



BRILL

Pneuma 34 (2012) 365-382


Pneuma
brill.com/pneu

The Intensity of the Spirit in a Spirit-Filled World: Spirit Baptism, Subsequence, and the Spirit of Creation

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Abstract

North American Classical Pentecostals have frequently described Spirit baptism as an experience that usually occurs subsequent to the reception of the Spirit at the point of conversion. When placed within a wider context of understanding the various ways in which the Spirit is present, it becomes apparent that this Pentecostal understanding of subsequence is only one instance of a subsequential experience of Spirit-filling. Given that we live in a Spirit-filled world, subsequent experiences of Spirit-filling can be seen in all believers, in the life of Jesus Christ, and in the life of the church. All of these experiences of being filled by the Spirit (and Spirit baptism in particular) may be expressed with the metaphor of the intensity of the Spirit.

Keywords

Spirit baptism, subsequence, filled with the Spirit, intensity, creation, church, Christ

Introduction

North American Classical Pentecostals have frequently described baptism in the Holy Spirit as an experience that usually occurs subsequent to the reception of the Spirit who indwells them from the point of conversion.¹ This manner of describing Spirit baptism as a “subsequent experience” has given non-Pentecostals a reason to critique this Pentecostal position. The argument often made, at least on the popular level, is that if believers *already* have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, then they cannot *later* be filled with the Spirit (what Pentecostals call Spirit baptism) as an experience subsequent to conversion; one cannot fill what is already full. When placed within a wider context of

¹ See Anthony D. Palma, *The Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO: Logion, 2001), 107-32.

understanding the various ways and times in which the Spirit is present, however, it becomes apparent that what may be called the Pentecostal problem of subsequence is only one instance or manifestation of many problems of subsequent experiences of Spirit filling. In fact, any experience of Spirit filling is subsequent to previous experiences of the reception of the Holy Spirit since we live in a Spirit-filled world. Subsequent experiences of Spirit filling can be seen not only in individual people, but also in the life of Jesus Christ and in the life of the church. All of these experiences of being filled by the Spirit (and Spirit baptism in particular) may be expressed with the metaphor of the intensity of the Spirit.

The Spirit in All People

Beyond the common Pentecostal identification of a post-conversion (hence, subsequent) in-filling of the Spirit, another example of subsequence is found when one considers that the Spirit dwells within all human beings, giving them life. That is, although all humans are filled with the Spirit (in as much as the Spirit is in them), the Scriptures affirm that a person (subsequently) receives and is indwelt by the Spirit upon conversion and may even continue to be filled by the Spirit as time passes. John Levison has identified the Old Testament theme that the Spirit fills all of human life.² In response, Frank Macchia observes that Levison “shows us that there is in the Scriptures a deeper tension in relation to the issue of ‘subsequence’ that makes any difference between Paul and Luke seem like small potatoes.” This issue of subsequence is “between the human vitality granted at birth and any further endowment of the Spirit.” Macchia contests, “*This* is indeed the subsequence issue on which we Pentecostals should be expending scholarly energy.”³

A number of Pentecostal scholars have resisted aspects of Levison's proposal that the Spirit fills all of human life. One of their primary concerns is that Levison does not adequately distinguish the divine Spirit from the human spirit.⁴

² John R. Levison, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 12 and 14-33.

³ Frank D. Macchia, “The Spirit of Life and the Spirit of Immortality: An Appreciative Review of Levison's *Filled with the Spirit*,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 33, no. 1 (2011): 70-71. Affirming Macchia, Levison refers to this as “a new sort of subsequence” (in the same volume, see John R. Levison, “Recommendations for the Future of Pneumatology,” 80). Levison again affirms Macchia's concern in John R. Levison, “*Filled with the Spirit: A Conversation with Pentecostal and Charismatic Scholars*,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20, no. 2 (2011): 220.

