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The Spirit-baptised Church

Frank D. Macchia

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is a root metaphor for the inauguration and fulfilment of the Kingdom of God and for the constitution and fulfilment of the Church in the world as the Kingdom's chief sign and instrument. The Church thus exists in the outpouring of the Spirit. The Church not only exists in the outpouring of the Spirit but lives from it in all facets of its life in Christ: kerygmatic, sacramental, and charismatic and missional life. The Church lives from this impartation of the Spirit and will be fulfilled by it when it rises in the fullness of the Spirit that characterises the glorified Christ.

Keywords: Pentecostal Churches; Spirit baptism; Kingdom and Church; Trinity; eschatology; charismatic Church; mission

'The Church exists in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.'¹ This statement expresses well the significance of the baptism in the Holy Spirit for how we understand the nature and purpose of the church. This is so because Spirit baptism is the biblical metaphor for God's self-donation to humanity in the outpouring of the Spirit to indwell them, to take them up into the divine life, and to enable them to participate in the divine mission. The Pentecostal churches have drawn our attention to the significance of this metaphor for the church's participation in the life and mission of the Spirit in the world. Yet, Pentecostals have not been in agreement as to the precise meaning of Spirit baptism for the life of the church. Some of us believe that this meaning is eschatological and global in significance. To unpack this expansive connection between Spirit baptism and the church, we will begin by discussing the meaning of the term for the church in relation to the Kingdom of God, the self-impartation of the Triune God, and the eschatological expanse of the Spirit's mission through the church in the world.

Spirit baptism: the Kingdom and the Church

Before baptising Jesus, John the Baptist spoke of the coming of one who would be greater than he and who would not baptise in water (as John himself had done) but rather in the Holy Spirit. All four Gospels have John the Baptist announcing the coming of the Messiah as the one who will baptise in the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3.11–12; Mark 1.8; Luke. 3.16–17; John. 1.33), implying that Jesus' Spirit baptising (only the

¹Del Colle, 'The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit', 249.

verb is used) functions as a root metaphor for describing the redemptive work that involves the origin and fulfilment of the Church. The Church is not fundamental to John the Baptist's use of the Spirit baptismal metaphor, which focuses instead on his preaching about the coming Kingdom of God (Matt. 3:1–2). Jesus' own reference to the metaphor of Spirit baptism is given within his teaching concerning the coming Kingdom according to Luke (Acts 1.2–5). Interestingly, the Spirit rests upon the disciples in Jerusalem, the city traditionally connected to the fulfilment of the Kingdom. The horizon of the event, however, goes beyond Jerusalem to involve the global reach of the Kingdom, for the goal is the filling of all flesh with the Spirit leading to final judgment and salvation (Acts 2.17–21).

Though the Church is born in Acts 2 with the baptism in the Spirit, Spirit baptism is devoted primarily to the inauguration and fulfilment of the Kingdom of God, for which the Church is born as its sign and instrument. There is no possibility of merely identifying the Church with the Kingdom of God, for the Kingdom is identifiable instead with God's liberating reign that sets the captives free, or with the very life and presence of the Spirit (Matt. 12.28; cf., Rom. 14.17). Indeed, the Son is the King and the Spirit is the Kingdom (Gregory of Nyssa). In the fulfilment of the Kingdom, the Spirit is thus the great 'ecclesiological dialectician', as the Czech theologian, Jan Milič Lochman, has noted.² The Spirit lives in dynamic dialectical tension with the Church, both accounting for its powerful life and yet resisting any simplistic identification with it. In possessing the Spirit (or, better, in being possessed by the Spirit), the Church not only lives in the liberty of the gospel but also groans under the burden of sin and death for the fullness of liberty yet to come. Especially as a divided people, the Church is called to work and grow towards a unity that will only be perfected in the *eschaton*. The Church is on the way, a pilgrim people that lives from the Spirit but in the midst of weakness. The Church is born and lives from the down-payment of the Spirit, but the fullness of life is not yet hers. Only in the new creation will Spirit baptism bring the Church into the fullness of pneumatic, Christoform existence. Only then will the Spirit unite all things, including the Church, under Christ (Eph. 1.10) and 'fill the whole universe' with Christ's presence (Eph. 4.10).

