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# The Ecumenical Shift to Cosmic Pneumatology

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In reflecting on this assignment of preparing a suitable essay to honor John Hesselink, I was reminded how much our ecclesiastical and academic paths have crossed thanks to our mutual interest in John Calvin, Herman Bavinck, and Karl Barth more broadly and the relation between theology and law more particularly. At a time that I was floundering in my dissertation work dealing with Herman Bavinck's understanding of the imitation of Christ, it was John's then recently published essay, "Christ, the Law, and the Christian: An Unexplored Aspect of the Third Use of the Law in Calvin's Theology,"<sup>1</sup> that helped get me on track. Also, within a one-year span we both produced little books intended to help the Reformed community understand its identity.<sup>2</sup> Then, when we moved within thirty miles of each other, together we became part of a wonderful ecumenical venture in translating and publishing the magisterial *Reformed Dogmatics* of Herman Bavinck. Finally, he served in a distinguished way as the external reader for Calvin Seminary's first completed Ph.D. dissertation, a project I was supervising on the eschatology of Karl Barth. I count it a privilege to have shared the churchly as well as academic theological task with John Hesselink and am honored to participate in this tribute to his service to Christ and the church.

The topic of this essay, the cosmic work of the Holy Spirit, arises out of the distinctive Reformed theological tradition but has also been at the forefront of recent ecumenical discussion. The role of another Dutch Reformed theologian who has intrigued both of us—Arnold A. Van Ruler—plays a key role in what follows.<sup>3</sup> Here I must also pay tribute to the excellent essay on Calvin's pneumatology by John's predecessor in the chair of systematic theology at Western Seminary, Professor M. Eugene Osterhaven, in his *The Faith of the Church*.<sup>4</sup>

## Introduction: The Problem

The current ecumenical interest in the cosmic or universal work of the Holy Spirit represents a significant shift from an earlier christological focus. In this shift Jürgen Moltmann's two series of systematic theologies<sup>5</sup> parallel developments on the ecumenical front. There is a general revival of interest today in diverse forms of *spirit*-uality: the World Council of Churches chose "Come Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation" as the theme for its 1991 (Seventh) Assembly at Canberra, Australia. Although this is not the place to

explore all the reasons for the shift, I believe that one reason is the growing commitment to pluralism in the ecumenical world. A cosmic pneumatology provides more possibilities for an inclusive Christianity than the focus on Christology which accents the particularity of our Lord.<sup>6</sup> The move toward ecological issues (away from the economic arena) after the collapse of Marxism/Socialism may also be a contributing factor.<sup>7</sup> Be that as it may, my interest here is systematic-theological rather than historical: What do we do with a cosmic pneumatology, an emphasis on the universal work of the Holy Spirit?

First, that cosmic pneumatology is an important feature of the Reformed theological tradition has been recently attested to by Hendrikus Berkhof<sup>8</sup> and Jürgen Moltmann,<sup>9</sup> among others. The judgment of Benjamin Warfield, for example, on Calvin's pneumatology, that Calvin was "pre-eminently the theologian of the Holy Spirit"<sup>10</sup> needs to be considered from both a particular, soteriological perspective and a general, cosmic, universal perspective.<sup>11</sup> For Calvin, "the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ unites us to Himself." It is through the "secret energy of the Spirit" that the work of Christ which is performed outside of us becomes valuable to us so that "we come to enjoy Christ and all his benefits." It is important to note here that for Calvin this work of the Spirit is *particular*, it accounts for the fact "that not all indiscriminately embrace that communion with Christ which is offered through the gospel."<sup>12</sup>

However, Calvin does not restrict the work of God's Spirit to the special Pentecostal grace uniting believers to Christ but affirms a universal, common grace or presence of God's Spirit among all human beings indiscriminately. For Calvin, the Spirit of God is the source of "every perfect gift" (James 1:17) and deserves credit for all human cultural achievements and civic good. Referring directly to the Spirit-endowed gifts of tabernacle artisans Bezalel and Oholiab, (Exod. 31:2-11; 35:30-35), Calvin notes:

It is no wonder, then, that the knowledge of all that is most excellent in human life is said to be communicated to us through the Spirit of God. Nor is there reason for anyone to ask, "What have the impious, who are utterly estranged from God, to do with his Spirit? We ought to understand the statement that the Spirit of God dwells only in believers (Rom. 8:9) as referring to the Spirit of sanctification through whom we are consecrated as temples to God (1 Cor. 3:16). Nonetheless he fills, moves, and quickens all things by the power of the same Spirit, and does so according to the character that he bestowed upon each kind by the law of creation."<sup>13</sup>

This quickening, life-bestowing activity of God's Spirit extends to all creatures, not only to humanity and, is, in Calvin's judgment the "proof" of the Spirit's true divinity. Depending on such Scriptures as Psalm 104:30 ("When you send forth your Spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.") Calvin is able to conclude: "For it is the Spirit who, everywhere

diffused, sustains all things, causes them to grow, and quickens them in heaven and in earth. Because he is circumscribed by no limits, he is excepted from the category of creatures; but in transfusing into all things his energy, and breathing into them essence, life, and movement, he is indeed plainly divine."<sup>14</sup>