⁴ See the review essays by Archie T. Wright, James B. Shelton, Janet (Jenny) Meyer Everts, and Frank D. Macchia in *Pneuma* 33, no. 1 (2011): esp. 38, 49, 64, 73-74. On this point, see also Max

This identification of the divine Spirit with the human spirit is one factor that leads Levison to argue that all of humanity is filled with the spirit.⁵ Many Old Testament texts do indicate a close relationship between the divine Spirit and the human spirit (for example, Gen 6:17, 7:22; and Job 32:8, 34:14-15). It would be too much, however, to claim that the Old Testament authors never distinguish clearly between the divine Spirit and the human spirit. Part of the ambiguity regarding the term *S/spirit* arises from the fact that the Old Testament (and the Bible more generally) is not trying to present a neat systematic theology of *ruach* or of *neshemah*, meaning breath. Terms can be used with various meanings depending on their context. At times it seems that *ruach* might even have a double meaning, referring to both God's Spirit and the human spirit all at once (for example, Ps 51:10).⁶ It is clear, nevertheless, that some Old Testament texts do use the term *ruach* to refer specifically to a human spirit in distinction from the divine Spirit. For example, Psalm 32:2 reads, "How blessed is the man . . . in whose spirit [*ruach*] there is no deceit." This text is clearly not referring to the divine "Spirit" that is within an individual (one could never even imagine the possibility of the "Spirit" having deceit). Furthermore, Numbers 16:22 states that God is the "God of the spirits of all flesh," indicating that each person has his or her own individual human spirit. A distinction between the divine Spirit and the human spirit also becomes apparent when one considers the fact that the divine Spirit would sometimes "come upon" a person at a specific point in time (for example, 1 Sam 10:6; 16:13), something that could not happen if one makes no distinction between the divine Spirit and the human spirit. The human spirit and the Holy Spirit of God are not one and the same.

Despite my above divergence from Levison, I continue to follow his proposal that the Spirit fills all people, for the Spirit is in all of humanity as the Spirit sustains our very existence. Two objections become immediately apparent when one considers the idea that the Spirit dwells in all people; thus I begin building my case by responding to these two objections.

First, one might argue that in the Old Testament the Spirit only *came upon* people, whereas after Pentecost the Spirit would now dwell *in* believers. After all, Jesus did not say that the Spirit would only rest on people, but that the Spirit

Turner, "Levison's *Filled with the Spirit*: A Brief Appreciation and Response," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20, no. 2 (2011): 196-97.

⁵ Levison chooses not to capitalize the word *spirit* in any context.

⁶ Alasdair I. C. Heron, *The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit in the Bible, the History of Christian Thought, and Recent Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 7.

would now “be in” believers (John 14:17).⁷ In response to this objection, however, it can be maintained that the Spirit was indeed “in” people before Pentecost. For example, Pharaoh recognizes that Joseph is a person “in whom is the Spirit of God” (Gen 41:38, NASB). Likewise, the Lord refers to Joshua as “a man in whom is the Spirit” (Num 27:18, NASB). The Spirit was also in people in the Old Testament in as much as the Spirit “filled” certain people. For example, God said regarding Bezalel that “I have filled him with the Spirit of God” (Exod 35:31; cf. Deut 34:9, Mic 3:8). Furthermore, the New Testament employs many metaphors in addition to the image of the Spirit being *in* believers in order to describe the special relationship of the Spirit to believers. For example, although Jesus said that the Spirit would be in the disciples, he also promised that the Spirit would live “with” them (John 14:17). Further, just as the Spirit “rested on” or “came upon” people in the Old Testament (for example, Num 11:25-26; Judg 3:10), one reads in 1 Peter 4:14 an affirmation that “the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”⁸ Similarly, Acts 8:16 refers to the possibility of the Spirit coming “upon” people (cf. John 1:32-33 regarding Jesus). It is clear, then, that many different words are used to describe the relationship between the Spirit and humanity in *both* the New Testament and the Old Testament; in both Testaments the Spirit could be in, with, or on a person.⁹

A second possible objection to the proposal that the Spirit dwells in all people is that the Spirit only came upon a limited number of people in the Old Testament. Along this line of thinking, Hendrikus Berkhof proposes that in the Old Testament, “the Spirit dwells not in all the faithful, but in some chosen ones,” whereas “the communion of the Spirit with the nation [of Israel] as a

⁷ I did not recognize the problems of this approach when I implicitly supported it (even though I was, at the same time, explicitly affirming that the Spirit is in all of creation) in Andrew K. Gabriel, *The Lord Is the Spirit: The Holy Spirit and the Divine Attributes* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 167.