As an event of the Spirit to inaugurate the Kingdom of God, Jesus' baptising in the Spirit is initially described in *contrast* to John the Baptist's water rite. John baptised in water *but* Jesus would baptise in the *Spirit*. John is thus not worthy to untie the Messiah's shoes (Mt. 3.11). No rite no matter how devoted to the coming Kingdom can simply be identified with Jesus' baptising in the Spirit. The prophets of old viewed ceremonies as pointing to a divine act to be accomplished by way of the Spirit. They said in effect, 'We circumcise the foreskin but God circumcises the heart' (e.g., Deut. 30.6). Similarly, John stated that he baptised in water as a sign of repentance but Jesus will baptise in the *Spirit* unto judgment and purgation/restoration. Yet, the relationship between John's rite and Spirit baptism is also complementary in the sense that John's baptism was an act of hope that awaited the redemptive act of the Messiah in bringing the Holy Spirit. But it was Jesus' act of imparting the Spirit that would bring the Kingdom of God to fulfilment through the life and mission of the Church.

The Church would be born from this great inauguration of the Kingdom of God through the Spirit in service to an ever expansive global mission of announcing and

²Lochman, 'Kirche', 135.

embodying the liberating reign of God in the world. The Old Testament connected the coming of God to establish God's end-time salvation to a final outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2.28). The promise began with Israel. God stated: 'I will no longer hide my face from them; I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel' (Ezek. 39.29). God will cleanse Israel and give them the Spirit so that they could follow the law (Ezek. 36.25–27). He will also put his Spirit in them to raise them up as a restored people from the grave of their despair, by way of implication, even the grave of death itself (Ezek. 37). God will put the Spirit upon his servant and he will bring justice to the nations (Isa. 42.1). The Messiah will fulfil the mandate to bless the nations by fulfilling justice and imparting the Spirit. The mandate to witness to the nations is thus handed down from the risen Christ to the disciples (Matt. 28.19), for the end will only come once this is done (Matt. 24.14). The Spirit will come upon the people of God to empower their witness to the ends of the earth (Acts 1.8). In Revelation, the Spirit proceeds from the Lamb of God into all the earth to bear witness to the life that conquers death through the risen Christ (Rev. 5.6). The people of God are the ones through whom this witness is made.

This universal blessing is the promise of the law as distinct from the curse that would come upon Israel in the nation's failure to grasp the promise of life (Deut. 28–30). Indeed, sin is not simply something quantifiable like the breaking of a commandment but is also the denial of the very life to which the law pointed as witness. Sin thus involves alienation and death. Consequently, righteousness cannot come primarily by way of the law 'for if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law' (Gal. 3.21). Only the Spirit brings life. In pointing to life, the law testified to a fulfilment that would come 'apart from the law' (Rom. 3.21), to 'justification and life' in the place of condemnation and death (Rom. 5.18) imparted within the Spirit of life.³

Spirit baptism in the self-giving of the Triune God

How is this Spirit imparted? It is the Messiah who will ultimately bear the Spirit for the fulfilment of the promise of righteousness and life (Isa. 61.1–3), a point that ends up qualifying how the promise would be fulfilled for Israel and the nations. For John the Baptist, only the coming Messiah possesses 'apocalyptic transcendence', for he alone will bring the Spirit for the blessing of the nations. The opening of the heavens at Jesus' baptism in Matthew 3.16 is typical of an apocalyptic revelation or event.⁴ In the same verse, the descending of a dove is a sign of the Spirit brooding over the waters at creation and of the new creation in the story of Noah.⁵ The separation of the wheat and chaff implies that final judgment will fall upon those who oppose God's end-time salvation. The Messiah will bring end-time restoration and judgment by baptising in the Spirit.

The Messiah will impart the Spirit after receiving the Spirit from the Father. Acts 2.33 tells us that Christ poured out the Spirit in fulfilment of the Father's promise: 'Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.' Jesus bore the Spirit as

³See the development of this connection between justification and the Spirit in, Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*.