Calvin's cosmic pneumatology is, I believe, suggestive and helpful for contemporary discussions even if the focus is different. The issue today has primarily to do with the question of exclusivity. Is the Holy Spirit's work exclusive to the intentionally Christian community and its witness or is it present and thus to be "discerned" by Christians in (all?) other "spiritualities," religions, and social/political movements? How explicit must the linkage be between *Logos* and *Pneuma*? The Canberra Assembly Section IV report on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit put it this way: "Spirits must be discerned. Not every spirit is of the Holy Spirit. The primary criterion for discerning the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit points to the cross and resurrection and witnesses to the Lordship of Jesus Christ."<sup>15</sup> Is this affirmation simply a leftover legacy of the Barthian Christocentrism that dominated mainstream theology and ecumenicity during the first half of this century or is it an authentically biblical and Christian caution? If, convinced of the latter, we speak, as I believe we must, of God's active presence beyond the church, what categories do we use without straining the Christian tradition to the breaking point? The discussion of these issues in ecumenical circles during the last thirty years has been intense<sup>16</sup> and has contributed significantly to the polarization between respective emphases on evangelism on the one hand and social action on the other. How can the church truly affirm its catholicity, its solidarity with the world without confusing "the unity and catholicity of the church with other solidarities and communities."<sup>17</sup> How can the church, in Langdon Gilkey's memorable phrase, truly "minister to the world without losing itself."<sup>18</sup>

There is yet one other "problem" that needs to be introduced at this point. Karl Barth once raised a significant and noteworthy caution about all theologizing which focuses on the Spirit: "I personally think that a theology of the Spirit might be all right after A.D. 2000, but now we are still too close to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is still too difficult to distinguish between God's Spirit and man's spirit."<sup>19</sup> Surely, the rise of the many and diverse contemporary "new age" spiritualities suggests that Barth's caution was on target.

Having raised the issue with its attendant complex problems, I want to argue that a properly formulated (trinitarian) cosmic pneumatology provides a helpful perspective for understanding the church's identity and mission while avoiding the errors alluded to by Barth and others.

### **The Need for a Trinitarian Cosmic Pneumatology**

If full and complete deity is to be ascribed to the Holy Spirit then the distinctive task appropriate to the Spirit must be considered in a trinitarian context. In the words of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Alexandria in a keynote

address to the Canberra Assembly: "When we speak about the Holy Spirit, we are speaking about the Holy Trinity. There is no Holy Spirit apart from the Holy Trinity. We live in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. We do not separate them. Our God is one."<sup>20</sup> Yet it is precisely here that the dogmatic and theological tradition does not help us enough. In general, the thorough analysis and reflection given to christological doctrines in both the Patristic and modern eras do not have a pneumatological counterpart.<sup>21</sup> Even though the first two great Ecumenical Councils of the Christian Church (Nicea and Constantinople) affirmed a *trinitarian* doctrine, it is necessary to ask whether the church has not for the most part been *functionally binitarian*. From the time of the apologists of the second century through the anti-Arians to the declarations of Chalcedon (and beyond), the preeminent concern has been the true consubstantiality of the Father and the Word. The cosmic Christology of the New Testament (John 1, Col. 1, Heb. 1) and the early church deliberately link the Son to the Creation; He who was incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth is also the Word by whom all things were made. The linkage is binitarian—Father and Son. Furthermore, when the Spirit is considered (particularly in the Western tradition), the linkage is once again binitarian—the Spirit applies the redemptive work of Christ; pneumatology flows from Christology. It has even been suggested that the pneumatology of the early church is developed "with a certain Logos logic."<sup>22</sup> If the Holy Spirit is to be considered a truly divine person, a full participant in the Trinity, it is necessary at the very least that we understand the Spirit's work in such a way as to link it directly to the Father and the Creation as well as to the Son and Redemption. In short, a truly trinitarian theology demands a cosmic as well as a soteric pneumatology.<sup>23</sup>

### The Logic of Pneumatology

Before we consider in greater detail the content of a cosmic pneumatology, a brief exploration of the distinctive "logic" or "grammar" of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit will be helpful. In particular, it is instructive to reflect on the difference between a christological and pneumatological perspective.<sup>24</sup> The classic christological formulations of the church include such notions as *enhyptosis*, personal or hypostatic union, assumption (of the human nature), incarnation, substitution, and once-for-all perfection (of Christ's sacrifice). The christological conviction is clear—in Jesus of Nazareth God himself became incarnate, assumed our human nature in a genuine personal union between the divine and human nature (Chalcedon), and gave himself as a full and complete ransom for human sin on our behalf (*hyper*) and in our place (*anti*). The work of Christ, it is usually argued, must in a real sense be *extra nos* (this is the heart of the Anselmian approach to the atonement—it takes place before God) in order to preserve the reality of grace. Our righteousness is not, cannot be from or within ourselves. Salvation is from God alone.

