward its fulfillment. Second, the Spirit works believers through created spaces and times, especially that of the church, to bring about conformation to Christ through the cycles of *tentatio, oratio, and meditatio*. Conformation is an historical process. It starts at conception (Jer. 1:5) by the Spirit and is not complete until the believer is restored to the original image in heaven through the knowledge of Christ and the Spirit. The first step of restoration involves being put on the cruciform bridge by justification. The second step involves crossing the bridge through sanctification. Justification assures one of a faithful crossing to deification if one never resists the Spirit's helping hand. God is not capricious. He does not promise you something, only to pull it back from you later. However, the crossing of the bridge is filled with



*tentatio*. We must cross the bridge with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12–13) for there are many pitfalls along the way (Lam. 3:47), and the devil seeks to devour us along the way (1 Peter 5:8). However, God is faithful, He will see us through to the end if we remain faithful by His grace (Phil. 1:6).

God desires to be present with His sinful creation through this journey. He does this by creating the space and time of worship. In Old Testament worship, sacrifices for sin were offered that enabled God to be present with His people in the land East of Eden. These sacrifices were a shadow of the sacrifice to come (Col. 2:17). In New Testament worship, the sins of His people are now covered by the sacrifice that has come.

In the New Testament church, the Lord enhanced the liturgy of the church with Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper for the purification of His people. Through these gifts, the Spirit brings the believer into union with Christ and conforms the believer in the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ. It conforms the believer in the act of Christ's sacrifice as it moves the believer to sacrifice himself for others. Second, through worship, Yahweh reveals His gracious presence and blesses His people with His divine, ineffable name (Num. 6:24). In worship, faith in this ineffable name is expressed immediately at the invocation and throughout the liturgy bringing accordance to our faith, worship, and baptism. All of which helps to make the Trinity relevant in the land East of Eden for bringing sinners to communion with God through Christ in the Spirit.

Third, through worship, the Spirit enables Christians to live in the salvation they have received in the land East of Eden. In this land, believers receive their life in Christ by the Holy Spirit to the glory of the Father. They remember daily and participate in the promises and benefits of their baptisms and the saving work of the Trinity.

When the Spirit completes its works and brings the believer into the space and time of the New Eden, the believer shares in the divine life as much as it is possible for finite creatures.<sup>45</sup>

Georges Florovsky describes this participation:

This is the mystery [John 17:21-23] of the final reunion in the image of the Unity of the Holy Trinity. It is realized in the life and construction of the church, it is the mystery of sobornost, the mystery of catholicity. . . The ontological blending of persons is and must be accomplished in oneness with the Body of Christ, they cease to be exclusive and impenetrable. The cold separation into “mine” and “thine” disappears . . . This is more than putting him on the same level with ourselves, of identifying him with ourselves; it means seeing our own self in another, in the beloved one, not in our own self . . . Therein lies the limit of love; the beloved is our “alter ego,” and “ego” which is dearer to us than ourself. In love we are merged into one . . . Such love demands self-surrender, self-mastery. Such love is possible only in a catholic expansion and transfiguration of the soul.<sup>46</sup>

Florovsky goes on to say that the catholicity experienced in the Trinity contains no denial of personality. Although a common oneness in thought and feeling will be found in the beatific vision, Florovsky believes a common consciousness will not.<sup>47</sup>

In the beatific vision, the author maintains that the pilgrim will have the knowledge of the Father which the person of Christ has in relationship to His humanity, not His Logos. The only being known to know the intimate secrets of God is the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:11). The finite pilgrim’s knowledge of the Father will be limited to what the Spirit reveals to the pilgrim through the Son. The saint will not have the knowledge of the Father the Spirit has. There will always be a hidden aspect of the Father.

However, in the New Eden, the will of the pilgrim will be the same as the Creator’s. The pilgrim saint will no longer do the law but fulfill the law. He will experience freedom from statutes and live a life of love. The believer will experience there a free will which desires

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<sup>45</sup> Bruce D. Marshall, “Christ and The Cultures: The Jewish People and Christian Theology,” in *CCCD*, 95.

<sup>46</sup> Georges Florovsky, “The Catholicity of the Church,” in *MTR*, 353.