⁴Nolland, *Luke 1–9.20*, 162.

⁵Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 58.

the faithful Son of the Father in order to impart the Spirit to others. As Irenaeus said, the Spirit rested on the Son to 'get accustomed to dwell in the human race, to repose on men, to reside within the work God has modelled, working the Father's will in them and renewing them from oldness to newness in life'.⁶ The Spirit gave the Son a Spirit-indwelt body at the incarnation in order through him to indwell all flesh.⁷ To elaborate further, N.T. Wright proposed that Jesus replaced the Jewish temple as the *locus* of God's presence and favour and also as the one who will fulfill the law and its promise of life. The judgment of God rested upon the Jewish temple, which will be destroyed and replaced by Jesus as the *locus* of God's presence and favour (Mark 14.58; 15.29–30; Matt. 26.61; 27.39–40; John 2.19; Acts 6.14).⁸ Jesus, as the temple of the Spirit and the faithful Son of the Father, descended into God forsakenness on the Cross in order through Resurrection to bring sinners into the realm of the Spirit. The atonement led to Resurrection and Pentecost. Jesus bore the Spirit to impart the Spirit on others, for 'the first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit' (1 Cor. 15.45).⁹

When Jesus poured out the Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost, tongues of fire rested on all of them and they announced in tongues understood by the nations the mighty deeds of God accomplished through the Messiah Jesus (Acts 2.3–12). In the image of the faithful Son, they themselves become a living temple of the Spirit at Pentecost, as suggested by the imagery of the event.¹⁰ The tongues of fire imply a holy dwelling place.¹¹ As Paul wrote to the saints at Corinth, 'you yourselves are God's temple' (1 Cor. 3.16). Jesus as the dwelling place of the Spirit died, rose, and ascended on high in order to impart the Spirit, so that sinners can also become the holy dwelling place of the Spirit in him. We are living stones founded upon the prophets and apostles with Christ as the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2.20–22; 1 Peter 2.4–5).

In the birth of the Church within the impartation of the Spirit, God is shown to be the self-donating God who wishes to dwell in creation and have creation dwell in God. Spirit baptism thus implies that the Triune God is not a closed circle of love but a self-giving, open circle. As Pentecostal theologian, Simon Chan, notes, the Spirit as the 'third Person' of the Godhead accounts for the eternal openness of God to the many beyond the 'I–Thou' relationship of the Father and the Son.¹² The reality of the Spirit does not allow us to confine the Trinity to an 'I–Thou' relation. The third person is the principle of excess or expansive otherness, celebrating the love shared between the Father and the Son in a way that involves an expansive reach globally and eschatologically to the alien others.¹³ The Spirit poured forth from the Father through the Son¹⁴ proliferates and diversifies the presence of Jesus in the world among communities of faith in many different and changing contexts over time. The Spirit brings the reality of Christ towards an ever-more expansive global and

⁶Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.17.1.

⁷See Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 126.

⁸Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 338–9.

⁹See the development of this idea of atonement in Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit*, 131–85.

¹⁰Beale, 'Descent of the Eschatological Temple'.

¹¹Menzies, 'Pre-Lucan Occurrences of the Phrase "Tongues of Fire"'.
¹²See Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, 32–3.

¹³See Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 47.

¹⁴I accept the ecumenical response to the *filioque* controversy by advocating the Spirit's eternal procession from the Father alone through the Son.

eschatological diversity, for Jesus was called by the Father and led of the Spirit to be the 'firstborn among many brothers and sisters' (Rom. 8.29).

