

STILL BURNING

Exploring the Intersection of Pentecostal and Reformed
Understandings of Baptism in the Holy Spirit

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The crest of the University of Stellenbosch, featuring a shield with a blue and white design, topped with a crown and a red banner. The shield is flanked by two red lions holding a shield. The motto 'VERA ROBOR ET CULTUS' is inscribed on a ribbon below the shield.

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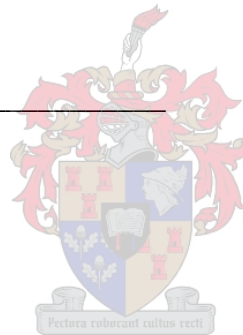
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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any university for a degree.

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ABSTRACT

I argue within the following pages for a synthesis of the contemporary Charismatic and Reformed positions on baptism in the Holy Spirit. I begin by surveying the Pre-Pentecost expectations of the Spirit's outpouring and then unfold both the Charismatic and the Reformed views concerning Spirit baptism. In a final chapter, I propose a combined approach to Spirit baptism – *spectacular everydayness* - that takes seriously the Charismatic emphasis on the Spirit's role of power as well as the centrality of community that forms the backbone of Reformed pneumatology.

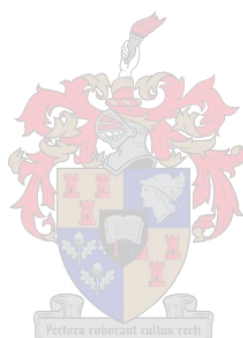
AFRIKAANS ABSTRACT

In die volgende dokument argumenteer ek vir 'n sintese van die kontemporêre Charismatiese en Gereformeerde standpunte oor die doop met die Heilige Gees. Ek begin deur die voor-Pinkster verwagtinge van die uitstorting van die Gees te ondersoek, en daarna fokus ek op sowel die Charismatiese en die Gereformeerde beskouings van doop met die Gees. In 'n finale hoofstuk stel ek 'n gekombineerde benadering tot doop in die Gees voor – *spectacular everydayness* – wat die Charismatiese klem op die Gees se rol van krag, sowel as die sentraliteit van gemeenskap wat die ruggraat van Gereformeerde pneumatologie vorm, ernstig opneem.

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I cannot explain what fuels me on a day to day basis.

I cannot explain the insatiable longing for more life that stirs deep within me.

I cannot explain the feeling inside me that there is so much *more* to my faith.

On October 17th, 2005, I was prayed for to be baptized in the Holy Spirit by three close friends. Almost immediately, incomprehensible words in a language I had never learned or heard started flowing from my mouth; this first utterance was the repetition of what sounded like “shemeh” or “shemah” – one sound, which later unravelled into longer sentences. I cannot explain this either.

The denominational background in which I was educated often undermines or even negates my experience, apposing to it such labels as “emotionalism,”¹ “theological grievance,”² or “unreal.”³ However, in retrospect, I find in the undeniability of my experience something of the mystery of God, and it is this motivation that underlies the following pages – the ongoing pursuit of following in Jesus’ footsteps.

Michael Welker, in his preface to *God the Spirit*, talks of shaping a “realistic theology,” one that makes clear that “God’s reality is much richer than the forms into which we attempt to fit it.”⁴ It is these theological boxes that have for so long limited or intimidated my experience of God and the Spirit.

As the biblical precedent indicates, it is always a powerful, often charismatic experience that eventually leads to theological reflection.⁵ And so it is, several months later, that I seek to put into words my experience of God’s Spirit.

¹ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 28.

² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 783.

³ J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984), 12.

⁴ Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), xi.

⁵ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 15.

A renaissance of the Spirit

The recent surge of interest in pneumatology, the study of the doctrine of the Spirit, can be attributed to many reasons, though two chief motives seem to be of significant importance. First, the inclusion of the Eastern Orthodox churches into the World Council of Churches has made their rich pneumatology and ancient spiritual tradition more readily available and more broadly recognized.⁶ Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, is the rise of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement with its strong focus on an *experience* of the Holy Spirit, representing today a voice that can no longer be dismissed as marginal.

Indeed, from its inception at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has today become the largest single group within Protestantism, and constitutes the second largest group (20%) in the worldwide Christian church behind Roman Catholicism (50%).⁷ As Walter J. Hollenweger writes, “its growth from zero to 400 million in ninety years is unprecedented in the whole of church history.”⁸ The Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition is growing by 19 million a year and 54,000 a day.⁹ Within this vast tradition are included three predominant waves, briefly defined here for further purposes of clarity: Pentecostals, Charismatics and Third-Wavers.

1. Pentecostals

James D. G. Dunn writes, “to be Pentecostal is to identify oneself with the experience that came to Christ’s followers on the Day of Pentecost; that is, to be filled with the Holy Spirit in the same manner as those who were filled with the Holy Spirit on that occasion.”¹⁰ More specifically, the Pentecostal movement finds its roots in the 1906 Azusa Street revival under Holiness preacher W. J.

⁶ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁸ Walter J. Hollenweger, “From Azusa Street to the Toronto Phenomenon: Historical Roots of the Pentecostal Movement,” *Concilium* 3 (1996): 3.

⁹ L. Grant McClung Jr., “Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspectives on a Missiology for the Twenty-First Century,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 16, no. 1 (1994): 11; McClung also states that “a cross section of worldwide Pentecostalism reveals a composite international Pentecostal/Charismatic who is more urban than rural, more female than male, more Third World (66%) than Western world, more impoverished (87%) than affluent, and more family-oriented than individualistic.”

¹⁰ James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in relation to Pentecostalism today* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1970), 38.

Seymour.¹¹ Its primary theological divergence with mainline churches lies in its teaching concerning a post-conversion baptism in the Holy Spirit as initially evidenced by the gift of tongues.¹²

2. *Charismatics/Neo-Pentecostals*

In the 1960's, a second wave of Pentecostal influence began in various parts of the world, first among Anglicans and Episcopalians, then among other denominations, and eventually within the Roman Catholic church in 1967.¹³ “Trans-denominational” and “cross-traditional,”¹⁴ Charismatics embody to varying degrees the Pentecostal emphasis on experiencing the gifts of the Spirit, though often seeing the gift of tongues as optional.¹⁵

3. *Third-Wavers*

Rooted in the 1980's, this movement encompasses believers who have experienced a certain renewal of the Spirit without recognizing it as a distinct experience separate from conversion, though signs and wonders, healings, power encounters, etc. are emphasized. To describe what Pentecostals and Charismatics refer to as “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” Third-Wavers usually make reference to being “filled with the Holy Spirit.”¹⁶

The rapid, global spread of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has brought with it a renewed interest in the Holy Spirit, and a profound thirst for a tangible experience of God's power. In addition, “the rise of the charismatic movement within virtually every mainstream church has ensured that the Holy Spirit figures prominently on the theological agenda. A new experience of the reality and power of the Spirit has had a major impact upon the theological discussion of the person and the work of the Holy Spirit,” writes

¹¹ Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), 48: Though sources of Pentecostalism's twentieth century origins are disputed, it is important to note that the movement finds its influence in much earlier similar movements. However, what is today known as Pentecostalism is considered by many to have spread as it did because of the 1906 revival.

¹² Steven J. Land. “Pentecostal Spirituality: Living in the Spirit,” in *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*, eds. Louis Dupré and Don E Saliers (New York: Crossroads, 1989), 482.

¹³ Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 10: Welker adds that the Charismatic movement *exploded* within the Roman Catholic Church, citing that 150 people attended the 1967 conference of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, while 37,000 people attended the 1974 conference of the same group. As a side note, J. I. Packer mentions that Catholic Charismatics see the Virgin as the “pioneer Charismatic” in her openness and obedience to the Spirit. J. I. Packer, *Keep In Step With The Spirit* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984), 176.

¹⁴ Packer, *Keep In Step*, 175.

¹⁵ Land, “Pentecostal Spirituality,” 483.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Alister McGrath.¹⁷ Clearly, the Spirit who was traditionally described, as did Gregory of Nazianzus,¹⁸ as the *theos agraptos* – the God about whom no one writes, has now become the God about whom *everyone* writes. Indeed, “never before have so many pneumatological studies appeared as during the past two decades or so.”¹⁹

Different voices in pneumatology

This multiplicity of voices forms the underlying framework of this work. Encouraging is the observation that most contemporary scholars seem to be slowly moving away from a divisive apologetic style surrounding pneumatological issues, especially when it comes to topics such as Spirit baptism. Instead, they are opting for more ecumenical and more fully Trinitarian approaches to the Spirit. With regards to Spirit baptism, effectively, the experience of 400 million believers cannot be easily dismissed.

Of these ecumenical voices is Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, who, in *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective*, offers a comprehensive view of biblical and ecclesiastical views, while overviewing historical developments and contemporary voices within the field of pneumatology, letting diverging approaches resonate within the parameters of his work.

In other areas pertaining to the Spirit, James D. G. Dunn’s classic work *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in relation to Pentecostalism today* surveys the significance of John the Baptist and Jesus’ experience at Jordan in relation to the Spirit of God, while exegeting New Testament references to the Spirit.

Similarly, an important, keystone work is Gordon Fee’s *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, which presents in a 967-page volume a thorough treatment of Paul’s view of the Spirit and concludes with a relevant synthesis in response to the main tenets of Pentecostal theology.

Approaching the topic from a different perspective, prominent Roman Catholic theologian Yves Congar unfolds the Apostolic creedal statement “I believe in the Holy Spirit” in a three volume work appropriately titled *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. In volume 1, Congar traces the historical experience of the Spirit from the early church to the after-effects of the Second Vatican Council. In volume 2, Congar treats the role of the Spirit

¹⁷ Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), 240.

¹⁸ Donald J. Gelpi, “The Theological Challenge of Charismatic Spirituality,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 14, no. 2 (1992): 185.

¹⁹ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 20: Refer, for example, to Kärkkäinen’s bibliography, 179-184.

within the Church, within the individual, and within the Charismatic movement. Finally, in volume 3, Congar contrasts the Eastern Church and its contributions to pneumatology with the Western Church's focus on Christology.

Evidently, such a broad range of topics, each with their own intricacies, cannot be fully addressed within the thrust of this paper, but I mention these works here in the capacity that they are shaping the field of pneumatology, illuminating the way forward, and are relevant to the purposes of this paper: synthesizing a way forward between the Pentecostal view and the Reformed view²⁰ on the complex issue of baptism in the Holy Spirit while recognizing the important conversation taking place in other traditions.

Baptism in/of the Holy Spirit: matters of terminology

Before unfolding the framework of this paper, how are we to define the term “baptism in the Holy Spirit”? Outside of Charismatic circles, the terms “baptism *of*” and “baptism *in*” are usually used interchangeably; here, the Pentecostal position clarifies the difference in language. Pentecostals believe that every believer, upon conversion, is baptized *of* or *by* the “Spirit-as-agent” into Christ. However, they also believe that *not* every believer has yet been baptized by Christ-as-agent *in* or *with* the Spirit.²¹ Therefore, to Pentecostals, “baptism *of*” can allude to the conversion of every believer, while “baptism *in*” refers more clearly to a second event that occurs after, or subsequent to, conversion. Because *in* and *of* are generally used interchangeably by people do not consider themselves to be Charismatic, the term “baptism *in* the Holy Spirit” will be used as common ground with those who *do* see a difference in terminology.

Though there are numerous biblical references to *outpourings* of the Spirit, the term “baptism in the Holy Spirit” itself is used six times in the New Testament, four of which are in the different gospel accounts of John the Baptist speaking about Jesus' future role in baptizing people with the Holy Spirit.²² The other two accounts refer directly to

²⁰ Some churches within the Reformed tradition have embraced and incorporated certain elements of Pentecostal theology within their congregations. However, as will be discussed in chapter 3, other churches such as the Christian Reformed Church have denounced such teachings, calling its members to a strengthened commitment to their tradition. It is to the churches that stand in greater contrast with the Pentecostal claims that I refer. For more on a Charismatic Reformed approach, see D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Joy Unspeakable: The Baptism of the Holy Spirit* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1984).

²¹ Bruner, *A Theology of the Spirit*, 60.

²² These four passages are found in Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:9, Luke 3:16, and John 1:33. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 766: Grudem also makes the case for a seventh use of the term in 1 Corinthians 12:13, though Fee proposes an entirely different translation of the same text. For this reason, it is not included with the other six clearer New Testament references.

Pentecost,²³ indicating that this outpouring of the Spirit occurred for the first time on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts.²⁴ In these six instances, it must be noted that the New Testament does not offer any particular definition of the term, nor does it offer significant hints as to its interpretation, other than to mention it *first* occurred at Pentecost as seen in the two references in the book of Acts.

Holding two voices in tension

As will be illustrated in chapter one, this textual silence opens the way for diverging interpretations. It is this ensuing lack of clarity that is at the heart of the argument surrounding Charismatic claims of an experience of the Spirit distinct from conversion, assertions which challenge the traditionally accepted “conversion-initiation” model. Therefore, in order to further the dialogue between often seemingly irreconcilable approaches concerning baptism in the Holy Spirit, I propose to survey within these pages the Pentecostal view as articulated by Craig S. Keener in *3 Crucial Questions about the Holy Spirit*, juxtaposing it to Reformed theologian Michael Welker’s *God the Spirit*. As Gordon Fee mentions, we tend to come to particular topics with our own agendas, instead of letting the issues speak for themselves.²⁵ It is therefore my intention, as I survey two of the many voices in the dialogue that try to explain my experience, to let these voices, as much as possible, speak for themselves.

Evidently, selecting and singling one voice out of a vast tradition as I have done is problematic in that no author single-handedly embodies or captures the entirety of perspectives within his or her movement or denomination. I will therefore complement these voices with other perspectives when necessary. However, I did not choose Keener and Welker for the vast range of their pneumatological views, but rather for the freshness and creativity of their approaches. Many of the scholars I have surveyed tend to formulate their positions *in opposition* to differing views, the underlying insinuation being “I am not what you are.” However, both Keener and Welker ground themselves firmly within their own traditions and offer confident approaches reflective of their own distinct backgrounds, without unnecessarily undermining alternative readings.

Additionally, the difficulty with selecting a Pentecostal theologian is that, because of the Pentecostal emphasis on experience rather than on theology, Pentecostal

²³ Acts 1:5 and Acts 11:16.

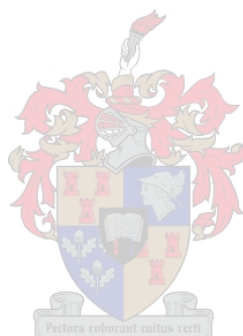
²⁴ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 766.

²⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 193.

theologians do not abound. Keener however, writing as a Charismatic Baptist, echoes the Pentecostal posture in a way that captures its essence while allowing for a few important nuances as will be illustrated later. Throughout his book, Keener calls for a renewed sensitivity to the Spirit's *empowering* presence in our lives; "the early Christians were dependent on God's Spirit from start to finish, and we must too."²⁶

Welker, on the other hand, is a Reformed theologian. Here, the difficulty with selecting a Reformed voice on baptism in the Holy Spirit is that Reformed theologians are usually silent on the matter. When they are not, they tend to argue against theological errors in Pentecostal theology without necessarily defining their own views. Such is not the case with Welker who articulates an understanding of baptism in the Holy Spirit firmly rooted in his Reformed background.

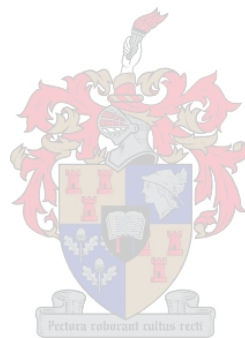
My intent here is not to oppose the Pentecostal view and the Reformed view with one another, but rather to hold both positions in tension with one another; to present both voices in a manner that they can be heard and engaged.



²⁶ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 13.

(chapter one)

pre-pentecost expectations of the spirit



The purpose here of looking at early Judaism's understanding of the Spirit is not to provide an exhaustive historical or exegetical analysis of the Spirit in the Old Testament; many studies already provide such in-depth unfoldings of pneumatological developments.²⁷ Instead, I intend to present a brief sketch of what the Spirit meant to people *prior* to Pentecost as shaped by early Judaism, as a *foundation and background* to inform a better contemporary conception of the Spirit. Briefly looking at the different understandings of the Spirit will help direct the conversation within the next two chapters. Indeed, it is with the experience of those *expecting* the coming of the Messiah and the Spirit as a backdrop that the Charismatic and Reformed voices will be unfolded in the next two chapters.

A theology of the *rûach*

Turning to linguistic matters, the difficulty in defining the term “baptism in the Holy Spirit” can be partly accounted for through the unclear roots of the Hebrew word for ‘Spirit’ – *rûach*. The basic principle underlying *rûach* is that of ‘blowing’ – that air should move.²⁸ However, “part of the problem,” as Max Turner points out, “is that the Hebrew word *rûach* sometimes denotes a storm wind, sometimes ‘breath’, sometimes ‘vitality’ or ‘life’ and so it was not always easy to be sure whether or not a particular instance of *rûach* referred to God’s Spirit.”²⁹ Such ambiguities led to, for example, different Judaic interpretations of the creation account, alternative readings which are today reflected in the varying English translations of Genesis 1:2. Indeed, the New International Version translates the Hebrew text as “the *Spirit* of God was hovering over the waters,” whereas the New Revised Standard Version translates it as “a *wind* from God swept over the face of the waters.” Turner uses this example to illustrate the lack of consensus as to whether the Spirit was involved in creation or not.³⁰

²⁷ Such as Craig S. Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997): 6-27, who traces the two main understandings of the Spirit in both non-Jewish and Jewish literature. See also M. E. Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit* (London: Heythrop College, 1976), who, according to Keener, provides “an excellent survey of the use of *pneuma* in Hellenistic Jewish texts, applying it to the New Testament.”

²⁸ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 25.

²⁹ Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1996): 4. A substantial part of this section is drawn from Turner: 5-20.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

Another major conception of the term *rûach* linked the Spirit to the very *life* of God.³¹ In these regards, the Trinitarian concept of the Spirit as a distinct person equal to the Father and the Son would not have been familiar to most Jewish readers of the Hebrew Bible, who would have instead held a view that the Spirit was “God’s own life and vitality in action”³² – God himself. In other words, referring to God’s Spirit under these terms carried the same connotation as mentioning “the arm of the Lord” as in Isaiah 59:1, or “the hand of the Lord” as in Exodus 9:3. Therefore, when the prophet Isaiah writes, “yet [Israel] rebelled and grieved his *Holy Spirit*,”³³ his words would have been understood by some early Jewish readers as Israel grieving Yahweh himself.³⁴

This ambiguity of the word “Spirit” is important, because it is at the heart of the diverging views concerning baptism in the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the different interpretations of the word, stemming from the unclear nature of the word *rûach*, led to the development of different *theologies* of the Spirit.³⁵ In effect, various groups within Judaism came to emphasize different facets of the Spirit’s work, while downplaying others, which led to two predominant streams of thought.³⁶ First, the more pervasive view, propagated by the Pharisees,³⁷ was to emphasize prophecy, while the alternative view highlighted purification, a path held and propagated particularly by the Essenes.³⁸ The differences between these two emphases, the Spirit of Prophecy and the Spirit of Purification, are significant here inasmuch as they shaped intertestamental Messianic expectations, and in turn, how different traditions interpret the significance of Pentecost.

³¹ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 26.

³² Turner, *The Holy Spirit*, 5: emphasis mine.

³³ Isaiah 63:10 (NIV): emphasis mine.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Evidently, other factors also shaped the diverging formulation of these distinct theologies. I mention here only what pertains to the Spirit.

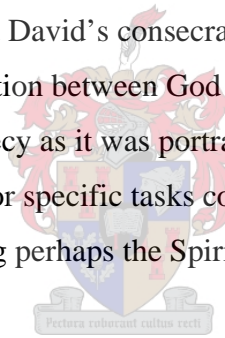
³⁶ By no means do these exhaust the categories of early Christian pneumatologies. Indeed, other scholars read into early Judaism emphases on the Spirit as being the Spirit of New Covenant Life and Sonship, and the Spirit of the Power of Confirmation. Cf. Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel’s Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 38-81.

³⁷ According to *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5. ed. David N. Freedman et al. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 289-303: the Pharisees are a Jewish group that functioned as a “political interest group which had its own goals for society and constantly engaged in political activity to achieve them.”

³⁸ Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels*, 214. Also, according to *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 619-626: the Essenes were a Jewish sect that arose during the mid-2nd century B.C. that, amongst many other beliefs, were “wont to leave everything in the hands of God,” with a strong view on cleanliness and strict admission procedures.

The Spirit of Prophecy in the Old Testament

If it is to be properly grasped, the Spirit of Prophecy should not be understood literally as a spirit of divination or premonition, but rather as the Spirit of empowerment. In the majority of Old Testament texts, the Spirit is illustrated as a channel of communication between God and a specific human person – one individual. Indeed, the Spirit worked primarily within *individuals* leading communities, rather than in a plurality of individuals or entire communities. As J. E. Lesslie Newbigin writes, “in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is spoken of mainly as a power coming upon individuals at particular times and enabling them to perform mighty works, to speak God’s word, to discern His will.”³⁹ The tasks involved were of major significance to Israel and each one therefore required a certain amount of divine empowerment.⁴⁰ Such occurrences in the Old Testament include Bezalel’s anointing with a creative spirit and craftsmanship for the putting together of cultic furniture (Exodus 31:3, cf. Exodus 35:31), Joshua’s appointing through Moses with the spirit of wisdom (Deuteronomy 34:9), Samson’s physical prowess flowing out of a spirit of power (Judges 14:6) and David’s consecration with a similar spirit of power (1 Samuel 16:13). This communication between God and his people through a leading figure best captures the Spirit of Prophecy as it was portrayed in Pharisaic theology.⁴¹ It is also significant that this outpouring for specific tasks could be lost, as is evident in the life of Saul (1 Samuel 16:14), indicating perhaps the Spirit’s work of “lesser power”⁴² that marks the Old Testament.



The Spirit of Purification in the Old Testament

Though less widespread as prophetic pneumatology which emphasized the role of the Spirit in communication through specific individuals, the Essenes’ view primarily attributed to the *rûach* the role of purification, that is, of cleansing and transformation. It suffices to note that this view also had its Old Testament roots in God’s empowering presence, but only inasmuch as it lead to *character transformation* in the life of the one directly affected by the Spirit. That is, the Spirit’s role was not in the calling as much as it was in the ongoing process of sanctification. Kärkkäinen suggests that purification pneumatology is perhaps more significantly rooted in the “image of the eschatological

³⁹ J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (London: SCM Press, 1953), 104.

⁴⁰ Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 145.

⁴¹ Turner, *The Holy Spirit*, 6.

⁴² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 770.

cleansing by God's Spirit portrayed as water."⁴³ For example, in a prophecy to the mountains of Israel, Ezekiel exclaims, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols."⁴⁴ Another instance of the Spirit's role of purification can be found in Psalm 22:14, a prophecy linking the water imagery characteristic of the Essenes' theology of the Spirit to Jewish Messianic expectations.

Messianic expectations in the intertestamental period

By drawing parallels between both dominant pneumatologies and the anticipation of Israel's restoration, it is possible to ascertain certain Messianic expectations that marked the intertestamental period, that is, the period between the prophet Nehemiah and the birth of Christ. These different expectations as to what the Messiah *would accomplish* are important in that they point towards the contemporary conflicting views of what the Messiah *did accomplish*.

Starting with the expectations underlying the Spirit of Prophecy, it is important to remember that this understanding of God's work was the *predominant* one in early Judaism, a work in which the Spirit was seemingly "limited to the leaders whose responsibility it was to bring Yahweh's direction to his people."⁴⁵ Linked to this understanding was the Messianic anticipation of a future in which "all Israel would share in the Spirit of prophecy."⁴⁶ Accordingly, the prophet Joel declared "I will pour out my Spirit *on all people*."⁴⁷ In other words, with the coming of the Messiah, a new age of an empowered Israel would dawn, as well as a new covenant. Whereas the Spirit was until then limited to acting through specific individuals, this new covenant would take account of the whole of God's people. Therefore, in line with the prophetic nature of God's Spirit through which he empowered individuals to carry out his purposes, the Messiah was expected to usher in an age marked by an abundant outpouring of God's power on *all* people. In contrast with the emphasis on purification, the accent here lies on God's power and might, in which all people would partake.

⁴³ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 9.

⁴⁴ Ezekiel 36: 25.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Joel 2:28: emphasis mine. Cf. Numbers 11:29, where Moses exclaims, "I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his on them!" and Jeremiah 31:34 where it is announced that each would know the Lord for him or herself.

Turning now to the view propagated by the Essenes, the understanding of the Spirit as a purifying agent meant that the Messiah would *restore* Israel's fortunes, leading a war against "gentiles and compromising Jews – the sons of darkness,"⁴⁸ as is suggested in Ezekiel's prophecy mentioned earlier (Ezekiel 36:24-29). Texts such as Jeremiah 31:31-40 and Psalm 51:10-14 similarly allude to the purification of Israel. On the Essenes' expectation of a Messiah, Turner writes that, "a king endowed with the Spirit amongst God's people was anticipated as leading to a deep existential renewal of Israel, leading to the recreation of the very heart of humankind in obedience."⁴⁹ From Turner's comments concerning this "deep existential renewal," it can be established that the pneumatology based on the Spirit of Purification assumed a Messiah who would usher in a restoration of Israel - the focus being placed on sanctification rather than on empowerment.

Preliminary conclusions

The argument thus far has been to briefly expound two dominant pneumatologies of early Judaism, stemming in many ways from the ambiguous etymology of the word *rûach*, and to illustrate how such views moulded Messianic expectations: while some expected God to usher in a comprehensive outpouring of the Spirit of Prophecy and power, others anticipated the Messiah to restore and sanctify Israel. Using these two pneumatologies as a backdrop for the following chapters, it is important to note their parallels with the two dominant views today, the Pentecostal view and the Reformed view. Indeed, in the same way that some early Jews *looked forward* to the Spirit's role of power, Pentecostals *look back* at Pentecost and see it fulfilling this awaited promise of power. Similarly, in the same way others emphasized the coming Spirit of Purification, so do Reformers see in Pentecost the fulfilled Messianic promise of sanctification. Evidently, we have in many ways returned today to the intertestamental debate surrounding the meaning of Pentecost.

⁴⁸ Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 125-126.

⁴⁹ Turner, *The Holy Spirit*, 6.

(chapter two)
a charismatic approach to baptism in the holy spirit



The Assemblies of God, currently the largest Pentecostal body,⁵⁰ articulates in articles 7 and 8 of its “Statement of Fundamental Truths” the distinctive doctrines that differentiate the movement from Protestants and Catholics:

7. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church.... This experience is *distinct from and subsequent* to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9)....

8. Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost

The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the *initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues* as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:4-10, 28), but the same in purpose and use.⁵¹

As reflected in these two articles, Pentecostals place emphasis on the subsequence of a second experience of the Holy Spirit, sometimes referred to as a “second blessing.” Until such an experience takes place, believers are thought to be lacking essential tools or resources that God desires to pour out.⁵² In addition to this “second blessing,” Pentecostals stress the evidence of speaking with other tongues as a confirmation of the Spirit’s outpouring in the life of an individual. These two statements aside, the rest of the Pentecostal theological corpus and, more specifically their understanding of the work and person of the Spirit, are not particularly unique when compared to other denominational perspectives.⁵³ However, while also forming the foundational doctrinal background for Charismatics,⁵⁴ it is these two confessions that often encounter the most resistance and are the most schismatic within the larger Christian body.

In surveying Craig S. Keener’s view of baptism in the Holy Spirit as unfolded in *3 Crucial Questions about the Holy Spirit*, it is helpful to begin with his own perception of

⁵⁰ Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), 25.

⁵¹ Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 84: emphasis mine. Also, in *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, Bruner mentions that article 7 is often referred to as “The Promise of the Father,” an echo of Acts 1:4-5.

⁵² J. I. Packer, *Keep In Step With The Spirit* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984), 202.

⁵³ Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 58.

⁵⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 763: Grudem here defines Charismatics as “those who trace their historical origin to the charismatic renewal movement of the 1960s and 1970s,” as influenced by Pentecostalism, noting that they also “seek to practice all the gifts mentioned in the New Testament,” but allow different viewpoints concerning the two articles mentioned above.

the discussion surrounding what 400 million people have experienced. I will then turn to his understanding of the two principle Pentecostal doctrines mentioned above, followed by his interpretation of Pentecost, all of which point towards his distinctive conception of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The discussion surrounding Pentecostal claims

Keener's approach to the split between diverging viewpoints is one of ecumenical sensitivity. He states, "As an exegete, I must try to understand what Scripture calls us to, even if it differs from my own experience. [...] My desire is to learn what Scripture teaches and then to seek to bring my life and the church's life into line with that norm."⁵⁵ While he understands the subjectivity of experience, his primary concern lies in viewing all of life through the lens of Scripture, rather than carefully moulding and bending Scripture to fit his personal experience.