<sup>47</sup> Florovsky, “The Catholicity of the Church,” in *MTR*, 354.

nothing of its own. It will only care for the will of God and remain free, cleaving and clinging to nothing else. In this way, the children of the kingdom will know true freedom.<sup>48</sup> The pilgrim will fulfill the obedience of faith, the first Adam failed to do, and be confirmed in his bliss.

However, the distinction between the Creator and creature will remain in manner of relationship and will. Jesus' relationship with His Father, with Him being of the same nature as the Father, experiences the relationship *ex natura*. The believer experiences the relationship *ex gratia*. The former embraces only three persons, the latter millions.<sup>49</sup>

The same with the divine will. The divine will remains in its own nature and the created will participates in it through grace. It will never ascend to the dignity that unchangeably belongs to the divine.<sup>50</sup> Cyril of Alexandria writes thus,

If anyone should hold that the disciples are united in the same way the Father and the Son are one, not only in essence but also in will (since there is one will in the holy nature and one purpose in all matters.), let them think this. They will not go astray from a fitting understanding of will among those who are really Christians, even though consubstantiality in our case is not of the same kind as that of the Father and God the Word, who is from Him and in Him.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, the Spirit of Christ, will reveal the immanent Trinity as the eschatological definitive form of the economic Trinity.<sup>52</sup> In the New Eden, the believer will no longer experience "theophanies," created manifestations which mask His glory, but the beatific vision where they will experience God as much as a finite being can.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Wainwright, "The Holy Spirit," in *CCCD*, 287.

<sup>49</sup> Lenski, *John*, 1137.

<sup>50</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 1:200–01.

<sup>51</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John*, 1:286–87.

<sup>52</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg, "The World as History of God and the Unity of the Divine Essence," in *MTR*, 82.

<sup>53</sup> Bogdan G. Bucur, "Christological Exegesis of Theophanies and the Making of Early Christian Theology," *CTQ*, 86, no. 2 (April 2022): 120.

## APPENDIX ONE

### Excursus on Philo of Alexandria and the Two Parts of God's Speech

This excursus is offered because of the many parallels Philo has with scholastic and neo-scholastic thoughts. Philo believed it is impossible for mortal nature to endure God's unmitigated power.<sup>1</sup> Thus, God must work through the mitigating beings of His Spirit and the Logos to communicate to His creation.

Philo of Alexandria puts a high emphasis on the Logos. He writes that the being which is the most universal is God. The second most universal is the Word of God, the Logos.<sup>2</sup> They are diffused everywhere over the universe.<sup>3</sup> God is the fountain of the most ancient Word.<sup>4</sup> Philo teaches that the Word can only be comprehended by the soul (a point of agreement with the postconciliar, although they give the closer affinity with the soul to the Spirit, not the Logos). It is more ancient than all things and is how the Ruler of the universe governs all things. God used the Logos as His instrument for the perfect arrangement of all things.<sup>5</sup>

The Logos is the shadow of God through which people can conclude through creation that God exists.<sup>6</sup> The Logos is the archetype and the instrument of creation.<sup>7</sup> Philo writes, "the

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<sup>1</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On the Unchangeableness of God*, in *WPh*, §77.

<sup>2</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Allegorical Interpretations III*, in *WPh* §4, 175.

<sup>3</sup> Philo of Alexandria *Allegorical Interpretation III*, 58. A second being diffused everywhere, according to Philo, is the Spirit of God. Philo of Alexandria, *On the Giants*, in *WPh*, §27.

<sup>4</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better*, in *WPh*, §82.

<sup>5</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On the Migration of Abraham*, in *WPh*, §6.

<sup>6</sup> Philo of Alexandria *Allegorical Interpretation III*, in *WPh*, §95. Aristotle taught that one reaches the deity from natural revelation, from life experiences or history, the shadow. Plato taught that one reaches the deity by divine illumination through what is given humanity. Human reason has a spark of the divine. Philo argues both ways. Gunton, "Historical and Systematic Theology" in *CCCD*, 8, 13.