Spirit baptism and the Church in eschatological expanse

Jesus thus baptises in the Spirit by pouring out the Spirit upon all flesh. In so doing, Christ gathers up all flesh into the blessing and mission of sonship. Oscar Cullmann suggests that John's baptism most likely involved pouring water over the head of the repentant for cleansing.¹⁵ This rite provides inspiration for Luke's description of how the Messiah will baptise the repentant in the Spirit as an abundant gift of grace. He will pour out the Spirit to inaugurate the new age and the new humanity. For Paul, the outpouring of the Spirit is to create the renewed Israel, which actually becomes the renewed humanity consisting of Jew and gentile incorporated into Christ the last Adam through the gift of the Spirit (1 Cor. 15.45–9). 1 Corinthians 12.13 thus may be translated as: 'In one Spirit we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, bond or free.' The Spirit is the agent of this Spirit baptism but also the powerful 'field' or reality into which the Church is baptised in incorporation into Christ. Consequently, the meaning of 1 Corinthians 12.13, according to Robertson and Plummer is as follows: 'The Spirit is the element in (*en*) which the baptism takes place and the one body is the end to which (*eis*) the act is directed.'¹⁶ Baptism in the Spirit is thus theologically prior to the unity, life, and mission of the one body. The outpouring of the Spirit constitutes the Church, incorporating believers into Christ and causing them to function in their unified witness as the sign and instrument of God's Kingdom in the world. The Church continues to live in Christ and from his Spirit in being and becoming the Church in the world. We are baptised into one body and continue to drink together of the one Spirit (1 Cor. 12.13). Be 'being filled' with the Spirit is the actual injunction of Paul in Ephesians 5.18.

The Spirit baptism metaphor is fluid and somewhat ambiguous but the major lines of meaning are fairly clear. The metaphor is connected to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit directed to all flesh (Acts 2.17), the inauguration and fulfilment of the eschatological reign of God on the earth (1.3–5), the incorporation of believers into Christ (1 Cor. 12.13), the purification of their hearts by faith (Acts 15.9), and the life of powerful witness to Christ in the world among the nations (Acts 1.8). The metaphor of Spirit baptism is fluid, expansive, and complex. Is Spirit baptism so multifaceted in its significance to the birth and life of the Church?

The fact is that there was no established theological tradition concerning the precise meaning of this relatively neglected metaphor for the Church. It was the Pentecostal Movement that would take this metaphor from relative obscurity and highlight it as the key component of entry into the abundant life of the Spirit. The difficulty was that, following their Holiness and revivalist roots, Pentecostals tended to focus Spirit baptism on an experience of empowerment for witness, neglecting the deeper and more expansive roots of the metaphor in the divine self-impartment to inaugurate the Kingdom and incorporate believers into Christ so that they could function as his body. Pentecostals had taken the metaphor from the Holiness Movement, which had defined it as a post-conversion revival experience of deeper

¹⁵Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament*, 62.

¹⁶Robertson and Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 272.

purity or sanctification. The Pentecostals then entered into a debate with their Holiness predecessors over which experience best fits the use of the metaphor in Acts. The Pentecostals cherished the experience of purity valued by Holiness advocates but viewed this as preparatory to what Pentecostals tended to see as another moment in the experience of the Spirit, namely, a dynamic infilling of the Spirit for empowered witness to the nations of the goodness of God (Acts 1.8). Most Pentecostals followed their Holiness forebears in defining Spirit filling as a post-conversion experience, but maintained that it was empowerment and not purity. Many added that speaking in tongues and other miraculous signs would vindicate the empowered witness of the Church as a legitimate pointer to the coming of the Kingdom of God in power.

The responses to the typically Pentecostal missional and charismatic understanding of Spirit baptism followed one of two major streams. The Catholic response (that was not only Catholic) focused Spirit baptism on water baptism as the sacramental rite of initiation.¹⁷ The contrast between Spirit and water baptism is not stressed here as much as their integration. Spirit baptism is viewed as the spiritual dimension of the sacrament of initiation to Christ. On the other hand, the typically Evangelical or free-church response has tended to connect Spirit baptism to regeneration through faith in Christ. The contrast between water and Spirit baptism is stressed in this way of interpreting the metaphor so as to protect the freedom of the Spirit and to resist formalising Spirit baptism within a sacramental rite.¹⁸

There are Pentecostals and charismatics of recent times who have responded to these ecumenical options and various mediating positions by accenting the eschatological expanse of the metaphor of Spirit baptism in the New Testament.¹⁹ Perhaps what is called for is a fluid and multidimensional understanding of the metaphor in which the role of Jesus in imparting the Spirit on behalf of the heavenly Father constitutes the Church as the body of Christ and a communion of the Spirit, incorporating diverse people into Christ through faith and water baptism, but also sanctifying, empowering, and glorifying the people of God in the image of the faithful Son. Spirit baptism is thus a root metaphor of the inauguration and fulfilment of the reign of God in the gift of the Spirit and through the Church as the sign and instrument of the Kingdom in the world.

