

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

**ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600**

UMI[®]

**THE HOLY SPIRIT
IN CHRISTIANITY AND IN THE WORLD**

Janet V. Brisson

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Theological Studies

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

December 2001

© Janet V. Brisson



**National Library
of Canada**

**Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services**

**395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

**Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada**

**Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques**

**395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-68395-8

Canada

ABSTRACT

The Holy Spirit In Christianity and In the World

Janet V. Brisson

This study begins with a search for the Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit as found in the Scriptures and in the writings of the Fathers of the Early Church. It examines the exclusive nature of the Church's understanding of the activity of the Holy Spirit and reflects upon what it means for a Christian to live a life "in the Spirit". Selected documents of the Vatican II Council are examined in order to underline the shift in the Church's understanding of the Holy Spirit from an exclusive to an inclusive view of the Holy Spirit. This study is discussed within the framework of the terms exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism which have come into use since Vatican II. It seeks to clarify the possible and probable position that the Holy Spirit is active in other World Faiths.

for
my husband Robert
and our children
Therese Susan Michael Catherine Tara

I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement I received
from my teacher and supervisor Dr. Pamela Bright.
Her inspired teaching and direction set me on a path
to discover and appreciate the wealth of our Christian Heritage.

CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND EXCLUSIVISM | |
| a. Development of Doctrine | 5 |
| b. The Holy Spirit in Scripture | 8 |
| The Old Testament | 8 |
| The New Testament | 11 |
| c. The Holy Spirit in the Early Church | 16 |
| Origen of Alexandria | 16 |
| Athanasius | 20 |
| Cappadocian Fathers | 22 |
| Conclusion | 24 |
| d. Christian Growth and Life in the Spirit | 25 |
| 3. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND INCLUSIVISM | |
| a. The Holy Spirit and Vatican II | 39 |
| Dogmatic Constitution on the Church | 41 |
| Pastoral Constitution: On the Church in the Modern World | 48 |
| Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions | 54 |
| Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity | 55 |
| b. After the Vatican II Council | 56 |
| 4. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PLURALISM | |
| a. Absolute and Relative | 58 |
| b. Theories of Religious Pluralism | 66 |
| Pluralism and History | 66 |
| Pluralism and Philosophy | 69 |
| Pluralism and Soteriology | 74 |
| c. Salvations | 81 |
| d. Dialogue | 84 |
| 5. CONCLUSION | 89 |

INTRODUCTION

Christians have a deep and fervent attachment to Jesus Christ. He is our Saviour, our brother, the Son of God. Jesus is the Good News, who at the sound of his name every knee should bend. It is Jesus, our mediator, who brings us to the Father. It is Jesus who reveals the Father. Christians speak of the three persons in one, the Holy Trinity, but does the Christian value the person and activity of the Holy Spirit? Luis M. Bermejo, in the introduction to his book The Spirit of Life, says "one has to note regretfully that after twenty long centuries of Christianity the Holy Spirit means next to nothing to the average Christian".

Jesus as Son of God and Saviour, has been a stumbling block when Christianity begins a dialogue with the other world faiths. Christianity, throughout history, has sought to convert and conquer the peoples of the world. Only Jesus saves. We know, however, that Christianity has developed through a complex interaction between religious and non-religious factors. Christian ideas have been formed within the intellectual framework provided by Greek philosophy; the Christian church was moulded as an institution by the Roman empire and its system of law; the Catholic mind reflects the Latin Mediterranean temperament, and the Protestant mind the northern Germanic temperament. In the other world faiths we can distinguish religious-cultural streams which are expressions of the diversities of human types and temperaments and thought forms.¹

For centuries Christianity has been able to ignore the serious questions which the

¹
John Hick. God and the Universe of Faiths, p. 102.

continuing presence of the other faiths asks. This was appropriate before human history had begun to coalesce into a single global history. Religions which developed within cultural-historical boundaries are now open to the world. We are in a new situation created by the unification of the world as a communicational system. We have begun to ask the questions but it will take several generations to find the answers. Even within Christianity the understanding of the Christ-event has changed massively and cumulatively. Christianity is the history of human beings' faith response to Jesus of Nazareth. It is an ongoing movement of life and thought, defined by its origin in the Christ-event and by its consciousness of that origin. Its doctrines are historically and culturally conditioned and have changed as the church enters new historical and cultural situations.²

Although Vatican II pronouncements represent a major step forward it still assumes that salvation is only in Christ and through incorporation into his mystical body, the church. Vatican II sees this incorporation as being able to follow the light available within other religious traditions. "For the Church is driven by the Holy Spirit to play its part in bringing to completion the plan of God, who has constituted Christ as the source of salvation for the whole world."³ Vatican II still contains vestiges of the imperialism of the Christian west in relation to the "lesser lights" of the other faiths.

Christianity has developed into several branches and in recent years ecumenical activity has made progress towards a unified Christian Church. The ongoing dialogue

²

John Hick. God and the Universe of Faith. pp. 106-119.

³

Lumen Gentium. Ch. 2:17.

within Christianity is preparing the Church for dialogue with the other world faiths. It is to be remembered that although the Christian mission is to proclaim the Gospel, it is no longer a one way process. In order to proclaim one must dialogue and dialogue means to listen.

When Christianity listens to the other faiths it hears that there are other revelations of the Divine, other sacred scriptures, a personal God under one name or another, the Father, Son, and Spirit of Christianity, or the Jahweh of Judaism, or the Allah of Islam. Also what is to be made of the non-theistic religions? The Brahman in Hinduism, the Buddha in Buddhism. Are these faiths, also conditioned by a particular history and culture, other ways of salvation, providing the principal path to the divine reality for large sections of humanity? Christianity teaches that holiness comes from the Holy Spirit. Is this holiness, this relationship with God, found in other religions also from the Holy Spirit?

This thesis is an exploration of the Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit, and how this understanding has developed. It reviews the data within the framework of current usage of the terms exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. *Exclusivists* are those who hold that there is only one, true saving religion - the religion founded on Christ; *Inclusivists*, on the contrary, affirm many religions but insist that Christ and his community make up the final, fulfilling norm for those religions. *Pluralists* announce at least the possibility, (some would hold the probability, if not the actuality) of many true religions, each carrying on a different though valid role in the divine plan of salvation.

In tracing the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit it is possible to detect a shift in the Vatican II documents from an exclusive to an inclusive view of the activity

of the Spirit. Since Vatican II there is a growing recognition that the Spirit is probably active in the other religions and if so what are the implications for Christianity and the other religions. The problem is how can we begin to speak of an authentic divine presence beyond Christian revelation? It is the argument of this paper that a pneumatological approach to the understanding of religious pluralism can provide a language of plurality of the divine activities beyond the Christian Church.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND EXCLUSIVISM

Development of Doctrine

Before the nineteenth century, theologians had practically no awareness of real doctrinal change. Revelation had occurred in history: God had entered the world and revealed himself to humanity through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The New Testament writings can be thought of as the first written doctrines of the church. They record what was revealed. The early church declared its faith as confessions that were part of the baptismal and eucharistic liturgy. These doxologies pointed to the mystery of God and the salvation brought through Jesus Christ. From confessions of faith, doctrines developed which were understood as the correct interpretation of the revealed message and the confessions of faith. Revelation had been completed in the apostolic age so what took place in the later patristic era was simply the preservation of what was previously and always had been believed. The doctrine thus became the “rule of faith” not in the modern sense of understanding this notion but in the sense that the rule is the faith itself. The formula was not considered infallible, but the Spirit who testified to himself in that formula.⁴

The Reformation and Counter-reformation showed Protestants and Catholics both hostile to dogmatic development. What is believed is what the Apostles taught. The Protestants appealed to Scripture alone as the authority of the pure apostolic faith and at the Council of Trent the Catholics claimed the apostolic faith was accessible equally

⁴

Walter Kasper, Man as Man & Believer, Concilium Vol.21 Dogma. p.159.

through Scripture and Tradition. It was widely held that the modern teachings of the Church went back to apostolic times. "All the teachings of the faith are as old as the Church: all of them were individually believed by the Apostles and have been preserved by an uninterrupted succession of tradition in the consciousness of at least a part of the pastors and the faithful"(Jansenist Antoine Arnauld).⁵

In the nineteenth century, evolutionary thinking began to assert itself. John Henry Newman became the first great theorist of the development of doctrine. The nature of an idea was conceived in organic terms, subject to laws of growth similar to organic development. A variation on this basic view consists of distinguishing expression and content. What is permanent and unchanging in a dogma is its content or meaning; what develops is its linguistic expression. Dogma does not undergo substantial change because substantial change would amount to corruption. Bernard Lonergan takes this view as well as Avery Dulles and a number of recent official Church statements. A further refinement along idealist lines are found in the work of Karl Rahner. His treatment combines philosophy and theology.⁶ Those who reject the organic model are searching for ways to reformulate the meaning of ecclesiastical dogmas. Walter Kasper shifts the problem of development so that it becomes almost exclusively theological. Others reject the content versus expression distinction as too facile and unfaithful to the way language functions. They readily grant the fact of development and concentrate on the task of making

⁵
Avery Dulles. The Resilient Church. p. 47.

⁶
William E. Reiser. What are They Saying About Dogma? p. 11.

dogmatic meaning contemporary. Piet Schoonenberg, Thomas Ommen, and to a degree Gerald O'Collins, represent this approach.⁷

In general the question concerning the development of doctrine and dogma is answered within the tension between truth as fixed and truth as growing? For many centuries Roman Catholicism has been concerned with preserving continuity. The development of dogma has been understood to be cumulative and irreversible. Revelation is looked upon as a body of supernatural knowledge that reached completion with Christ and the apostles. Dogma is an authoritative statement by the church of a truth implicitly contained in the deposit of revelation, and for a truth to become dogma it is necessary that it be infallibly known as divinely revealed.

The multiplication of dogma has become a burden. There comes a time when one recognizes that dogmas have been formulated and conditioned by the time and culture in which they were formed. Outdated formulations only add to man's frustrations in allowing him to accept ancient statements of faith. Cumulative development has reached its saturation point. Karl Rahner, shortly before Vatican II declared that it would be a mistake to assume that development must always be from the one to the many. Still more important is the development in the line of simplification, towards the single mystery, an intensification of the experience of faith of what is infinitely simple and in a very essential way obvious. Have we become too concerned with being faithful to the voice of past generations and being responsible to generations yet to come that we are unable to hear the

7

William E. Reiser. p.12.

voice of the Spirit in the here and now?

The Holy Spirit in Scripture

The Old Testament:

In the Hebrew Scripture, the Holy Spirit is never presented as a person, but as a divine force, the breath of God, capable of transforming human nature and the world. In the beginning the *ruah*, the breath of God, the wind of God hovers over the primordial waters, the deep abyss. The Spirit brings order to this chaos - earth without form and void and darkness upon the face of the depth. The Spirit descends and produces the miracle of creation, chaos into cosmos, disorder into order, anonymity into community. Then God formed man of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living being. (Gen.2:7) Man, brought to life with the breath, *ruah*, of God is thus made in the image and likeness of God and is given responsibility for the world.

The story of creation in the introductory verses of Genesis is suffused with the power of the Spirit of God. He is Lord of his creation and acts within the history of his creatures. Seeing the great wickedness of the people the Lord was grieved and He destroyed the wicked but saved Noah who had found favour with the Lord for "Noah walked with God" (Gen 6:9). God is universal in the creation story but there is a growing exclusiveness as the biblical accounts continue the revelation of God's relationship with humanity.

By exclusivism is meant the calling out from the universal. The story of God's call to Abraham begins the exclusive nature of this activity:

Now the Lord said to Abram,
"Go forth from your country,

And from your relatives
And from your father's house.
To the land which I will show you.
And I will make you a great nation.
And I will bless you.
And make your name great:
And so you shall be a blessing;
And I will bless those who bless you.
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of earth shall be blessed. (Gen. 12:1-3)

God calls forth a people from the nations and begins to form a holy people. In the narratives of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob it is God or an angel of the Lord who speaks, guides or confronts the people he has chosen.

In the story of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt we begin to see the Spirit of God at work among his people. Moses is called by God to lead his people out of bondage. The Lord speaks to Moses and tells him what to say and do. The story of the Exodus presents Moses as a Spirit filled man who is a mediator between God and his people. Through Moses God gives the commandments which are to be obeyed by the people. The Book of Leviticus provides a long list of laws and instructions on how to live and conduct one's life as a member of God's people. In the Book of Numbers God's Spirit descends upon seventy men chosen from the elders of Israel in order to have them bear the burden of leadership with Moses (Num. 11:17, 25-29). The Spirit is later given to Balaam, (Num. 24:2) and Joshua (Num 27:17-18). In the Book of Judges leaders were raised up by the Lord and the "Spirit of the Lord came upon them". (Judges 3:10, 6:34, 11:29, 13:25, 14:6, 19:23.)

When the Old Testament speaks of God's Spirit it focuses our attention on who God is as a vital, active, life-giving power. There is no statement, nor did the authors suspect that God exists in Trinity, as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit as separate yet equal persons. What the Old Testament saints did know was that God's Spirit

spoke through the prophets. In Isaiah 11 the Spirit of the Lord is a guide giving wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, fear of the Lord. The Spirit takes hold of certain persons, those whom God chooses, and makes them guides and master interpreters of God's will. In Ezekiel 36 the Spirit of the Lord heals. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you. Thus the Spirit enters and recreates and restores to health while vanquishing sin. The Spirit reconstitutes the person as God's partner. In Psalm 104:29-30 the Spirit, breath, gives life: "If you take away their breath they perish and return to their dust. When you send forth your Spirit, they are created and you renew the face of the earth."

In Joel 2:28 there appears to be a universal dimension in the giving of the Spirit. God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all mankind and your sons and daughters will prophesy. The Spirit will empower everyone. Joel describes the Spirit as being lavishly poured forth on all creatures, bringing order and right direction and intention of God's will.⁸ It is to be remembered that Joel was speaking to a Jewish community and unlike in Ezekiel, the Spirit will be given to all the people and not just to a select number of prophets.

Throughout the Old Testament the Spirit strengthens the Judges, anoints Kings, and

8

George T. Montague. The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition. p. 86. Alluding to Ezekiel 39:29, Joel refers to the pouring out of the Lord's Spirit, but whereas Ezekial had said "on the house of Israel" Joel has "on all flesh". The meaning however is probably not all mankind in general, for the immediate addition of "your sons and daughters...your old men...your young men" obviously refers to the Jewish community addressed in the prophecy.

speaks the words of God through the Prophets. The people are called to repentance, to conversion, to love of God and love of neighbour. The Spirit is a force, the power of God that spoke through the Prophets calling the people to holiness. The Israelites are to be a holy people - a nation separated from the sinful ways of the world and they are to become a witness to the world, testifying that God is holy and deserves obedience.

The New Testament:

It may be argued that the New Testament is even more exclusive in that pneumatology and christology are inextricably intertwined. In the Gospel accounts the Spirit is closely identified with the saving activity of Jesus. Mary is overshadowed by the power of the Spirit and thus filled with the Spirit she gives birth to the child Jesus (Lk. 1:34-35). The Spirit enables others to recognise Jesus as Lord. Elizabeth and John the Baptist at the time of Mary's visit and Anna and Simeon in the temple at the time of Jesus' presentation, were filled with the Holy Spirit (Lk.1:41-44, Lk.1:25-38). Jesus is baptized with water by John the Baptist and all four Gospels testify to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. The power of the Spirit drives Jesus into the desert where he is tempted by the devil. When he returned to the synagogue in Nazareth and read from the book of Isaiah "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, and He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor" (Lk.4:18), Jesus told them "today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk.4:21). In Luke's gospel Jesus tells us at the very beginning that all of his work will be under the influence of the Spirit.

Jesus was filled with the Spirit and when He dies on the cross He cries out in a loud voice "Father into your hands I commit My Spirit" (Lk.23:46). The Gospel of John tells

us of the promise Jesus makes to His disciples. "The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, will instruct you in everything, and will remind you of all that I told you" (Lk.14:26).

The story of the sending of the Paraclete occurs in the Acts of the Apostles. After Jesus ascended into heaven the Apostles returned to Jerusalem. There in an upper room along with the women and Mary, his mother, they devoted themselves to prayer. The Pentecost event is told in powerful language - a loud noise from heaven, like a violent rushing wind, filling the room, and tongues of fire resting on each of them. Those present are filled with the Spirit and they are able to speak in foreign tongues and make bold proclamation as the Spirit prompted them. In his speech to the crowd Peter recalls the prophecy of Joel and tells them that through Jesus, whom God has raised up and has received the promised Holy Spirit from the Father, has now poured it out on them (Acts 2:17-21; 33). When the amazed people asked what they must do Peter tells them to repent and be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

How is the Pentecost event to be interpreted? Is it an exclusive or an inclusive pouring out of the Spirit? In a sense, it is exclusive because the Spirit was given to the Apostles. They in turn preached by the power of the Spirit converting devout Jews from every nation who were living in Jerusalem. (Acts 2:4-6).