However, these categories fail us when we want to describe the work of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Spirit consists of an indwelling<sup>25</sup> in which the

already created and existing human *persons* who are renewed retain their full identity. Human beings do not find their hypostasis (existence) in God nor does the indwelling Holy Spirit divinize human nature.<sup>26</sup> While the appropriate christological categories here are *enhyposstasis* and assumption, the appropriate pneumatological categories are adoption and encounter. A new *relationship* between God and the human persons arises in which the clear distinction of the *relata* are wholly retained. Herbert Richardson has summed this up aptly:<sup>27</sup> "The Holy Spirit gives us eternal life by uniting Himself to us in a unique way. His indwelling is a form of presence which is closer and more "unitive" than even the most perfect communion among created beings. Indwelling is a divine, or uncreated, form of presence. It is the very perichoresis that unite the persons of God with each other. Hence, when the Holy Spirit indwells us, we are lifted into the very life of God Himself." There is no human or even creaturely analogy for such a "perichoretic" indwelling.

Creatures cannot indwell one another. Rather, the perfect form of unity among creatures is the moral communion of friendship. When Jesus Christ sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, however, He makes God present to us in a way which exceeds even the most perfect moral communion. In our union with the Holy Spirit, we are joined to Him even more closely than we are joined to ourselves (since even "self-consciousness" is a form of created presence). Hence, Scripture tells us that the Spirit knows us not only better than even our closest friends know us, but even better than we know ourselves. For when we do not know our true desires, the Holy Spirit interprets them to God for us. When we do not know the way to turn, the Spirit leads us. When we are weighed down by doubts and despair, the Spirit preserves our soul. When we cannot hold our lives in our own hands, then we know they will be held in the hand of God. The man in whom the Spirit dwells, dwells in the Spirit, the Comforter whom our friend Jesus Christ sends us.

Richardson continues by arguing that unlike the fairly precise trinitarian and specifically christological formulas of the early church, such a formulation is missing for the unique work of the Holy Spirit. His suggestion for this lacuna is the formula "one person in two persons."

The Church has not yet formulated a dogmatic explanation of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a human person. She has defined the relation of God to creation as *ex nihilo*; she has defined the presence of God in Jesus Christ as "one person in two natures"; but she has never defined the union of the Holy Spirit with the soul, or very person, of a man. I suggest, however, that Scripture and ecumenical dogma require the

minimum affirmation that the Holy Spirit indwells a man as "one person in two persons." This formula is to be explained as follows: when the Holy Spirit indwells a created person, He does not assume a human nature. Rather, He unites Himself with a created person or individual existence in an "uncreated" way. In this indwelling the distinctive individualities of both the human person and the Holy Spirit are maintained, and yet they are spoken of as a single subject. They "indwell" one another. In this way, the act of either is referred to the other: "I pray, yet not I, but the Spirit in me . . . ," says the Apostle. "Hear the Word of the Lord . . . ," says the prophet, speaking with a human voice.

On the other hand, the indwelling Spirit not only unites Himself with a human person, but He also indwells and is united with Jesus Christ, whose Spirit He is. In this way, the Spirit is one person in two persons: He is in Jesus Christ and He is in the created person whom He indwells. He is a common subject of two other distinct subjects.

Here we see the clear difference between the christological and the pneumatological viewpoints. The notion of substitution, so important in Christology, obscures the mode of the Spirit's work since the Holy Spirit does not believe, witness, and pray, *in our place* or *on our behalf (extra nos)* but *to us (in nobis)*. (A characteristic New Testament expression can be found in Romans 8:16: "It is that very Spirit bearing witness with (*summarturei*) our spirit that we are children of God.") In addition to Richardson's "one person in two persons," A.A. van Ruler also coins a wonderfully descriptive new phrase to describe this: *theonomous reciprocity*:

What is called substitution in christology, is called reciprocity in pneumatology. Theonomous reciprocity: it is the Spirit that does and gives everything. It is the Spirit, for example, who sets our will free so that we obtain a truly free will. Nevertheless, a theonomous reciprocity is still a genuine *reciprocity*. The chief characteristic of the Holy Spirit's work is that it sets us to work.<sup>28</sup>

A final difference that must be noted is that while perfectionism is christologically necessary, it is a pneumatological heresy both at the individual and communal level. Classically, Jesus is an all-sufficient Savior yet the conflict of Spirit against flesh and the demonic continues. The Christian tradition tends to reject both enthusiasm and utopianism. No person and no community *fully* possess the Spirit even though the Spirit may be present *truly*.<sup>29</sup> Thus there is a decided provisionality to the work of the Spirit in us and through us.