Yet, because of Spirit baptism, the Church with all its weakness already lives from the Spirit in the loving embrace of the Triune God. We speak of a baptism of love by the Spirit of God with specific points of emphasis but with expansive and complex fulfilment in the wide open spaces of God's eschatological self-impartation as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.²⁰ In the remaining sections of this paper, I will explore an ecumenical theology of how Spirit baptism constitutes the Church and defines its nature and mission. I will begin with the typically Evangelical focus on regeneration through faith in Christ and will proceed to the sacramental and then the vocational understandings of the metaphor.

¹⁷See McDonnell and Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

¹⁸See Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*. Dunn criticises both the Pentecostal and the sacramental views of Spirit baptism.

¹⁹See discussion of these views in Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*.

²⁰See development of this view in Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*.

Spirit baptised born-again Church

Though Pentecostal churches tend to define Spirit baptism as a post-conversion experience of power for witness, many have from the beginning made it clear that this experience is at least rooted in the fundamental transformation of life involved in turning to Christ by faith in the Gospel. William J. Seymour, for example, referred to the power of the Spirit poured forth from Pentecost as 'rivers of salvation'.²¹ Some Chilean and German Pentecostals have been known to identify Spirit baptism with regeneration, as have Oneness Pentecostals (who represent about one-fifth of the global Pentecostal Movement). An increasing number of recent Pentecostal authors who view the experience of Spirit baptism as post-regenerative still view it as the *release* in life of the gift of the Spirit given at the point of regeneration through faith in Christ.²² There is potential here for dialogue between Pentecostals and Evangelicals on Spirit baptism.

Evangelicals can help in the realisation that Spirit baptism is deeper than an experience of power. Spirit baptism transforms persons, binding them to Christ and bringing them into community. Pentecostals can help in showing that Spirit baptism also involves an empowered witness directed to the nations. Important to regeneration and its consequence in empowered witness will be a joint recognition of the fact that the Church was born from the witness of the outpoured Spirit to the Word of God. The Spirit is received and diverse peoples taken up into Christ and his mission in the world through the life-transforming work of the Spirit in witness to Christ and his Gospel. Throughout the book of Acts believers proclaim or otherwise bear witness to the Word of truth when the Spirit is poured forth (Acts 1.8; 2.11; 4.31; 19.6). The Church is thus born in service to the Word of God. There is no possibility here of dissolving the Word of God into the Church's own institutional identity or subjective life. The Spirit at the heart of the Church's life and mission bears witness to Christ and seeks to continuously bring the Church into conformity with Christ's prophetic Word. As in the Book of Revelation, the Spirit seeks to grant the people of God the capacity to hear what Christ is saying to the churches (e.g., Rev. 3.6). Christ speaks to the churches today through the biblical canon, the words of the prophets and the apostles. This hearing and obeying allow the churches to bear effective witness to the world of the mercy and justice of the Kingdom of God.

As bearers of the Word, all believers participate in speaking the truth in love to one another and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph. 4.15; 5.21). The proclamation of the Word is not only centred on the pulpit or the ordained ministry. Pentecostal scholar, Roger Stronstad, thus refers to the universal 'prophethood' of believers.²³ This is not to deny that the ordained ministry leads in the proclamation of the Word. Jesus told his disciples that they would bind and loose and he focused on Peter as the rock among the others, as one earmarked to lead towards a larger ministry of binding the dark powers and setting the captives free (Matt. 16.17–20).²⁴ We are exhorted to submit to the ministries of those placed over us (Heb. 13.17). Yet, we are all living stones in the temple of God, bearing the Spirit

²¹Seymour, *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 6 (Feb.–Mar. 1907): 7.