⁸ Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources Outside the Modern West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 62-63, emphasizes the image of the Spirit “resting” on people throughout the Scriptures, in contrast to those who emphasize the Spirit being “in” believers.

⁹ While these prepositions, and the preposition *in* in particular, no doubt carry different theological connotations for different biblical authors, it does generally seem that both Old Testament and New Testament authors had in mind the spatial image of “inside a person” when they used the preposition “in” with respect to the Spirit’s relationship to a person. For an example in the Old Testament: in Genesis 6:17 the Spirit is the life-breath that is literally inside a person; and in the New Testament, Paul says that since the Holy Spirit is inside the bodies of believers, each believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19).

whole and with its individual members is reserved for the future.”¹⁰ This understanding of the relationship of the Spirit to individuals in the Old Testament in comparison to the New Testament is not adequate. One cannot deny that the New Testament authors teach that there is a special and new relationship between believers and the Holy Spirit after Pentecost. Nevertheless, many Old Testament texts, in fact, teach that the Spirit is in all people in as much as they are alive. For example, Job 32:8 speaks of the “*ruach* in mortals, the breath of the Almighty.” Furthermore, on account of the presence of the Spirit in all people giving them life, it is apparent that if God “should gather to himself his *ruach*” then “all people would perish together and would return to the dust” (Job 34:14-15, cf. Eccl 12:7).¹¹ One sees the same presupposition that the Spirit is in all of humanity when God proclaims to Noah that God was about “to destroy all flesh in which is the *ruach* of life” (Gen 6:17). There is a sense in which the Spirit was in all people, even before Pentecost; the Spirit is present in all people as the Spirit sustains their very existence. The Spirit was not only in human beings, but was even “in” all animals; the animals that went into the ark with Noah’s family are described as “flesh in which was the *ruach* of life” (Gen 7:15, cf. 7:22). The Spirit is in every living being. This is a natural conclusion when one considers a doctrine of the Creator Spirit.

The Spirit in Creation

We live in a Spirit-filled world. There is a sense in which the Spirit dwells within all of creation. In as much as humans are a part of creation, the Spirit also dwells within every individual human being. Pentecostals have historically tended to neglect the theme of the Spirit in creation, however. As Frank Macchia writes, “we [Pentecostals] tend to see life outside of (or prior to) Christ as dark, lost, and devoid of the Holy Spirit.”¹² Pentecostals are not completely to

¹⁰ Hendrikus Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1964), 99. Cf. Palma, *The Holy Spirit*, 38.

¹¹ While many English translations translate *ruach* as “spirit” when the word is used in relation to humankind, these two texts (cited above) make it clear that this is indeed God’s Spirit that is being referred to. In contrast to the two texts I have cited here, almost all English translations have no problem translating *ruach* as Spirit when the *ruach* is described as explicitly *active* in relation to humanity. Consider, for example, Job 33:4, which reads, “The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (NIV).

¹² Macchia, “The Spirit of Life and the Spirit of Immortality,” 71. Cf. Walter Hollenweger, “*Creator Spiritus*: The Challenge of Pentecostal Experience to Pentecostal Theology,” *Theology* 81 (1978): 36-37.

blame for this, since it has been typical of pneumatologies to neglect the Spirit's role in creation.¹³ While the trend is clearly changing, it seems that even though Pentecostals have been exploring the relationship of the Spirit and creation, the idea of the Spirit indwelling all of creation is only beginning to penetrate Pentecostal theology.¹⁴

As a divine person, the Holy Spirit is present throughout the whole of creation. The Spirit is omnipresent. No Christian should deny this. After all, there is, as David declares, no way for a person to flee from the presence of the Spirit (Ps 139:7). Further, if the Spirit is to be present everywhere, the Spirit must be in all things, although remaining distinct from each part of creation. If the Spirit were not in all things, this would (wrongly) imply that there is a place where the Spirit is not present. Therefore, the Spirit must dwell in all things in some way. The conclusion that the Spirit dwells in all things is consistent with Paul, who wrote to the Ephesians that God is "over all, and through all and in all" (Eph 4:6) and that God "fills everything in every way" (Eph 1:23). Further, the Lord (who is the Spirit, 2 Cor 3:17) fills heaven and earth (Jer 23:24). Indeed, the Spirit must be in all things if "the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God" (1 Cor 2:10). The Spirit dwells in all things as the Creator and sustainer of all things.