The pneumatological perspective thus points us to the full participation of human beings in God's continuing mission to the world. God's Spirit does not replace the human spirit but in uniting with it renews it and equips it for service in God's kingdom. In Van Ruler's words:

In the mediation of salvation it is God the Holy Spirit who brings salvation to me in many ways so that I become a partaker of it. In the application of salvation, it is I who have salvation applied to me by the Spirit and in the Spirit, in order that it fully becomes my salvation. Everything hinges on this happening. God's cause must truly become my cause; I repeat God's words as truly mine. That this result takes place is the essence, or at any rate, the goal of the Spirit's activity.<sup>30</sup>

Barth's fear that a theological focus on the Holy Spirit would obscure the distinction between God's Spirit and the human spirit is warranted from a christological point of view. From a pneumatological perspective, however, a "union of the divine and human spirit," understood as "theonomous reciprocity," is fully appropriate for that indeed is the ultimate goal of the Spirit's work. The reason for this is that "the Holy Spirit is uniquely God in creative interaction with the human spirit."<sup>31</sup>

## A Cosmic Pneumatology

### *Some Scriptural and Theological Givens*

It is generally granted that the New Testament is relatively silent about the cosmic work of the Spirit. There are no cosmic pneumatological passages in the New Testament corresponding, for example, to cosmic christological passages such as Colossians 1:15-20 or John 1:1-18.<sup>32</sup> Romans 8, which speaks extensively about the Spirit and about the groaning, expectant creation, perhaps comes closest, but even there a direct linkage between Spirit and the Creation is not explicitly stated. For specific cosmological-pneumatological texts we are dependent more or less on Old Testament passages such as Genesis 1:2, 2:7, Job 26:13,33:4; Psalm 104:26-30, the "gifting" of artisans such as Bezalel and Oholiab (Exod. 31:2-11; 35:30-35) and the "anointing," for specific tasks, of charismatic judges such as Othniel, Jephthah, and Samson by the *ruach Yhwh* (Judges 3:10; 11:29; 14:6,19). However, such important biblical themes as holiness, Sabbath rest, tabernacle and temple (the dwelling of God with us—Rev. 21:3), and glory also need to be taken into account in a cosmic pneumatology. It is the cosmic work of the Spirit that underscores the eschatological goal of creation for the Sabbath—for God's glory; for the indwelling Spirit to be at home in the Creation. In Moltmann's words: "It is the Sabbath which blesses, sanctifies and reveals the world as God's creation . . . it is only the Sabbath which completes and crowns creation. It is only in his Sabbath rest that the creative God comes to his goal, which means coming to

himself and to his glory. When people celebrate the Sabbath they perceive the world as God's Creation."<sup>33</sup>

In addition to explicit references to the cosmic Spirit and broad biblical-theological themes such as Sabbath, glory, and tabernacle/temple, it is also possible to *infer* cosmic implications from scriptural references to the Holy Spirit's particular work as the Pentecostal Spirit of Jesus. Such a theological move seems justified by the trinitarian fact that the same Spirit is at work in church and cosmos and that the Holy Spirit's renewing work in the church is the first fruit of a renewed creation.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, from the New Testament confession that the Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of truth" (John 14:17) it has been inferred that the Spirit is *the* Teacher not only of the church but also the inspiration of the human intellectual quest in general. Scientific knowledge, then, is also a "fruit of the Spirit." Similarly, in the same way that the Spirit is the bond of unity in the church (1 Cor. 12, esp. vs. 13), efforts to promote all human solidarity and community can be said to be of the Spirit. The Spirit who anointed Jesus to bring salvation to the poor (Luke 4, Isa. 61) is also, it has been argued, the *Spiritus Liberator* in all social and political movements seeking justice for the oppressed. Finally, the Holy Spirit, the Vivifier and Consummator, who is the source and guarantee of Christian hope (Eph. 4:4, 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5) is *also the source* of all creation's hope and expectation (Rom. 8:23).<sup>35</sup>

#### *Application:*

What is to be done with this biblical-theological material? What difference does it make to the concrete life of the church? Certain general, broad affirmations follow rather naturally and are not terribly contentious. A trinitarian cosmic pneumatology enables us to distinguish, without separating, the divine Spirit and the human spirit as well as distinguish the works of the triune God in the Creation and in redemption/reconciliation. It leads us to distinguish, once again without alienating separation, the community of Christian faith from the world while affirming that the church's distinct identity in Christ is for the glory of God and the salvation of the world. A cosmic pneumatology, in other words helps us to rediscover the genuine catholicity of the church and its catholic task in the world. Genuine renewal in the Christian church cannot take place apart from an evangelical and socio-political mission to the world.<sup>36</sup> The Pentecostal Spirit of Jesus Christ, which unites believers with their Lord and with one another in one body is also the Spirit of the living God *universally* present to all people as a life-giving, gift-bestowing, quickening, and enabling power. Furthermore, a cosmic pneumatology reminds us that the ultimate divine goal is the sanctification of all things. ("On that day, there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, 'Holy to the Lord.' And the cooking pots in the house of the Lord shall be as holy as the bowls in front of the altar; and every cooking pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 14:20-21a,

emphasis added). In that sense it is correct to say that the church exists "for the world."

Since God's Spirit is not absent from but indeed present to all humanity, even outside of the intentional Christian community, the Christian gospel must never be presented in gnostic fashion as something alien to the human spirit. Redemption in Christ, communion with the Pentecostal Spirit of Jesus, does not negate but restores and is thus the affirmation and fulfillment of our true humanity including legitimate human quests for truth, freedom, unity, justice, and peace. In this sense it is correct to say that salvation is "humanization."