It is interesting to note that Paul, in his letters never mentions the Pentecost but his letters do give us the earliest accounts of the action of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Paul, according to New Testament writing, never tells of having actually encountered the living Jesus but he knew about his followers, those who followed "The

Way” and he knew about the Holy Spirit. The importance of Jesus in Paul’s teaching was his suffering, death and resurrection. Paul’s encounter with Jesus was an experience of the risen Jesus, in a vision, a spiritual resurrection, because corruption cannot inherit incorruption. For Paul Jesus is the Christ, the Greek for Messiah.

It is through Paul’s letters to his churches that we learn how the Spirit functions. His letters give an insight into the early church’s understanding of who the Holy Spirit is. Paul preaches Christ resurrected, and it is through God’s Spirit that the christian is brought to say “Jesus is Lord”(1Cor.12:3). Paul claims to have the Spirit of God (1Cor.7:40) and says that the body is God’s temple, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1Cor3:16, 6:19).

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul prays that they may be strengthened in their inner being with power through the Spirit (Eph.3:16). For Paul the Spirit is the Spirit of Power. In his letter to the Romans he speaks on the theme of salvation. When people are saved, the Holy Spirit dwells in the body empowering them to live a godly life - to say no to evil desires that once controlled them and to pursue sacred opportunities they would not otherwise have. God will save all people who have faith (Rom1:16), if you confess that “Jesus is Lord”, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead (Rom.10:9).

Paul’s usage of the Spirit shows no discernible difference between the (divine) Spirit, the Spirit of God equal to the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Lord and the Holy Spirit (Rom.8:9). He was designated Son of God in power from the resurrection according to the Spirit of holiness (Rom 1:4). For Paul the Spirit is the eschatological Spirit, the Spirit of the new age pressing upon the old. The first Christians’ experience of the Spirit was so rich and real that they could not believe that its consummation would be longed

delayed. Christ was the first fruits of the general resurrection - the rest of the resurrection could not be far off "

Paul makes it clear that the roots of Christian faith are Jewish. The Jewish people have long been drawing spiritual nourishment from God. Paul says "they are still the chosen ones, and God loves them" (Rom.11:28). It is through Jews, such as Jesus, the disciples, and Paul, that God extends salvation to the rest of the world.

Paul takes the gospel of Jesus to the Gentiles. When the decision is taken at Jerusalem in the presence of Peter and James it is thus phrased "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15:28). The Holy Spirit guides Paul in his journeys preventing him from speaking in Asia and leading him to Macedonia and eventually to Rome. The Holy Spirit is leading the followers of Christ to Rome and hence to the whole world. The Gospel is spread through the action of the Spirit to create more followers of Christ. The message is exclusive in being inextrudably bound to the mission of Jesus and through Jesus to the mission of the apostles to make disciples of all the nations (Matt. 28:19-20).

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is a force, the power of God that spoke through the Prophets. This view is continued in the New Testament, however there is a new dimension in understanding who the Spirit is. John's baptism of water serves as a bridge to the new baptism of water and the Holy Spirit. John's baptism was a call for repentance and a cleansing from sin. The new baptism, the baptism in the Spirit, brings about the indwelling of the holy Spirit which allows the Christian to live a Spirit filled life.

9

Dunn. James D.G. The Christ and The Spirit. p.355.

Baptism was completed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was seen by his contemporaries as an inspired prophet - the messiah anointed by the Spirit - speaking with authority, with the power to heal, and his claim to know and do the will of God. It seems to be Jesus' own self-understanding. He applies the words of the prophet Isaiah "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me" to his own self and mission after reading the passage in the synagogue in Nazareth (Isa.61:1-2, Lk.4:16-21). Jesus attributes his success to the powerful activity of God's Spirit through him: "It is by the Spirit of God that I expel demons" (Mt.12:28, Lk. 11:20).

The long drought of the Spirit was over as Jesus introduced the new age of the Spirit in himself and his mission. Jesus became Lord and dispenser of the Spirit. He who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him (1Cor. 6:17). What was claimed was that the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, was to be identified as the Spirit of Jesus. Christ and the Holy Spirit merged, as the Paraclete in John's Gospel is understood as Jesus' alter ego. The Paraclete constitutes the presence of Jesus when Jesus is absent. The identification of the Spirit with Christ is not so complete however, because Jesus can still be remembered as one inspired by the Spirit and not as the incarnation of the Spirit. Jesus the man inspired by the Spirit provides a distinct role for the Spirit over against the earthly Jesus. There is both a fusion and a continuing distinction between Jesus and the Spirit.¹⁰ This recognition provides the dynamic drive to trinitarian formulations. The Holy Spirit is the living memory of Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit the story of Jesus is remembered

¹⁰

James D.G.Dunn. The Christ and The Spirit. p.340 -341.

and Jesus leads us to the Father.

William Shepherd in his book The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as Character in Luke-Acts gives a literary analysis of the Holy Spirit in the text. He contends that the Holy Spirit is best understood as a character in the narrative of Luke-Acts. Shepherd makes use of categories developed by a number of narrative theorists to show that the characterization of the Spirit is often presented indirectly through speech, action, appearance, description of environment, and comparison or contrast. The indirect characterization of a character means hard work for the reader and after puzzling through Luke's presentation of the Spirit he will arrive exactly where Luke wants that reader to be: convinced of the faithfulness of God. It can be no surprise that a Holy Spirit presented as a character who is virtually a stand-in for God would eventually be absorbed into the Godhead. The step between Luke's character and the Third Person of the Trinity proves to be small indeed.¹¹

It took several generations for the church to finally declare that the Holy Spirit is not merely a force but is in fact a distinctive person in the triune God.

The Holy Spirit in the Early Church

Origen of Alexandria:

The history of the theology of the Holy Spirit begins with Origen in the first half of the third century. The teaching of Origen of Alexandria is of particular significance because he is the first of the Fathers to write about the Holy Spirit in a systematic way. The

¹¹

James D.G. Dunn. p. 247-255.

Patristic Age exposed Christianity to Hellenism and Gnosticism. Origen of Alexandria was not interested in just the literal meaning of the Bible, he sought the inner meaning of the inspired Scripture.¹² He came to distinguish between simple believers who accept the Christian faith on authority and the tiny elite of spiritual Christians who seek the deep things of God. For him, knowledge, freedom from the passions, and active loving care for others was the way to holiness.

After reflecting on the awareness of the presence and activity of the Father and the Son outside of Christianity he says, "As to the Holy Spirit no one, except those familiar with the law and the prophets and who believed in Christ, could have suspected His existence. It is through the Scriptures, that were inspired by the Holy Spirit, that we learn the higher and more divine doctrines of the Son."¹³ He asks why salvation needs the cooperation of the entire Trinity? In his opinion the working of the Father and the Son takes place in saints as in sinners, in rational beings, dumb animals, all things that exist - even those without life. But the work of the Holy Spirit is in the saints only - those already turning to a better life and walking with Jesus.¹⁴ Rational beings obtain their existence from the Father, their rational nature from the Son and their holiness from the Holy Spirit. For Origen the Holy Spirit was exclusive to Christians. That the working of the Father and the

¹²
Joseph Wilson Trigg. Origen. p.13.

¹³
Origen. Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. IV. pp. 251-252. (*On First Principles* Bk.1 ch. 3.1) Origen says that God who created all things is unbegotten and He is recognised as the parent of the universe and He has a Son. Even the philosophers and barbarians have an idea of his existence.

¹⁴
Ibid. p.253.

Son applies to both saints and sinners is evident from the fact that all rational beings are participants in the Word of God - i.e. in reason - and because of this, have implanted within them, certain seeds, as it were, of Wisdom and Righteousness, which is Christ. The Apostle Paul tells us that Christ is in the heart of all, in respect of His being the word or reason, by participating in which they are rational beings. Reason has implanted in them the difference between good and evil. To know good and do evil is to sin. All men are not without communion with God, "the kingdom of God is within you" (Lk.17:20) and "He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen.2:7).¹⁵

Origen refers to the flood to show that the Holy Spirit is taken away from all who are unworthy. In Psalm 104 it is written, "Thou wilt take away their spirit, and they will die, and return to their earth." After sinners and the unworthy are wiped out the Holy Spirit creates a new people - and "renews the face of the earth." In this manner then, the working of the power of the Father and Son is extended to every creature - but a share in the Holy Spirit is possessed only by the saints, those who have been regenerated. God the Father bestowed on all things the gift of natural life; the Lord Jesus Christ confers by nature the gift of reason; but the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon the deserving, in proportion to the merits of those who are rendered capable of receiving it.¹⁶

The chief advent of the Holy Spirit was after Christ ascended to Heaven. Before that the Holy Spirit was upon the prophets and a few individuals - if there were a few

¹⁵

Origen. Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol.IV. p. 254. also Benjamin Drewery. Origen and the Doctrine of Grace. p.171.

¹⁶

Origen. Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. IV. p.255. also Drewery. p.172.

deserving of it - before Christ only a few were able to find something spiritual in the law or in the prophets - but now there are countless multitudes of believers. "In the last days I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and they shall prophesy" (Joel.2:28). Now many are able to have spiritual understanding of the law, suggested to the mind by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷

What was most limiting in Origen's theology was his teaching that the Holy Spirit was for the regenerated only. The Spirit was given to the Church - to those who believed in God and were followers of Christ. For Origen the Holy Spirit could not abide with evil or non-believers. His main work, however, was to sanctify - it was the Holy Spirit who inspired the writing of the Scriptures and therefore the Holy Spirit, abiding in man, was able to enlighten him as to the interpretation of the Scripture. For Origen, knowledge and understanding of the Scripture brought Faith.

In Origen's lifetime little had been said about the Holy Spirit. Origen wrote about the Trinity in its infancy stage of development. He asked the first questions and gave the first answers to the speculations. In the Preface to *On First Principles* he states that the Holy Spirit was associated in honour and dignity with the Father and Son, but in His case it is not clearly distinguished whether He is to be regarded as born or innate, or also as a Son of God or not. Origen states that a careful investigation is needed. He claims that "up to the present time we have been unable to find no statement in holy Scripture in which the

¹⁷

Origen. p.285.

Holy Spirit could be said to be made or created.”¹⁸ Origen sees the Father as the creator of all things, the Son is begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit, a third eternally existing divine hypostasis, subordinate to the Son. The Son was begotten of the Father and the Holy Spirit is brought into being by the Father through Christ. As it were the Father sends the Son but the Holy Spirit joins in this with the promise to come down to the Son in due time and to work with him for the salvation of mankind.¹⁹

Athanasius:

The question of the true nature and status of the Holy Spirit became an issue in the third quarter of the fourth century. The first clear evidence of this are the four letters of Athanasius written to Serapion, bishop of Thumis, who had drawn his attention to certain Egyptian Christians who accepted the full divinity of the Son (unlike the Arians) but who regarded the Spirit as a creature differing from the angels only in degree. He is an angel and a creature, and unlike the Son.²⁰

For Athanasius, the question of the Spirit arose out of the question of the Son. The fact that the Son is in the Father involves that the Son is from the Father, must it not be equally true that the Spirit, being in the Son, must be from the Son? If it is lawful to argue from unity of operation to unity of essence, must we not acknowledge that He from whom

¹⁸

Origen. p.252

¹⁹

Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer. eds. Documents in Early Christian Thought. p.79. from *Commentary on Joh11,10-12*

²⁰

Athanasius: The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit. tr. and notes C.R.B. Shapland. p.28.

the Spirit receives the things of the Father no less bestows upon Him that divine life of which the Father is the unique source²¹. Here we recover the New Testament conception of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Son, not only inasmuch as the Son gives and sends Him, but because He is the principle of Christ's life within us. There is nothing which is not originated and actuated through the Word in the Spirit.²¹ Athanasius taught that the action of the Godhead, derives from the Father and is accomplished through the agency of the Son in the Spirit. He does not make clear what is meant by "in the Spirit".²² For Athanasius, God cannot create without imparting to his creatures something of His own character; and the continuance of His works is only secured by His presence within them. He thinks of creation and sanctification as a single work. In these letters Athanasius is not concerned with the ministry of the Spirit but with His propriety to God, but in so doing he relates the concept of sanctification to the Holy Spirit.²³

In his notes Shapland refers to Langen who summarized the teaching of Athanasius on the relation of the Spirit to the Father and Son in four Propositions:²⁴

- a) The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father;
- b) He belongs to the Son whose image He is;
- c) He has the whole divine nature of the Father through the Son, who thus far is His source;
- d) He is in the Father through the Son.

²¹

Athanasius. p.36. from 1Cor. 8:6, 12:3.

²²

Ibid. p.37.

²³

Ibid. p.39.

²⁴

Ibid. p. 41. Quoted by Lauchert, *Die Lehre des hl. Athanasius*, p.64.

When Christ says ‘We will come, the Father and I’ the Spirit comes with them. The Spirit is inseparable from the Son, as the Son is inseparable from the Father. When the Spirit comes to us, the Son will come and the Father, and they will make their abode in us (Eph.4:6). Athanasius affirms the faith in the one Godhead, a Triad, and in reaffirming the propriety of the Spirit to the Son he fixed the line upon which the Church’s Pneumatic doctrine was to develop.²⁵

Cappadocian Fathers:

The question of the Spirit’s Godhead became the question of the mode of his derivation. How is He from God? The further development of the Trinitarian doctrine passed to the “Cappadocian Fathers”- to Basil of Caesarea, his friend Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil’s younger brother Gregory, who became bishop of Nyssa.²⁶ Using philosophical language and categories particularly of “Mystical Platonism”, the Cappadocians were able to coin new terms and formulate new explanations to protect and preserve the authentic experience and proper understanding of Christians.²⁷

When people follow God in faith, according to the Cappadocians they come to see that God is not alone in His divinity. God is Father because He has a Son by nature as a necessary element of his divine being and life. Following the teaching of Athanasius and the Council of Nicaea they saw in Scriptures that the true and living God is never without

²⁵

Athanasius. p. 43.

²⁶

Henry Chadwick. The Early Church. p.148.

²⁷

Bernard McGinn. ed. Christian Spirituality. p.261. Thomas Hopko. *The Trinity in the Cappadocians*.

His Word and Spirit. They affirmed three hypostases (persons) in one essence (substance or nature). The technical Trinitarian language was quickly adopted in church documents and liturgical prayer.

The council of Constantinople (381) reaffirmed the Nicene faith but the actual creed promulgated by the council was differently worded from that of Nicaea. and had a cautiously worded article concerning the Holy Spirit. It reflected the argument of Basil that in the liturgy the Holy Spirit is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son, and the difference between the Son and the Spirit is how they are from God. The Son is begotten of the Father and the Spirit proceeds from the Father.²⁸

Cyprian of Carthage in the mid third century also puts forth an exclusive view. The Holy Spirit works within the Church and the bishop is responsible to God alone although he has an obligation to act in harmony with other bishops for the sake of unity. The bishop has sacramental authority within the Spirit-endowed community of faith. It was from that perspective that Cyprian argued "Outside the Church there is no salvation."²⁹

In the succeeding centuries the Church carried an exclusive view of itself, with the Spirit impressing on the community the "marks" one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. The church had inherited from its Jewish roots a strong sense of having been 'called out'

²⁸

"And in the Spirit, the holy, the lordly and life-giving one, proceeding forth from the Father, co-worshipped and co-glorified with Father and Son, the one who spoke through the prophets." from the exposition of the 150 fathers at the Council. Tr. from *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. N.P. Tanner . [http//.piar.hu/councils/ecum02.htm](http://.piar.hu/councils/ecum02.htm)

²⁹

John McManners. ed. The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity. Henry Chadwick. *The Early Christian Community*. p.37.

from the rest of society - to be a witness to the holiness of God. Although the 'world' was, in nature, a great gift from God. Jewish-Christian traditions also saw the 'world', in some moral sense, as being alienated from its creator.

Conclusion:

The early church was concerned with right belief as can be documented in the writings of the Church Fathers. In its arguments with the Gnostics and heretics, doctrines were formulated and anathemas pronounced. To be a member of the church was to be baptized and to receive the gift of the Spirit. But the Spirit cannot be contained. There is an explosive energy always fermenting within the community. On one side there is newness and creativity, on the other there are schisms and disagreements. The Western Latin Church, the Eastern Greek Orthodox Church, the later Protestant Christian Churches, and present day Pentecostalism, all claim to be led by the Spirit. The Spirit, however, is still exclusive to Christianity, a diverse Christianity, yet unified in its belief in Jesus as necessary for salvation. The role of the Spirit is still exclusively christological. It creates community for the building-up of the community gathered around the Risen Jesus.