Although not always speaking in terms of the Holy Spirit specifically, Christian theologians have long understood that God dwells in all things. For example, Thomas Aquinas declares outright that "God is said to exist everywhere in everything" in as much as "God is boundless and unlimited." For Aquinas, "a thing is present wherever it is active"; therefore, since God gives existence to all things, he must be *in all things*.¹⁵ Many other examples can be found that

¹³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 8, and Mark I. Wallace, *Fragments of the Spirit: Nature, Violence, and the Renewal of Creation* (New York, NY: Continuum, 1996), 137.

¹⁴ Among Pentecostals, most recently see Amos Yong, *The Spirit of Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination*, Pentecostal Manifestos (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), as well as the two collections of essays in Amos Yong, ed., *The Spirit Renews the Face of the Earth: Pentecostal Forays in Science and Theology of Creation* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009) and James K. A. Smith and Amos Yong, eds., *Science and the Spirit: A Pentecostal Engagement with the Sciences* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010). Outside of Pentecostal theology, in addition to Wallace and Moltmann (cited above), consider Denis Edwards, *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004); Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985); Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993); and Sigurd Bergmann, *Creation Set Free: The Spirit as Liberator of Nature*, trans. Douglas Stott (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

¹⁵ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, introduction to Ia, q.7 and Ia, q.8, a.1.

illustrate the long and wide tradition of expressing the reality that God dwells in all of creation. In the fourth century, Hilary of Poitiers wrote that God "is present in all things; in him who is infinite all are included."¹⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus claimed the same thing.¹⁷ In the eighth century, John of Damascus wrote that God "fills all things with His essence. . . . In His essence He fills the world, but in His power the world does not contain Him."¹⁸ Anselm of Canterbury (eleventh century) concluded that "the supreme Nature" is everywhere in the sense "that it is in all existing things."¹⁹ Among the Reformation theologians of the sixteenth century, Martin Luther wrote that "God's divine essence encompasses all things and dwells in all," so that, for example, "it can be substantially present in a grain, on a grain, over a grain, through a grain, within and without."²⁰ In the eighteenth century, John Wesley too affirmed that "God is in all things."²¹ Coming closer to today, Karl Barth in the twentieth century emphasized that God is free to be inwardly present to all things and that he is indeed "as a gift . . . everywhere, with and in all things."²² In Catholic theology, Yves Congar teaches that the Holy Spirit is a "penetrating reality" who is transcendent and yet "in all things."²³ From an Orthodox perspective, Kallistos Ware emphasizes the divine presence in all of creation to transform and divinize the world.²⁴ Among Evangelicals, in the nineteenth century Charles Hodge main-

¹⁶ Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, 1.6.

¹⁷ Bergmann, *Creation Set Free*, 166, particularly the references to Gregory's *Oration* 32.27 and 26.19.

¹⁸ John of Damascus, *The Orthodox Faith*, 113.

¹⁹ Anselm, *Monologium*, 23.

²⁰ Luther, *Weimarer Ausgabe*, 23.134.34-23.136.36, translated in Elizabeth Johnson, *Quest for the Living God: Mapping New Frontiers in the Theology of God* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 188. F. LeRon Shults, *Reforming the Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 107, finds similar themes in John Calvin's theology.

²¹ Cited in Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 317 n. 31.

²² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957-1975), II/1, 485, cf. 313, 462, 469, and 475-77. At the same time, he rejects pantheism and (what he refers to as) "panentheism" because God cannot be synthesized with creation (*Church Dogmatics*, II/1, 312, 315, and 562). In current theology Ron Highfield, *Great Is the Lord: Theology for the Praise of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 288, is likewise willing to affirm that "the world is in God and God is in the world," although he removes himself from any association with panentheism.

²³ Yves M. J. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3 vols., trans. David Smith (New York: Seabury, 1983), 2:17-18.