²²Palma, 'Spirit Baptism', 94.

²³Stronstad, *Prophethood of All Believers*.

²⁴Cullmann notes that Peter is indeed the rock on whom Christ builds the Church, meaning that he may be viewed as having a special leadership role among his brothers (and sisters). See Cullman, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*.

in devotion to the Word of God (1 Peter 2.1–6). There is thus still a sense in which that proclamation is shared by all. The Word is proclaimed in the broad sense of the term by all in many ways and through many spiritual gifts, making this proclamation polycentric. In Acts 2, the baptism in the Spirit brings about an end-time witness in which sons and daughters prophesy and the young and the old participate with the prophetic gifts of dreams and visions (Acts 2.17). The Spirit baptised Church is transformed by the Spirit to be bearers of Christ and his Word in the world.

Spirit baptised Church and the sacraments

There is Word, but there is also sacrament in the Spirit-baptised church. The Spirit-baptised church cherishes both water baptism (Acts 2.38) and the breaking of bread (Acts 2.46). Both sacraments were instituted by Christ (Matt. 26.24–7; 28.19). The Reformed tradition has tended to place proclamation of the Word of God (e.g., in preaching) above sacraments as clearer and more effective in nature,²⁵ but Calvin's view was otherwise: 'The sacraments bring with them the clearest promises, and, when compared with the Word, have this peculiarity that they represent promises to life, as if painted in a picture'.²⁶ There is no separation here of Word and sacrament. For Calvin, this unity of Word and sacrament is due to the Spirit, who performs what is promised in the sacraments,²⁷ which explains how they are efficacious as means of grace to those who receive in faith. We are buried with Christ and rise with him 'through baptism' (Rom. 6.4), and the Lord's Supper is a 'participation in the blood of Christ' (1 Cor. 10.16). Through feet washing as well we take 'part in' Christ (John 13.8). The Spirit baptised church is taken up into Christ by the Spirit of sonship through faith in the Word of God as performed in the sacraments as well as proclaimed from the pulpit and through many other less obvious channels. The sacraments also allow us to partake of the mission of God in the world and its horizon in the new creation. They suggest 'alternative worlds' and help us to imagine 'alternative visions' of the world.²⁸ In them we celebrate something that is humanly absurd: the resurrection of the body and the new heavens and new earth.²⁹ This new creation embodies the ultimate outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh that is anticipated in the sacraments and made possible by Spirit baptism.

There is indeed a special relationship between baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit. John's baptism in water provided the setting and the image for John's own coining of the Spirit baptism metaphor. Matthew connected Jesus' baptism with those by his disciples. As Jesus is commissioned as the faithful Son of the Father through the resting of the Spirit upon him, so also the disciples should baptise peoples of all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3.16–17; 28.19) or in the name of this Triune God revealed and active in the commissioning event of Jesus' Messianic mission. The theological connection of water baptism with Spirit baptism is obvious, namely, the Spirit is to reach all

²⁵Note for example Berkouwer's criticism of G. van der Leeuw who viewed both the preached Word and the sacraments as equal in value as forms of proclamation, in Berkouwer, *The Sacraments*, 45–55.

²⁶Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979) 491 (4. 14. 1).

²⁷Ibid., 495–6 (4. 14. 7).

²⁸Driver, *Magic of Ritual*, 80–1.

²⁹Ibid., 202.

peoples, all flesh, in order to incorporate them into Christ and into Christ's mission and goals for the world within his liberating reign. Baptising all nations in water functions as a sign of what Spirit baptism is to accomplish in being poured out upon all flesh or all peoples.

Yet, one cannot simply reduce Spirit baptism to the spiritual side of Christian water baptism, as though its only meaning is to distinguish John's from Christian water baptism. Spirit baptism is theologically prior, and eschatologically transcendent, to water baptism. Water baptism can participate in the movement of the Spirit being poured out from the Father through Christ. In fact, through Spirit baptism, water baptism can reach in its symbolism towards what may be termed eschatological transcendence. Dying and rising with Christ in the water rite confirms and deepens regeneration by faith and anticipates not only dramatic moments of hope in this life but also the future rising with Christ in the new creation in full communion with all of the people of God. Spirit baptism becomes the primary context in which water baptism is to be understood and not the other way around.