Joachim of Fiore, a Calabrian monk, in 1183 pondered the meaning of "in the Spirit" while reading the Apocalypse during the Easter - Pentecost season. He prayed to the Holy Spirit to show him the mystery of the Holy Trinity. For Joachim, accounts of the past when examined "in the Spirit" present an overall design. History makes sense, it proceeds in three successive periods, and it obeys the laws of progress. Joachim organizes history according to the three persons of the Christian Trinity. God the Father had

determined the course of things from Adam until the time of Christ. From that point on God the Son was in charge of the world. The Holy Spirit, who had been in the background, would have his turn during humankind's last days which would begin around 1200.³⁰ Joachim erred in his timing and his theology of the Spirit was bitterly contested. However, he is a witness to the continuing awareness in the church of the "breaking-in" of the Spirit into history, and the newness and unexpected directions of the activity of God in the world. Jesus spoke of this in the famous discourse with Nicodemus in the Gospel of John: "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (Jn.3:8).

Christian Growth and Life in the Spirit

The Christian is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is baptized into the Trinitarian life of God and the "Holy Spirit" - the "Lord and Giver of Life" who dwells in the body of the Christian. This new life in the Spirit instills faith in one's heart which results in the performance of good works - the fruits of the Spirit. This new life is capable of growth and must be nurtured through the reception of the sacraments (particularly the Eucharist) and by the daily performance of good works. Docility to the promptings of the Spirit becomes a vital principle of development and growth. Daily we listen to the Spirit and perform good works which keep us growing towards heaven.

In his book, The Spirit of Life, Luis M. Bermejo tells us what it means to live a "life in the Spirit". He seeks to explain under the unfailing light of the New Testament and

³⁰

Adolf Holl. The Left Hand of God. p.148-155

of the authentic Christian tradition, the inexhaustible riches of the Spirit's activity in the heart - in the body of the Christian: for the Spirit and the Christian are closely interlocked in a permanent dialogue which takes place in the human being. Throughout the text he emphasizes the indwelling of the Spirit within the individual. "It should be a normal thing for a Christian to experience the Spirit. He possesses the Holy Spirit and he knows it, both from faith and from his own personal experience: this is the perfect Christian."³¹

Salvation of the individual begins with God's fidelity to his promise. It is God's unmerited, gratuitous love that begins the entire process. We can only co-operate: we can only react to God's initial action. What then is the reward or recompense for the just person who tries his best and performs his task according to his capabilities? People deserve their wages - the just payment for their labour. There are many examples in Scripture (Lk.10:7, Mt.20:8, Lk.15:17) that imply a necessity of payment. Jesus tells us our reward is eternal life - inherit the kingdom prepared for you (Mt. 25:34). Bermejo describes those Christians who seem to be shy and embarrassed to lift their eyes and fix their gaze in the world to come as being narrow and short-sighted in their vision. Jesus promised heaven as a reward for our upright behaviour.

Yet God's reward depends on God's bountiful generosity not on our good works. All the labourers in the vineyard received the same pay. The owner was generous to those who worked only part of the day. God rewards as a generous Father and not as a magistrate who judges. But in order to receive a reward one must perform good works. God's generous love and our faithful work are two components of salvation. One's achievements, though real and deserving of reward, are, in reality, God's gifts and we should remember that one's good works proceed from the indwelling of the Spirit. Without good works our growth in the life of the Spirit is stunted.

That God rewards good works is not typically Christian. Paul as Saul, the pious

³¹Bermejo. pp. 230-231.

Pharisee. knew that one's works will be rewarded - that God, a just judge, will reward us with an everlasting inheritance. What Paul, the Christian, brings to this view of God's reward is the realization that, one's good works brought before God's judgement are in reality the fruit of the Spirit. Without the help of the indwelling Spirit humans would be unable to perform good works. God's reward is not merited or claimed - it is only received. The Christian receives the gift of faith which brings the gift of the Holy Spirit who dwells within his body prompting and enabling him to perform good works. One depends entirely on God. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

In the Old Testament sin leads to death, total death - physical and spiritual. Against this background Paul brings to light the new life in Christ - baptismal justification grows into sanctification which develops into eternal life as its final goal. Through baptism humans receive the gift of faith, become a son of God, receive the personal presence of the Holy Spirit, is endowed with sanctifying grace, flooded with divine life and is grafted onto the risen Christ.³² The totality of these gifts is planted in the Christian like a seed which can grow, sprout and bear fruit. The seed grows into eternal life. Despite the growth and fruitfulness of his Christian life, eternal life is a gift proceeding from the Father's munificence. And yet Paul exhorts the Christian to ever greater efforts as though everything depended on them. Is there a contradiction? In one passage everything depends on God and his unmerited grace and in another, Paul lays heavy emphasis on one's necessary effort and unavoidable responsibility. An answer to the apparent contradiction can be found in Paul's words, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work in you" (Phi2:12)

Human activity is necessary for the growth and development of trinitarian life but

³²

Bermejo. Luis M. S.J. The Spirit of Life, p.266.

the activity is the result of God's grace. Human activity in the realm of grace is a divine-human action issuing both from the Spirit that indwells and from the one who is indwelt. Growth of trinitarian life in humans is in proportion to the Spirit's activity in each person - if you let him act freely there is a maximum increase in your divine life - "Let the Spirit Fill you". (Ep.5:13) Impelled by the Spirit, one's actions are a visible manifestation of spiritual health and a cause for further growth in sanctity. The sacraments are one way to make God's life grow within you but they are not the only way. All the trivial daily actions which proceed from the Spirit are steps in growth that lead to eternal life.

Bermejo gives special attention to the common occurrence of suffering in one's life. To keep one's gaze fixed on the eternal reward as a crown for his suffering is not cheap sentimental spirituality but is entirely biblical and therefore Christian. Suffering in any form is evil and the Christian should try to alleviate it or eliminate it altogether where possible. Paul tells us that we are children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Rom 8:16-17) Suffering is not an argument against the reality of divine sonship, for the presence of the Spirit and actual human suffering can be simultaneous. If suffering deserves a reward it is because it is rooted in the Spirit. Suffering without the Spirit has little value.

Bermejo does not like the word "merit" - an ugly word not found anywhere in the Bible. He regrets the Catholic's continued attachment to the word as it misleads and blurs the correct relationship between God and man. It also creates ecumenical difficulties between Catholics and Protestants. If the word is not biblical where in our Christian heritage does it come into view? Bermejo traces it to Tertullian the third century African lawyer with a thoroughly legalistic mind. Tertullian views the relationship between God and humans as master and servant. We submit to God's will but in the end hold out our hand, - "a good deed has God as debtor". "How can there be many mansions in the

Father's house (Jn14:2) if not on account of the diversity of merits? For Tertullian the harder the work the greater the merit.

Bermejo sees Tertullian as presenting a deviation of the biblical perspective and credits Augustine of Hippo with a rightful development of the term "merit". With Augustine, the juridical, legalistic framework is eliminated. Humans do have merit but it is preceded by and imbued with God's unmerited grace. Take away God's grace and you will slip and fall. Humans have freedom, a freedom constantly tempted by their sinful and evil tendencies. We are in desperate need of God's grace. Without it we will collapse and disintegrate. The following is one example of Augustine's profound and penetrating insights.

"I have received because I have merited. Do not think that you have received by meriting, for you would not have merited anything unless you had received. *It is grace that precedes your merit; not grace from merit, but merit from grace.*³³ Assuredly, once grace is given, our good merits begin, but through that grace. For if grace is withdrawn, man simply falls, he does not stand, but is knocked down by his own free will."³⁴

Augustine takes us to the very source of human merit. It is not God's grace but God's promise to give grace and his fidelity to his promise. God becomes a debtor because he has promised what pleases him to give. Thus we may say to our Lord "Give us what you have promised, because we have done what you commanded us to do." Augustine confirms Paul's thought and takes it one step deeper. There is no contradiction; your eternal glory is a reward due to you and it is a gratuitous gift not due to you. One's reward is sustained by God's grace.

³³

Bermejo. p.273. Quoting Augustine. *Sermo 169, 3*

³⁴

Ibid. p.274. Quoting Augustine. *De gratia et libero arbitrio VI, 13.*

Even with Augustine's retrieval of the word "merit" Bermejo would like to see a moratorium imposed on its usage or discard it completely from our spiritual vocabulary. When you talk about your merit and rightful claim to your reward you are implying an equal partnership with God where your salvation is concerned. Vatican II recommended the use of terms that our separated brethren can really understand. For Protestants merit can easily be misunderstood and comes close to heresy. In the past, Catholic attachment to the word and Protestant rejection has created unnecessary difficulties. Ecumenically speaking there has however, been progress. In 1983 an agreement was reached between Lutherans and Catholics on the nature of our eternal reward.

The eternal reward promised to the just is a gift, for it rests entirely on the grace of God in Christ, only mediator between God and fallen mankind. The good works of the justified, performed in grace, will be rewarded by God, the just judge who, faithful to his promise, 'will render to everyman according to his works' (Rom. 2:6).³⁵

Much of this discussion has centered on one's eternal reward. What is to be said about the here and now - the growth of divine life in the pilgrim's journey? In the Old Testament God's covenant, "You shall be my people and I will be your God" (Ez36:28) produced a warm, personal, intimate relationship binding Yahweh and Israel. Christianity has not cancelled this kind of relationship but has interiorized it. Yahweh was linked to his people from afar - now the Spirit of God lives in the Christian - a close bond of intimacy beyond description. It is here where we must examine the concept of reward - where God's Spirit and the human who is indwelt are almost fused into one. One's reward is the

³⁵

Bermejo. p.279.

person of the Holy Spirit himself. One receives the "Giver".

God gives himself entirely to human beings. We crave for God and God craves for us - a mutual longing, satisfied partially by the indwelling and totally in the heavenly consummation. Human's work and God's grace - from this "mystical marriage" is born our reward. To consider our reward from a mercenary angle, as cheques to be cashed on arrival at the pearly gates of heaven, is a distortion and travesty of the truth. It is not law, but love that governs the doctrine of a human being's reward. Just as in our human relations where the mutual self-giving increases and causes our love for one another to grow so too in our relationship with God. The Holy Spirit gives to humans and humans reciprocate and love grows. An increase in one's docility to the Spirit corresponds with an increase in divine life in humans. As you penetrate deeper into the person of the Holy Spirit you are seized by God's life which grows and transforms you. The Eucharist makes the indwelling of the Spirit grow in depth and intensity.

Bermejo stresses the persistence of the Holy Spirit. Even the person who has forfeited the indwelling of the Spirit is the object of the persistent promptings of the Spirit seeking re-entry into the sanctuary of one's inner being. In giving examples of the promptings of the Spirit from within and from without Bermejo uses two examples, that of Pope John XXIII in calling the ecumenical council and St. Teresa of Avila prompted to bring reform to the Carmelite religious order. These were familiar stories and they brought to mind that we can learn how the Spirit acts by listening to others who have heard the Spirit's voice.

Discerning the voice of the Spirit can be difficult. The example of the sheep

recognizing and following the voice of the Good Shepherd is given to help us understand that we must learn to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit in order to follow where he leads us.

One must discern that it is God's Spirit that is leading you and not your own psychological human activity or some other external source that draws you away from God. It takes practice and perhaps a spiritual director to help in discernment before one is able to hear the voice of the Spirit with any degree of clarity. To live in the Spirit we experience, judge, and then act. It is necessary to "test the spirits", to ascertain the origin of the promptings. Since the Spirit is often elusive, self-effacing, subtle, delicate we can recognize his voice if the promptings lead us to Jesus and his church. An inspiration, if genuine, cannot go against the teaching of Jesus, nor against an article of faith proposed by the Church's official magisterium. However, the fact that the magisterium upholds strongly and insistently a particular doctrine is not in itself an absolute guarantee that the doctrine in question is correct and sanctioned by the Spirit. History teaches us that often the Spirit at times hides behind, but actively supports critical reactions to official positions. Bermejo is careful to say the Spirit would never prompt one to take the dreadful step of leaving the Church.³⁶

The Holy Spirit acts upon the individual so that one is able to act in the world - able to bring Christ to the world. The gifts of the Spirit are given for the benefit of the individual but also to urge one to action in the world helping to renew the face of the earth.

³⁶

Bermejo. p. 216.

The Holy Spirit guides the church to the knowledge of the truth and unites her in fellowship and service. He is the Spirit of certainty, dispelling all doubts, the Spirit of genuineness, firmness, and stability. He is not the Spirit of confusion.

Still, discernment takes practice. If we are to grow in the life of the Spirit we must continually seek his voice. We must become conscious of his presence and to do this one must spend time in prayer and contemplation. It is through prayer that we become familiar with the way of the Spirit - the voice of the Spirit - so that we learn to recognize his voice and hear and see his presence in others and in all of creation.

Prayer is the Holy Spirit speaking within you. You cannot pray without the presence of the Holy Spirit. A calm introspective attitude is the only way to listen to the voice of the Spirit, whether the voice is coming from within or without. It is in quiet reflection that one is able to discern. Bermejo tells us that the Christian is expected to hear the voice of the Spirit and to submit to it in the calm secrecy of his heart. He also reminds us of the different ways of the Spirit through the age old images for the Spirit- of wind, fire, and water. A gentle cooling breeze or a hurricane; a warming fire or destructive blaze, refreshing, cleansing water or a hurricane. But above all the Spirit is subtle, with gentleness usually prevailing. He speaks in whispers that can go undetected, he is unpredictable, all-pervasive yet evasive, self effacing and still it is to be remembered that he is the Spirit of power and strength, and comfort and joy. Listening to his voice brings calm and peace.

In the Bible the Spirit is power and might, vigour and strength. In Jesus, the Incarnation, baptism, desert experience, return to Nazareth were accomplished in the

power of the Spirit. This power of the Spirit continues in human beings, dwelling in them, renewing the face of the earth. The Spirit enlightens and strengthens, illumines and fortifies. What is important to understand is the continual giving of the Spirit and the giving of one's self to the indwelling of the Spirit. Bermejo tells us that the reconciliation of God's grace and human freedom is an unfathomable mystery locked away in the profundity of God's heart.

Growth brings change and just as we as individuals change as we grow in the Spirit so too does the Church. What leads people to Christ and faith is strong convincing experience of the Spirit.

In the past a certain cultural faith was still very powerful, however, today, it is easier to have faith in Christianity, in a code of ethics, in Jesus' moral teaching and even in the value of gathering for worship, than it is to have a real relationship with God. Having been born into a Christian family we may have a relationship with a religion, a community of worship, but do we have an actual faith in God? Just as we may believe and not practice we may also practice our faith and not believe. At some time one must make a deep and private act of faith and to do this you must make the inward journey into the deepest part of our being where we will find the indwelling Spirit waiting to possess and to console us with his very being. In order to grow in the life of the Spirit we must make that simple act of faith that the Spirit draws us to make.

What can we expect from the indwelling of the Spirit? Bermejo gives three answers. First: The Spirit is the Spirit of "light and truth". He scrutinizes the depths of God and communicates that knowledge to the individual. The depths of God can only be

known by the Spirit of God who acts as an intermediary - from the depth of the Father to the depth of the human being. The individual will be led internally by the Spirit to grasp, interiorize and assimilate the teaching of Christ. The Spirit sheds light abundantly on one's mind deepening his knowledge and understanding of God.

Second: The Spirit is the Spirit of power and strength. What we need is inner strength and courage to act according to what we have learned is the true way, the right way. In both the Old and New Testament it was through the "power" of the Spirit that humans were able to do the will of God. The Spirit brings an explosion of light and an infusion of strength to the inner spiritual recesses of one's being.

Third: The Spirit is the Spirit of comfort and joy. As the Paraclete he is our comforter, our consoler. Here Bermejo provides a vivid description of what the Spirit does:

in the words of the Church's liturgy for the feast of Pentecost, "the father of the poor"; in our labour he is rest and solace; in the heat of passion, coolness and refreshment; in pain and bereavement, soothing comfort and consolation. He removes the stain of sin, waters what is bleak and dry, heals what is sick and wounded, bends what is stiff and rigid, warms up and melts the icy coldness of our heart. He is the consoler who, like the Father, 'wipes away every tear from our eyes'.³⁷

Promptings of the Spirit can be internal or external. He acts in a variety of ways, in as many ways as there are people. He can illumine the believer from within, brightening his mind and warming his will and he can also use other people, or providential historical situations to guide and lead the individual. His promptings come enfleshed, in concrete, historical situations. They are there in the trivialities of our daily life, in the monotony of our daily occupations, behind the "coincidences" we experience. He is noiselessly active

³⁷Bermejo. p.189.

and anonymously efficient, touching, whispering, suggesting, instructing, always active and yet elusive. The action of the Spirit is twofold: the Spirit, given as gift to the individual, first prompts, or as it were, coaxes one's will to surrender to the inspiration and second gives you the strength and power to accept and act upon the inspiration. It is through the power of the Spirit that one is able to cooperate with the promptings of the Spirit. The promptings should be received with the acquiescence of a docile heart, submissive to his voice. We possess the Spirit so that he, in turn may possess us.