That being said, why does baptism in the Spirit cause so much discord?

Transposing his conceptual approach to Spirit baptism, Keener, along with most other scholars, identifies its controversial nature as being rooted in the Pentecostal claims as seen in articles 7 and 8 above. Writing about the reasons underlying the controversy over the doctrine of subsequence, he explains that, "not everyone agrees that the expression "baptism in the Holy Spirit" applies to such a postconversion experience of God's Spirit. Many believe it applies only to conversion itself."⁵⁶ Accordingly, the usual Pentecostal position teaches that there is a *subsequent* experience of the Spirit, while the typical Reformed position advocates that the Spirit is received in full *at the moment of* conversion.

Alternatively, scholars such as Wayne Grudem who vehemently disagree with baptism in the Holy Spirit would rather refer to it as "a new empowering for ministry" or a "large step in growth."⁵⁷ On this point, Grudem attempts to argue that Pentecostals' so-called "preparation" leading to baptism in the Spirit – here he lists confession of sins, repentance, trust in Christ for forgiveness, full commitment to the Lordship of Christ, and belief that Christ empowers – is a "formula" that *inevitably* leads to significant growth in the Christian life.⁵⁸ The problem with Grudem's argument however, is that interpreting

⁵⁵ Craig S. Keener, *3 Crucial Questions about the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 40.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵⁷ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 779.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

baptism in the Holy Spirit as a “large step in growth” places the primary responsibility on individuals, reflecting a “salvation through works” approach, thereby undermining the sovereignty of God - such is not the usual Pentecostal understanding of faith.

Ultimately, returning to Keener, he argues that the church tends to get sidetracked by discrepancies concerning the *how* and *when* of Spirit baptism, losing sight of why God baptizes believers with the Spirit in the first place.⁵⁹ In the end, chronology is not the point.⁶⁰ What *should be* the point is rather that Jesus said to his disciples, “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for *the gift my Father promised*, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days *you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.*”⁶¹ This verse, regardless of exegetical interpretations, constitutes common ground for all believers by the simple fact that it scripturally attests to the promised outpouring of the Spirit.

A question of semantics

In light of Jesus’ words to his disciples, to Keener, the debate is merely a question of semantics; it is therefore, in his opinion, largely unnecessary and misdirected. Pointing to the commonalities between Charismatics and those who advocate what are seemingly opposing views, he writes, “Most believers who insist that Spirit baptism occurs at conversion do not deny that God may fill believers with his Spirit in other ways after conversion. Conversely, most believers who insist that Spirit baptism generally occurs after conversion nevertheless agree that all believers receive the Spirit in the most important way at conversion.”⁶² Keener further emphasizes this point by highlighting the common agreement that most believers share: that by being born again, all Christians share in the one Spirit, and that everyone should continue to be filled with the same Spirit in daily practice.⁶³ While some might object to this notion of being filled daily by the Spirit on the theological basis that we cannot add to what Christ has done through the resurrection, Keener suspects that most people will admit that, practically speaking, reality confronts each of us with the need to yield more and more of ourselves and our lives to God.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 17.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶¹ Acts 1:4-5: emphasis mine.

⁶² Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 18.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

It is particularly this yielding to God's Spirit that some have labelled "baptism in the Holy Spirit." John the Baptist for example used the term in his prophetic ministry. I noted in the introduction that four of the six occurrences of the term itself appear as John the Baptist calls the Jews to a baptism of repentance. Without dwelling on interpretative matters relating to John the Baptist's role and message,⁶⁵ it suffices to mention that, according to Keener, John the Baptist's assertions about the Spirit assumed the *whole* work of the Spirit: salvation *and* any subsequent empowerments, not one *or* the other;⁶⁶ John the Baptist recognized that these different emphases were all part of the work of the same Spirit.

Here, Keener draws an important parallel between John the Baptist's use of the phrase and the contemporary, semantically-based debate. He suggests that once we similarly allow for the possibility that the same Spirit works in different ways, then the phrase "baptism in the Holy Spirit" could be seen as being used to indicate *one facet* of the Spirit's work.⁶⁷ Yes, he attributes to the Spirit the work of justification which occurs upon conversion, but he also leaves room for the phrase "baptism in the Holy Spirit" as being indicative of a more experiential level where "some people encounter a fuller prophetic empowerment of the Spirit *after* conversion."⁶⁸ In other words, instead of flattening out one definition of the Spirit and focusing solely on one work of the Spirit up against other possibilities, he holds different alternatives in tension with one another.

However, traditionally, such has not been the approach: Charismatics have pointed to certain texts to validate their testimony, while those who refute their claims use other "proof texts" as evidence that there is only one Spirit and one baptism. Both use Scripture and experience (including a lack thereof⁶⁹) to strengthen their own position. The problem with such an approach, according to Keener, is that if the Spirit is to be received upon conversion as the events of Cornelius' household⁷⁰ seem to indicate, then instances where the Spirit is clearly received by believers *after* conversion must be explained as

⁶⁵ For such studies, cf. Turner, *Power from on High*, 170-187; James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 8-22; Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 25-35; Howard M. Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 1-4.

⁶⁶ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 21.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 51: emphasis mine.

⁶⁹ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 55: Though stated rather simplistically here, Deere makes a strong argument that there is one basic reason why people do not believe in the miraculous gifts of the Spirit today: they have not experienced them.

⁷⁰ Acts 10: it must be mentioned that traditional Pentecostal positions interpret this text differently, citing that Cornelius' household were already believers and that on this basis, Acts 10 constitutes grounds for the subsequence of baptism in the Holy Spirit. See James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1970), 79-82.

exceptions. Such *postconversion* fillings of the Spirit are the case, Keener argues, in the account of Pentecost, the experience of the people in Samaria, Saul's conversion, and the disciples' encounter in Ephesus.⁷¹ "When four of our five biblical examples are 'exceptions', however," says Keener, "one is tempted to question the validity of the 'rule'."⁷²

Though allowing for Scriptural divergences to coexist creates dialogical possibilities, this cohesive approach to the biblical text does not shed light on the *significance* of the Spirit's work as experienced by Pentecostals and Charismatics, nor does it offer guidance concerning the two contested pillars of Pentecostal theology: the doctrine of subsequence and the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence. It is therefore with Keener's understanding of the controversy that we turn to his exposition of both doctrines.

The doctrines of subsequence and of the evidence of tongues

Though doctrinal issues such as the subsequence of Spirit baptism and the initial evidence of tongues are, to Keener, side issues reflective of a more important work of the Spirit, I begin with these inasmuch as they represent one of the most significant areas of pneumatological interest and controversy in the church. I suspect Keener would object to such an approach; he himself keeps the issue of tongues almost as a footnote to his chapter on baptism in the Holy Spirit. However, addressing such issues now, I presume, will pave the way for a clearer exposition of the Pentecostal view of baptism in the Spirit.

First, the Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence is firmly rooted in the movement's historical tradition. Keener points here to John Wesley and many of his followers who became convinced that proper exegesis reveals a second work of grace following conversion, a work "in which the Spirit brought a believer to a higher level of inward purity."⁷³ In pursuit of this experience, mid- to late-nineteenth century figures such as Charles Finney, D. L. Moody, R. A. Torrey, and others also viewed Spirit baptism as taking place after conversion, especially to empower believers for service.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Acts 2; Acts 8:12-17; Acts 9; and Acts 19:1-7 respectively. Again, different traditions interpret these texts differently. However, Keener does make a valid point irrespective of interpretational divergences.

⁷² Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 54.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

Tradition aside, the major *biblical* sources of the doctrine of subsequence are found solely in the book of Acts.⁷⁵ Pentecostals and Charismatics alike generally attribute this to the fact that the Old Testament and the four Gospels only relate prophecies of the outpouring of the Spirit, while the Epistles, though *discussing* the Spirit, do not address its baptizing as promised by Christ.⁷⁶ Therefore, the book of Acts is the only canonical source that relates the experiential, historical outworking of the coming of the Spirit as instituted at Pentecost. As per Keener's reading of the book of Acts, there are throughout it instances which show that believers embraced certain aspects of the Spirit *subsequently* to their conversion, but there are also other passages that show the Spirit coming *at* conversion.⁷⁷ Keener explains these seemingly diverging perspectives in the following way: "the whole sphere of the Spirit's work" becomes available *at* conversion, while certain other elements of the Spirit's work might be experienced by believers *after* their conversion.⁷⁸

Turning to the book of Acts, in its introduction, the author, Luke, makes a clear statement – "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"⁷⁹ – a statement which he illustrates through various examples sporadically incorporated into his narrative.⁸⁰ Surveying the book of Acts for such passages is complex; what some hold as evidence for the subsequence of Spirit baptism, others interpret as meaning the opposite. Supplementing Keener's work with other sources, I mention here three texts normally used as the basis for the Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence; one text that is usually successfully challenged by critics of Spirit baptism – Acts 2:1-4; one text loosely used on a linguistic interpretation – Acts 9:1-19; and one clearer text that provides much more solid grounds for the doctrine – Acts 8:12:17.

Acts 2:1-4: Pentecost. As Frederick Dale Bruner mentions, "the principal reference instanced for the subsequent operation of the Spirit is its coming at Pentecost where the one hundred and twenty awaiting Christians "were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues"."⁸¹ The problem with normatizing Pentecost,

⁷⁵ Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 61.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 21, 51.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

⁷⁹ Acts 2:38 (NIV).

⁸⁰ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 51.

⁸¹ Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 63.

however, is that it is unrepeatable.⁸² Pentecost is the fulfilment of a promise and is made possible through the death and resurrection of Christ; these events happened once and for all⁸³ – historically-speaking, Christ is not crucified and raised over and over. Therefore, it necessarily follows that the outpouring of the Spirit in the lives of the one hundred and twenty believers was a subsequent event; it is the very nature of the fulfilled promise at Pentecost. While Acts 2:1-4 does constitute evidence of the *outpouring* of the Spirit, ascribing a pattern of subsequence to it necessitates the reoccurrence of Pentecost itself. It therefore appears as though Acts 2:1-4 does not constitute a solid basis for the doctrine of subsequence, though it does point to the outpouring of the Spirit on all people.⁸⁴

Acts 9:1-19: Paul's experience. Another text used to inform the Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence recounts Paul's earliest Christian experience. As James D. G. Dunn explains, to Pentecostals, this text shows that, "Paul was converted on the road to Damascus and *three days later* he was baptized in the Spirit."⁸⁵ What is important here to Pentecostals is that Paul made a commitment to Jesus *before* he met Ananias, therefore indicating the subsequence of Spirit baptism.⁸⁶ Here, opinions diverge as to what the text indicates. Dunn questions the doctrinal validity of the passage on the premise that the term Paul uses in Acts 9:5 is, to him, better translated as "Sir" rather than as "Lord."⁸⁷ In other words, Dunn argues that when Paul encounters Jesus on the road to Damascus, he exclaimed "Who are you Sir?" rather than "Who are you Lord?" Therefore, to Dunn, the assumption that Paul was converted on the road to Damascus is erroneous. Needless to say, Dunn's case is a hard one to make. He argues instead that Paul's conversion was the *entirety* of the three day period, not an instant event, and that when Ananias greets him as "Brother Saul,"⁸⁸ he is either "simply hailing his fellow Jew with the word of racial kinship," or "simply putting Paul at ease – telling him that his past was not held against him."⁸⁹ In a critique of Dunn's book, Howard M. Ervin argues the opposite - that Paul was indeed baptized in the Spirit at a later time as an empowerment for mission, largely

⁸² John Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Ends of the Earth* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 60.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

⁸⁴ Additionally, D. A. Carson makes the case that, though Scripture says that *all* spoke in tongues, the word "all" is not necessarily exhaustive. He uses this argument against the Pentecostal focus on the necessity of tongues. D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 142.

⁸⁵ Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 73.

⁸⁶ Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation*, 41.

⁸⁷ Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 73.

⁸⁸ Acts 9:17.

⁸⁹ Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 74.

based on his own understanding of Ananias' "Brother Saul" greeting.⁹⁰ In this instance, it appears as though the text *can* point to Spirit baptism, depending on exegetical and linguistic interpretations.

Acts 8:12-17: the converts in Samaria. In this account of the conversion of a group of people in Samaria who later receive the Spirit when Peter and John lay hands on them, Pentecostals find some of their most solid ground on which to base baptism in the Holy Spirit as an experience distinct from and after conversion. From this text, the argument is generally that "to have been baptized merely in water [...] is not yet to have been baptized in the Spirit."⁹¹ However, critics of this explanation attempt to discredit this text by suggesting that perhaps Peter and John, as representatives of the church, needed to officially induct these first Samaritan believers to stop the Samaritan-Jewish schism.⁹² Therefore, they argue, the Spirit's outpouring was postponed till such a moment was possible. Dunn also suggests that verse 14, "Samaria had accepted the word of God," reflects an intellectual acceptance of a statement, and not a life-changing commitment to God. Conversion, therefore, occurred when the apostles lay hands on them.⁹³ As Keener points out however, the problem with such an argument is that it implies, on the basis of the text, that people may receive God's word, may be baptized in the name of Jesus, and yet *still* require that certain apostles lay hands on them in order to complete their conversion.⁹⁴ To Keener then, this text provides much more solid grounds for baptism in the Holy Spirit as an experience that can occur after conversion.⁹⁵

It is important to mention before turning to the doctrine of tongues as evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit that the point is not to *ignore* texts that illustrate diverging positions. The fact that one text such as Acts 2:1-4 can be successfully challenged does not discredit the Charismatic experience altogether, nor does one text which clearly illustrates a subsequent outpouring of the Spirit, Acts 8:12-17 for example, necessarily become normative for the whole of Christian life.

The doctrine of tongues as initial evidence

Turning now to the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence of Spirit baptism, the question that immediately comes to the fore is whether or not tongues-speaking *always*

⁹⁰ Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation*, 49.

⁹¹ Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 65.

⁹² Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 57; Packer, *Keep in Step*, 204.

⁹³ Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 65.

⁹⁴ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 56-57.