<sup>7</sup> Carl Jung has an interesting take here. He wrote, "If it were permissible to personify the unconscious, we might call it a collective human being combining the characteristics of both sexes, transcending youth and age, birth, and death, and, from having at his command a human experience of one or two million years, almost immortal. If such a being existed, he we would be exalted above all temporal change." Jung calls the archetype a "collective

materials [of creation] are the four elements, of which it is composed; that instrument is the Word of God.”<sup>8</sup> Through the “shadow” of creation, a person can perceive that creation would not be so beautiful if it was not made from an archetype that was “beautiful, the uncreate, blessed, and imperishable”.<sup>9</sup>

Subjects that revealed the shadow of God the best was music, philosophy, and education (a point of agreement with the postconciliaris). Philo went so far to call these items the divine images of the divine soul.<sup>10</sup> He teaches that the soul is divided into three parts, reason, courage, and appetites.<sup>11</sup> Out of the three, it is in the reason where “God walks.” (Prenter says reason is orientated toward earth, conscious toward heaven. Luther believed reason was part of God’s image).<sup>12</sup> Philo believed that God made no soul, not even a sinless one, capable of seeing the Creator. But considering it would be a great advantage for creatures to have some knowledge of their Creator and the proper understanding of how creation is to work, God breathed into humanity something from his own divine nature and stamped His image on the invisible soul so that earth would not be destitute of His image.<sup>13</sup> He breathed into Adam as much of His own power as mortal nature was capable of receiving.<sup>14</sup>

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human being.” Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, trans. W.S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books, 2017), 190.

<sup>8</sup>Philo of Alexandria, *On the Cherubim*, in *WPh*, §127. Hans Urs von Balthasar taught that the human creature is one to whom and through whom God can communicate, and therefore may be reckoned a “word of God.” This is in alignment with Philo’s thought that humanity is created in the image of the Word, rather than the Father. Vanhoozer, “Human Being, Individual and Social,” in *CCCD*, 180.

<sup>9</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On the Cherubim*, in *WPh*, §86.

<sup>10</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On the Cherubim*, in *WPh*, §93.

<sup>11</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Allegorical Interpretation III*, in *WPh*, §114.

<sup>12</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better*, in *WPh*, §4.

<sup>13</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better*, in *WPh*, §86.

<sup>14</sup> Philo of Alexandria *On the Virtues I*, in *WPh*, §203. Here Philo also confesses that Adam was created mortal. Origen taught that God first created a higher world of spiritual beings whose fall provided the occasion for the second creation, the material world, as a place of reformation where they could freely learn to return to their

In other writings, Philo will interchange the human mind with the human soul, calling them both fragments of the deity.<sup>15</sup> In another writing, he calls the rational spirit, “fashioned after the archetypal model of the divine image,” which is the Logos.<sup>16</sup>

This Word, Philo teaches, is a demi-god and is subordinate to the Father. Humanity must be created in the image of the Word, not the Father. He writes, “No mortal thing could have been formed on the similitude of the supreme Father, since it is fitting that the rational soul of man should bear before it the type of the divine Word, since in his first Word God is superior to the most rational possible nature. But he who is superior to the Word holds his rank in a better and most singular pre-eminence, and how could the creature possibly exhibit a likeness of him in himself?”<sup>17</sup> Philo taught that the goal of man was to strive to become like this archetype (point of agreement with postconciliar on the imitation of Christ). He writes,

And even if there be not as yet anyone who is worthy to be called a son of God, nevertheless let him labor earnestly to be adorned according to his first-born word, the eldest of his angels, as the great archangel of many names; for he is called, the authority, and the name of God, and the Word, and man according to God's image, and he who sees Israel.<sup>18</sup>

For Philo, what it meant to be human is to have hope in the true living God.<sup>19</sup> He talks about how the Creator has sown in a very excellent soil, the rational soul, the seed of hope. Hope is the source of happiness. It excites people who are filled with admiration of virtue to study philosophy with the hope that they will obtain a clear sight of the nature of all things. He alone is

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maker. Gunton, “The Doctrine of Creation,” in *CCCD*, 149.

<sup>15</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On Dreams, That They Are God-Sent*, in *WPh*, §34, and *Allegorical Interpretation III*, in *WPh* §161.

<sup>16</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *The Special Laws I*, in *WPh*, §171.

<sup>17</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Questions and Answers in Genesis*, in *WPh*, §62.

<sup>18</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On the Confusion of Tongues*, in *WPh*, §146.