Conclusion

Our salvation depends entirely on God. We receive the gift of faith which brings the gift of the Holy Spirit who dwells within our body prompting and enabling us to perform good works. Our good works are really the work of the Spirit. Our reward, eternal life, is gift from the Father's munificence and not from our own performance of good works. If we have faith and are docile to the promptings of the Spirit so that we cooperate with and become instruments of the Spirit then the Spirit is able to renew the face of the earth. The Spirit is given to the individual for the benefit of the community. When we truly say to God "not my will, but thy will be done" when we submit our free will to the will of God, when our human spirit is joined with God's Holy Spirit then our reward has already begun. Having faith and performing good works is living in the Kingdom of God.

Growth in the life of the Spirit takes two paths; inward and outward. The indwelling Spirit illumines and empowers the individual and impels him outward to perform good deeds in the community. One becomes holier by acting. The inward path,

the life of prayer leads to a silent unassuming docility to a dedicated life attuned to the inner voice of the Spirit. Growth is measured by our openness to the Spirit. Growth is nurtured through prayer. In the final stages of growth and transformation one becomes utterly docile to the Holy Spirit and lives by the Spirit's own life. One becomes a saint.

Bermejo sees the Holy Spirit exclusively as sanctifier of Christians when one takes into consideration what is taught in Scripture. Paul claims that the Spirit is absolutely necessary in order to become a son of God and John seems to say that sharing in the life of God is the result of supernatural faith in Jesus Christ. Since John and Paul were surrounded by an overwhelming mass of non-Christians the question whether our sonship can be extended to them never seems to have occurred to them. Both of them write exclusively for Christian communities and as regards this question they are simply silent and, according to Bermejo, therefore neutral.

However, though we may not go *against* Scripture, which for Christians is normative and binding, what is there to prevent us from going *beyond* Scripture? In conclusion Bermejo states that the gates of the eternal kingdom are certainly not open to only Christians, but to non-Christians as well, provided they act according to their conscience. To have hope for eternal life one must sooner or later be in a state of friendship with God and to have this is to be possessed by the Spirit of God. The non-Christian who lacks explicit faith in Jesus Christ may still have a living, transforming faith in God. The presence of the Spirit can be manifested and rendered tangible in their ethical

behaviour, and in their service to the poor.

The Spirit is leading the Church outwards to the world. What proceeds from the Spirit does so in the form of human action. In recognizing the growing human interdependence we see the Spirit drawing us to recognize our need for unity with others and our responsibility for the general welfare of the entire human family. Therefore there must be made available to all people everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to respect, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and to rightful freedom, even in matters religious (Gaudeum et Spes 26).

The awareness of the Spirit leading the Church outward towards the world becomes evident in the documents of the Vatican Council in the early sixties of the twentieth century.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND INCLUSIVISM

The Holy Spirit in the Vatican II Documents

The Council would be an event "that ought to move heaven and earth," said John XXIII (May 17, 1959); it would be "the starting point for a general renewal and a new and mighty flowering of the Holy Spirit throughout the world" (July 27, 1960); it would be an "extraordinary Epiphany," a "new Pentecost" (September 12, 1960).³⁹

Before examining the documents I wish to explain briefly the almost obscure role of the Spirit prior to the Council in order to highlight the shift that took place during the Council and recorded in the documents.

The original ecclesiology of the Patristic Age, that of Father, Son and Spirit, developed in the Western Church in the later middle ages as Father, Son and Church. In this pattern, God is revealed by Christ and Christ is made known by the Church - meaning the hierarchy. Through the sacraments the Church dispensed sanctifying grace which brought salvation. There was a radical separation between sanctifying grace and grace itself and anything that might be called religious experience.⁴⁰ Mystical experiences were absolutely exceptional and in no way related to normal Christian life. In fact mystical experiences were always suspect by the hierarchy. Possible experiences of the Spirit were kept well outside the lives of ordinary Christians. The Church was sufficient to establish

³⁹

Bonaventure Kloppenburg, O.F.M. Ecclesiology of Vatican II. p. 6.

⁴⁰

José Comblin. The Holy Spirit and Liberation. p.16. In making the distinction between Father, Son and Holy Spirit and Father, Son and Church, Comblin is saying that the Church in reality controlled the giving of the Spirit through its sacraments.

the link between Christians and Christ.

In the East the church remained more faithful to the Fathers' concept of the Spirit. Liturgical celebrations are truly a spiritual experience - the Spirit is evoked and in a sense perceived. The Spirit gives access to the risen Christ, and through him to the Father. In the West, in the Catholic Church, the liturgy hardly evoked the Spirit. The sacraments were received as a means to salvation.⁴¹

The theology of Robert Bellarmine, which dominated Catholic theory and practice until Vatican II, defined the Church as an organization founded by Jesus, directed by the hierarchy, who guarantee faithful execution of the function defined by Jesus, thanks to the powers received from him.⁴² The Holy Spirit comes in to authenticate and make holy what the Church does. The Spirit is above the Church giving, as it were, its Seal of Approval. This development of Father, Son, and Church reached its highpoint during the pontificate of Pius IX to that of Pius XII.⁴³ The unity of the Church meant uniformity in theology, liturgy, and canon law all of which the Church claimed to be approved by the Holy Spirit.

Yves Congar tells that during the whole of Vatican II the observers from the Eastern churches criticized the absence of pneumatology from the conciliar documents.⁴⁴

⁴¹
Comblin. The Holy Spirit and Liberation. p.81.

⁴²
Comblin. p.78.

⁴³
Ibid. p.36.

⁴⁴
Comblin. The Holy Spirit and Liberation. p.16.

However, present theologians are turning to a theology of the Holy Spirit. Congar himself devoted much of his time after the council to working on a theology of the Holy Spirit. Vatican II was a turning point in recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit. Comblin states that the final documents mention the Holy Spirit 258 times, a notable advance on the previous Councils of the Western church, but it still did not do justice to the Holy Spirit. Comblin claims that there is still no authentic conception of the Holy Spirit in Catholic teaching which would do justice to Scripture.⁴⁵ The Western church can learn much from the Eastern churches which never lost their sense of the Holy Spirit as well as from the liberation theologies in Latin America.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) LG:

Lumen Gentium is a statement of the church looking inward to define itself. What can be seen of the Holy Spirit in this document?

In the very first sentence it is acknowledged that the sacred Council is gathered together in the Holy Spirit. This is the classical and almost official formula. The Council is gathered by and in the Holy Spirit who is, invisibly, the most authoritative Person of this gathering. “(‘the meeting of the bishops bears witness to the presence of the Holy Spirit’) writes Pope Celestin I at the Council of Ephesus.”⁴⁶ The meeting of two or three in Christ’s name is an assurance of the presence of the Spirit. It is Christ and the Holy Spirit who act in councils and are the real authors of their decrees. Unanimity is both the fruit

⁴⁵

Comblin. The Holy Spirit and Liberation. p.16.

⁴⁶

Yves Congar. Report From Rome II. p.190.

and the sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit - he who can make himself present and act within each person⁴⁷

Chapter one The Mystery of the Church is an explanation of the reality and mystery of the visible and invisible Church. The church was prepared in marvellous fashion in the history of the people of Israel (LG 2). Christ, the Son, by his obedience to the Father brought about our redemption. The Church - that is the kingdom of God - already present in mystery, grows visibly through the power of God in the world - the work of the Holy Spirit.

The origins of Christianity take into account two events of equal importance. The first event is Jesus from his birth to his death and resurrection. The second event is the experience of the Spirit in the early communities. José Comblin argues that Western theology, until now, has played down the “Pentecost” event. Invoking a Christology is no longer enough to ensure the handing-on of the faith. What can lead people to Christ and faith is strong convincing experience of the Spirit.⁴⁸

The Spirit has always been present in the world. He was present at Creation hovering over the abyss (Gen. 1:2) and was present at the beginning of the new covenant - for Christ was born of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. The fullness of the Spirit occurred when the “Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that he might continually sanctify the Church” (LG 4). It is the work of the Spirit that has brought

⁴⁷

Yves Congar. Report From Rome. p.191.

⁴⁸

Comblin. The Holy Spirit and Liberation. p. 3.

growth to the Church. The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of men as in a temple (LG 4). On calvary Christ died and gave up his Spirit. The fullness of the Holy Spirit was experienced on the day of Pentecost by the Apostles and those to whom they preached. The Spirit was sent to all the world. He is the Spirit of life - access through Christ in one Spirit to the Father - The Father gives life through the Spirit to men dead in sin - in Christ he raises to life their mortal bodies. (LG4).

It was the sending of the Spirit that formed the Church - the Apostles' experience of the Spirit led them to action. The Spirit leads the Church from within - the church must follow where the Spirit blows. The Spirit makes the church its instrument and means of acting in the world though not its only instrument.⁴⁹

The Holy Spirit prays in the hearts of the faithful and bears witness to their adoptive sonship. He guides the church to the knowledge of the truth and unites her in fellowship and service. He directs her through various hierarchic and charismatic gifts and adorns her with his fruits (LG4); Love, joy, peace, patient endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness, chastity (Gal.5:22). The Spirit permits the Church to keep the freshness of youth - constantly renewing her to perfect union with her Spouse - Jesus Christ. He forms in the Church a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

By communicating his Spirit, Christ mystically constitutes as his body those brothers of his who are called together from every nation. In one Spirit we were all

⁴⁹

Jose Comblin. The Holy Spirit and Liberation. p.77.

baptized into one body (LG4). This same Spirit produces and stimulates love among the faithful. He gives his different gifts for the welfare of the Church. The Holy Spirit gives life to and moves the whole Church so that his role can be compared to that of a soul in a human body (LG7). The soul image brings out the close union between the Spirit and the Church, but it does not shed light on the results of that union. If everything is spiritual then nothing is. If the Spirit is the "normality of the Church," its presence is no longer meaningful.⁵⁰ What does this mean in practice? Neither Church nor person possesses the Spirit, rather it is the Spirit who possesses the Church or person. What proceeds from the Spirit does so in the form of human action. If the Church is of the Spirit it is born of human beings. The Spirit is the source of newness of what begins to exist. Traditional components of the action of the Spirit in people are; contemplation, asceticism, prayer, paschal joy. The Spirit allows us to penetrate into the secret of the words and deeds of Jesus.⁵¹

In chapter two, of *Lumen Gentium*, The People of God, we see again the work of the Spirit. The formation of the Church began with the Holy Spirit calling together Jews and Gentiles to be one, not according to flesh, but in the Spirit - a new People of God made one from water and the Holy Spirit (LG9). The work of the Spirit is the call to unity and making holy the People of God. He distributes special graces among the faithful as it is written, "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit" (1Cor.12:7). Those who have charge over the Church should judge the genuineness and proper use of

⁵⁰

Comblin. The Holy Spirit and Liberation. p.83.

⁵¹Ibid. p.131.

these gifts, through their office not indeed to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold fast to what is good (LG12). It is significant that special gifts of the Spirit are said to be distributed among the faithful "in every state of life".

According to St. Paul, the main criterion of the true gifts of the Spirit are: devotion to the service of the whole body, and a genuine accord between the development of variety and the promotion of unity in the mystical body. ... The church must cease to be afraid of charisms. They are essential characteristics of the Church.⁵²

Comblin claims that one of the outstanding aspects of Vatican II was its rediscovery of charisms. Through charisms the Spirit has recuperated a ministry it had lost in Catholic theology. These charisms are recognized as expressions of charity because every thing inspired by the Spirit is service to our neighbour.⁵³ Because they proceed from the Spirit they must be recognized by the Church. All believers receive charisms. The Spirit unites and leads the People of God to what is good. All the faithful scattered throughout the world are in communion with each other in the Holy Spirit. Those who are fully incorporated in the Church possessing the Spirit of Christ - accept all means of salvation given to the Church united by the bonds constituted by the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion. They form the visible Church of Christ ruled through the Supreme Pontiff and bishops.(LG 14) The Church is driven by the Holy Spirit to do her part for the full realization of the plan of God, who has constituted Christ as the

⁵²

Herbert Vorgrimler. Commentary On the Documents of Vatican II. Vol.I. p.166. See LG. 12.2 and 1Cor.12:7.

⁵³

Comblin.The Holy Spirit and Liberation. p.112.

source of salvation for the whole world. (LG 17)

In discussing the sacraments it is the ministerial priest that has the sacral power whereby he forms and rules the priestly people (LG 10). The priest celebrates in the name of Christ, takes the place of Christ, and does what Christ did. Christ is thought to act directly in the sacraments using the priest as instrument. Such a conception leaves little room for the Holy Spirit. With this understanding the sacraments run the risk of being viewed as magical actions produced through the right words of the priest and what matters is that they be validly performed thus reducing the sacraments to legal status.⁵⁴ The faithful needs to be reminded of the presence of the Holy Spirit in its sacramental life. An invoking of the Spirit brings Christ into everyday life.

In the chapter on The Hierarchy, the Holy Spirit's role in the formation of the Church, is acknowledged. "By preaching everywhere the Gospel (Mk.16:20), welcomed and received under the influence of the Holy Spirit by those who hear it, the Apostles gather together the universal Church" (LG 19). Today, through the apostolic succession, the Holy Spirit continues to gather the Church through the pope and bishops. Throughout this chapter questions of authority, teaching, ruling, infallibility, the collegiality of the bishops, the Roman Pontiff's supreme and universal power over the whole church are defined. However, many questions remain, or at least further clarification is necessary. For example to say that the college of bishops has no authority unless united with the Roman Pontiff is in effect giving no authority to the college of bishops - only persuasion. In

⁵⁴

Comblin. The Holy Spirit and Liberation. p. 111.

Vorgrimler's Commentary. he makes note that because of the charismatic and prophetic quality of the Church "open opposition" is possible (Gal. 2:11) where there is no legal authority to question the validity of the Pope's decision.⁵⁵ Even so the Holy Spirit is seen to continually strengthen and sustain the organic structure and harmony of the Church (LG 22). A papal definition is given as the definitive decision of the supreme authority in the church with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and not as the statement of a private person endowed with charism.⁵⁶ His decisions do not need the approval of others. The Pope's function is exercised in the power of the Spirit which accompanies him in all his functions as teacher, priest, and pastor. He receives as it were multiple charisms. The papacy is in fact a gift that the Spirit makes to the Church in order to preserve unity of faith.⁵⁷

The chapter on The Laity mentions the very diversity of graces, of ministries and of works that gather the sons of God into one, "for all these things are the work of the one and the same Spirit" 1Cor.12:11(LG 32). Thus, every lay person, through those gifts given to him, is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church itself. They must diffuse in the world the Spirit which animates those poor, meek and peace-makers whom the Lord in the Gospel proclaimed blessed. In a word: ' what the soul is in the body, let Christians be in the world.' (LG 38)

⁵⁵

Vorgrimler. p.202. Gal. 2:11 "But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned."

⁵⁶

Vorgrimler. p.212.

⁵⁷

Hans Kung and Jurgen Moltman, eds. Conflicts About The Holy Spirit. Concilium. p.69. Battista Mondin.

The Church - the People of God - is called to holiness. Endowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit the holiness of the Church is constantly shown forth in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful (LG 39). The forms and tasks of life are many but holiness is one - that sanctity which is cultivated by all who act under God's Spirit. The practice of the "evangelical counsels" are prompted by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is sent to all to move them interiorly - to love God and to love one another. Church authority has been guided by the Holy Spirit to give a right interpretation of the counsels, to regulate their practice and to set up stable forms of living embodying them. (LG 43). In docile response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit the hierarchy accepts rules of religious life which are presented for its approval, improves them, and officially authorizes them (LG 45).

Pastoral Constitution: On The Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*)GS:

Before discussing the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World I wish to quote a description of the secularized world as written by Johanne Metz.

A secularized world is the world that experiences itself in its non-divinity; a world whose frontiers do not shade off into the infinity of God: a world that is not itself directly diaphanous, as it were transparent towards God, that is a world in which God does not "appear"; a world that does not present itself to man as God's majestic and untouchable representative, but as a building-site and laboratory of man and his planning; a world that seems, therefore, to have come down from its high dignity as the creation of God; a world which does not *exist* in pre-established order and from which an "eternal order of things" could be read, but which is coming into being as a result of human action, in the process of directed scientific and technological planning or social and political revolutions.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Johannes Metz. Theology Of The World. p.146.

My christian training and faith taught me that I must save my soul. Salvation has been secured through the work of Jesus, his life - death - resurrection and his way is the way to salvation - we must die with Christ in order to rise with him. All this remains true but the emphasis is shifting away from self and outwards to the world. I must not only save my soul but must help to make it possible for others to save their souls. I am responsible not only for myself - but for the world. The Christian community must bring the "tradition" of hope and love into the world. Belief in the Spirit is fundamental to a sound and basic Christian view of things. The failure to respond to the fact of the Spirit's presence and power has resulted in the impotence of much of conventional Christianity. Pentecostal churches have become strong as they have recovered a sense of the Spirit's power and presence. The Spirit is present every where in the world and because he is in and behind what goes on in the world, nobody need be afraid of new truth wherever it is seen, new discoveries whatever they may be, new ideas however odd they may appear to be. His action is veiled and is not at once recognized and it is the responsibility of the Christian to see and acknowledge his work.