⁹⁵ J. I Packer refers to this text as an "abnormality." Packer, *Keep in Step*, 204.

accompanies baptism in the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the question *as it pertains to the topic of Spirit baptism* is not whether tongues exists or not, nor *what* the gift of tongues is, but rather how it is linked to baptism in the Holy Spirit. On this question, most traditional Pentecostals argue that the gift of tongues *always* accompanies baptism in the Spirit. Even Dunn, who strongly disputes the doctrine of subsequence, seems to think that tongues does indeed constitute initial evidence. Linking every instance where believers speak in tongues with the reception of the Spirit, Dunn remarks, “the corollary is then not without force that Luke intended to portray ‘speaking in tongues’ as ‘the initial evidence’ of the outpouring of the Spirit.”⁹⁶ However, he notes that Luke also points to other evidence of the Spirit’s outpouring as well, such as praise, prophecy and boldness. He adds however that if the gift of tongues were really a *necessary* sign, Luke would have mentioned it more explicitly in passages where the gift of tongues is not mentioned such as the conversion of the people in Samaria.⁹⁷

Historically, whereas the doctrine of subsequence was strongly defended by the Pentecostal movement, it was not so with the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence. On this point, Keener lists several figures central to the Pentecostal movement who disputed that tongues *always* accompanied Spirit baptism: Agnes Ozman – one of the first people to speak in tongues in contemporary times, F. F. Bosworth, and William J. Seymour - who I mentioned earlier in the introduction as one of the cornerstone preachers of early Pentecostalism - only to name a few. Seymour went as far as condemning the doctrine as a form of idolatry because it limited God to acting according to certain norms.⁹⁸ However, Keener suggests that because of the prominence accorded to tongues in the Pentecostal movement over the last few decades, most Christians today do not reject tongues as a contemporary gift of the Spirit; therefore, it might not be as important for Pentecostals to defend the doctrine as strongly as they have in the past.⁹⁹ The issue remains however concerning whether or not tongues is always initially a sign of baptism in the Spirit.

Turning to Scripture for clarity, the fact that the book of Acts “at least sometimes, and probably often” draws clear parallels between Spirit baptism and the gift of tongues

⁹⁶ James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1975), 189-191.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 72.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

assumes that the topic cannot be easily dismissed.¹⁰⁰ According to Kärkkäinen's reading of Scripture, "the book of Acts leads one to the conclusion that the reception of the Spirit *often* took place with visible signs (see Acts 4:31; 8:15-19; 10:44-47; 19:6)."¹⁰¹ He then adds that, in the early church, "such signs were so essential that when they were missing, believers doubted the presence of the Spirit, as among the Samaritans (Acts 8:12ff.) and the group of disciples in Ephesus (Acts 19:11ff.)."¹⁰² Therefore, according to Kärkkäinen's view, tongues was an integral part of the Christian life in the New Testament church. Similarly, Keener argues that the book of Acts "shows that tongues *often* accompanies one's first filling with prophetic empowerment."¹⁰³ Keener remarks that the important distinction is that Luke, in Acts, mentions tongues *inasmuch* as it points to the Spirit. *That* is the focus for Luke, not what tongues teaches about people receiving the Spirit.¹⁰⁴

While the book of Acts contains many instances where tongues and Spirit baptism are inextricably linked, most people agree that the emphasis should be placed on *often* rather than on *always*. Still, critics of the doctrine turn to Paul's theology of the Spirit, pointing to his appeal to the church in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 12:30, "do all speak in tongues?", a verse in which it is *assumed* that not every believer in the church spoke in tongues. To this, Pentecostals respond that Paul was referring to the public use of the gift and not to the private use, and counter 1 Corinthians 12:30 with 1 Corinthians 14:5, "I would like everyone of you to speak in tongues," to argue that Paul intended for everyone to seek the gift of tongues.¹⁰⁵

On this point, Keener's words are important: "the controversy surrounding the relation of tongues to baptism in the Spirit, like the controversy over whether that baptism always occurs at conversion or may occur after it, has the potential to distract [people]."¹⁰⁶ Today, tongues is no longer viewed as a mark of salvation, but rather as one of the many gifts symbolic of a Spirit-filled life, alongside other gifts such as faith, wisdom and teaching. Indeed, tongues serves as a gift when it is seen as a useful prayer resource,¹⁰⁷ not when it is seen as a sign of spiritual superiority.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 63.

¹⁰¹ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 31.

¹⁰² Ibid., 31.

¹⁰³ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 73.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 69.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 71.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 62.

¹⁰⁷ See 1 Corinthians 14.

The point in this debate for Keener is not to decide which side is right, but rather to call people to return to what really matters. He mentions that even if every Christian began speaking in tongues, the world would remain mostly unchanged. But if every Christian began taking Jesus seriously, loving God passionately, loving their neighbour as themselves, *then* we would witness more of God's Kingdom here on earth.¹⁰⁹ Evidently, Christ did not pour out his Spirit at Pentecost *so that* his church could speak in tongues. Though I do not intend to unnecessarily belittle doctrine, Keener's comments are profoundly important, and it is with these remarks that I turn to the significance of Pentecost according to Keener.

Pentecost as ushering in the empowering Spirit of Prophecy

Surveying Keener's comprehension of Pentecost is helpful in shedding light on his position on baptism in the Holy Spirit, but I also mention it here in anticipation of the next chapter where Michael Welker draws heavily on Pentecost as a significant springboard to his own perspective on Spirit baptism. Whereas for Welker Pentecost is primarily about community, to Keener it signifies the beginning of prophetic empowerment. To illustrate the coming of the Spirit of Prophecy, Keener uses Luke's sixfold structure in Acts 2 to deconstruct Pentecost, surveying the promise of Pentecost, the proofs of Pentecost, the peoples of Pentecost, the prophecy of Pentecost, Peter's preaching of Pentecost and the power of Pentecost.¹¹⁰

Acts 1:4-8: The promise of Pentecost. Luke begins Acts 2 with the Old Testament promise of the coming age. As seen in chapter 1, Keener argues that the disciples, when hearing about the Spirit, would have assumed that Jesus was going to restore the kingdom to Israel.¹¹¹ They would have seen the arrival of the Messiah, the resurrection, and Jesus' promise of the Spirit as clear signs that the future age had indeed arrived.

Acts 2:1-4: The proofs of Pentecost. Luke then moves from the promise to the proofs that the age of the Spirit had arrived by describing the accompanying signs of Pentecost – wind, fire, and tongues.¹¹² These constitute proofs inasmuch as they fulfil Old

¹⁰⁸ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 62-65.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 36-38. Keener also unfolds in more detail this sixfold structure in: Craig S. Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997): 190-213.

¹¹¹ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 36.

¹¹² Some scholars such as Dunn attribute the dawn of the Spirit's era to a different moment: Jesus' experience in the Jordan where the Spirit descended upon him after his baptism. Therefore, the new age is attested to by Jesus' ministry. Cf. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 23-37. Keener's position seems to

Testament prophecies. Indeed, Ezekiel 37 mentions that the end times would be ushered in by a mighty *wind* sent by God to restore life to Israel. Isaiah 66:15-16 and Zephaniah 1:18 and 3:8 attest to God's Spirit being poured out like *fire*. Similarly, Joel 2:28-29 speaks of the Spirit as leading believers into *prophetic speech* (tongues).¹¹³

Acts 2:5-13: The peoples of Pentecost. Because the future age had come, Luke then mentions who were affected by the fulfilment of the promise. To Keener, the nations listed symbolize the universal, all-encompassing nature of God's plan to redeem the entirety of his creation, breaking beyond the borders of Israel; "multiculturalism is God's idea."¹¹⁴ Additionally, as Keener points out, some scholars suggest that the list of nations given by Luke is meant to associate the end times with a reversal of the curse of Babel,¹¹⁵ a position Welker unfolds more at length.

Acts 2:14-21: The prophecy of Pentecost. While Luke began by showing the signs of the coming of the Spirit, he now makes the Old Testament prophetic parallel clear via Peter's words, who quotes Joel 2:28-29. Peter explains to the awed bystanders that this tongues-speaking was inspired by God in the same way that he inspired the prophets to proclaim his reign.¹¹⁶

Acts 2:22-41: Peter's preaching of Pentecost. By then recounting Peter's sermon, Luke suggests that the significance of the outpouring of the Spirit is that the era of salvation has come upon all people.¹¹⁷ Peter's call for people to repent and to be baptized was a call for radical change in these end times. As Keener says, "he wanted them 'altered' – changed – not just 'altared' (as in modern altar calls)."¹¹⁸

Acts 2:42-47: The power of Pentecost. Finally, Luke depicts the *power* of Pentecost as further proof that the Spirit really was active by showing the fruit of the prophetic empowerment.¹¹⁹ Indeed, the Spirit produced gifts, but more importantly it produced fruit, such as the growth of the church and "a community of believers who cared for one another in sacrificial ways."¹²⁰

imply that the new age of the Spirit necessitates the involvement of the church which was not practically instituted until Pentecost.

¹¹³ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 36-37.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

And so it is that Keener unfolds the events narrated by Luke in Acts 2: Luke first describes the historical events and signs of Pentecost, linking them to Old Testament prophecies in order to demonstrate that the era of salvation was now upon all people, as also evidenced by the lasting fruit of the Spirit's empowerment. The consequences are that, "[early Christians] recognized that those who have the Spirit taste the power of the coming age in advance," and that the Spirit calls us into communion with one another as a witness to what God's world should be like.¹²¹ The signs that accompanied Pentecost and the ensuing empowered communion of believers transferred the *coming hope* illustrated in the Old Testament prophecies into a concrete, palpable *reality*.¹²² Clearly, from Keener's reading of Acts, it is evident that he primarily understands Pentecost as ushering in an age of missional empowerment along the lines of the early Christian notion of the Spirit of Prophecy as unfolded in chapter 1, which has a significant impact on his own perspective of baptism in the Spirit, which I will now conclude with.

Multiple fillings - paving the way to an empowered witness

So far, I have argued that Keener, on the foundation of his reading of Scripture, allows for different chronologies to be held in tension with one another when addressing the timing issue of baptism in the Spirit: all receive the Spirit at conversion, while others sometimes receive an additional empowering for ministry at a later occasion. I have then unfolded his understanding of tongues, which suggests that such a gift represents *possible*, though not *necessary*, evidence for Spirit baptism. On these two doctrines, Keener emphatically argues that they are issues that tend to distract people from what is really at stake. Indeed, the important point to him is not *when* or *how* the Spirit moves, it is rather that the church returns to an expectation of the Spirit's empowerment of believers for mission as ushered in at Pentecost.

Articulating his understanding of the significance of Spirit baptism, Keener writes that people's experience of empowerment was more important than *when* that experience occurred. Building on this, Keener argues that in his narrative, Luke shows the expectation that "the missionary church be a Spirit-empowered church in experience, not just in theory."¹²³ He adds that the book of Acts and Paul's writings alike¹²⁴ are not

¹²¹ Ibid., 30-31.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid, 61.

¹²⁴ Again allowing for diverging views to coexist, Keener argues that Paul is clear in his writings that baptism in the Spirit occurs *at* conversion. The point he makes here is not to flatten out Luke and Paul's

simply summoning people to be baptized in the Spirit or to display some sort of spiritual experience. Instead, the underlying intention is to call people to a Spirit-empowered life in a way that challenges people who are content to pray in tongues while neglecting more fundamental issues such a “love of neighbour,” while *also* challenging people who are comfortable with a “static devotional life devoid of real passion or power.”¹²⁵ Indeed, Gordon Fee writes, “Christian life [has come] to consist of conversion without empowering, baptism without obedience, grace without love. [...] Cheap grace, Bonhoeffer called it.”¹²⁶

Because baptism in the Spirit is about empowerment, Keener holds the view that it is not a once-and-for-all event, but one that is necessary at different times in the journey of a believer. Emphasizing this point, he writes, “what may surprise us [...] is that Spirit-empowerment did not stop with what some call a “second-work of grace,” even among those who had undoubtedly received a full “dose” of the Spirit by that point.”¹²⁷ He refers to Peter and John who were present on the day of Pentecost and were therefore part of the initial group of believers who were filled with the Spirit. However, as Scripture attests, their filling by the Spirit reoccurred on other occasions. Effectively, Acts 4:8 appears to articulate a later, additional filling of the Spirit for a special task. Again, in Acts 4:31, the Spirit descends and “they [including Peter and John] were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” This happened as Peter and John, after their release from jail, prayed with a group of people. Keener therefore argues not for a strictly second-blessing theology, but rather for a second-, third-, or fourth-blessing understanding of baptism in the Holy Spirit.¹²⁸

As a concluding note, Keener warns against the tendency of Pentecostals to focus on the blessings of Pentecost, forgetting the cost of pain and suffering associated with following Christ. Echoing the narrative threads of victorious conflict that he sees in Mark’s Gospel, Keener writes, “a Christian must be ready to display God’s power, but also pay the price of death for doing so.”¹²⁹ Arguing along parallel lines, Stanley M.

views, but rather to point the way forward in the space created by the tension. Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 50.

¹²⁵ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 60.

¹²⁶ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 118.

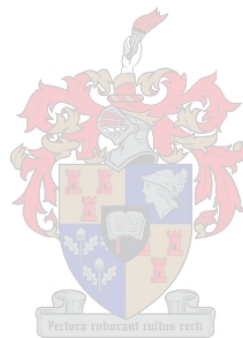
¹²⁷ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 60.

¹²⁸ This approach is also supported by D. A. Carson, who finds no biblical evidence for a second-blessing understanding of baptism in the Spirit, but rather one of multiple fillings. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 160.

¹²⁹ Keener, *3 Crucial Questions*, 29.

Hauerwas adds that being faithful to God’s leading will undoubtedly “challenge the powers of this world.”¹³⁰

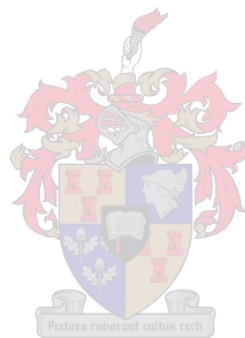
It is on this remark, one that points to the more rational side of discipleship, that I turn now to the Reformed view of baptism in the Spirit which focuses predominantly on these aspects of faith that are often seen as more concrete and rational.



¹³⁰ Stanley M. Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World, and Living in Between* (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1988), 52.