These general affirmations are, I believe, relatively unproblematic and necessary correctives to all forms of evangelical gnostic sectarianism. However, when we move to greater specificity and concreteness, when we begin the "hazardous task of 'the discernment of spirits,'" we face "the perennial temptation" to use the doctrine of the Spirit "in support of [our] disparate cultural and political enthusiasms."<sup>37</sup> What does the church do with the reality of God's presence beyond its walls in the world? Should the liturgy express gratitude for or celebrate specific scientific discoveries or technological innovations because all "truth" ultimately is from the Spirit of God? Should the church affirm all expressions of human solidarity, all efforts to improve justice or promote peace since the Holy Spirit is after all the Spirit of unity?

The problem here is that the provisionality and ambiguity of human experience calls for extreme caution in the process of discernment. Scientific knowledge, expressions of solidarity, and movements for political liberation, justice, and peace, *can* be expressions of the Spirit of truth, unity, liberation, and hope, *can* be a blessing to humanity; *but* they can also lead (and *have* led!) to idolatry and incredible inhuman barbarism. The history of identifying specific social and political movements as harbingers of the "new age of God's Spirit" (from Eusebius's praise of Constantine, to Thomas Müntzer's revolt, to the Puritans, to the German Christians, to the "blessing" of Soviet, Chinese, Cuban, and Nicaraguan revolutions, to the civil religion of the American Religious Right) should serve as a warning here. Another concrete example illustrates this point.

Hendrikus Berkhof in his discussion of the cosmic work of the Spirit, speaks of the "sanctification of structures" on a direct analogy with "sanctification of persons." For Berkhof, this includes the process of Christianizing through the mediation of the church and gospel but it also has a life of its own. "It so happens that God instructs the church as much by what happens in the world as vice versa."<sup>38</sup> "The renewal of the world is not a direct fruit of the renewal of people, but follows its own ways."<sup>39</sup> It is because Christ is Lord and head of all creation that Berkhof wishes to claim for the socially democratizing, desacralizing, secularizing, individualizing, and scientific-technological emancipation from nature, so characteristic of Western civilization, the struggling, progressing work of the Holy Spirit. "The liberating and transforming power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ is at work everywhere where

men are freed from the tyranny of nature, state, color, caste, class, sex, poverty, disease and ignorance.<sup>40</sup>

A somewhat different, if not contradictory, vision of the cosmic Spirit is given by Jürgen Moltmann in *God in Creation*. His proposal differs from Berkhof's in that he is convinced that the secularization and scientific-technical mastery characteristic of Western civilization is hardly the movement of the Spirit since it has resulted in a life and death struggle for the creation. Rather a certain re-divinization of nature as the dwelling place for the Spirit is needed. Themes such as indwelling, glory, Sabbath rest, enjoyment rather than mastery, delighting, participating, harmony, cooperation, and community abound in Moltmann's work.

Must we choose here? Should the Christian church be in the business of making judgments about political and social revolutions; whether of the left (Maoist, Sandinista) or the right (The Contract with America)? Which spirit is to be discerned in the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European empire? Is the spirit of democratic capitalism or of socialism more Christian? Is the splitting of the atom a step toward greater humanization and freedom? The problem with even this token list is that judgments about such matters, while significant, are still *penultimate* and *debatable*. Should the body of Christ be yet further divided by church assemblies "blessing" or "cursing" social or political movements and scientific/technological achievements? Is the church even competent to make such judgments and in some sense to make them binding on its members? Or, since the Spirit of God is indeed present beyond the church, why should the church even bother to affirm, approve, sanction, or condemn scientific discoveries or social and political movements? Is it perhaps, ironically, a form of Constantinian hubris for church bodies to suggest that they alone truly know what the Spirit of God is doing? Is it even a species of Christian gnosticism involving the claim that the church, and *only* the church, is able to make such judgments about historical movements? Are not decidedly provisional and carefully qualified judgments called for instead?

The Christian church does know Jesus and affirms the Spirit of Jesus to be God the Holy Spirit. Jesus is confessed by the church as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Does not the church have enough to do in being true to and proclaiming that good news? The first affirmation of the *Barmen Declaration* (1934) seems apropos to this issue when it confesses:

Jesus Christ, as he is testified to us in the Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God, whom we are to hear, whom we are to trust and obey in life and in death. We repudiate the false teaching that the church can and must recognize yet other happenings and powers, images and truths as divine revelation alongside thus one Word of God, as a source of her preaching.<sup>41</sup>

My queries in the previous paragraph are based on an insistence that we *distinguish but not separate* the cosmic and soteriological work of the Holy

Spirit while also suggesting a somewhat restricted role for the church. Furthermore, it means that we insist that the proper Christian movement is from the Spirit-led community to the world rather than the other way around. This is not to deny that the church learns from the world but to insist with Barmen that the Spirit-led community exists on a christological foundation of grace alone. To reverse the order is to reduce the Christian faith to moralism, to works.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> In the Ford Lewis Battles festschrift, *Reformatio Perennis: Essays on Calvin and the Reformation*, B.A. Gerrish and Robert Benedetto, eds. (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1981), 11-26.