We see in *Gaudium et Spes* the Church's response to this modern world. Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit (GS 3). This involves a search for the will of the Holy Spirit through an intelligent reading of the "signs of the times" and the discerning use of all the resources that nature, science, and technology has to offer.⁵⁹ The human race has passed

⁵⁹

Hans Kung and Jurgen Moltman. eds. Conflicts About the Holy Spirit. Concilium. p.69. (Battista Mondin)

from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one (GS 5). These new conditions have their impact on religion. The Holy Spirit is leading us to a religion of experience rather than formulas. The Church firmly believes that Christ can, through his Spirit, offer man the light and strength to measure up to his supreme dignity. Therefore the Council wishes to speak to all men in order to shed light on the mystery of man and to cooperate in finding the solution to the outstanding problems of our time(GS 10).

The Church -The People of God - believes that it is led by the Lord's Spirit and so seeks to understand the modern world. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit man comes by faith to the contemplation and appreciation of the divine plan (GS 15). The Holy Spirit brings hope to the world - he is the "pledge of our inheritance" renewing the whole man from within, even to the redemption of the body - not only for Christians, but for all men of good will, for the Holy Spirit, in a manner known only to God, offers to every man the possibility of being associated with the paschal mystery (G.S.22).

In recognizing the growing human interdependence we see the Spirit drawing man to recognize his need for unity with others and his responsibility for the general welfare of the entire human family. Therefore there must be made available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to respect, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and to rightful freedom, even in matters religious (GS 26).

Comblin speaks of the work of the Spirit in the world as liberation from alienation. He asks the question "must the struggle for liberation necessarily fall into modernity and

secularism, or can it be the point of departure for a new spiritual journey? The outcome depends on the Holy Spirit and also on us.⁶⁰ In Latin America, he sees the Spirit at work among the people on two levels: among the elite where pastoral openness and a preferential option for the poor represent the most noticeable tendency of religious life, and among the poor where in the base communities a spiritual path is opening up, starting from the religious inheritance of the people and leading to new expressions of it.

There are other cultures and societies in the world where the Spirit is building on the ruins of the old. The Church has always been in and of the world. It must learn to follow the Spirit within the secular world. When models and rules fail, the Spirit takes us back to our origins, to the two models provided in the New Testament: the disciples' following of Jesus and the early communities. The Spirit is present when people courageously intervene in favour of the liberation of the oppressed, when equal treatment is granted to those who are discriminated against, when the marginalized are integrated, when the ignorant are educated, enemies reconciled, and the weak are protected. The Spirit seeks to create community entering into history through men and women who carry the Spirit in themselves.

Love, peace, justice, are all evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world. "Our thoughts go out to all who acknowledge God and who preserve precious religious and human elements in their traditions; it is our hope that frank dialogue will spur us on to receive the impulses of the Spirit with fidelity and act upon them with alacrity"

⁶⁰

Comblin. The Holy Spirit and Liberation. p. 126.

(GS 92). By virtue of her mission to shed on the whole world the radiance of the Gospel message, and to unify under one Spirit all people of whatever nation, race or culture, the Church stands forth as a sign of the brotherhood which allows honest dialogue and gives it vigour. Love under the powerful impulse of the Holy Spirit seeks that unity among peoples that brings peace and justice for the whole human family.

The Catholic Church teaches that through Christ's life, death and resurrection all of humanity has been redeemed. Christ's Spirit, the Paraclete, was sent to the whole world - a continuing presence, working to unite all humanity to God. Christ, who died and was raised for all, can through His Spirit offer to humans the light and strength to measure up to his supreme destiny (GS 10).

Gaudeum et Spes (16) teaches that the divine voice speaks in all consciences - Christians are joined with the rest of humanity in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems that arise in the individual and society. Each individual has in his heart a law written by God always summoning him to love good and avoid evil. Conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbour.

It is through Christ and in Christ that one finds meaning for his own sorrows, tribulations and death. Without the hope of redemption humanity sinks into hopelessness and despair. God has willed that all people should treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood as all are called to the same goal - God Himself (GS 24). All humans are increasingly becoming dependent on one another. This interdependency takes on a universal complexion and involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race. Jesus, after his death, resurrection and the giving of His Spirit founded a new brotherly

community composed of all those who receive Him in faith and love. He commanded his Apostles to speak to all peoples the Gospel's message, that the human race was to be the Family of God (GS32). The basic equality of all must receive increasingly greater recognition (GS29). The human family is gradually recognising that it comprises a single world community. Christ is now at work in the hearts of people through the energy of His Spirit, arousing a desire for the age to come, animating, purifying, strengthening those noble longings by which the human family makes its life more human. The Spirit leads all souls to Christ and through him to God and their eternal end- a kingdom "eternal and universal" a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace. On this earth that Kingdom is already present in mystery (GS 32).

For Pope John XXIII the "signs of the times" that the Church needed to scrutinize and interpret were the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the women's movement for dignity and equality, the workers' movement for justice and participation, and the anti-colonial struggles for self-determination. The new approach to doing theology was to see and understand the world in which we live and then formulate the Christian message in response to the human condition.

Gaudium et Spes is a document that seeks to reconcile the Church to the modern world. It concentrates on the scientific, cultural, and social changes that have taken place. The church sees the world as a world still becoming - changes in human attitudes and structures call accepted values into question and the Church must answer in the light of the Gospel. Science and new technologies create new questions as well as greater inequalities among the peoples of the world. The Council recognized that for the first time in history

all people are convinced that the benefits of culture ought to be and can be extended to everyone - nations try every day to bring about a kind of universal community (GS 9). People everywhere must be freed from poverty and ignorance in order to become aware of their human dignity.

Gaudium et Spes teaches that all of God's creation is good but from the very beginning humanity abused its liberty. Experience tells us that the human being is split - one is called to grandeur and the depths of misery. Swayed by right conscience humans are drawn to good and search for what is right and just.. The Church, however, sees in modern atheism excessive desire for human independence, denying any kind of dependence on God. The remedy for atheism is a clear and mature Church teaching and living the Gospel message. Faith needs to penetrate the believer's entire life leading him towards justice and love especially in regards to the needy.

The Church recognized the growing interdependence of peoples and nations. It condemned all discrimination whether social, or cultural, whether based on sex, race, colour, language, or religion. The Church is bound to no particular form of human culture, nor to any political, economic or social system. By her universal nature the Church is able to foster the unity of humanity recognising human and solidarity rights everywhere.

Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions

(*Nostra Aetate*) NA:

The Council brought into focus the question "Is there salvation outside the Catholic Church?" In answering the question theology identifies three categories in regards to non-Christian world religions; exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. The basic tenet of

exclusivism “that apart from Jesus and his Church there is no salvation” has been repudiated by Vatican II. The theology of inclusiveness became the dominant view and influenced the Council and the resulting documents.

Nostra aetate is an inclusivist document. Christ died for the whole of humanity and divine grace is offered in the religions of the world. In regards to pluralism Vatican II teaches that dialogue with the non-Christian religions recognises that men from various religions ask the universal questions; “What is the meaning of life?, What is good?, What is the final end of humankind?” Various answers in differing cultures have given birth to and later growth of non-Christian religions. The document asserts that the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She proclaims Christ “the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6) and that in Christ people may find the fullness of religious life. In dialogue the Church bears witness to the Christian faith and life while honouring the values of other cultures. It can be argued that inclusiveness sees members of non-Christian religions as implicit or anonymous Christians - invisible members of the Church. A non-inclusive pluralism runs the risk of relativising all religions and abandoning the traditional doctrine of Christ as universal Saviour and unique mediator between God and humans.

Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes Divinitus*) AGD:

In *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, the principle of the real possibility of supernatural salvation even for non-Christians was expressed. Even after sin God never abandons humankind. God has his ways, known to him alone, of saving even non-Christians. “The universal design of God for the salvation of humankind can be accomplished “in the soul

of an individual, with a kind of secrecy”, or “through those multiple endeavours, including religious ones, by which persons search for God, groping for Him that they may by chance find Him (though He is not far from any of us)” (AGD 3). “Doubtless the Holy Spirit was already at work in the world before Christ was glorified” (AGD 4) and “even now the Holy Spirit continues to open the hearts of non-Christians” (AGD 13).

As Christ became a Jew, so the Church must become Chinese, African, Latin American. Evangelization into the Latin Church is not the mission Christ gave. The Western or Latin expression of the Church is only one legitimate and possible expression and not necessarily the most perfect expression. There must be a delatinization, deitalianization and dewesternization in liturgy, theology, discipline, and pastoral practice.

After the Vatican II Council

The Vatican II Council was a time of a renewed awareness of the Spirit and a new awareness of the need for change and creative newness in the life of the church. Vatican II introduced the inclusive nature of the Spirit and some theologians are now asking the hard questions. The inclusive approach to the other faiths as “anonymous Christians” is no longer satisfying. This is hardly an appropriate starting point to begin a dialogue with the other faiths. Christianity can no longer ignore the authenticity of the truths proclaimed in the other religions. Karl Rahner in The Church After the Council listed ecclesiological themes which needed further examination: the salvation of non-Christians, a theology of the missions, the theology of the function of non-Christian religions in collective and individual salvation history. These are but a few of the themes.⁶¹ John Hick and Paul

⁶¹Rahner, Karl. The Church After The Council. p. 91

Knitter, editors of the book The Myth of Christian Uniqueness, provided a forum for theologians to discuss Christianity's relation to the other faiths. The divinity of Christ is not what is at stake in the pluralism debate. The problem is how can we begin to speak of an authentic divine presence beyond Christian revelation? What is the activity of the Holy Spirit in the other religions? The early church fought to affirm a monotheism that rejects a plurality of gods while recognising God as Trinity -Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The early councils of the church elaborated a careful theological language that proclaimed its faith (ortho-doxis) in the plurality of the activity of the Tri-une God in the Church. Can we, today, find a language of plurality of the divine activities beyond the Church?

George Tavad warns against what he calls the dream of a Church of the Spirit. When the faithful are puzzled by circumstances, they are tempted to shift attention from the familiar and distinct focus of faith on the Second Person Incarnate to a less explored and more ambiguous focus on the Third Person.⁶² But when this happens Christians are made to take a new look at what God is doing in history. It is true that for Christians the focus of faith is Jesus the one who reveals the face of God but it is the Spirit who alone searches the deep things of God and reveals God to whom he will. (Mt.11:27; 1Cor.2:10; Jn.14:26; Jn.16:12-13.)

Pope Paul VI, in 1973, drawing attention to the 258 references to the Holy Spirit in the conciliar documents, said that the Christology and especially the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council should be followed by a new cult of the Holy Spirit, as an indispensable complement of the conciliar teaching.

⁶²Tavad, George. The Community of Salvation. p.233.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PLURALISM

Absolute and Relative

According to John Hick absolutism in religion has had harmful effects worldwide. A history-long study of the harmful effects of religious absolutism would draw material from almost every tradition - Christianity and Islam probably providing the greatest number of examples, and Buddhism perhaps the least. Until about the end of the nineteenth century what defined the relationship of Christianity to other forms of religious life was the virtually universal Christian assumption, an implicit dogma with almost credal status, that Christ/the Christian gospel/Christianity is "absolute," "unique," "final," "normative," "ultimate" - decisively superior to all other saviours, gospels, religions. By 1923 Ernst Troeltsch criticized his own earlier position found in his famous book The Absoluteness of Christianity (1901) and opted for a very different view that Christianity is "absolute" for Christians, and the other world faiths are likewise "absolute" for their own adherents.⁶³

The declaration of the Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate* is regarded as "the first truly positive statement" of the Catholic Church about other religions.⁶⁴ However it looks as if, having opened the door slightly, Christians are afraid that the strangers, long

⁶³

John Hick and Paul Knitter. The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. p. 16-17. Hick. *The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity*.

⁶⁴

Ibid. p.70. Karl Rahner, "Basic Theological Interpretations of the Second Vatican Council," in *Concern for the Church*. Quoted by Stanley J, Samartha, *The Cross and the Rainbow*.

kept outside, might indeed turn out to be fellow pilgrims after all.⁶⁵

At the present time theologians interested in the question of the continuing presence of other religions and what this possibly means for Christianity are struggling with the inclusive vs pluralist understanding of non-Christian faiths. “There are catholic scholars who feel that the tensions regarding other religions are rooted within the official magisterium:

The failure adequately to explain what Vatican II means, and to square it either with Scripture or with the strong theological tradition that has seen other religions as idolatrous is serious.⁶⁶

In its address to the other faiths *Nostra Aetate* says that “The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions”(N.A. 2). However, in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), in which the Church was clarifying its beliefs for the benefit of its own members, it was stated that “Whatever goodness or truth is found among them [i.e., among “those who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ” and “those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God”] is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the gospel”(L.G. 16). And finally, In the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church

⁶⁵

John Hick and Paul Knitter. The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. p.70. S.J. Samartha. *The Cross and the Rainbow*.

⁶⁶

Ibid p.71. S.J. Samartha, *The Cross and the Rainbow*. notes. p.84 Paul Knitter remarks that “Christians should seriously consider whether this opening has been toward more abundant life or has now arrived at dead ends.”(Roman Catholic Approaches to Other Religions: Developments and Tensions, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 8, 1984.)

(*Ad Gentes*) it is emphatically stated:

Everyone, therefore, ought to be converted to Christ, who is known through the preaching of the Church, and they ought, by baptism, become incorporated into him and into the Church which is his body. . . . So, although in ways known to himself God can lead those who, through no fault of their own are ignorant of the gospel, to that faith without which it is impossible to please Him (Heb. 11:6), the Church, nevertheless, still has the obligation and also the sacred right to evangelize. And so, today as always, missionary activity retains its full force and necessity (A.G. 7).

This new consensus has marked the Christian mind as having moved away from the old intolerant exclusivism to a benevolent inclusivism. Non-Christians can be saved because, unknown to them, Christ is secretly “in a way united” with them. But the saving truth unknown to them is known to the Church, which is God’s instrument in making redemption known. John Hick tells us that to abandon this claim to an ultimate religious superiority is to pass a critical point and enter into new territory in which the whole terrain of Christian truth is bound to look different. To pass from an inclusive to a pluralistic context Christianity is seen as *one* of the great world faiths, *one* of the streams of religious life through which human beings can be savingly related to that ultimate Reality Christians know as Father.⁶⁷

There has been an explosion of studies in religious pluralism and what it means for Christian theology. The number of Christians who espouse purely negative attitudes to non-Christian religions and to their adherents is fast dwindling. More people are living in societies where religious pluralism is becoming the norm. Globalization has entered almost

67

John Hick and Paul Knitter. The Myth of Christian Uniqueness, p.22. Hick. *The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity*.

every area of human life as lived in the multitude of societies throughout the world. Science, technologies, world trade and world economics, global communications all serve to unite the peoples of the world and bring them into a relationship that is far more visible as a unified diversity. The migrations of peoples from rural to city, from city to city, from country to country and now in an ever increasing rate from continent to continent has contributed to the pluralistic mix in society. We have begun to experience first hand the implications of multi-religious societies where multiple perspectives now offer us conflicting truth claims, all of which are for many viewed as relative in value. "The emerging generation, also known as 'vidiots', in the western world, is giving evidence of being the first generation raised with a pluralistic worldview, tending to be nonjudgemental toward ideological differences in the midst of their own search for relational acceptance."⁶⁸

After 2000 years of preaching the Good News of the Gospel and following the command to baptize all nations, Christianity has failed to bring about a universal faith under one God. Today's Christian may well ask: "Why are so many other religions that claim loyalty and devotion of millions of followers so persistently present providing meaning and direction to the lives of millions of our neighbours? What does it mean theologically - that is, for our understanding of God and God's relationship to the whole created *oikoumene*, of which Christians are not the only citizens? Can it be that plurality belongs to the very structure of reality? Or can it be that it is the will of God that many

⁶⁸

Pittman, Donald. Ministry and Theology in Global Perspective. p.365. Craig Van Gelder, *A Great New Fact of Our Day: America as Mission*

religions should continue in the world?"⁶⁹ Stanley Samartha tells us that it may take a long time for the church to arrive at clear and unambiguous answers to these difficult questions.

Christianity, with its past attitudes (and maybe still present attitudes) of superiority, triumphalism, and the possessor of absolute truth received from God, now faces the complicated task of setting out a theological or philosophical basis for relating the Christian faith to other faiths which overcomes the traditional denigration of other faiths.

God's universal will to save all men, the hidden and creative presence of the Holy Spirit at every time and place forming and fashioning the mystery of Christ in all men and the paternal providence of God towards all men of all times, are central to the theologically baffling and paradoxical mystery of the existence of non-Christian religions.⁷⁰ Those Christians who maintain an inclusive position, a middle ground between absolutism and relativism (pluralism), view the non-Christian faiths as having possibly the experience of the unknown Christ embodied in their religions, and of containing the seeds of Christianity which prepare the adherents to non-Christian faiths for the eventual acceptance of the fullness of the mystery of God in Christ. The cosmic revelation embodied in the religions means to be completed and crowned by the historical, deed/word/revelation, definitely achieved in the Christ event.