(chapter three)

a reformed approach to baptism in the holy spirit



If we understand the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements as ones that grew out of a certain dissatisfaction with the church – or “flat-tire” versions of Christianity, as J. I. Packer puts it,¹³¹ it is easier to understand the Reformed approach to baptism in the Holy Spirit.¹³² Indeed, because the doctrine of Spirit baptism is one that was formulated by Pentecostals to address the lack of teaching surrounding the Spirit, it is understandable that the Reformed tradition holds no such official doctrinal formulations, and furthermore, that statements that *are* made on the subject are usually reactionary ones which address or counter the challenge posed by Charismatics within their church structures. In a study guide prepared by and for the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in North America titled *Neo-Pentecostalism Hits the Church*,¹³³ Synod states that “The Christian Reformed Church cannot ignore the challenge that has come to her from those who identify themselves with [the Charismatic or neo-Pentecostal] movement.”¹³⁴ On one hand, it is with striking urgency that the CRC calls for introspection and self-examination in light of the “painful lack of religious assurance exhibited by many of her members, the limited display of joy and power in the service of Jesus Christ, and the widespread lack of appreciation for a full-fledged covenantal life in Christ as the Bible speaks of it.”¹³⁵ Nonetheless, Synod takes a strong stand against Pentecostal teachings, declaring that the church must “firmly reject” certain characteristic teachings, listed as follows:

- a. the teaching that baptism with the Holy Spirit is a second blessing distinct from and usually received after conversion;
- b. a yearning for and seeking after the extraordinary, spectacular gifts of the Spirit, *viewing* these as primary evidence of Spirit baptism;
- c. a low regard for the church for not possessing those gifts which the neo-Pentecostals especially treasure;
- d. an atomistic and private way of interpreting Scripture that ignores the literary, historical nature of the Bible as well as its redemption-history focus;
- e. a practical separation of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals from the saving work of Christ in the world;
- f. a reduction of the scope of the Gospel to the salvation and empowerment of the individual, and the neglect of the outward-looking kingdom perspective.¹³⁶

¹³¹ J. I. Packer, *Keep In Step With The Spirit* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984), 193.

¹³² Again, as mentioned in the introduction, there are also Charismatics within the Reformed tradition. I refer here to the Reformed tradition inasmuch as it does not echo Pentecostal strains.

¹³³ In this publication, the term “neo-Pentecostal” is used to define the broader charismatic movement as defined in the introduction.

¹³⁴ David Holwerda, *Neo-Pentecostalism Hits the Church* (U.S.A.: Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church, 1974), 43.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

Such is the usual Reformed approach to the Pentecostal movement. From this, with regards to Spirit baptism, it can be ascertained that the Reformed tradition normally argues that the Spirit is received in full at conversion,¹³⁷ and that, based on Scripture¹³⁸ and Questions 49, 51, 53 and 55 of the Heidelberg Catechism, there is no second experience or blessing distinct from conversion.¹³⁹ As mentioned earlier, the Reformed position on baptism in the Holy Spirit is generally one which is formulated in response to the Pentecostal challenge.

It is in this regard that Michael Welker departs from the broader Reformed tradition in his views of Spirit baptism; instead of opting for a defensive or apologetic stance, he pushes for a more creative perspective, one that opens up new pneumatological possibilities rooted in typical Reformed emphases. Only in his treatment of speaking in tongues does he adopt his counterparts' methodology, a topic which he approaches with much critical suspicion.

Following a structure parallel to the one adopted to unfold the Charismatic understanding of baptism in the Holy Spirit, I will begin with Welker's view on the more controversial issues, namely the gift of tongues. It is important to note that because of Welker's focus on the Spirit, he does not particularly address the issue of subsequence. Upon unfolding Welker's understanding of the gift of tongues, I will attend to his reading of Pentecost inasmuch as it informs his definition of baptism in the Holy Spirit, concluding with a few brief comments on the gifts and fruit of the Spirit.

Welker on the gift of tongues

While Welker, like Keener, addresses the issue of tongues as the last section of his chapter on the outpouring of the Spirit, he nonetheless acknowledges that the Pentecostal claim of the initial evidence of tongues as indicative of Spirit baptism constitutes one of the most "controversial pneumatological themes of the last two decades," one which divides members of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches on the one hand, from Christians who belong to other churches which do not reflect a similar expression of the

¹³⁷ Craig S. Keener, *3 Crucial Questions about the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 46.

¹³⁸ Verses used to shape the Reformed position include 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 2:18, 22; etc.: Holwerda, *Neo-Pentecostalism*, 44.

¹³⁹ Holwerda, *Neo-Pentecostalism*, 44.

Spirit on the other.¹⁴⁰ To Welker, the debate is one that is offensive to people who are not believers inasmuch as it illustrates that the Christian faith is “outdated” and that it “lives in superstitious, authoritarian postures that are hostile to rationality.”¹⁴¹ His position is supported by his interpretation of Paul’s words to the church in Corinth, whereby he says that tongues is a sign “for unbelievers.”¹⁴² To Welker, Paul is implying that speaking in tongues gives people who do not believe reason to “persist in their unbelief.”¹⁴³

If such a gift is so detrimental to people outside the Body of Christ as Welker seems to suggest, why do Pentecostals hold the doctrine of evidence in such high esteem? According to Welker, the reason for the importance of tongues to the Pentecostal experience is multifaceted. First, he argues that the gift of tongues to Pentecostals signifies the concretization of faith in a protest against secular culture and against “liturgical ossification and theological abstraction.”¹⁴⁴ In other words, the gift of tongues makes real a faith that is otherwise abstract. Secondly, the gift of tongues finds its importance taking a stand against the individualism propagated by modernity by unifying the speaker and the interpreter.¹⁴⁵ Though Welker’s first two arguments seem to give weight to the Pentecostal practice of employing the gift of tongues, he does not remain so positive. Indeed, he also highlights that the Pentecostal emphasis on tongues comes from a mistaken understanding of God’s Spirit as something mystical or magical, an improper exegesis of Pentecost events, unclear notions of what the Spirit “wills to accomplish,” a false understanding of the Spirit’s action, and a mistaken evaluation of the gifts of the Spirit.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 264: He lists a second controversial topic, namely the inspiration of Scripture, an argument which will not be addressed within the framework of this paper. For more, see Welker, *God the Spirit*, 272-278.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*: While Welker condemns traditions that are “hostile to rationality,” underlying his own argument it seems is the Enlightenment-driven suspicion of anything that does not fit within an explainable scientific grid. For more on the interplay between Western culture and the Gospel, see J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (London: SPCK, 1986).

¹⁴² 1 Corinthians 14:22 (NIV).

¹⁴³ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 267: He bases his argument on Isaiah 28:11. The problem with such an argument is that it wrongly focuses on one part of the verse, ignoring what is really being said. Indeed, Isaiah 28:11 says, “Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to his people.” Here, Welker seems to place emphasis on the foreignness of the language, omitting the fact that it is *through* this foreignness that “God will speak to his people.”

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 268-269.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 269.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 268: Here, Welker’s argument is heavily biased. Arguing against the Pentecostal emphasis on tongues based on the premise that they do not know what the Spirit “wills to bring into effect” is not only highly ostentatious, but also implies that it is possible to come to a fixed understanding of God’s Spirit.

In light of this perceived misdirection of Pentecostal theology, Welker offers a rectified unfolding of the gift in light of his reading of Scripture. On the basis of 1 Corinthians 14, Welker defines the practical side of the gift of tongues as being a prayer directed to God that builds up those make use of the gift; such was Keener's description. However, unlike Keener, Welker adds that tongues remains nonetheless an irrational form of speech in need of interpretation which takes place in a "state of rapture."¹⁴⁷ He continues his argument by tracing Paul's exposition of the gifts of the Spirit as per 1 Corinthians 14, arguing that, though Paul describes all gifts as equal, tongues should be in fact subordinate to other gifts. He supports his argument by saying that, "Paul repeatedly emphasizes that prophetic speech and the person who speaks prophetically are more important and stand higher than speaking in tongues."¹⁴⁸

Despite his negative view of the gift, Welker does not deny its existence, nor does he deny its roots in baptism in the Spirit. In effect, he highlights several Scriptural precedents where the gift is described as a consequence of the pouring out of the Spirit. Such instances listed by Welker include Mark 16:17, Acts 10:46 and 19:6, as well as 1 Corinthians 12:10, 12:28, 12:30, and 13:8. He also mentions 1 Corinthians 14 as being a "detailed and graphic depiction" of the gift, alongside the Pentecost account.¹⁴⁹

However, the problem he identifies with the *contemporary* use of the gift of tongues within Charismatic churches is that it differs from the outburst of speech described at Pentecost. Whereas the gift that Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 14 is in need of interpretation, Welker argues that such was not the case with the form of speech exhibited during the events of Pentecost.¹⁵⁰ Because of the dissimilarities between Pentecost and the gift of tongues described by Paul, Welker sees as problematic the Pentecostal tendency to link speaking in tongues with the outpouring of the Spirit upon people at Pentecost.

Nonetheless, he concedes that tongues *is* beneficial inasmuch as it shatters individuality through the speaker-interpreter combination.¹⁵¹ That is, because of the need for tongues to be interpreted, the individual can no longer rely solely on him or herself,

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 265.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 267.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 265: It must be mentioned that Welker's language is slightly misleading; the stylistic structure of his argument is such that it insinuates that only the 1 Corinthians 14 account is relevant and authoritative.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 265.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 270: I mention here as "speaker-interpreter" what the Reformed position traditionally emphasizes concerning the orderly use of tongues: that the gift of tongues should be interpreted as per 1 Corinthians 14:27-28.

and is therefore more dependent on community. Furthermore, inasmuch as it is “uncontrollable,” “incomprehensible,” “unforeseeable,” and “unpredictable,” speaking in tongues also shatters tendencies to place one individual at the centre of the congregation and communal worship.¹⁵² However, Welker concludes that such a gift stands in opposition to the world depicted in Joel’s prophecy, the Pentecost event, and Jesus’ healing ministry, because it displaces people using the gift out of a familiar context and experience, thereby eliminating cultural and linguistic nuances which he argues are an essential part of the Christian life.¹⁵³ Therefore, he concludes, “speaking in tongues is an expressive religious form that in itself is empty, indeterminate, and in need of interpretation.”¹⁵⁴

Pentecost: the reversal of the curse of Babel

As Welker alludes to in his exposition of the gift of tongues, a proper understanding of the significance of Pentecost is an essential foundation to an informed discussion on baptism in the Holy Spirit. While Keener emphasizes, as illustrated in the previous chapter, the outpouring of the Spirit as an act of empowerment, to Welker, Pentecost represents the beginning of a broken world being mended back together. As mentioned earlier, it is on this point that Welker departs from the Reformed tendency to articulate a position on Spirit baptism *in contrast with* the Pentecostal view. Instead, he creatively engages the events of Pentecost in order to suggest an alternative reading. In a perspective that echoes the one held by the Essenes, Welker focuses predominantly on what could be seen as the Spirit of Purification, inasmuch as the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost represents a restitution of the communal character of God’s people.¹⁵⁵ He also argues that the Pentecost event encompasses previous ways of experiencing the Spirit, while activating the promises of the outpouring of the Spirit described by the prophets - especially Joel - and Jesus’ ministry.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, Welker argues that Pentecost

¹⁵² Welker, *God the Spirit*, 270.

¹⁵³ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 271.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: In his conclusions, Welker seems to forget that the gift of tongues does not find its precedent in the Pentecostal tradition but rather in the biblical text. Indeed, he briefly skims over Paul’s words, “do not forbid speaking in tongues” (1 Corinthians 14:39).

¹⁵⁵ Though in my reading of Welker I ascribe to his view the term “Spirit of Purification” in order to draw parallels with the Essenes within the pre-Pentecost debate surrounding the outpouring of the Spirit, Welker himself uses the term “Spirit of Justice and Peace.” The important commonality between these two variations is that in both the Purification view and the Justice and Peace view, the underlying role ascribed to the Spirit is one of restitution.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 234.

represents, essentially, an “unforeseeable universal understanding” and a new experience of pluralistic commonality.

Turning first to this universal understanding ushered in by Pentecost, Welker describes the outpouring of the Spirit described in Acts 2 as a being primarily a “miracle of languages and of hearing.”¹⁵⁷ In other words, Pentecost created the momentum for a universal *proclamation* of the wonders of God, which only became possible through a new common *understanding*. Indeed, linguistic and ethnic groups that previously did not understand each other suddenly experienced a common understanding of God’s glory; they all understood what was spoken and attested.¹⁵⁸

Linguistically speaking, Welker argues that Pentecost is a case of xenolalia, speaking in foreign languages,¹⁵⁹ and not glossolalia, “uttering sounds unintelligible to oneself.”¹⁶⁰ He stresses that, in these regards, Acts 2:1-16 cannot be interpreted as a spectacular, supernatural event which causes believers to speak in tongues in a manner that is confounding to those listening, as is often the case with the use of the gift in Charismatic circles.¹⁶¹ Instead, those on whom the Spirit of God was poured out experienced not a sense of incomprehensibility, but rather what Welker calls “*overcomprehensibility*.”¹⁶² In other words, those who were baptized in the Spirit at Pentecost spoke of God’s wonders in a way that was understandable to outsiders, thereby testifying to God’s glory.

It is important to note that it is not to the accompanying wind or fire that Welker ascribes the onlookers’ dismay and fright, but to this new, unprecedented and profound experience of a common understanding. Indeed, as Luke writes in Acts 2:6, “a crowd

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 230: However, D. A. Carson contests this notion of miraculous hearing, arguing that Luke’s intention is to relate the Spirit’s descent and activity among *believers*, not unbelievers. D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 138.

¹⁵⁸ Luke lists the different linguistic and ethnic groups that witnessed the events of Pentecost: “Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs” (Acts 2:9-11). Welker, *God the Spirit*, 232.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.: Carson similarly uses the term “xenoglossia,” defined as “real, human languages never learned by the speakers.” Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 138.

¹⁶⁰ Packer, *Keep in Step*, 177.

¹⁶¹ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 231-232: Welker later adds that nowhere in Acts is there sufficient data to assume that the gift of tongues described in the different manifest outpourings of the Spirit was in need of interpretation. This creates the possibility that the instances where tongues was linked with baptism in the Holy Spirit as in Acts is a *different* form of the gift than the one found in charismatic circles because it is in need of interpretation. Through this argument, Welker poses a considerable challenge to the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence. It must be noted however that both views rely heavily on Scriptural silence as an open door for their experience or views.

¹⁶² Welker, *God the Spirit*, 232.

came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.” To Welker, it is the hearing that startles. Luke later adds that each one present understood what was being proclaimed in their native language, which, as mentioned earlier, Welker reads as a reversal of the curse of Babel portrayed in Genesis 11; as Stanley M. Hauerwas writes, “at Pentecost God has undone what was done at Babel.”¹⁶³ Indeed, if Babel is understood as the confusion of languages and communication, then a *reversal* of Babel implies the *rectification* of communication between various linguistic groups. On this reversal of the curse of Babel, Augustine writes, “through proud men the languages were divided; through the humble apostles, they were reunified.”¹⁶⁴ Effectively, the “disintegration” and “dispersion” of people are removed.¹⁶⁵

What is important to retain from Welker’s understanding of Pentecost as a reversal of the curse of Babel is that this new linguistic experience does not dissolve the multiplicity of experiences and the complexity of different backgrounds. Instead, it creates a new, universal experience of community that makes use of distinctiveness and individual particularities. Welker speaks here of a “polyindividuality,” perhaps better understood as “individual-in-community.”¹⁶⁶ Indeed, he writes, “one’s particularity is experienced in the midst of a consciously perceived polyindividuality.”¹⁶⁷ In other words, Pentecost creates a shared experience which retains uniqueness and individual experiences. Welker further points out that Joel’s prophecy similarly illustrates this theme of “communal individualities;” God’s Spirit will work through individuals, all of which, when brought together, will testify to the wonders of God. Sons, daughters, old and young, servants both male and female - all will receive the promised Spirit as a witness of God’s faithfulness.