<sup>19</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On Rewards and Punishments*, in *WPh*, §11–14.

worthy of being accepted who attributes this hope coming from God.<sup>20</sup>

Humanity was created between the uncreated and perishable nature.<sup>21</sup> The soul of a person who is devoted to God, eager for truth, will soar upward to the heavens and seek to be under the immediate command of God just like the rest of creation.<sup>22</sup> Philo hints of synergism when he says that the fountains of God's grace are not dispensed to all men, but only to those who are suppliants for them, and who love virtue and piety.<sup>23</sup>

Philo notes the relationship between the soul and blood. He acknowledges that God said life is in the blood (Lev. 17:11). He teaches that blood is the substance of the soul. However, it is the soul which exists by external senses, like that of animals. Blood is therefore not the substance of the rational soul. The substance of the rational soul is the divine spirit. The spirit of humanity has not a separate existence from the flesh. It cannot live in the body if the body has not blood. When the body is drained of blood the spirit leaves.<sup>24</sup>

For Philo, humanity is made up of two parts, animal and human. To the animal nature is assigned the vivifying power by which one lives, the other is the reasoning faculty.<sup>25</sup> In this reasoning faculty some portion of the divine spirit is given which enables the soul to experience transcendence (point of agreement with Rahner's *Vorgriff*) and embrace the vastness of the heaven and of the world.<sup>26</sup>

Abraham was one who first discovered God by His shadow. Philo mentions that the

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<sup>20</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On Rewards and Punishments*, in *WPh*, §13.

<sup>21</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On Dreams, That They are God-Sent*, in *WPh*, §234.

<sup>22</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *The Special Laws*, in *WPh*, §207.

<sup>23</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On the Virtues*, in *WPh*, §79.

<sup>24</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, in *WPh*, §59.

<sup>25</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better*, in *WPh*, §82.

<sup>26</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better*, in *WPh*, §90.

shadow moved Abraham to become, “a wise man and a lover of God.”<sup>27</sup> Philo calls the shadow a helper to keeping one on the royal road to God. This road consists of a philosophy that studies virtue and rejects the persuasive juggleries of pleasure. This royal road is also identical to the Word of God.<sup>28</sup>

Philo mentions that God’s self-communication can take place in dreams. He illustrates this through the dream of Jacob. In the dream, Jacob transcends his external senses and meets the Lord. When the dream is over, Jacob now only meets the divine Word. In dreams and visions, in ecstasy, humans can meet God directly. In the body, one meets Him indirectly through the sacred Logos. The Logos serve as a mediator and intercessor between humanity and God.<sup>29</sup> However, for Philo, a fuller self-communication of God takes places through dreams and visions than through the Logos (a point of disagreement with Lutherans and postconciliarists).<sup>30</sup>

Philo notes that the naming of people has a major influence on their personal formation. Names became self-fulfilling prophecies. In one example, he notes how Er means leather, another name for the flesh, which is an evil thing. Er was perceived as wicked by God (Gen. 38:7) and according to Philo, was given this “evil” name at birth without any apparent cause. However, he lived up to his name and the Lord slew him because of it.<sup>31</sup>

In another example, he teaches how Noah means “rest” or “just.” One who is resting, rests from acts of injustice and sins, and lives with virtue and justice. Noah found grace before God without having previously done anything good.<sup>32</sup> God worked through the personal histories of

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<sup>27</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On the Cherubim*, in *WPh*, §7.

<sup>28</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile*, in *WPh*, §102.

<sup>29</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On Dreams, That They Are God-Sent*, in *WPh*, §70, 142.

<sup>30</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *On Dreams, That They Are God-Sent*, in *WPh*, §119.

<sup>31</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Allegorical Interpretations III*, in *WPh*, §69–71.

<sup>32</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Allegorical Interpretations III*, in *WPh* §77–78.



Noah, Abraham, and others, to carry out His plan, “HisStory”, for the world.

In this short excursus, we see many similarities Philo has with postconciliar thought. It is helpful to know Philo’s story as it reveals to us that postconciliar thought is nothing new under the sun. It has a long history. It is in the knowledge of one’s history, or the history of ideas, which helps build a bridge for meaningful conversations to take place as it develops respect for the heritage of ideas and people. It is always easier to talk to the other side when the other side senses you understand their history.

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