Many Christian thinkers hold the view that individual non-Christians in principle

69

Hick, and Knitter. The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. p.72. Stanley J.Samartha, *The Cross and the Rainbow*.

70

Geffré, Glaude. ed. True and False Universality of Christianity. *Concilium*. p. 103. Ignace Puthiadim. *Christian Faith and Life in A World of Religious Pluralism*.

could be saved outside the visible communion of the Church. Christianity is the extraordinary way of salvation and other religions are the ordinary way. Christianity still understands itself as the absolute religion, intended for all humanity. At present, "There is not one orthodox Christian theological position which can defend fully religious pluralism except in terms of freedom of conscience, which conscience unfortunately is in error, or imperfect, or implicitly and anonymously Christian."⁷¹

Unless we can cultivate the courage to take the other as the other, the Scriptures of other religions as they are and not pre-Christian, and the non-Christians as genuine Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, etc. and not as anonymous Christians or imperfect beings non- thematically desiring fulfillment in our religion, we cannot create a theology. Theology springs from life as it is lived and reflected upon. The theologies created by us up until now from our Christian isolation, from purely inner Christian presuppositions have not really touched the facts. Each of the faiths possess absolute centres in their lives and religions. Each believe and proclaim absolute centers - can two or more absolutes exist?⁷²

The history of religions, and the present pluralism of religions as well as the tenacity with which individuals and groups cling to their religions seem to indicate that God wants religious pluralism. The "Unity in Diversity" seems to apply. The agreement at least for the time being to 'agree to disagree' can be and is satisfying for some but it

⁷¹

Geffré. p. 104. True and False Universality of Christianity. Concilium. Ignace. Puthiadim. *Christian Faith and Life in a World of Religious Pluralism*.

⁷²

Ibid. p. 107.

does nothing to futher the absolute truth of humanity's existence and its relationship with God, Yahweh, Allah, the Real, Ultimate Being, and humankind's ultimate destiny.

We have only just begun to accept the oneness of humanity. The human family is one. We have the same basic gene structure, the same basic human mind, but, like the rest of creation, there is great diversity and so the human mind has given different answers to the same questions - Who am I?, Where do I come from?, Where am I going?. What is my purpose? All theologians would have to agree that the various religions have been formed and conditioned by culture, geography, history. I am Christian because I was born into a milieu that was predominately Christian; a family, a community, a society, a nation that functions on basic Christian values. This is true for all the great faiths that were founded, developed, then grew and spread throughout a specific geographically area under specific historical actions and conditions that allowed for this growth. It is also noted that within each of these great faiths there is diversity. Christians are Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, with all its varying denominations, and more recently Pentecostal. Judaism has Orthodox, Reformed, and Hasidic forms of faith and worship. Within Islam there are Sunni and Shiite Muslims. The theistic Hinduism of the Bhagavad Gita, the semi-theistic faith of Mahayana Buddhism and the non-theistic faiths of Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism are divisions within the broad classifications of the faith as practised and believed.

History has acted and is acting upon the faiths of the world. The movement of peoples and the every increasing meeting of cultures has created a new situation with new questions. Hinduism, long thought to be a non missionary faith, is experiencing a growing

missionary spirit.⁷³ Hinduism did not regard as its mission to convert humanity to any one opinion, for what counts is conduct not belief. Having witnessed the devastating social and personal effects of unethical missionary effort over several centuries Hindus repudiate the missionary spirit if by the word missionary we mean those attitudes and strategies of aggressive world proselytism. Hindu missionary activity is characterized by an "eagerness to share our beloved faith with those who wish to know it."⁷⁴

The idea of a conquest driven one-way-only concept of religion is being laid to rest to a large extent in the non-Christian/non-Muslim world.⁷⁵ They are replacing it with views of the Divine which they perceive to be more healing, more focused on the individual's reach for enlightenment, more naturally devotional, richer in technique and less authoritarian. Hindu institutions have answers when people ask about inner light or consciousness. They have methods when people want to calm the mind and "go within". This is the stock-in-trade of any Hindu teacher.⁷⁶

What is at the heart of our baffling but very exciting theological task is to

⁷³

Pittman, D.A., R.L.F.Habito, T.C.Muck. eds. Ministry and Theology in Global Perspective p.273. Swami Palimi, *Mission-Minded Hindus Going Global*.

⁷⁴

Ibid. p.274.

⁷⁵

The Sept. 11 destruction of the World Trade Center in New York and the subsequent war on terrorism with the search for Osama bin Laden its main objective underlines the horror that radical religious fundamentalism can bring to the world. The wars in Bosnia also had religious undertones as well as problems in Ireland and other areas of the world.

⁷⁶

Pittman. p.275. Swami Palimi.

understand God in relation both to a mystery that transcends God and to the nonbeing that seems to contradict God: to understand revelation in relation to other revelations that relativize our revelations: to view christology and gospel in relation to other manifestations of grace: anthropology in relation to *anatta* (no-self). The secret is to hold on with infinite passion to both ends of the dialectic of relativity and absoluteness with inner strength and outer liberating power.⁷⁷

Theories of Religious Pluralism

Pluralism and History:

William Cantwell Smith, a historian of religion, approaches the question of religious pluralism with the conviction that a certain unity of the world religions already exists. All manner of influences, borrowings, and relations have intertwined the various religious communities throughout their existence. For Smith there are two fundamental truths. The first is that there is only one history of religion. Serious historical inquiry reveals that like the religions that are their ostensible subjects these studies are but arbitrary portions of a whole. There is no unity within even one “so called religion”. The only adequate history is one which is global and singular, dealing with the seamless project of human religiousness.⁷⁸ Smith sees the task of pluralistic theology or what he prefers to call “world theology” is to make explicit that the unity of religious systems stems from

⁷⁷

John Hick and Paul Knitter. The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. p. 50. Langdon Gilkey. *Plurality and its Theological Implications*.

⁷⁸

Mark S. Heim. Salvations p. 45-46 Cantwell Smith tells us that he has long aspired to write a history of human faith, century by century as a unitary reality rather than varied systems. (Smith, Towards a World Theology, 1981.)

participation in a single historical continuum.

The second fundamental truth is that the substance of religion does not have to do with ideas or practices but with faith “a universal quality of human life.”⁷⁹ We see doctrines, ethics, and rituals, as the constitutive elements of the religions. On the contrary the study of religions has as its subject a personal quality, a “serenity and courage and loyalty and service; a quiet confidence and joy which enables one to feel at home in the universe and to find meaning in one’s own life, a meaning that is profound and ultimate... stable.”⁸⁰ This quality Smith calls faith. “One’s faith is given by God, one’s beliefs by one’s century.”⁸¹ No individual’s complex of convictions is precisely identical to another’s yet all draw upon elements interwoven in others’ beliefs. Faith is not an idea. It is a mode of knowing which puts us in control with a real aspect of our world. Seen as a unitary reality, religious history is one monumental fact testifying to the reality of transcendence as the true horizon of human life.

For Smith, the comparative study of religion in dealing with its own problems has stumbled upon the only way forward for all human knowing. This is the advance to a state of global self-consciousness where our discourse becomes always “a ‘we all’ talking together about ‘us’”.⁸² In this position we will all know what we are doing in being

⁷⁹

Heim. p.46. quoting Smith Towards a World Theology, 1981.

⁸⁰

Heim. p.46. quoting Smith, Faith and Belief, 1979.

⁸¹

Ibid. p.46. quoting Smith, Belief and History. 1977.

⁸²

Ibid. p.49. quoting Smith, Toward a World Theology. 1981.

religious and and “rationally approve (or at the very least rationally understand)” our various ways of doing it. Supporting this position are two fundamental qualities of humanity, the capacity to understand and also to be understood. It is a vision that dreams of a time when one would not want to believe anything but what is intelligible and acceptable to all others. When we see ourselves as participants in one community, the human, a theology of religions that is Christian or Muslim or other is fundamentally misconceived as it looks out from within one tradition upon others. The point is to always look from the corporate human perspective of “us” upon all the specific faiths, including our own, as a portion of our collective self-knowledge.

Smith rejects the “theology of religions” project as the different faiths have practised it. As a Christian he aspires to “participate Christianly in the total life of mankind” religiously, as already today those of various faiths participate together in a single shared life economically and politically.⁸³ A world theology is not confessional. It is arrived at by addition rather than subtraction. A process of convergence will allow what is distinctively Muslim or Jewish, Christian, Hindu or Buddhist, to be increasingly held in a form which can be understood and accepted by all, and for the same reasons. This is definitely many steps beyond what a “Christian” theology of religious pluralism would look like.

Smith’s proposal is theocentric and not Christocentric. He chides the Church for losing sight of the God beyond Christ and losing touch with a fully trinitarian approach.

⁸³

Heim. Salvations. p.50. Quoting Smith, Towards a World Theology. 1981.

His work revolves around the understanding of faith. He argues against confusing faith with belief but he resists the temptation to define faith. "Faith differs from unfaith in 'seeing that life and the universe do indeed have a point - a cosmic point'."⁸⁴ Faith can never be expressed in words. No two people have the same faith but all faith is of the same kind. The unitary nature of faith and the unitary nature of humanity are two sides of the same coin, both reflected in the existence of a single, seamless human story that is revealed to the serious historian. The unity of humanity is a historical conclusion, and not a religious insight.

Pluralism and Philosophy:

John Hick is perhaps the best-known interpreter of the pluralist position. Over some twenty years of intense work he summarizes the "pluralistic hypothesis" this way:

An infinite Real, in itself beyond the scope of other than purely formal concepts, is differently conceived, experienced and responded to from within the different cultural ways of being human. In each tradition that transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness is taking place by which humans find ultimate fulfillment.⁸⁵

John Hick speaks of the natural condition of human religious life, a time before there was religious revelation. These religions reflected the culture, the geographical space, the material circumstances of the various peoples and the large part the human element played within the history. But sometime around 800 B.C. there began what has been called the golden age of religious creativity. A remarkable series of revelatory

⁸⁴

Heim, Salvations, p. 54. Quoting Smith, Faith and Belief, 1979.

⁸⁵

Heim, p.15. quoting Hick, An Interpretation of Religion, 1989

experiences occurred during the next five hundred or so years in different parts of the world, experiences which religious faith can only attribute to the pressure of the divine Spirit upon the human spirit.⁸⁶

First came the early Jewish prophets, Amos, Hosea and first Isaiah, declaring that they had heard the word of the Lord and demanding a new level of righteousness and justice in Israel. Then in Persia the great prophet Zoraster appeared; China produced Lao-tzu and then Confucious; in India the Upanisheds were written, and Gotama the Buddha lived and the Mahavira, the founder of the Jain religion and, probably about the end of this period the writing of the Bhagavad Gita; and Greece produced Pythagoras and then ending this golden age, Socrates and Plato. Then after a gap of some three hundred years came Jesus of Nazareth and the emergence of Christianity; and after another gap the prophet Mohammed and the rise of Islam.⁸⁷

The question to be considered is were all these historical happenings moments of Divine revelation? Why would we not expect God to make one mighty act of revelation rather than different and presumably partial revelations at different times and places? When we remember the facts of history and geography it is to know and understand that it was impossible for a world wide revelation of God through any human mediation. The technology wasn't there. Communication among the cultures in the ancient worlds was slow and limited. Religion and culture were one and over time each major occasion of

⁸⁶

John Hick. God and the Universe of Faiths. p.135.

⁸⁷

John Hick. p.136. God and the Universe of Faiths.

divine revelation has slowly transformed the primitive and national religions within the sphere of its influence into what we now know as the world faiths. Over time the frontiers of these faiths became more or less fixed with little penetration of one faith into societies molded by another.

This view of history suggests that from the standpoint of religious faith divine self-revelation has been related to different human circumstances. Ethnic, geographical, climatic, economic, sociological, and historical circumstances have produced a differentiation of cultures with each cultural region responding to the divine in its own characteristic form.

What does this mean theologically? What about the conflicting truth claims that are so visible today? Is the divine nature personal or nonpersonal? Does deity become incarnate in the world? Are human beings born again and again on earth? Is the Bible, or the Koran, or the Bhagavad Gita the word of God? If what Christianity says in answer to these questions is true, must not what Hinduism says be to a large extent false? If what Buddhism says is true, must not what Islam says be largely false?⁸⁸

To answer these questions Hick reminds us that in all the main religions the ultimate divine reality is infinite and as such transcends the grasp of the human mind. God is greater than that which can be thought and therefore he cannot be encompassed by human thought. For Christians this would have to mean that Jesus although He is Son of God and He reveals the face of God and He is of the same substance of God, He cannot

⁸⁸

John Hick. p.139. God and the Universe of Faiths.

contain the whole of divinity as the finite cannot contain the infinite. It follows then that the different encounters with the transcendent within the different religious traditions may all be encounters with the one infinite reality, but with partial or overlapping images of God. This would suggest that the religions are not rivals but that they all hold a piece of the truth.

Hick's earliest work in philosophical theology defended the cognitive meaningfulness of religious beliefs on the grounds of eschatological verification. Religious statements are meaningful even if the conditions to decide them do not yet exist. He is committed to confirming the various traditions as religiously valid.

Given the religious ambiguity of the universe, and the constructive element in interpreting its data, Hick concludes that it is rationally appropriate for those who experience their lives in relation to a transcendent to trust that experience and to 'proceed to believe and live on that basis'.⁸⁹

The same course is also true for those whose "faith" is a rejection of all transcendence. Hick thus sharpens the expectation that pluralism must mean contradiction, since the varying forms of religious experience seems to justify contrasting sets of belief.

Each of the faiths offers coherent world-views encompassing verifiable expectations. So, as Hick says, have we not, in showing the fact-asserting character of the plurality of religious options, thereby established their radical religious incompatibility?⁹⁰

Hick's vision of the religious traditions is one in which it is no longer possible to doubt any specific religion per se. The variety of religions used as a perennial reproach to

⁸⁹

S. Mark Heim. Salvations. p.18. Quoting Hick. *An Interpretation of Religion*. 1989.

⁹⁰

Ibid. p.18.

the claims of any one, is now turned into testimony in support of all. The pluralistic hypothesis involves the soteriological criterion as a pragmatic test of religious traditions. The moral development is our guide to gauge whether salvific transformation is taking place within a faith, then a rough and unprejudiced survey would indicate a near parity among the major (and most other) traditions.⁹¹ It is sometimes possible to conclude that that salvific transformation is not taking place in any meaningful way and that it is not a true response to the real. Hick's standard of judgement comes from "self-sacrificing concern for the good of others."⁹²

Hick seems to be asserting that a single salvific process, as measured morally, is advancing at a similar pace in each religion. He does not indicate the norms that decide what is salvific. For Hick the soteriological criterion serves to avoid the completely relativistic conclusion that any religious faiths or practices whatsoever must be affirmed. "To Hick it must be self evident, at least since the axial age, that not all religious persons, practices and beliefs are of equal value."⁹³

The pluralistic hypothesis attempts to hold together two fundamental elements: all major religions are salvifically effective and all have real cognitive content. The key to reconciling the two is to find some shared cognitive content and a way of interpreting the contradictions. The shared formal substance of religion is their affirmation of the

⁹¹

S. Mark Heim. p.19.

⁹²

Heim. p.19. Quoting Hick. *An Interpretation of Religion*

⁹³

Ibid. p.19.

limitlessly better possibility by centering on the Real rather than the self. The contradictions are apparent in that they have to do with mythological truth which contradicts literally but whose actual religious functions evokes the same dispositions in believers or they are true differences but have to do only with historical forms associated with the real.

Heim points out that Hick's thesis rests on two sweeping questionable assumptions: 1) a metaphysical dogma that there can be but one religious object and 2) a soteriological dogma that there can be but one religious end. Hick assumes that one and the same salvation is taking place in each religious tradition and no other is possible. With these assumptions one might question if Hick is a true pluralist or is he perhaps a pluralist who has not completely put aside the inclusive category.

Pluralism and Soteriology:

Paul Knitter in his book The Uniqueness of Jesus puts forth five theses for consideration and discussion in order to consider how Jesus is unique in relation to the Christian dialogue with other religions. The New Testament itself contains a pluralism of christological affirmations. The growing knowledge of antiquity brought forth questions about the formulations of the Hellenized early church, claiming that the ontology later ascribed to Jesus departed significantly from the claims made by Jesus himself and his disciples.

That Christ is in some way unique has been a constant presupposition of the Christian preaching - and one that has never been more of an offense than in this relativistic and pluralistic age. Yet how he is unique has been expressed in remarkably divergent ways, considering the unanimity on the fact and its indispensability. The divergence would suggest a certain fuzziness about the central certainty, which demand to be looked at before it is

merely shouted more loudly to a particularly deaf generation⁹⁴

Knitter's five theses seek to show that while the Christian affirmation of the uniqueness of Christ can and must be reinterpreted (theses 1 and 2), it need not be abandoned (theses 3). indeed, precisely by reinterpreting Jesus' uniqueness, Christians can reaffirm it with greater relevance for our contemporary world (theses 4). In the end, then, such a reinterpretation of how Jesus is unique will flow from and lend greater depth and strength to Christians' devotion to and following of Jesus.⁹⁵

Theses 1: Given the nature and history of Christology, previous understandings of the uniqueness of Jesus *can* be reinterpreted.