Participation through the Lord's Supper in Christ's self-giving (1 Cor. 10.16) is also a reality that has Spirit baptism as its context. It is through baptism by and in the Spirit that we partake of Christ and of the life of communion with God and one another in the Spirit (1 Cor. 12.13). St John Chrysostom notes rightly that the work of the Spirit in the Lord's Supper is for 'fellowship in the Holy Spirit for the fullness of the Kingdom'.³⁰ The *epiclesis* is thus as important as the words of institution in the celebration of the meal. Tom Driver regrets the relative loss in the literature on the Lord's Supper of insight into sacramental experience as a being filled anew with the presence of God.³¹ The meal is an event of reconciliation and communion, a fresh infilling of the Spirit. We could add that if sacramental symbolism implies participation in the reality being symbolised, it participates in God's abundant self-giving as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the precise reality at the essence of Spirit baptism. Pentecostal theologian, Simon Chan, has suggested that the sacraments be viewed as contexts for understanding both the initial reception of the Spirit and continued renewals in the Spirit.³² Baptism, Feet Washing, and Lord's Supper are caught up within this divine self-giving present to us in the rich outpouring of the Spirit of God from the Father and through Christ as the faithful Son so that we could participate in the divine *koinonia*, the divine love poured out within and among us (Rom. 5.5).

Spirit baptised and empowered Church

Word and sacrament are not to be confined to the walls of the church but are to function as signs to the world of the coming Kingdom. Spirit baptism is also all about consecrated and empowered witness. Pentecostals are fond of pointing to Acts 1.8 to describe the *experience* of Spirit baptism: 'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' The entire book of Acts is read as a story of how this power is put to the test and succeeds at moving the mission ahead in the direction of all nations. The story continues in the present time, for Peter

³⁰Quoted in Wainwright, 'Veni Sancti Spiritus', 318.

³¹Driver, *Magic of Ritual*, 208.

³²Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 105–10.

himself quotes Joel to the effect that the mission is earmarked for the latter days and will not conclude until the Kingdom of God comes in final restoration and judgment (2.17–21). Those involved in the Pentecostal renewal wish for all communities of believers to be personally acquainted with the dynamic power that drove the early churches out into the world to bear dramatic and effective witness for Christ, not only through proclamation, but also with signs and wonders of the Spirit that signify Christ's victory over the dark forces.

There is no question but that this concern relates to the heart of the reality of Spirit baptism in Acts. Though the terminology of Spirit *baptism* assumes something initiatory (meaning that Spirit baptism is deeper than an experience), this initiation also leads to broad implications that involve something vocational and charismatic, namely, cleansing and empowered witness. The Spirit baptised Church as the temple of God's Spirit is consecrated for a holy purpose (Acts 15.9): to move out in the power of the Spirit to bear witness to the world of Christ as the condemned but vindicated Messiah. The early Pentecostals insisted to their forebears in the Holiness Movement that Spirit baptism was not an experience of sanctification but rather an experience of the gift of power to energise the sanctified life for witness. But is this bifurcation between consecration and vocation possible? Not if Spirit baptism inaugurates and fulfils the life of the Kingdom on earth. Pentecostal pastor, David Lim, has provocatively suggested that Spirit baptism in Christian experience should be termed 'vocational sanctification'.³³ So also, Simon Chan refers to a 'holy boldness' or an 'empowered holiness'.³⁴ He urges a convergence of *charismata* and holiness.³⁵ In other words, the early debate between most Pentecostals and their Holiness friends could be read as a debate over competing ideas about the experiential consequences of Spirit baptism as a sanctifying event, one faction focusing on purity of life and conduct and one highlighting the passion and energy that feeds the Church's witness through its charismatic and missionary life. Both in reality are forms of witness; both are consequences of consecration; both are forms of power. Note what one early Pentecostal pioneer wrote: 'There is no difference in quality between the baptism in the Holy Ghost and sanctification. They are both holiness ... If we follow Jesus, we will never have any other Spirit but the Spirit of holiness.'³⁶ As Chan notes, provocatively: '[w]hen Spirit baptism and holiness are conjoined, the Pentecostal reality is no longer just one component in the Christian life, but provides a perspective with which to view the whole of the Christian life'.³⁷ Such is indeed what the fluidity of the metaphor of Spirit baptism in the New Testament suggests.