<sup>2</sup> I. John Hesselink, *On Being Reformed: Distinctive Characteristics and Common Misunderstandings* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1983); John Bolt, *Christian and Reformed Today* (Jordan Station, Ont.: Paideia, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> Van Ruler's role in the following discussion is twofold. First, his theology has profoundly influenced my own pneumatology and provides some of the key theoretical models guiding my analysis, particularly the relation between Christology and pneumatology (see A.A. Van Ruler, "Structural Differences Between the Christological and Pneumatological Perspectives," in *Calvinist Trinitarianism and Theocentric Politics: Essays Toward a Public Theology*, Toronto Studies in Theology, No. 38, trans. John Bolt [Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989], 27-46). Second, Van Ruler's thought has been a significant influence on a key player in the pneumatological shift in the ecumenical world, the Tübingen theologian Jürgen Moltmann (see note 5 below). Moltmann acknowledges his debt to Van Ruler, *inter alia*, in *The Crucified God*, trans. R.A. Wilson and John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1974), 259-64, 288.

<sup>4</sup> M. Eugene Osterhaven, "John Calvin: Order and the Holy Spirit," in *The Faith of the Church: A Reformed Perspective on its Historical Development* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 162-93.

<sup>5</sup> The first, the christologically/eschatologically shaped series included *Theology of Hope*, *The Crucified God*, and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*; the second more pneumatologically shaped series includes *Trinity and the Kingdom*, *God in Creation*, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, *The Spirit of Life*, and *The Coming of God*. On Moltmann's pneumatological turn see D. Lyle Dabney, "The Advent of the Spirit: The Turn to Pneumatology in the Theology of Jürgen Moltmann," *The Asbury Theological Journal* 48/1 (1993), 81-107.

<sup>6</sup> This is clearly reflected in the influential, dehistoricized christological vision of Raimundo Panikkar, whose unified theory of religion, according to fellow Indian theologian Vinoth Ramachandra, rests on a hermeneutic that "is grounded in the radical disjunction . . . between Logos and Spirit. *Only the Spirit is capable of being universal . . . .* Logos is there for the sake of life, not vice versa" (*The Recovery of*

*Mission: Beyond the Pluralist Paradigm* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 99, emphasis added).

<sup>7</sup> Here the new ecological interest of Latin liberation theologian Leonardo Boff is a signal indicator; see Leonardo Boff, *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995). On Moltmann's ecological spirituality see Steven Bouma-Prediger, *The Greening of Theology* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

<sup>8</sup> This relation between the Spirit and creation is much neglected in Christian thinking. Calvin and, following him, Abraham Kuyper are the only ones I know who tried to do justice to this cosmic aspect of pneumatology." Hendrikus Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1964), 96; cf., idem., *Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 217.

<sup>9</sup> John Calvin was one of the few people to take up and maintain this conception: *Spiritus Sanctus enim est, qui ubique diffusa omnia sustinent, vegetat et vivificat.*" Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 11. Moltmann also notes that the Jewish and Eastern Orthodox traditions have developed such a theology. Dabney overlooks Moltmann's reference to Calvin in his desire to demonstrate the "illegitimate subordination of pneumatology to christology that has determined the Western tradition and led to division in the church" ("The Advent of the Spirit," 100).

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, "John Calvin the Theologian," in his *Calvin and Augustine*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1956), 484-485. The authors of the two major works on Calvin's doctrine of the Holy Spirit concur in Warfield's judgment. See Werner Krusche, *Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957), 12; and Simon van der Linde, *De Leer van den Heiligen Geest bij Calvin, Bigdrage tot de Kennis der Reformatorische Theologie*, Th.D. dissertation (Wageningen: H. Veenman and Zonen, 1943), 2. The first of van der Linde's theses (*stellingen*) defended in his doctoral examination reads "Terecht typert B.B. Warfield Calvin als den theoloog van den Heiligen Geest."

<sup>11</sup> I have explored Calvin's cosmic pneumatology in greater detail in a presentation given at the Sixth Colloquium on Calvin and Calvin Studies, held at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, May 6-7, 1987 on the general topic "Calvin and the Holy Spirit." See John Bolt, "Spiritus Creator: The Use and Abuse of Calvin's Cosmic Pneumatology," in *Calvin and the Holy Spirit*, ed. Peter DeKlerk (Grand Rapids: Calvin Studies Society, 1989), 17-34.

<sup>12</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. J.T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, *The Library of Christian Classics*, XX-XXI (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), III.i.1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, II.ii.16. This same distinction is affirmed by a contemporary Orthodox theologian, Nikos Nissiotis, "The Pneumatological Aspect of the Catholicity of the Church," in *What Unity Implies*, World Council of Churches Studies, no. 76, ed. Reinhard Groscurth (Geneva: WCC, 1969), 19: "Therefore, one should not confuse

the action of the Spirit as being always present in the creation of the universe—certainly, there is nothing good in our daily life which is not a gift of the Spirit—with the distinctive act of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and always and continuously after it in the world by realizing in Christ the particular community of faith, uniting the believers in one and sending out the Apostles.”

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xiii.14.