Theses 2: Given the ethical imperative of dialogue, previous understandings of the uniqueness of Jesus *must* be reinterpreted.⁹⁶

If the nations and cultures of the world are really going to confront and resolve the crises threatening humanity today the nations and ethnic groups are going to have to cooperate as never before but to make such cooperation possible the religions of the world will have to cooperate as never before. They will have to dialogue. Knitter tells us that Christians today cannot truly and effectively carry out the "*last commission*" of proclaiming the gospel to all nations unless they are truly and effectively carrying out the "*first commission*" of loving their neighbours among those nations. Love calls us to a mutuality of dialogue.

94

Paul Knitter. The Uniqueness of Jesus, introduction p.xv. Paul Mojzes quoting Bishop John A. T. Robinson

95

Paul Knitter. p.4.

96

Ibid. p. 4-5.

If we enter a relationship with the others presupposing that we have the fullness of God's truth and they only partial rays of that truth, we all too easily view them as less able than we to know the truth or to live moral lives or to know God. If Christians think that they are in possession of the "fullness" of revelation and the norm for all truth, then no matter how much they might call for a dialogue among equals they retain the position of advantage. Dialogue must go before proclamation. I see this as definitely affecting the way Christian missionary activity has been traditionally conducted. Mission now becomes a listening to and help for the poor of the world.

Theses 3: The uniqueness of Jesus' salvific role can be reinterpreted in terms of *truly* but not *only*.⁹⁷

Is it necessary to insist that Jesus is the only mediator of God's saving grace in history? Words like full, definitive, unsurpassable. In Jesus we do not possess full revelation, as if he exhausted all the truth that God has to reveal. As stated elsewhere, the finite cannot exhaust the fullness of the infinite. Unsurpassable suggests that God could not reveal more of God's fullness in other ways at other times. Such a notion of unsurpassable would seem to contradict, or rule out the role of the Holy Spirit that Jesus in John's gospel affirmed: "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth" (Jn. 16:12-13). If we believe in the Holy Spirit then we must believe there is always more to come.

God's word in Jesus is experienced to be meaningful not just for Christians but for peoples of all times. If it is true it has to be true for others. If God's word is decisive in

⁹⁷

Paul Knitter. The Uniqueness of Jesus. p.7.

Jesus then it calls one to change one's perspective and conduct. To say Jesus is decisive means that he is normative. Jesus provides Christians with a negative rather than a positive norm. Christians can imagine that God may have more to reveal to mankind that what has been made known in Jesus, but they cannot imagine that such a revelation would contradict the central ingredients they have found in Jesus. Jesus' good news *defines* God but does not *confine* God; it reveals what Christians feel is *essential* to a true knowledge of the Divine, but it does not provide for *all* that makes up such knowledge.⁹⁸

Inherent in the Christian experience of Jesus is the conviction that those who have not known and in some way accepted the message and power of the gospel are missing something in their knowledge and living of truth. In a qualified but still real sense, people of other religious paths are "unfulfilled" without Christ. If we no longer insist that Jesus is God's only saving word, we are open to the *possibility* - our Christian belief in universal revelation would suggest *probability* - that there are other universal, decisive manifestations of divine reality besides Jesus.⁹⁹

Thesis 4: The content of Jesus' uniqueness must be made clear in Christian life and witness. This content, however, will be understood and proclaimed differently in different contexts and periods of history. Today, the uniqueness of Jesus can be found in his insistence that salvation or the Reign of God must be realized in this world through human actions of love and justice.¹⁰⁰

Christians must abandon an understanding of Jesus' uniqueness which excludes or absorbs

98

Paul Knitter. The Uniqueness of Jesus. p. 8-10.

99

Ibid. p.10.

100

Ibid. p.11.

other religions. Pluralists enter the dialogue expecting to find God's truth revealed in other religious traditions. In Christianity the heart of the gospel or core of Christian revelation is a pluriform, adaptive, changing, reality. What makes Christianity unique is paradoxically, ever the same but ever different. Marcus Borg concludes that we do not have a true picture of Jesus and his message unless we hold two elements in unison: Jesus was both a spirit-filled mystic or teacher of wisdom, and at the same time an earth-rooted prophet and leader of a revitalisation movement "whose purpose was the transformation of the Jewish social world."¹⁰¹ The transformation of the world to a higher humanity, to justice and peace, is therefore an essential part of the catholicity, or universality of Christianity. Unless we are realizing salvation or "well being" in and for this world, we are not realizing the salvation announced by Jesus.

The uniqueness of Jesus can be: *exclusive* in that it will challenge any religious belief or practice that does not promote a this-worldly engagement of love and justice; *inclusive* in that it will clarify and fulfill the potential of other religions to promote what Christians call the Reign of God; *pluralistic* in that it will recognise and be itself fulfilled by new insights found in other traditions as to how we can enable humanity and earth to have life and to have it more abundantly.¹⁰²

Thesis 5: The orthodoxy of this pluralistic reinterpretation of the uniqueness of Jesus must be grounded primarily in the ability of such a reinterpretation to nurture a holistic Christian spirituality that is, a devotion to and a following of Jesus. The proposed understanding of

¹⁰¹

Paul Knitter. The Uniqueness of Jesus. p. 12.

¹⁰²

Ibid. p.13.

Jesus as God's truly but not only saving word meets this criterion.¹⁰³

A pluralist Christian will continue to affirm, because they continue to experience, that God has truly spoken a saving word in Jesus. In Jesus one encounters God and one's life is transformed. A pluralist Christian can say that Jesus is truly the Son of God and universal Savior. The real test of fidelity to Jesus is to act as a disciple. Paul Knitter testifies that:

The God whom I know in Jesus and whose Reign I work for is a God of pure, unbounded love, a God who seeks to communicate with all persons and who wills to inspire all men and women to work for a world of love and justice. This is a God who cannot be confined, a God who, in speaking truly in Jesus, reveals that God cannot speak only in Jesus.¹⁰⁴

Knitter moves from a Christocentric to a Theocentric and then to a Regnocratic or Soteriological basis for a theology of religious pluralism. If the religions of the world can recognise poverty and oppression as a common problem, if they can share a common commitment (expressed in different forms) to remove such evils, they will have the basis for reaching across differences in order to hear and understand each other and be transformed in the process.

A theology of religious pluralism grounded in Justice is one that seeks to exorcise the religious sources of human oppression. Tissa Balasuriya, a Sri Lankan theologian, asks "Can the self-understanding of churches that legitimated sexist, racist, classist, and religious oppression be theologically true."¹⁰⁵ The test for true religions is to test all religious convictions and practice by an ethical norm. What yields socially destructive fruit

¹⁰³

Ibid. p. 14.

¹⁰⁴

Paul Knitter. The Uniqueness of Jesus. p.15.

¹⁰⁵

S.Mark Heim. Salvations p.73. Quoting Balasuriya. *A Third World Perspective*.

cannot be held to be true. This in fact reintroduces a distinction between true and false religions. Knitter dialogues with those that share his view of salvation which reintroduces a form of exclusiveness.

John B. Cobb suggests that Hindus and Buddhists have something other than social change in mind when they speak of liberation. Knitter allows that Christians should hear out the case for a "preferential option for personal enlightenment". but he trusts that Buddhist and Hindus recognize that in "the world of today" enlightenment must bring about positive social effects to be a valid religious aim.

Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki explores what is involved with trying to follow the soteriological prescription. She points out the difficulty of making one mode of humanity normative for all. What can follow is exploitation of those outside the norms. She underlines three fundamentals of well-being: The first level is physical well-being; food, water, shelter, work, community. (standards that might be found in an enlightened prison). The second level involves human dignity; self-nameing, and some standing within a human social community. The third level brings the possibility of self-development and self-determination. She admits this three tiered definition is culture bound and would not receive universal assent. Even physical well-being can be constituted differently in different faiths and cultures. To impose one norm on all would be imperialistic.

Suchocki then suggests a return to the doctrinal realm as the basis for pluralistic dialogue. Each religion's highest valuation of what physical existence should be may be discovered, she suggests, not in its culturally contaminated concrete ethics, but precisely

in its projected ideal.¹⁰⁶

Soteriocentrism is convinced that the religions are more alike as social projects than as doctrines. It is not belief or practice that should constitute Christianity but action on behalf of Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God.

In Smith's faith-centered world theology as found in history the religions are not permitted to differ in the nature of their faiths. In the reality-centered pluralistic theology of Hick the religions are not permitted to differ in their actual definitions of reality. In the salvation-centered perspective as described by Knitter religions that might have a different conviction of what it means to be saved are left aside as inauthentic.¹⁰⁷

Most of the approaches to a theology of religious pluralism work towards a common religious goal such as a single common reality or a common nature of faith based on what it means to be human or a common approach to justice all of which theories are culturally Western and religiously Christian.

Arnold Toynbee prophesied that World Government would come about by conquest or by federation. It would prosper only if a world cultural community also came into existence and with it a universal religion adopted world wide.

Salvations

Do religions share a common salvation? Knitter's soteriological pluralism seems to imply that there is comonality but it is described only in terms of liberation in this world

106

Paul Knitter. The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. pp. 149-161. Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki. *In Search of Justice*.

107

S.Mark Heim. Salvations. p.116.

and doesn't address the eschatological fulfillment that the various religions believe. Pluralists should recognise the real plurality of religious ends that characterize the various traditions. Heim criticizes the pluralists for not recognizing the plurality of religious ends and claims that to be true to pluralism the possibility of the providential provision of a diversity of religious ends for human beings must be considered.¹⁰⁸ Heim is confident that his views on the diversity of religious ends "can be interpreted and defended on Christian grounds".¹⁰⁹ Though it is a challenge for Christian thought to come to terms with this possibility, it is an approach with deep grounds in fundamental Christian sources and convictions.¹¹⁰ He admits that "it does not fit easily into traditional Christian theological frameworks", but he remains convinced that the perspective of "orientational pluralism" can be more fully worked out.¹¹¹

The Christian tradition has always held that God wills the salvation of all human beings (1 Tim. 2:4). By salvation is meant sharing in God's life here on earth and union with him in the other life. It did hold, of course, that God's grace is subject to acceptance by each individual and that free acceptance implies the possibility of refusal. Only human beings can be responsible for not being saved. Christian tradition has been impelled to

¹⁰⁸

S. Mark Heim. Salvations. p.160.

¹⁰⁹

Ibid. p.184.

¹¹⁰

Ibid. p.213.

¹¹¹

Ibid. p.228.

devise solutions by which God's will to save could be realized in all situations.¹¹² Jacques Dupuis tells us that because of this even theologians with a traditional bent are asking anew, whether God could "suffer" the eternal damnation of any human being. However possible eternal loss may be, would not hell as the actual fate of some persons seem to contradict God's universal will to save and belie the efficacy of that will. God's ways, however mysterious, cannot contradict his own will.¹¹³ What is at stake is not just the efficacy of God's will to save but more profoundly, the unity of the human race both in its origin from God in creation and its destiny in him through salvation.

In multi religious situations, such as India and Africa the notion of "salvation" and what we are saved from are understood differently. The question is not whether there may be plural ways of salvation but whether in multi religious situations there are plural ways of salvations experienced and articulated in different ways.

It is far easier for Christians to acknowledge the possibility of other paths to salvation in the other faiths especially when salvation is viewed as liberation from poverty, persecution, racism and all the other ills of society but when ultimate destiny is considered within the framework of a unifying pluralism it becomes difficult to cross the Rubicon. One may seek a new interpretation for "in my house there are many mansions".

It would seem to me that we are back at the starting point. If the human family is one, of the same substance, then it is logical to assume that humanity has the same source and the same eschatological destiny. However, Christians have never been able to explain

¹¹²Jacques Dupuis. Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism. p.311.

¹¹³

Jacques Dupuis. Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism. p.312.

to themselves or others the nature of eternal life as this is experienced by finite spirits. Perhaps this is the reason a soteriological pluralism would find favour with Christians as it promotes the most concrete approach. A this world salvation in the form of working for the liberation and the good of humanity can be seen and understood by all. For the Christian this is the greatest command to love God and to love our neighbour. The focus is on the message and not the messenger - to bring about the Reign of God on earth. Feeding, clothing, and sheltering the needy, teaching the ignorant, bringing spiritual drink to the thirsty, comforting the pained; - This is what it means to "love our neighbour as ourself." It is the only true way that we can love God with our whole heart, mind and soul. "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen (1 Jn. 4:20).¹¹⁴

Dialogue

The quest for a Christian theology of religious pluralism is but a stepping stone to the true project. Whatever such a theology may look like and however it would be accepted it is still Christian. The search for non-conflicting truth could only be found in a quest for a World Theology that all humanity could accept. Such a theology would necessarily involve the transformation of Christianity and the other faiths as they are presently viewed in the world.

It is obvious that in order to arrive at the first goal, that of a Christian theology of

114

Leonard Swidler and Paul Mojzes. ed. The Uniqueness of Jesus. p.189.

religious pluralism. dialogue must take place with the other. This process has already begun. The increasingly real living together and contact between people of different faiths has resulted in a new situation in which Christians must reflect upon their own faith and how to relate to other believers. The Enlightenment ideals of tolerance and freedom of religion and the present call upon all cultures to work for the welfare of humanity provide the impetus for inter-religious dialogue. Human beings are becoming aware that they live in a global village and that they are fashioning one common human history.

The Roman Catholic Church has instituted the Secretariat for Non Christians (SNC) and the World Council of Churches has the Sub-Unit for Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies (DFI).¹¹⁵ Robert Sheard in his book Interreligious Dialogue in the Catholic Church Since Vatican II has provided an excellent source of information for the Christian who is just beginning to reflect on the new situation in the world which is placing serious demands on basic Christian ideas.

There is tension in the inter-religious dialogue emanating from both sides of the dialogical conversation. Within Christianity there is the fear that what might occur is the “watering down’ of the uniqueness and transcendence of the Christian message and that dialogue with the other will lead to syncretism. In the Non-Christian faiths there is a suspicion that dialogue is just another tactic for mission and conversion. The impetus for dialogue comes mainly from the Christian faiths. This can be seen as the recognition within the fold of Christianity that the members themselves can no longer understand and accept

115

Robert B. Sheard. pp.2-4. Interreligious Dialogue in the Catholic Church Since Vatican II. An Historical and Theological Study.

in the same way, what has always been believed. There is also the need to come to a new understanding of mission.

There are several dialogues taking place, one within Christianity in the Ecumenical movement as well as the dialogue within the Catholic Church itself. The other is the dialogue with Non-Christians. The dialogue within Christianity is to clarify Christianity's self-understanding and dialogue with the other is to understand Christianity's relationship with the other faiths of the World. This is not new but what is new in dialogue is its purpose. Not to evangelize, not to proclaim, not to convert, not mission. The new dialogue is to listen. All guidelines for dialogue stress that those who enter the process must have firm religious convictions and believe their faith as taught. Dialogue is meant to be understood as "a method and means of mutual knowledge and enrichment". It should "lead to inner purification and conversion" not the conversion of the others to Christianity, but of the conversion toward God of both the partners in dialogue.¹¹⁶ The purpose of dialogue is for both sides to come to a better and clearer understanding of their respective faiths. Dialogue seeks understanding in difference, in a sincere esteem for convictions other than one's own. It leads both partners to question themselves on the implications for their own faith of the personal convictions of the other. The partners in interreligious dialogue maintain their own personal religious convictions - even claims to universality that may be part of their faith. It is in this fidelity to personal, non-negotiable convictions, honestly accepted on both sides, that the interreligious dialogue takes place "between equals" - in

116

Jacques Dupuis. Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism. p. 365. from *Redemptoris Missio* (55, 56).

their differences.¹¹⁷

Aloysius Pieris sees the Christian tradition, on one side, and the Buddhist tradition, on the other as “two religious models which, far from being contradictory, are in fact, incomplete each in itself and, therefore, complementary and mutually corrective.” Our religious encounter with God and human beings would be incomplete without this interaction. Pieris calls these two poles the agapeic (Christianity) and the gnostic (Buddhism).¹¹⁸

John B. Cobb advocates a “mutual transformation”, beyond dialogue. Seeking the common ground is not the purpose of interreligious dialogue. The true purpose must be to seek an understanding of the other and in post dialogue reflection seek a deeper understanding of one’s own faith convictions.

Raimundo Panikkar speaks of going beyond what he calls the problematic of “cross-fertilization” to a further stage in which, transcending the static doctrinal of their respective traditions, the partners of dialogue will be able to contribute mutually to a deeper self-understanding.

Efforts toward a new Christian theology are taking place in India. A process of rejecting exclusive claims and seeking new ways of understanding the relationship of Jesus Christ to God and humanity is taking place. From what may be described as normative exclusivism Christians are moving toward a position of “relational distinctiveness” of

¹¹⁷

Ibid. p.379.