The power of witness is the power of divine love: 'Christ's love compels us' wrote Paul in explaining that which energised his mission in the world (2 Cor. 5.14). This Spirit empowerment is not naked power but rather the power of divine love that separates us from sin and consecrates and empowers us for witness. Indeed, Spirit baptism is essentially the divine self-giving out of love for the world. In being baptised in the Spirit, the church is swept up in the power of the divine self-giving for

³³David Lim suggested this idea to me personally.

³⁴Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 71.

³⁵Ibid., 63–70.

³⁶Author unknown, 'The Baptism with the Holy Ghost', *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 9 (June–Sept., 1907): 2.

³⁷Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 70.

the world. We give of ourselves in witness as participation in God's very own self-giving for the world in the person of Christ and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through Christ.

The empowered witness of the Church is not only through proclamation narrowly defined. The Church witnesses of Christ in the world also through the quality of its life together. As Jesus prayed, 'that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me' (John 17.21). The Church engages in loving and just *koinonia* as the fellowship of the Spirit in witness to Christ (Acts 2:42–7). Spirit baptism, God's own self-giving in Christ and in the Spirit, takes us up in acts of self-transcendence and self-giving within the fellowship of brothers and sisters in mutual life together: 'For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink' (1 Cor. 12.13). More dynamically: 'Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord' (Eph. 5.18–19).

Within this empowered *koinonia* or sharing of life are multiple gifts and ministries in the Spirit that edify or build up the congregation into Christ its head. These gifts involve powers of the Spirit such as healing, prophecy, miracles, words of wisdom and knowledge (1 Cor. 12), in order to provide foretastes of the 'powers of the age to come' (Heb. 6.5) in building each other up. Gifts of teaching and encouragement are also included among the gifts (Rom. 12.7–8). In all of these gifts, the people of God strengthen the Church in its witness to Christ and propel the Church outward in service to the world. All of these gifts are to be viewed as channels of the divine self-giving that serve the purposes of empowered love in and through the Church. Thus, without love, these powerful gifts are nothing or lose their meaning or purpose (1 Cor. 13). They assume the transformation of our minds in the direction of the mind of Christ so that we could discern what the will of God is for us (Rom. 12.1–3).

The Church, therefore, does not remain locked behind the walls of the churches. The divine self-giving reaches out to all flesh, to the nations. The reach of the Spirit in consecrated and empowered witness is eschatological and global. The Spirit can be seen as appropriately the abundant self-giving of God towards the vast outreaches of time and space. Why did not the Kingdom come in fullness when the Spirit fell upon the company of believers in Acts 2? The reason is the global and eschatological reach of the Spirit. The Spirit has unfinished business, namely, the blessing of the nations, the outpouring upon all flesh. The Spirit baptised Church thus inherits this mission upon its being taken up into the river of the Spirit that flows forth from the mission of the Son and will culminate in him. This mission must be fulfilled before the Kingdom comes in fullness (Acts 1.1–8). The Kingdom coming in fullness is the accomplishment of the mission.

Conclusion: the fullness of the Spirit

The Church exists in the outpouring of the Spirit. The Church not only exists in the outpouring of the Spirit but lives from it in all facets of its life in Christ: kerygmatic, sacramental, and charismatic and missional life. The church lives from this impartation of the Spirit and will be fulfilled by it. Penultimate 'filling' or 'fullness'

of the Spirit among the churches is but a foretaste of the fullness that belongs to Christ and that the Church does not yet possess, cannot possess, until the Kingdom of God is fulfilled in the ushering in of the new creation. When the Church united under Christ rises from the dead in the fullness of the Spirit that characterises the Son's risen life, then and only then will it fully realise the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

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