<sup>15</sup> Cited by Lawrence Adams, “The WCC at Canberra: Which Spirit?,” *First Things* no. 14 (June/July 1991), 35. Similarly, Anglican Archbishop George Carey: “What we must ask ourselves, is the truth that the Holy Spirit will lead us into? Surely it is the truth about God in Jesus Christ . . . the truth that the Holy Spirit leads us into must be Christocentric or it is not Christian. In other words, let us be careful not to separate the work of the Spirit from that of the Lord.” *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the turning point here was the adoption of the report, “The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church” by the Fourth WCC Assembly at Uppsala, July 4-20, 1968. See the *Uppsala Report* (Geneva: WCC, 1968), 7-20 and Fred H. Klooster, “Uppsala on ‘The Holy Spirit’ and the Catholicity of the Church,” *Calvin Theological Journal*, 4 (12969), 51-98.

<sup>17</sup> This phrase is taken from the Uppsala statement on “The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church,” no. 10. *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>18</sup> L. Gilkey, *How the Church Can Minister to the World Without Losing Itself* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964). Similarly, Robert Jenson, in a stimulating discussion of the “Cosmic Spirit” speaks of the necessity and peril of cosmic pneumatology: “The enterprise of cosmic pneumatology is thus necessary; indeed, it is dogmatically mandated by the Trinity doctrine’s assertion of the unity of Father and Spirit. But the enterprise is also perilous, for it must be the particular Spirit of Jesus and of the church to whom we attribute cosmic efficacy; that is, we must assert the universal potency of events in one little religious group. Such an assertion strains the Western intellectual tradition to breaking. As we will see, those who have ventured cosmic pneumatology have not always been able to avoid producing nonsense or myth. And conversely, the enterprise exposes theology to powerful temptation: to mitigate the offense by relaxing the restriction by ‘of Jesus and the church’ a little, to fudge the particularity of the Spirit.” In Carl E. Braaten, Robert Jenson, eds., *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 2. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 165.

<sup>19</sup> John Godsey, ed., *Karl Barth’s Table Talk* (Richmond: John Knox Press, n.d.), 27. Cf. Karl Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, ed. Dietrich Ritschl, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 278-79. A somewhat different caution, especially directed to the work of the Spirit in *creation*, is reflected in the preface to Jürgen Moltmann’s *God in Creation*, xi-xv.

<sup>20</sup> Cited by Lawrence E. Adams, “The WCC at Canberra: Which Spirit?,” 35.

<sup>21</sup> See Kilian McDonnell, “A Trinitarian Theology of the Holy Spirit?,” *Theological Studies*, 46 (1985), 191. McDonnell begins his essay with this lament from

Augustine: "Wise and spiritual men have written numerous books on the Father and the Son. . . . On the contrary, the Holy Spirit has not yet been studied so extensively and with like care by the learned and famous commentators on the divine Scriptures so that one might easily understand the proper character of the Spirit, and the fact that we can call Him neither Son nor Father but only the Holy Spirit." McDonnell then cites a number of similar complaints including one from Nicholas Berdyaev who called the doctrine of the Holy Spirit the last unexplored theological frontier. Also see Albert C. Outler, "Veni, Creator Spiritus: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," in *New Theology*, no. 4, ed. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 195-196: "The likeliest place to begin, [a discussion of the Holy Spirit] I think, is by noticing the strange reticence and ambiguity of the traditional teaching about the Spirit, both in the Scriptures and in the church tradition. Despite heroic hermeneutical efforts by recent exegetes, the biblical notions of pneumatology are far from simple and clear. The creeds of the early church are almost cryptic. The earliest form of the Apostles' Creed has merely the bare phrase 'and in Holy Spirit' for its lame conclusion—and there is nothing more ample in the Eastern Creeds until the pneumatomachian controversies of the last half of the fourth century. The bibliography of important literature in pneumatology is downright skimpy; we have no 'classics' here to compare with those in theology proper, in Christology or Christian ethics."

<sup>22</sup> Kilian McDonnell, "A Trinitarian Theology of the Holy Spirit," 194. McDonnell here refers specifically to Basil's *On the Holy Spirit*. The same argument—that most Christian theology is functionally binitarian—has been set forth in a highly original way by Herbert Richardson, *Toward an American Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), ch. 5. The need to make a clear distinction between the "logic" of Christology and Pneumatology is argued with creative brilliance by the Dutch Reformed theologian A.A. Van Ruler in his essay "Structural Differences Between the Christological and Pneumatological Perspectives," (see note 3 above). A typical Van Ruler observation (p. 28): "One cannot gratuitously derive the structure of pneumatological dogma from christological dogma. This was done rather easily in the fourth century. . . . Pneumatological dogma has its own distinct structure in comparison with christological dogma." Cf. Van Ruler's "Grammar of a Pneumatology," in *Calvinist Trinitarianism and Theocentric Politics*, 47-88.