¹¹⁸

Jacques Dupuis. p.381.

Christ, relational because Christ does not remain unrelated to neighbours of other faiths, and distinctive because without recognizing the distinctiveness of the great religious traditions as different responses to the Mystery of God, no material enrichment is possible.

A Christian in interfaith dialogue with the other recognizes that the principal agent of interreligious dialogue is the Holy Spirit of God who animates the partners. The Spirit is at work on both sides. The Christian partners will not only give but will receive as well. In being open to dialogue one is being open to the Spirit who calls all to holiness. To understand others it is necessary in some degree to see the world through their eyes, in the light of their questions as they emerged in their history. The opportunity is open for Christian theology to renew itself through its encounter with the other religions. The Spirit is forever renewing the face of the earth.

CONCLUSION

This study of the Holy Spirit began as a personal quest to understand why I believe what I do believe. I was raised in the Catholic Faith in a small town that was predominately Protestant with all the denominations being represented. I was taught that I was a child of God who loved me and my purpose was to know, love and serve Him in this world so I would be happy with Him in the next. The Catholic Church was the one true Church and it was necessary to be baptized in the Catholic Church in order to be saved. I was also taught the fear of Hell. My unforgiven sins would destine me to hell but the sacrament of penance would assure that I was forgiven and I would gain heaven.

The questions about my faith and particularly questions about what is true came fast and furious when I entered adulthood and engaged in conversations and arguments with my non Catholic friends. Nothing was resolved but I did learn that within Christianity there was a basic adherence to a core of beliefs about God; Incarnation, Redemption, Resurrection and faith in a triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What separated us was the way we practised our religion and our source of authority. The continuing doubts that I had were packed away, as it were, in a trunk. I was a Catholic because that was the way I was raised. My core beliefs remained intact but I continued to question the rules and regulations that seemed at times to me to be actually unchristian and unloving when it came to putting Christian Catholic belief into action. To avoid arguments and gnawing doubts the trunk became hidden away only to be pulled out at a time when I realized I didn't know what I really and truly believed.

When I opened the trunk I found that I had come to believe that the most important

thing to know about Jesus was not that he was Son of God but that he preached a message of love. - love of God and love of neighbour. The Jesus event in history caused a new awareness of the presence of God in the lives of those who followed his teaching. The development of the doctrine of the Trinity was a way of expressing what Christians had come to believe about God. That He was creator, redeemer, and sanctifier. All of these titles reveal a God who is in relation with his creation. Humanity has been created and redeemed, what remains is for humanity to be made holy as individuals and as communities.

God calls all to holiness. There are as many ways of being holy as there are people. The question is not the uniqueness of Jesus but the realization that each individual has a unique relationship with the Divine. The World Faiths have provided a means for individuals to hear the call to holiness and this I believe is the work of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Spirit is to sanctify, to make holy and this work is not exclusive to Christians. To see and acknowledge that the Spirit is active in the other faiths is an inclusive view of the Spirit. For the present a Christian has no other language to explain the paths of holiness found in the other faiths other than it being the work of the Spirit.

“In theological terms, our ecclesiology and missiology have been developed too much within the framework of christology and now have to be re-visioned also within the framework of pneumatology.”¹¹⁹

The economy of Christ is not understandable without the economy of the Spirit. The Spirit fills everything in an economy distinct from the Son. The word and the Spirit are called the

¹¹⁹

Paul Knitter. Jesus and the Other Names. p. 112

“two hands of the Father.” We must affirm their hypostatic independence and visualize in the religions an all-comprehensive phenomenon of grace. Pentecost... is not a continuation of the Incarnation but its consequence... Between these two economies there is reciprocity and mutual service (Khodr 1991, 27).¹²⁰

While the Spirit can never be understood and experienced without reference to the Word, neither can the Spirit, explicitly or implicitly, be reduced to the Word, for this then becomes subordination of the Spirit to the Word. The Spirit, when viewed as originating from the Father and the Son but living out its own identity, then what the Spirit may be doing beyond the church, within other religions, can be different from what the incarnate Word has revealed in the church.¹²¹ The Reign of God beyond the church is therefore independent and not to be submerged or incorporated into the economy of the Word as represented in the Christian churches.

Christianity is not to be understood as the “last and final economy” which seeks to destroy all others. Christians have always seen themselves as carrying the light of the Lord into the world. “The challenge is how to profess faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour of all people of all kinds, while simultaneously following the Pope in recognising the Spirit at work in the world’s religions and cultures.”¹²²

The Spirit has always been present in the world before and after the Christ event,

¹²⁰

Paul Knitter. *Jesus and the Other Names*. p. 113. ` quoting George Kodhr. *An Orthodox Perspective of Inter-Religious Dialogue*.

¹²¹

Ibid. p.113.

¹²²

Jacques Dupuis. from an article in *The Tablet* Sept. 8, 2001. *Out on the Frontier*.

the culminating point in God's one plan of salvation. Jacques Dupuis also asks the question "has the Spirit of God become to such an extent the "Spirit of Christ" as to be able no longer to be present and operative in any other way?"¹²³ In the New Testament, Paul makes no distinction, the Spirit is either "Spirit of God" or "Spirit of Christ" (see page 13 above) but the Spirit is more often called the Spirit of God. To answer his question Dupuis makes reference to the metaphor used by St. Irenaeus of the "two Hands" of God. Isaiah speaks of God as a potter and we are the clay, all of us the work of his hand(Is. 64.8). The two hands of God, the Word and the Spirit, are working together, they are conjoined hands. While being united and inseparable, they are also distinct and complementary.¹²⁴

As Christians we believe that God is one but we also see the distinctive action of the Father and the distinctive action of the Son, can we begin to see the distinctive action of the Spirit, especially as he is operative in the whole of creation? God is still active in our history and when we speak of the two hands of God it is to recognize that hands don't always move in the same direction. The left hand of God may not always work in the same way as the right hand. If God is the potter then he has not finished his work. If we as Christians believe that we have the fullness of faith then we are no longer listening to the voice of the Spirit. We must listen to the other voices if we truly believe that God wills to save all humanity and bring about the Reign of God on earth.

123

Jacques Dupuis. from *The Tablet*. November 3, 2001. *The Work of the Potter*.

124

Ibid.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adler, Mortimer J..

Truth in Religion. The Plurality of Religions and the Unity of Truth. Collier Macmillan, Toronto, Can. 1990.

Athanasius.

The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit. tr., Introduction and Notes C.R.B. Shapland. The Epworth Press. London. 1951.

Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo.

On Christian Teaching/Saint Augustine. tr. intro. and notes, R.P.H.Green. Oxford [Eng]. Oxford University Press, New York. 1997.

The Trinity. tr. Stephen McKenna. Catholic University Press of America, Washington. 1963.

Augustine Confessions. tr. Edward B. Pusey. D.D. Collector's edition, Pocket Books Inc, New York. 1951.

Balasuriya, Tissa, OMI

Mary and Human Liberation. Trinity Press International, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. 1997.

Basil.

St. Basil the Great On The Holy Spirit. tr. David Anderson from the Greek text, Vol.32. Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York. 1980.

Bermejo, Luis M. S.J.

The Spirit Of Life. Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand, Gujarat, India, (Loyola University Press). 1987.

Chadwick, Henry

The Early Church. The Penquin History of the Church. Penquin Books. London. rev. 1993.

Clark, Gillian.

Augustine: The Confessions. Cambridge University Press. 1993.

Cobb, John B. Jr.

Transforming Christianity and the World. A Way beyond Absolutism and Relativism. ed. and intro. Paul F. Knitter. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 1999.

Comblin, José.

The Meaning of Mission. tr. John Daly. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y. 1977.

The Holy Spirit and Liberation. tr. Paul Burns. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y. 1989.

Congar, Yves.

Report From Rome II. tr. Lancelot Sheppard. Geoffrey Chapman, London. 1964.

I Believe in the Holy Spirit. vol 2 vol 3. tr. David Smith. Seabury Press, New York. 1983. New York. 1974.

The Word and the Spirit. tr. David Smith. Geoffrey Chapman, London. 1986.

Daly, Robert J. ed.

Rising from History. U.S. Catholic Theology Looks to the Future. College Theology Society Publication Vol. 30, 1984, University Press, Lanham, MD. 1987.

De La Potterie, Ignace. S.J. and Stanislaus Lyonnet. S. J.

The Christian Lives By the Spirit. Alba House, Staten Island. 1971.

Drewery, Benjamin.

Origen and the Doctrine of Grace. Epworth Press, London.

Dulles, Avery. S.J.

The Resilient Church. Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y. 1977.

The Survival of Dogma. Image Books, Garden City, N.Y. 1973.

Dunn, James D.G.

The Christ and the Spirit Vol 2. Pneumatology. W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1998.

Durken, Daniel, O.S.B. ed.

Sin, Salvation, and the Spirit. Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. 1979.

- Dupuis, Jacques. S.J.
Who Do You Say I Am ?. Orbis Books. Maryknoll. New York. 1994.
Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism. Orbis Books. Maryknoll. 1997.
- Eliade, Mircea and David Tracy. eds. Concilium
What is Religion? An Inquiry For Christian Theology. Seabury Press. New York. 1980.
- Ellis, Earle E.
Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society. W. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids. Mich. 1989.
- Flannery, Austen. O. P. ed.
Vatican II Council The Basic Sixteen Documents. Costello Publishing Co., Northport, New York. 1996.
- Frost, S.E.
Basic Teachings of the Great Philosophers. Doubleday. New York. 1942, 1989.
- Geffré, Claude; Jossua, Jean-Pierre; Lefébure, Marcus. eds.
True and False Universality of Christianity. Concilium. Seabury Press, New York, 1980.
- Gelpi, Donald L.
Experiencing God :A Theology of Human Experience. Paulist Press, New York. 1978.
- Hawley, John C. ed.
Christian Encounters with the Other. New York University Press, Washington Square. 1998.
- Happel, Stephen and Tracy, David.
A Catholic Vision. Fortress Press, Philadelphia. 1984.
- Hick, John
God and the Universe of Faiths. Macmillan, London. 1973.
- Hick, John and Paul Knitter. eds.
The Myth of Christian Uniqueness. Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions.

- Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1994.
- Heim, S. Mark.
Salvations. Truth and Difference in Religion. Orbis Books, New York, 1997.
- Himes, Michael J. and Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M.
Fullness of Faith. The Public Awareness of Theology. Paulist Press, Mahwah, N.Y. 1993.
- Heron, Alasdair I. C.
The Holy Spirit. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1983.
- Holl, Adolf.
The Left Hand of God. A Biography of the Holy Spirit. tr. John Cullen. Doubleday, New York, 1998.
- Hollis, Christopher.
The Achievements of Vatican II. Hawthorn Books, New York, 1967.
- Huizing, Peter. and William Bassett. eds.
Experience of the Spirit. Concilium. Seabury Press, New York, 1974.
- Joachim of Fiore.
Enchiridion super Apocalypsim. ed. and notes Edward Kilian Burger. Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, 1986 (explanatory matter in English- text in Latin) Catholic Encyclopaedia - Apocalypsim.
Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality. pps. 228-229. ed. Gordon S.Wakefield. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1983.
- John Paul II.
Dominum et Vivificantem Lord and Giver of Life. encyclical, Rome, 1986.
- Kasper, Walter.
The God of Jesus Christ. tr. Matthew J.O'Connell. Crossroad, New York, 1984.
- Kloppenburg, Bonaventure. O.F.M.
Ecclesiology of Vatican II. tr. Matthew J.O'Connell. Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1974.

- Knitter, Paul F.
No Other Name. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York. 1985.
Pluralism and Oppression, ed. P. Knitter. Theology in World Perspective. College Theological Society. University Press of America, Maryland. 1991
Jesus and the Other Names. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York. 1996.
- Küng, Hans. and Jurgen Moltman. eds.
Conflicts About the Holy Spirit, Concilium. Seabury Press, New York. 1979.
- Kung, Hans. and David Tracy. eds.
A Paradigm Change in Theology. A Symposium for the Future. Crossroad, New York. 1989.
- Lindars, Barnabas, and Stephen S. Smalley. eds.
Christ and Spirit in the New Testament. Cambridge University Press. 1973.
- Lonergan, Bernard.
The Way to Nicea. Darton, Longman and Todd, London. 1976.
Method in Theology. University of Toronto Press, Toronto. 1971.
- McManners, John. ed.
The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity. Oxford University Press, New York. 1992.
- McGinn, Bernard. and John Meyendorff. eds.
Christian Spirituality Origins to the Twelfth Century. Crossroad, New York. 1992.
- Metz, Johannes B.
Theology of the World. tr. William Glen-Doepel. Seabury Press, New York. 1973.
- Meynell, Hugo A.
Is Christianity True? Catholic University Press of America, Washington. 1994.
- Montague, George T.
The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition. Paulist Press, New York. 1976.
- Neill, Stephen
Christian Faiths and Other Faiths. Oxford University Press, London. 1961

Newman, John Henry.

The Development of Christian Doctrine. Sheed and Ward, New York. 1960.

On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine. ed. by John Coulson. Collins Liturgical Press. London. 1961.

O'Carrol, Michael. C.S.Sp.

Trinitas. A Theological Encyclopaedia of the Holy Trinity. Michael Glazier, Inc. Wilmington, Delaware. 1987.

Veni Creator Spiritus. Michael Glazier Book. Liturgical Press. Collegeville, Minn. 1990.

Origen.

Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol.IV. eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, American reprint of Edinburgh edition. We.B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1956.

Alexandrian Christianity, intro. and notes, John E. Leonard Oulton and Henry Chadwick. S.C.M. Press, London. 1954.

Contra Celsum. tr. intro. and notes, Henry Chadwick. Cambridge [Eng] University Press. 1965.

Spirit and Fire. Selections. ed. Hans Urs von Balthasar. tr. Robert J. Daly. Catholic University Press of America, Washington D.C. 1984.

Origen, Selected Works. tr. and intro. Rowan A. Greer. preface, Hans Urs von Balthasar. Paulist Press, New York. 1979. {Exhortation to Martyrdom; On Prayer; On First Principles; Book IV.}

Ormerod, Neil.

Introducing Contemporary Theologies. E.J. Dwyer, Newton, Australia. 1990.

Pittenger, Norman.

The Holy Spirit. Pilgrim Press Book, Philadelphia. 1974.

Pittman, Donald, A., Ruben L.F. Habito, and Terry C. Muck. eds.

Ministry and Theology in Global Perspective. William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1996.

- Rahner, Karl.
The Church After The Council. trs. D. Heron and R. Albrecht. Palm Publishers,
 Montreal. 1966.
- Reiser, William E. S.J.
What Are They Saying About Dogma? Paulist Press. New York. 1978.
- Rynne, Xavier (Francis X. Murphy, CSSR)
Vatican Council II. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y. 1999.
- Schillebeeckx, Edward, O.P.
Vatican II: The Real Achievement. tr. H.J.J. Vaughn. Sheed and Ward, London.
 1967.
Man as Man & Believer. ed. Concilium Vol 21. Dogma. Paulist Press, New York. 1966.
- Segal, Robert A.
Jung on Mythology. Princeton University Press, New Jersey. 1998.
- Sheard, Robert B.
Interreligious Dialogue in the Catholic Church Since Vatican II. An Historical and
 Theological Study. Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston/Queenston. 1987.
- Shepherd, William H.
The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts. Scholars
 Press, Atlanta, Georgia. 1994.
- Spong, John Shelby,
Why Christianity Must Change or Die. Harper, San Francisco. 1998.
- Stott, John R.W.
Christian Mission in the Modern World. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove,
 Illinois. 1975.
- Suens, Cardinal Léon Joseph
A New Pentecost. 1974 tr. Frances Martin. Seabury Press, New York. 1975.
- Swete, Henry Barclay
The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids,
 Michigan. 1966. (reprint of 1912 edition).

Swidler, Leonard and Paul Mojzes. eds

The Uniqueness of Jesus. A Dialogue with Paul F. Knitter. Orbis Books, Maryknoll. 1997.

Tavard, George H.

The Church Tomorrow. Herder and Herder, New York. 1965.

The Pilgrim Church. Herder and Herder, New York. 1967.

The Church, Community of Salvation. A Michael Glazier Book. Liturgical Press, Minnesota. 1992.

Theobald, Christoph and Dietmar Mieth. eds.

Unanswered Questions. Concillium. Orbis Books, Maryknoll. 1999.

Tillich, Paul.

Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions. Columbia University Press, New York, 1963.

Trigg, Joseph Wilson.

Origen. John Knox Press, Atlanta. 1983.

Vorgrimler, Herbert. ed.

Commentary On the Documents of Vatican II. Vol. I; III; IV. Palm Publishers, Dorval, Montreal. 1967.

Wiles, Maurice and Mark Santer. eds.

Documents in Early Christian Thought. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1975.

Wiltgen, Ralph M. S.V.D.

The Rhine Flows into the Tiber. Augustine Publishing Co., Devon. 1979.