The significance of Pentecost: murmurs of a new community

In light of this reversal of Babel and new sense of “individual-in-community,” Pentecost becomes not primarily about an empowering outpouring of the Spirit, but rather about the restoration of the communal character of God’s people in the creation of a new

¹⁶³ Stanley M. Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World, and Living in Between* (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1988), 48.

¹⁶⁴ Augustine quoted in: Raniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M.Cap, *The Mystery of Pentecost*, trans. Glen S. Davis (Mumbai, India: St. Paul’s, 2003), 17.

¹⁶⁵ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 230.

¹⁶⁶ C. Norman Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit: How the Church is in the World* (Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1993), 128.

¹⁶⁷ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 233.

community - a community of the Spirit. C. Norman Kraus' understanding of Pentecost is helpful here. He remarks that in the days between Christ's resurrection and Pentecost, "[early Christians] were not to begin their mission until the Father had completed formation of *the new body through which the Christ would expand his presence and ministry.*"¹⁶⁸ He attests here to the outpouring of the Spirit as the formation of a new body through which Christ continues his work. Indeed, he writes, "Christ is not dead or absent in some far-off spiritual realm. His ministry is not concluded, but universalized through his new body."¹⁶⁹ Effectively, for Welker and Kraus, what happened at Pentecost expresses itself primarily in terms of the formation of a community under a new covenant.

This community is one that cannot be intentionally created by relying on the work of one particular individual or on a joint effort amongst a few gifted individuals. Seemingly reacting to Pentecostal emphases,¹⁷⁰ Welker writes, "the concrete course of the event reported in Acts 2 cannot be repeated and directly adopted as one's own."¹⁷¹ Instead, he argues, it is the Spirit that draws people into this new community, irrespective of their accomplishments or understanding of the Spirit.¹⁷² In the same way that Jesus' healings and exorcisms pulled those impacted out of experiences of isolation and separation back into a larger community, so did Pentecost strip away isolating boundaries between individuals. In the process, as portrayed in the events of Pentecost, the Spirit created what Welker calls "a powerful public," a communality that holds in tension both the removal of individual isolation into a communal body, and various forms of social and historical diversity.¹⁷³

The fruit of Pentecost therefore is not as much the powerful proclamation of God's wonders through various works or deeds of power, but rather the authentic proclamation of God's glory in and through a community gathered by the Spirit and shaped by diversity.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁸ Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit*, 15: emphasis mine.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ F. D. Bruner outlines a third Pentecostal doctrine which was not addressed previously, that of the doctrine of the conditions for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Citing conditions as established on the basis of the book of Acts, such as "joyous faith," "repentance," "right attitude," "separation from sinners," and "unconditional obedience" (92), Bruner adds that there are two kinds of faith, and only a total faith directed toward the Holy Spirit is rewarded with baptism in the Holy Spirit. Cf. Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), 87-117.

¹⁷¹ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 235.

¹⁷² Ibid., 238.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 235.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 230-234.

Baptism into the community of the Spirit

Because the Spirit is the one active in gathering individuals into the community of the Spirit, the question of baptism in the Holy Spirit, to Welker, takes on a different meaning than it does for Keener, or, more generally, for Pentecostals and Charismatics. According to Welker, baptism in the Spirit points to this outpouring of the Spirit as first illustrated at Pentecost, and it is through such an outpouring that people are incorporated into the body of Christ.¹⁷⁵ Welker notes that “the pouring out of the Spirit,” or “the descent of the Spirit,” or “baptism with the Spirit,” all terms which he uses synonymously, is not a one-time event.¹⁷⁶ It is instead a recurrent event as illustrated time and time again in the book of Acts.¹⁷⁷

Also, because it is through baptism in the Spirit that believers are beckoned into the community of the Spirit, its work is made real in a community of believers who make its presence concrete and effective. Alluding to 1 Corinthians 6:11, Welker points out that, “this presence is not something otherworldly, but it is something that is mediated through a community of testimony of people who have been “washed... sanctified...justified” by the name of Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God.”¹⁷⁸ That is to say, the Spirit, through its outpouring or descent, should not be perceived esoterically, but rather realistically inasmuch as it is embodied by a community who follow its leading. To be baptized in the Spirit, therefore, is to become a member of Christ’s body.

This realism does not necessarily negate the notion of “power” that the New Testament often attests to in relation to the deeds carried out by the disciples, though it does challenge the Charismatic connotations associated with the word. Because Welker sees baptism in the Holy Spirit as unifying individuals in light of their uniqueness, he argues that it is the *power* of the Spirit that is reflected in “every good proclamation, on the basis of every good sermon.”¹⁷⁹ What he means is that it is this “power” of the Spirit that is made manifest in every experience that enables people from different backgrounds to understand each other and to share a common experience of God. *That*, to Welker, is the power of God.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 236: Though it is nowhere defined, Welker repeatedly uses the term “force field” to describe the Spirit’s “realm of influence.” Perhaps its German translation, *Kraftfeld*, is more commonly used and therefore in no need of clarification in the original German publication of *God the Spirit*. However, such terminology in English remains evasive and ambiguous, and will therefore be paraphrased when possible.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 229.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 229.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 238.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 234.

Again, it must be reemphasized that it is the Spirit that enacts, not individuals. While Pentecostals traditionally place a lot of importance on the laying on of hands as a means of receiving and imparting the Spirit,¹⁸⁰ Welker highlights several Scripture passages which indicate that *various* experiences can be conducive to the outpouring of the Spirit. Amongst many instances, he cites specifically the Spirit descending after believers *prayed* together (Acts 4:31), as a result of *petitioning the Spirit* and *laying on of hands* (Acts 8:15), while Peter was *proclaiming God's wonders* (Acts 10:44; 11:15), and after believers were *baptized in water* and were laid hands upon (Acts 19:6). These four occurrences relate different forms of experience and expressions of outpouring of the Spirit, which should all be allowed to coexist within the community of the Spirit.

On this point, Welker argues vehemently that baptism in the Spirit, because it allows for a multiplicity of experiences, should not be understood simplistically as involving two sides, that is, God and “the human person,” nor should it be perceived as being merely two-directional, that is, from God to “the human person” or from “the human person” to God.¹⁸¹ On this point, he criticizes Karl Barth’s model as an example of an improper *intellectual* model that *dichotomizes* the reality of the Spirit. As Welker explains, Barth adopts a theology which assumes that baptism in the Spirit is God’s first step, upon which the human person, singular, can respond.¹⁸² According to Welker, the problem lies in the model’s reduction of baptism in the Holy Spirit to the renewal and repentance of individuals, and does not make provisions for “internal differentiations.”¹⁸³ In other words, reductionistic models such as Barth’s lump everyone together and cannot account for cultural, linguistic or even historical particularities.

While Welker does not particularly define his own model or definition of baptism in the Spirit, his criticism of Barth sheds light on his understanding. From his comments concerning the erroneous tendency to reduce baptism in the Holy Spirit to a simple process, it becomes apparent that Welker’s model is a complex one which takes form in a plurality of individuals, in a plurality of ways. Indeed, he writes, “the persons seized, moved, and renewed by God’s Spirit can know themselves placed in a force field that is seized, moved, and renewed from many sides – a force field of which they are members

¹⁸⁰ Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 113-114: F. D. Bruner mentions that laying on of hands is a symbolic and external act that, in principle, is not *necessary* and *indispensable* for the reception of the Spirit. It is therefore usually seen as a “sympathetic aid.”

¹⁸¹ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 236.

¹⁸² Barth, quoted in Welker, *God the Spirit*, 236.

¹⁸³ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 237.

and bearers, but which they cannot bear, shape, be responsible for, and enliven alone.”¹⁸⁴ In other words, believers on whom the Spirit descends are incorporated into a community that cannot be attested to on an individual basis, but rather comes alive in the plurality of its existence and composition.

The new horizons of the gifts and fruit of the Spirit

Through baptism in the Holy Spirit then, Welker sees God creating a universal, multilingual community comprised of a multiplicity of individuals, all of whom, together, testify to the wonders of God.¹⁸⁵ Together, the community recognizes that it embodies and carries out only a share or a deposit of what is to come; “it is the firstfruit which assures us that there is going to be a harvest.”¹⁸⁶

This notion of firstfruit, which Paul uses in Romans 8:23 to describe the promise of the Spirit, points to that which is *yet to come*. In these regards, J. E. Lesslie Newbigin illustrates the outpouring of the Spirit as a sign of God’s kingdom:

The Holy Spirit, given to the company of the disciples, is the firstfruit [...] which assures us of the fact that the kingdom of God is a reality and that it is the coming reality. In the presence of the Holy Spirit we have already a real foretaste of life in the kingdom of God, of the love, joy, peace and understanding which belong to God’s kingdom. Real, but yet only a foretaste; something – therefore – which points beyond itself to that which is yet to come. Just as the first-fruit is more than just one handful of grain or one bunch of fruit, but has the character of a sign pointing us to the coming harvest and assuring us of its coming; so the presence of the Holy Spirit is more than just the present experience of life in the fellowship of the Church, but is the assurance of something much richer and more glorious to come. It is in this sense that the presence of the Holy Spirit constitutes the Church a witness to the kingdom which it proclaims.¹⁸⁷

What Newbigin writes captures in essence the remainder of Welker’s argument concerning baptism in the Spirit. Indeed, he focuses at length on the contemporary outworking of baptism in the Spirit as a sign of the coming Kingdom, more specifically on the gifts of the Spirit of faith and hope, and the fruit of the Spirit of love and peace. However, I mention here only what is particularly relevant to the topic of Spirit baptism. Reformed discussions of the gifts and fruit of the Spirit tend to focus selectively on what are considered more realistic, down-to-earth gifts or fruit, omitting others such as healing,

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 228.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 235.

¹⁸⁶ J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, “Church as Witness: A Meditation,” *Reformed World*, vol. 35, 1978: 6.

¹⁸⁷ Newbigin, “Church as Witness,” 6.

despite a lack of biblical precedent for doing so.¹⁸⁸ While Welker similarly focuses solely on certain gifts as flowing out of the community of the Spirit, he nonetheless provides insightful thoughts helpful to synthesizing his view.

First, with regards to the firstfruit understanding of the Spirit, Welker suggests that the Spirit uses forms of experience that are graspable by “people in finite structures of life” so as to enable them to *relate* to the *coming fullness* of the power of the Spirit, thereby attesting to “its real presence and action.”¹⁸⁹ The Spirit does so through what Paul calls gifts of the Spirit, and what Charismatics usually define as charisms. Thus defining the term, Welker writes, “the charisms are substantively grounded forms in which the Spirit becomes knowable and effects knowledge, forms in which “the manifestations of the Spirit” are given to specific people “for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7).”¹⁹⁰ These charisms, the chief of which Welker argues are faith and hope, are offered and made available through baptism in the Holy Spirit. More importantly however, they attest to the coming Kingdom inasmuch as they are used to point to Christ, his proclamation and his action, bringing “God closer to human beings and human beings closer to God.”¹⁹¹

Another important aspect that must be addressed pertains to the uniqueness of gifts. As I have already mentioned, Welker stresses time and time again the importance of retaining particularities in the midst of a common understanding – such is the miracle of Pentecost. Welker transposes his understanding of Pentecost to the realm of the gifts of the Spirit. Indeed, he argues that God uses not only different gifts of grace, of deeds, and of service, but uses also their interplay in different people enlisted to serve and attest to God’s presence.¹⁹² For example, a person gifted with wisdom and faith is not only used in those two capacities, but also in the unique interplay created by the *intersecting* of “wisdom-and-faith.” This example is limited here to only two gifts, when in reality, there are a broad range of gifts that coexist within any individual. Combined with one’s upbringing, passions, interests, social background, and so on, the realm of the Spirit’s interplay is not only complex but incredibly vast. Evidently, such gifts are not meant to be

¹⁸⁸ It must be noted here that Charismatic discussions similarly tend to selectively focus more intently on *other* gifts.

¹⁸⁹ Welker, *God the Spirit*, 240.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 241.

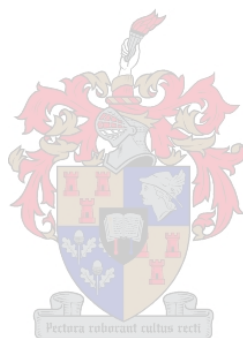
¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 243: In contrast with Barth’s use of “the human person” (singular), Welker uses “human beings” (plural) to make provision for the plurality of experiences and backgrounds.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 241.

privatized or individualized, but instead are meant to include people into “forms of participation and of inclusion in public powers.”¹⁹³

Effectively, a proper use of the gifts for the well-being of others leads inevitably to the fruit of love, the greatest of all gifts.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, on love as self-effacement and selflessness, Welker writes, “love as a fruit of the Spirit tolerates no division into hostile camps and vilification of the other side along racist, sexist and other lines.”¹⁹⁵ He later adds that, “the Spirit turns violent humans into peaceful beings.”¹⁹⁶ Indeed, in the same way that Keener concludes that a true revival does not ultimately constitute the empowerment of God’s people but rather a return to embodying the Gospel, Welker highlights that a community, without love, nullifies the outpouring of the Spirit.

It is on this commonality – that is, Keener and Welker’s emphasis on the importance of embodying the Gospel on a level that is meaningful and relevant to others – that I turn now to a synthesis of both views that points towards the everyday implications of baptism in the Holy Spirit.



¹⁹³ Ibid., 242: Welker also adds that such gifts should not be irrationalized, though at no point does he provide *sufficient* support for such a view, one that seemingly reduces the Spirit’s activity to a rationalistic worldview. Also, a danger apparent in the underlying assumptions of Welker’s approach is the possibility to view the range of gifts as an ethereal mass into which people can plug in and out of, though Welker would probably refute such comments based on his call for the rationalization of gifts.

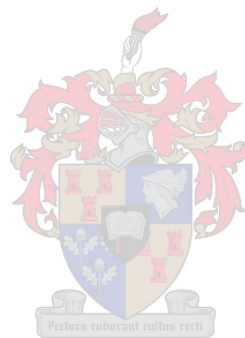
¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 245.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 250.