<sup>23</sup> According to Hilary of Poitiers, "He whom in our profession we must join with the Father and the Son cannot be separated in such a profession from the Father and the Son." Cited by McDonnell, *ibid.*, 206. Cf. the judgment of Paulos Mar Gregorios, "Toward a Basic Document," *The Ecumenical Review*, 41/2 (April, 1989), 191: "One of the temptations of modern theology is to underplay the work of the Holy Spirit. . . . The Spirit is Creator, involved in the creation from the beginning of it to its final fulfilment. . . . *There can be no vital and coherent theology without a pneumatology that does justice to the Spirit's work in the whole created order, as well as her special work in the church and in Christians as persons.* . . . Very few theologians, whether they be Protestant, Catholic or Orthodox, have so far done justice to the work of the Holy Spirit in the church in relation to the work of the same

Spirit in the whole of humanity and the cosmos. This job needs to be done before ecumenical theology can be vital" (emphasis added).

<sup>24</sup> For what follows I am deeply indebted to the two essays of A.A. Van Ruler referred to in notes 3 and 22 above and to Herbert Richardson's essay "Toward an American Theology" cited in note 22 above.

<sup>25</sup> The history of the Logos and the history of God's Spirit were often seen parallel to one another in theology, and were even interwoven with one another. But a clear distinction was made between the *incarnation* of the Logos and the *inhabitation* of the Spirit. The Word '*becomes flesh*' but the Spirit '*indwells*'" (Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 102).

<sup>26</sup> "There is no *hypostatic union* of the Holy Spirit with the human person. The union of the Holy Spirit with the human person is not hypostatic because the Spirit is united with a man in the same way he is united with Jesus Christ, i.e., by mutual indwelling or perichoresis. This is a real, though not a hypostatic, union—for in the perichoresis of the Spirit with the soul of man the two persons remain distinct." "Because the sanctification of man results from a union of persons, man's nature is neither divinized nor transformed by it. The man in whom the Spirit dwells remains fully man" (Herbert Richardson, *Toward an American Theology*, 148, 154).

<sup>27</sup> Herbert Richardson, *Toward an American Theology*, 146-147.

<sup>28</sup> *Calvinist Trinitarianism and Theocentric Politics*, 35.

<sup>29</sup> Here we do have an important christological parallel with the *totus-totum* distinction so crucial to the so-called "extra calvinisticum." See E. David Willis, *Calvin's Catholic Christology: The Function of the So-Called Extra Calvinisticum in Calvin's Theology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), 30-33.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 78, cf. 209.

<sup>31</sup> R. William Franklin and Joseph M. Shaw, *The Case for Christian Humanism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 226.

<sup>32</sup> Unlike the Old, the New Testament hardly speaks of the Creation, nor does it mention the work of the Spirit in the Creation. This is because the Old Testament belief in God as creator of heaven and earth is presupposed and unquestioned" (Eduard Schweizer, *The Holy Spirit*, trans. Reginald H. and Ilse Fuller [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978], 67). Cf. Max-Alain Chevallier, "Sur un Silence du Nouveau Testament: L'Esprit de Dieu a L'Oeuvre dans le Cosmos et L'Humanite," *New Testament Studies* 33 (1987), 344-369.

<sup>33</sup> J. Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 6.

<sup>34</sup> For what follows I am especially indebted to Philip Rosata, S.M., "The Mission of the Spirit Within and Beyond the Church," in Emilio Castro ed., *To the Wind of God's Spirit: Reflections on the Canberra Theme*: (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), 21-30. Rosata's argument is "that the spiritual renewal of the churches . . . is essentially conjoined by the Triune God to the aspirations of all humanity. For the

church first emerged, and continually grows, as human beings, created and destined to be re-created by the Father in the Son, came and come through the power of the Holy Spirit to faith and baptism. The church is at any present moment fulfilled as human persons find the culmination of their various longings in Christ the Redeemer, and are directed by his Spirit towards the new heaven and the new earth being prepared by the Father. In the light of the Christian claim that all reality was initially animated the *Spiritus Creator* so as to be ready for the initial advent of the Word, and is now oriented by the same divine Pneuma towards its eschatological goal in his final advent, it will be argued that the church, the last fruit of the original creation and the first fruit of the new, is justified in imploring the Holy Spirit on behalf of the renewal of the entire world.”

<sup>35</sup> These four specific categories are from Rosata (ibid.) and are not suggested as exhaustive. For example, a good case could be made for “freedom” as a fruit of the cosmic Spirit. Also, if the Holy Spirit is the teacher of sin (John 16:8,9), could it not be said that conscience and guilt in general are fruit of the cosmic Spirit?

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Nikos Nissiotis, “The Pneumatological Aspect of the Catholicity of the Church,” 28: “[W]e have to emphasize the distinctive operation of the Spirit through the Church, retaining, however, the insight that this work of the Spirit is for the whole world and is in solidarity with it, reaffirming that the Church only exists for the world and as an inseparable part of it.”

<sup>37</sup> Albert Outler, “Pneumatology as an Ecumenical Frontier,” 365, 371.

<sup>38</sup> H. Berkhof, *Christian Faith*, 500.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 508.

<sup>40</sup> Berkhof, *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, 102.

<sup>41</sup> In John H. Leith, *Creeeds of the Church* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963), 517.