¹⁹⁶ Michael Welker, *What Happens in Holy Communion?*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 172.

(chapter four)

the community of the spirit and spectacular everydayness



Up until this point, I have argued that there are predominantly two different streams of experience with regards to the Spirit, each with its roots loosely reaching back to early Judaism's distinction between the Spirit of Prophecy and the Spirit of Purification. As I have argued, on one hand, Pentecostals and Charismatics tend to emphasize what was known as the Spirit of Prophecy, that is, the empowerment of God's people to proclaim God's deeds of power. On the other hand, the Reformed perspective tends to highlight the restoration of the communal character of God's people through the creation of a new community, a role that is usually attributed to the Spirit of Purification.

Prior to synthesizing both views, briefly surveying the experience of the Spirit within the early church provides a helpful background from which to depart.

The Spirit in the early church and church Fathers

From the biblical narrative, it is clear that the believers, “who had had an old-covenant [...] experience of the Holy Spirit in their lives, received on the Day of Pentecost a [...] new-covenant experience of the Holy Spirit working in their lives.”¹⁹⁷ On this topic, Newbigin provides helpful insights which further expand the significance of Pentecost in the early church:

By this *koinonia*, common sharing, in the Holy Spirit, Christ's people are enabled to acknowledge Him as Lord, to cry to God as Father, and to live together a common life in which the Spirit furnishes all those gifts which such a common life needs and of which the greatest is love. The Holy Spirit is now no more an occasional visitant to a favoured individual, but the abiding and indwelling principle of life in a fellowship.¹⁹⁸

In other words, in the early church, the understanding of the Spirit shifted from being active in and through specific *individuals* to a broader, more communal outworking.

But how did such a reality of the Spirit shape the early church's practices? In an article surveying the parallels between the theology and the practice of the early church, Kilian McDonnell shows that few people disputed that the Spirit was also imparted during baptism, later adding that church Fathers “Justin Martyr, Origen, Didymus the Blind, and Cyril of Jerusalem, all equivalently call Christian initiation “baptism in the Holy

¹⁹⁷ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 771: Grudem also uses the term “more-powerful” in contrast with “less-powerful” to describe the post-Pentecost experience of the Spirit, both of which I have purposely omitted because of their subjectivity. The point is the shift in how people experienced the Spirit.

¹⁹⁸ J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (London: SCM Press, 1953), 104.

Spirit.”¹⁹⁹ In his writings, Justin Martyr claims that prophecy and charismatic gifts²⁰⁰ still exist.²⁰¹ In fact, the early church held the view that such gifts of the Spirit would continue within the church till the end.²⁰² Effectively, attesting to the Spirit’s powerful presence, third century scholar Origen, writing to his opponent Celsus, mentions that, “Christians cast out demons, accomplish many healings and, according to God’s will, see into the future.”²⁰³ Also confirming the vibrant existence of spiritual gifts, fourth century theologian Hilary of Poitiers writes, “we who have been reborn through the sacrament of baptism experience intense joy when we feel within us the first stirrings of the Holy Spirit. We begin to have insight into the mysteries of faith, we are able to prophecy and to speak with wisdom. We become steadfast in hope and receive the gifts (plural) of healing.”²⁰⁴ These figures of the early church attest to the undeniable effervescence of gifts of all kind within the Body of Christ.

Reflecting on this multiplicity of gifts, Roman Catholic theologian Yves Congar specifies that there did not exist in the early church a split between hierarchical and charismatic ministries; by its very nature, the church and its ministry were considered charismatic and those who questioned the charismatic nature of the church were seen as sectarians.²⁰⁵ This charismatic nature of the church is best illustrated in Cyprian’s writings about the Council of Carthage in 252, wherein he states that the church had made decisions “under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and according to the warnings given by the Lord in many visions.”²⁰⁶ Time and time again, the writings of church Fathers reveal the inextricability of charismatic gifts, as imparted by the Spirit, within the Christian life.

The disappearance of gifts and the challenge of Montanists

If such was the experience of the early church, why is the Charismatic movement, seemingly embracing a similar experience of the Spirit, creating such waves within the

¹⁹⁹ Kilian McDonnell, “Does the Theology and Practice of the Early Church Confirm the Classical Pentecostal Understanding of baptism in the Holy Spirit?” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 21, no. 1 (1999): 123-125.

²⁰⁰ Again, matters of definition are complex. It suffices to note that further references to “gifts” do not solely isolate only what are traditionally understood as “out-of-the-ordinary” gifts such as healing, tongues and the working of miracles, though references to the term also do not *exclude* these gifts of the Spirit from the array listed by Paul in his letter to the Corinthian church.

²⁰¹ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 39.

²⁰² Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1997), 1:65.

²⁰³ *Welcome Holy Spirit: A Study of Charismatic Renewal in the Church*, ed. Larry Christendon (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 249.

²⁰⁴ McDonnell, *Theology and Practice*, 128.

²⁰⁵ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:65.

²⁰⁶ Quoted in: Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 40.

contemporary church? Writing near the end of the fourth century, John Chrysostom confirms the disappearance of gifts that were once part of the early church's *raison d'être*, saying, "many of the wonders which then [in the time of the apostles] used to take place have now ceased."²⁰⁷ Many have attributed this shift to the church's need for clear guidance because of the rising number of challenges posed by so-called "inspired laity" and pseudo-prophets who were eventually dismissed as "sectarian troublemakers."²⁰⁸ In order to avoid such unorthodoxy and dissent, the church stopped ordaining gifted individuals, changing its practices in order to *instead* bless the offices within the church which individuals would then occupy.²⁰⁹ In other words, people were elected for office *and then* blessed by God in their position, rather than being installed *because of* God's blessing upon them.

Reacting against this growing estrangement towards the gifts of the Spirit, a radical, sideline group called the Montanists, which emerged in roughly A.D. 160-170,²¹⁰ argued against the growing worldliness of the church. Up until this point, gifts such as prophecy were still largely known and embraced within the church.²¹¹ However well-intentioned the pleas of the Montanists might have been, the ecstatic nature of their prophecies eventually led to a "common scepticism towards *all* prophecy in the church."²¹² Additionally, because their call for a revival within the church opposed the voice of the apostles, it was believed that they arose from a false spirit.²¹³ They were eventually dismissed as heretical.²¹⁴ Out of this negative experience with these more "extraordinary" gifts, the church slowly withdrew and eventually abandoned its use of the gifts altogether. Though it might be argued that these "spectacular" gifts continued sporadically throughout church history, often in marginal groups,²¹⁵ Kilian McDonnell suggests nonetheless that, "the church never really recovered its balance after it rejected Montanism."²¹⁶

²⁰⁷ Quoted in McDonnell, *Theology and Practice*, 130.

²⁰⁸ *Welcome Holy Spirit*, 249.

²⁰⁹ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 39.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

²¹¹ D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 166.

²¹² *Welcome Holy Spirit*, 250: emphasis mine. It is added that Montanists also had a tendency to impersonate the Spirit when prophesying. In other words, rather than saying, "The Spirit says," they would exclaim, "I, the Spirit, say..."

²¹³ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 41.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 166.

²¹⁶ *Welcome Holy Spirit*, 250.

It should be mentioned here that many contemporary scholars draw strong parallels between Montanists and Pentecostals, especially concerning their similar “dissatisfaction with life in Christ without life in the Spirit and their subsequent experience of a mighty baptism in the Spirit.”²¹⁷ Irrespective of analogous assertions, understanding the decline of gifts within the church sheds light on the contemporary debate surrounding the return of such gifts through the Pentecostal understanding of baptism of the Spirit.

From orthodoxy to orthopraxis

With such an understanding of the early church’s experience of the Spirit, what are the implications of both the Pentecostal and Reformed views? If not mere intellectual tourism, what do the previous chapters point to with regards to baptism in the Holy Spirit?

I propose here, as a way forward, a different approach to what has typically been done, and that is to not critically “expose” the theological flaws in either view, but rather to *engage* both perspectives and to *hold both in tension* with one another. Evidently, to insinuate that this is altogether a ground-breaking approach is to deny the existing ecumenical sensitivity that underlies the previous work of scholars such as V. M. Kärkkäinen and C. S. Keener. Though it is important to address interpretive and argumentative errors when they arise, doing so usually needlessly fuels the debate. Again, such is not the intention of this paper.²¹⁸ Instead, I acknowledge here the richness and depth of the Reformed tradition *alongside* the undeniable experience of the Holy Spirit of over 400 million Christians that identify themselves as Pentecostals or Charismatics. In holding the two voices in tension with each another, one is confronted with what I would call an enigmatic-realistic pneumatology – spectacular everydayness. The *mystery* of the *reality* of God calls us to nothing less.

²¹⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 119: Fee adds two other reasons for the disintegration of life in the Spirit. First, a reason is that the Bible was written to first generation believers without addressing the needs of second and third generations who did not experience the same drastic lifestyle change as their predecessors. Secondly, another reason brought forth by Fee was the eventual tie of the gifts of the Spirit to water baptism, and the advent of infant baptism, all of which eliminated the “phenomenological, experiential dimension of life in the Spirit” (117-118).

²¹⁸ For critical studies of Pentecostal pneumatology: James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1970); Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), 25. For a rebuttal of Dunn’s reading, Howard M. Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An engaging critique of James D. G. Dunn’s Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984).

If we intend to move forward however, it is crucial to shatter this false perception that dismisses Pentecostal claims as being overly concerned with an intangible, ungrounded realm, and therefore as having little to offer to a rational mindset and society. D. A. Carson rightly argues that to condemn anything deemed too “sensational,” as is often the case in circles that do not profess a Charismatic experience, is to also indict Jesus and Paul.²¹⁹ Welker, for example, making way of anything irrational, repeatedly argues, as I have mentioned, that what was *really* miraculous about Pentecost was the sense of “overcomprehensibility.” However, ultimately, even this common understanding remained profoundly *incomprehensible* as Scripture attests: “Amazed and perplexed, [those witnessing the events of Pentecost] asked one another, “*What does this mean?*””²²⁰ It is this sense of the mysterious that must be recovered - irrationality and rationality must be held in tension with one another

Doing so, I propose in the pages that follow to synthesize the Pentecostal and Reformed positions of baptism in the Holy Spirit, thereby constructing an approach to the topic that embodies this sense of “spectacular everydayness” – an approach that, I suspect, will be helpful in showing what it means to follow Jesus. My intention then is not to offer a third, middle-ground definition of Spirit baptism but rather to highlight what insights each tradition has to offer, as per Keener and Welker. My hope for this last chapter therefore is not “theological bedazzlement,” but rather to come back down to a level where faith really matters – the everyday. My hope is to make life in the Spirit something real, something concrete, and attainable.

An everyday community of the Spirit

In constructing an understanding of baptism in the Holy Spirit that accounts for both the realism that underlies the Reformed approach and the incomprehensibility that marks the Pentecostal experience, starting with the notion of community serves as a solid, undisputable foundation. Indeed, anyone would be hard pressed to deny that, in one way or another, baptism in the Holy Spirit, whether understood as a second blessing or as an outpouring upon conversion, incorporates believers into an existing community of faith. As Miguel M. Garijo-Guembe notes, “the Church cannot be grasped apart from the Holy Spirit, and can only be grasped as the work of the Holy Spirit. [...] Only after Pentecost

²¹⁹ D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 173.

²²⁰ Acts 2:12 (NIV): emphasis mine.

[...] can we speak about a “Church.””²²¹ For this reason, Kilian McDonnell argues that ecclesiology should be an extension of pneumatology, not the other way around.²²² In other words, the church without the Holy Spirit is nothing; “as a body without breath is a corpse, so the church without the Spirit is dead.”²²³

In this sense, Welker captures the complexity of the Spirit’s vitality within the body of Christ. In a culture that isolates individuals, where “singular” is more important than “plural,” and moral decisions are largely a personal matter, Welker rightly calls for a return to community. As C. Norman Kraus writes, “the concept of organic community has been heavily eroded by technology, urbanization, political ideology, and legal definitions” – even religious convictions have largely become a private, personal matter.²²⁴ In light of this growing disintegration of community, Welker situates baptism in the Spirit within a complex communal network formed by the intricacies of individuals-in-community. He writes, “the Spirit connects human beings, interweaving them in an unforeseen manner in diverse structural patterns of life [...] The Spirit comes bringing life from all sides.”²²⁵ His approach to community accounts for linguistic differences, historical differences, social differences, all of which are held together in the proclamation of God’s wonders – that I can be in India, or South Africa, or Holland, or Canada, and worship with people who attest in their own language to God’s glory is in itself a testimony to the miracle of Pentecost. Indeed, in the same way that Pentecost united people who previously were profoundly disconnected, authentic community now holds in tension the underlying differences that are brought together in one Body.

Here, it is important to reiterate a point on which Welker is emphatic: this community does not form an otherworldly, mystical body, but one that is grounded in real life, one that breathes, laughs and suffers. We are the church that rejoices in liberation, but we are also the church that is dying of AIDS.²²⁶

²²¹ Miguel M Garijo-Guembe, *Communion of the Saints: Foundation, Nature and Structure of the Church*, transl. Patrick Madigan, SJ (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 2.

²²² Kilian McDonnell, “Does the Theology and Practice of the Early Church Confirm the Classical Pentecostal Understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit?” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 21, no. 1 (1999): 119.

²²³ John Stott, *The Message of Acts: The ends of the earth* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 60.

²²⁴ C. Norman Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit: How the Church is in the World* (Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1993), 31.

²²⁵ Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 28.

²²⁶ The formulation comes from Denise Ackermann, *After the Locusts: Letters from a Landscape of Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 80.

A spectacular empowerment for witness

Though this is not an exposé on Christian community, it seems that Welker could go farther in defining the *outworking* of such a community of the Spirit. What I mean here is that Welker's theology is limited in outlining the implications of the Spirit's role of empowerment within its role of justice and peace. Though he does affirm that "through the activity of the triune God in the Spirit, [people] are given powers that enable them to resist the might of sin,"²²⁷ the question nonetheless remains: how does the Spirit really differentiate the church from the world? Kraus suggests that the church, insofar as it constitutes a community, is a group of people who take Jesus seriously and step out accordingly; the church is a community of disciples of Jesus – people who can claim Jesus' authority and are learning to shape and mould their lives after his.²²⁸ The first disciples of Jesus joined a new, radical movement to be part of what God was doing around them.²²⁹ Larry L. Rasmussen mentions that these first Christians were initially called "followers of the Way," because they were *first and foremost* understood as a group of people who *lived a certain way* – the way of Jesus.²³⁰ As I have argued by unfolding the understanding of the Spirit within the early church, the Spirit was the "hallmark and dynamic"²³¹ of their community. Only later were Christians identified by their beliefs rather than their way of life.

If Jesus really instituted a community that was to live according to an alternative lifestyle, then the notion of God's power can indeed, as Welker suggests, be found in a good sermon in which individuals from diverse backgrounds come together. However, *limiting* the definitions of "alternative lifestyle" and of God's power to the realm of rationality, to what is understandable, is denying the reality of Jesus' ministry. Prior to his crucifixion, he says to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do *even greater things* than these, because I am going to the Father."²³² It seems reductionistic, to say the least, to understand these "greater things" as simply meaning that we would preach and proclaim the Word better than Jesus

²²⁷ Michael Welker, *What Happens in Holy Communion?*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 172.

²²⁸ Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit*, 62.

²²⁹ Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit*, 81.

²³⁰ Larry L. Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments & Moral Community: A Proposal for Church in Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 138. See Acts 19:23.

²³¹ Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit*, 30.

²³² John 14:12: emphasis mine.

as some, like Welker, interpret “greater things” to mean.²³³ Others suggest that “greater things” simply refers to the conversion of souls – that doing greater things than Jesus simply means converting more souls.²³⁴ And still others see in this “greater things” the mere geographical missionary success of the early church – while Jesus’ ministry was confined to an area, such would not be the case with the church.²³⁵ However, as George R. Beasley-Murray shows, such interpretations do not fully capture the reality of what Jesus was saying. Beasley-Murray’s exegesis indicates that these “things” are more properly understood as Jesus’ miraculous works, the signs of his ministry.²³⁶ While I would suggest that we have not yet begun to imagine what it could look like for the contemporary church to recover such a sense of the “possible impossible,” the point is that Jesus calls this new community to continue his work, through a radical way of life that points to God’s Kingdom.

Therefore, though through baptism in the Holy Spirit we are incorporated into the complexities of a new community, one rooted in *real*, concrete joy and suffering, Jesus not only *offers* more abundant life, but there is also a sense in which he *expects* more from his disciples, of whom we are a part of - *more* than only gathering as a community in which everything is explainable.

It is in light of Jesus’ offer of a more abundant life which testifies to the coming Kingdom that I shift now to some insights the Charismatic movement contribute to this community of the Spirit. I speak here of the more mysterious, enigmatic facet of baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is important to understand this term, enigmatic, not as something unattainable, or “new age,” but rather as a way of describing the mystery and incomprehensibility of certain facets of the Christian life. That being said, it would seem biblically sound to understand baptism in the Spirit as Keener does, as multiple fillings rather than as a second blessing. From a Scriptural standpoint, Pentecostals are hard pressed to justify Spirit baptism as a “second blessing” that is normative for all people. The biblical text, as I have indicated, *allows* for such an outpouring to occur after

²³³ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 610-611.

²³⁴ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 574: He quotes Ryle who says, “there is no greater work than the conversion of a soul.”

²³⁵ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 433.

²³⁶ George R. Beasley-Murray, “John,” *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 36 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 254: While I do not have room to unfold his argument by which he discredits other interpretations, namely Bultmann’s, it suffices to state that Beasley-Murray provides sufficient indications to opt for his approach. See 254-255.

conversion, but not *always*, and certainly not as a norm for all believers. Either way, generally speaking, Charismatics are moving away from such a “two-stage salvation” kind of theology.²³⁷

Then, if baptism in the Holy Spirit points to multiple fillings (or *even* if the Spirit is perceived as being received in full at conversion), what is its purpose in filling believers? Amongst other things, I would suggest that this filling is primarily about empowerment. The reason is complex, though basic. That Christ poured out his Spirit at Pentecost shows that the Spirit serves purposes *beyond* those of salvation because the disciples who first received the Spirit were already that: disciples. For them, the Spirit did not play a role of conversion, but instead one of empowerment as the book of Acts attests to. For example, Peter and Paul are depicted as repeating many of Jesus’ miracles, which indicates that such incomprehensible gifts were not limited to Jesus. As Keener suggests, Peter and Paul are carrying out Jesus’ work in a way that paves the way and sets the example for the church to come.²³⁸ It is not far fetched then to ascribe to the Spirit a similar role today. The Spirit in the early church was not simply a gift that came with no repercussions, neither is it today. Instead, Christ abides in us so that we can be his hands and feet – so that we can *continue* his work. The implication however is not that everyone should start performing miracles. John the Baptist did not perform any miraculous signs; his ministry was by no means less powerful.²³⁹

I see therefore in Keener’s understanding of baptism in the Holy Spirit an underlying call for the church to re-embrace the gifts of the Spirit in their fullness. If Paul lists the gifts in various places, then on what basis do we edit these lists to cross out certain gifts? If “gifts of healing” or “miraculous powers”²⁴⁰ are to be excluded from the church today, then on what basis do we keep the gifts of wisdom, knowledge or faith mentioned in the same biblical passages? Such a selective tendency is given no Scriptural weight. Instead, in the words of the apostle Paul, “all these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.”²⁴¹

²³⁷ J. I. Packer, *Keep In Step With The Spirit* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984), 220: He also mentions that Pentecostals are more reluctant to abandon the doctrine of subsequence because of its deeper roots within the tradition.

²³⁸ Craig S. Keener, *3 Crucial Questions about the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 40.

²³⁹ *Ibid.* See John 10:41.

²⁴⁰ See 1 Corinthians 12:10.

²⁴¹ 1 Corinthians 12:11.

What of the gift of tongues? Its *use* as a gift is less disputed today as it was a few decades ago.²⁴² Those who do question its *authenticity* nonetheless usually attribute to it certain benefits that do not ultimately undermine its *use*. As far as it being evidence of Spirit baptism, again, the matter remains unclear. Yes, every biblical instance of people speaking in tongues is preceded by an outpouring of the Spirit, but not every instance of the Spirit being poured out mentions the fruit of speaking in tongues. Opponents of the initial evidence doctrine highlight these instances where the gift of tongues is absent to support their own counter claims. This approach is problematic however; it is what Jack Deere calls making an argument from silence - “you cannot use what the Scriptures *don’t say* as proof of your view.”²⁴³ Can tongues then be initial evidence for Spirit baptism? Possibly. Could it be that tongues is *not* initial evidence? Possibly also. Because of the lack of clarity on the doctrine, I agree with Carson who says that ultimately, tongues cannot and should not be used as an indicator or criteria for anything.²⁴⁴

Grounding the spectacular in the everyday

As I mentioned earlier, people tend to dismiss the Charismatic movement as being concerned with gifts that have no bearing in the natural realm of every day life. I interject a few personal comments here on the nature of these gifts often labelled as “supernatural”, especially healing and tongues, not to explain away the incomprehensible, but to ground the spectacular in the everyday.

First, on demystifying healing. After graduating from university, I attended a group of young adults that met every Monday night. One evening, one of the members of the group mentioned that his movements were greatly hindered because of two cracked ribs. At the end of the evening, we prayed for each other as we normally concluded every gathering. A few of us gathered around him, placing our hands on him and prayed perhaps three, maybe four sentences. The mood and prayers were as casual as someone blessing a meal or praying for safe travels. Nothing happened. No one felt anything particularly different, not even him. I woke up the next morning however to an ecstatic e-

²⁴² J. I. Packer however finds very little in common between the contemporary expression labelled “tongues” and the Scriptural precedent. He further suggests that what is commonly referred to as a “personal prayer language” is an expression that has absolutely no Scriptural backing. J. I. Packer, *Keep In Step*, 206-211.

²⁴³ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 19.

²⁴⁴ D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 170.

mail from this man whose ribs were perfectly normal. Up until that point, I always expected healing to be different, *radically* different from every day life. It wasn't.

Secondly, on demystifying tongues. Let me begin by stating that “Christian speaking in tongues is done as objectively as any other speaking, while the person is in full possession and control of his wits and volition, and in no strange state of mind whatever.”²⁴⁵ For three years I prayed, asking God for the gift of tongues, admittedly because of its sensational appeal. Ironically, the gift came shortly after I “rationally” concluded that the gift of tongues was heretical. Needless to say, it was with great anxiety that I found myself surrounded by three friends praying for me to receive the gift of tongues. As they quietly prayed for me, I wanted to laugh - the situation was embarrassingly completely bizarre. That is, until I felt my lower lip turn to lead. At that very instant, a friend sitting next to me said “Simon, I can *see* it on your lips.” Yes, admittedly, the language does sound cryptic, but looking beyond the incomprehensible, what matters is that my friend’s words *attested to the reality of what I was experiencing*. The rest of the story is described in the preface. I doubt at times the authenticity of the gift I have received; it feels so extremely ordinary, too “unsupernatural” to be real. What felt like jumping off a cliff that night turned out to be nothing more than stepping down a roadside curb. Tongues is like speaking English. Or French. Except that I have seen God mend situations I thought were impossibly doomed through prayers which I simply lacked words for.

Though I recognize that my experience is not normative for all believers, nor is it even indicative of some sort of “proper Christian journey”, the point I am making is that having crossed the threshold of these gifts, I realize how such occurrences, though ultimately incomprehensible, are nonetheless surprisingly *normal* – spectacular everydayness.

Toward spectacular everydayness

It is the *un*supernatural aspect of my experience that allows me to speak of spectacular everydayness. What I thought would be mystical turned out to be quite ordinary, though excitingly so. A friend of mine once shared with me her view that the Pentecostal movement (and all that it stands for) is often unfortunately discredited simply because of its presentation of God: the hype, the emotion, the noise. Without posing judgements on

²⁴⁵ Packer, *Keep In Step*, 177.

such expressions of faith, I have found comfort with my gifts, my background, and all the complexity of who I am within a very normal group of friends who strive to follow Jesus in their every day: some with profound wisdom, some with an unshakeable faith, some with creative musical gifts, some that pray in tongues, and some that don't. Their lives are quiet, simple witnesses of a God that moves in ways that defy understanding. This very real community is one that embodies this sense of spectacular everydayness: it is alive in the now because *Jesus* is alive in the now.

Indeed, combining Keener and Welker's conclusions regarding baptism in the Holy Spirit, the point is not tongues or healing, nor is the point complexity or uniqueness of individuality. The point is yielding to the Spirit and attesting to God's glory with all of our lives; the point is listening to the voice that speaks; the point is being attentive to God.

Where to from here? The community and the world

Up until now, the argument surrounding baptism in the Holy Spirit has been largely centred on the individual in relation to the community of the Spirit. But, as Welker says, relation to God is not a "purely private matter."²⁴⁶ Therefore, while this is not a study on the Holy Spirit per se, but rather one on *baptism in the Holy Spirit*, I propose to end by opening up the issue and to briefly unfold the implications of this community of the Spirit within the world. As Gordon Fee writes, "if we are going to count for much in the post-modern world in which we now live, the Spirit must remain the key of the church's existence."²⁴⁷

In *Another City*, Barry A. Harvey outlines the contours of the church within a post-modern and post-Christian world, arguing that this new community formed by the Spirit is one that should, like the early church, not compromise itself by giving allegiance to any worldly political entity.²⁴⁸ Instead, he shows how the church is once more in a position where it can take a stand against unjust socio-political structures, engaging in liberation and overcoming the world. Stanley M. Hauerwas captures the essence of the implications underlying this spectacular everydayness:

The mighty wind that gave birth to the church involves affairs of nations and empires. That wind created a new nation that was no longer subject to

²⁴⁶ John Polkinghorne and Michael Welker, *Faith in the Living God: A Dialogue* (London: SPCK, 2001), 84.

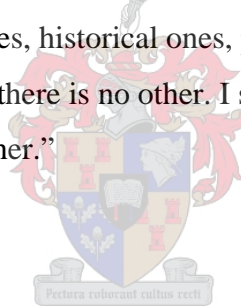
²⁴⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 179.

²⁴⁸ Barry A. Harvey, *Another City: An Ecclesiological Primer for a Post-Christian World* (Harrisburg, PN: Trinity Press International, 1999).

the constraints of the past. Salvation cannot be limited to changed self-understanding or to insuring meaningful existence for the individual. Salvation is God's creation of a new society which invites each person to become part of a time that the nations cannot provide.²⁴⁹

The implication is missional. Practically speaking, Mark R. Gornik shows how the church within the urban context of Los Angeles and New York (and the same could be said about the church in South Africa), is engaged not only in evangelism, but also in reconciliation, community organizing, and community development. He writes, "church members in these cities are bringing a "politics of the Spirit" to bear on every area of life."²⁵⁰

Returning to Joel's prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit, the promise that God will pour out his Spirit on all people is explained "in an emphasis differentiation."²⁵¹ He shows how God's promise is not only for men, but also for women, not only for the old, but also for the young. In the patriarchal and classical society of Joel's time, the notion that men and women, old and young, were all given equal status was astounding.²⁵² But as I have mentioned earlier with regards to Welker's understanding of the fruit of love,²⁵³ this alternative community exists to *continue* God's work in the "already-not-yet", to break down barriers - societal ones, historical ones, political ones, linguistic ones, and so on – for the sake of the other till there is no other. I speak here not of "church for the other" but of "church *with* the other."



²⁴⁹ Stanley M. Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World, and Living in Between* (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1988), 48.

²⁵⁰ Mark R. Gornik, *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 14.

²⁵¹ Polkinghorne and Welker, *Faith in the Living God*, 86.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ While much can be said about faith, hope and love, I would argue that these three virtues often become a means, rather than an end. It seems to me that faith, hope and love are the *fruit* of a person or community that lives in attentiveness to God, and not a *path to* being attentive to God. Evidently, by attending to the poor and marginalized we are attending to Christ, but it seems that it is *in doing so* that faith, hope and love develop. I cannot make myself be faithful, or hopeful, or loving on my own, but rather I *become* faithful, hopeful and loving as I follow the crucified and risen Christ.

As Eugene Peterson says, we are all beginners.²⁵⁴

Ever since I experienced what some call baptism in the Spirit, though some aspects of my life have changed drastically, life has not become simpler or clearer as I always thought it might. No, in fact, I still struggle at times with insecurity, or anger, or possessiveness. What *has* changed is the unshakable, profound sense of God's grip on my life that I now have.

As I said, the point is attentiveness to God.

And this persistent sense of God's presence fuels in me an incessant feeling that there is so much *more* to life.

After all is said and done though, I join Shane Claiborne in saying that most good things have been said far too many times and just need to be lived.²⁵⁵



²⁵⁴ Eugene Peterson, *Subversive Spirituality* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 1997), 208.

²⁵⁵ Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution: Living an as ordinary radical* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 32.

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