²⁴ Kallistos Ware, "God Immanent Yet Transcendent: The Divine Energies according to Saint Gregory Palamas," in *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World*, ed. Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 167.

tained that God is “everywhere present, and everywhere imparting life . . . present in every blade of grass. . . . He is in all, and over all things; yet essentially different from all, being over all, independent, and infinitely exalted.”²⁵ Bernard Ramm, one of the most influential evangelical theologians of the twentieth century, contends that nature “is under the constant and immanent penetration of God” and that “the Spirit of God [is] in all things.”²⁶ Likewise, today many Pentecostals, such as Amos Yong, are affirming that “the Spirit infuses the world.”²⁷ As a divine person, there is a sense in which the Holy Spirit fills all of creation.

The Spirit in Christians

Given that the Spirit dwells in all of creation, it follows that the Spirit dwells in every human being in some manner, unless one divorces humanity from the rest of creation. Therefore, as Levison concludes, when believers receive the Spirit, the Spirit is “received as an additional endowment.”²⁸ In other words, when a person receives the Holy Spirit at conversion, that person is having a subsequent experience of the Holy Spirit. At conversion, people “receive the Spirit . . . by believing” the Gospel (Gal 3:2, cf. Rom 8:15); or a person “might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal 3:14). As a result of receiving the Spirit, God lives in believers by the Spirit in a new way (1 John 4:13). Further, “since the Spirit of God dwells in” believers (Rom 8:9), or is “living in” them (2 Tim 1:14), a Christian’s body is a “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 6:19). Given what I have said above about the Spirit dwelling in all of creation (and hence, in all people), one might say that at conversion, a person is filled with the Spirit who already fills them. The Spirit fills them in a new way. This is a subsequent experience of the Spirit.

Subsequent experiences of being filled with the Spirit may continue even after a person has received the Spirit at the point of new birth. Aside from potential Pentecostal interpretations of subsequent post-conversion receptions of the Spirit in the book of Acts, post-conversion experiences of being

²⁵ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols (1871-1873; reprinted: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 1:385.

²⁶ Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 109.

²⁷ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: World Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 281.

²⁸ Levison, *Filled with the Spirit*, 423 (cf. 12).

filled by the Spirit may be found in Pauline literature as well. While Paul clearly recognizes the presence of the Spirit in believers, at the same time he exhorts believers to “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18). Further, even though the Ephesians are already a temple of the Holy Spirit, Paul also informs the Ephesians that “you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (Eph 2:22, NASB; cf. 1 Pet 2:5). Given these Pauline themes, even aside from the book of Acts, Pentecostals such as Roger Stronstad are correct to make a “distinction between the once-for-all and the repetitive character of the gift of the Spirit.”²⁹ Non-Pentecostals also sometimes recognize that there are numerous times at which a person may be filled with the Spirit subsequent to conversion. For example, John Stott quotes the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, which anticipates that a Christian may “daily increase in the Holy Spirit more and more, until we come unto God’s everlasting kingdom.”³⁰ These experiences of being filled with the Spirit are subsequent both to salvation and also to the reception of the Spirit that all people have by virtue of being part of God’s creation that is imbued with the Spirit.

The Spirit in Jesus Christ

Subsequent experiences of the Spirit may also be identified in Christology and ecclesiology. These instances of subsequent experiences of the Spirit provide further support for the idea that believers can experience numerous subsequent receptions of the Spirit in their lives, including through baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Subsequent experiences of the Spirit may be identified within the life of Jesus Christ.³¹ Christology provides an important foundation for pneumatology, for, as Gary Badcock writes, Jesus was “the goal of God’s life-giving presence as Spirit in Israel’s history.”³² Furthermore, Jesus Christ provides the paradigm for what it means for people to be filled with the Spirit. Old Testament messianic prophecies lead to the expectation that the Messiah (*christos*)

²⁹ Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), 81.

³⁰ John R. W. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness: The Work of the Holy Spirit Today*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1971), 75 (cf. 47-52). See also Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 89.

³¹ I am not proposing a form of degree Christology. Rather, I see these insights from Spirit Christology as complementary to a Logos Christology. I affirm the unique hypostatic union of the Son of God in Jesus Christ.

³² Gary D. Badcock, *Light of Truth and Fire of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 145.

would have the anointing (*chrisma*) of the Spirit. This expectation was fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35). Then, leading up to his ministry, the Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove at his baptism (Matt 3:16; Mar 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32). At that point Jesus was anointed by the Spirit (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38) and he then engaged in ministry "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14). As a result of the presence of the Spirit within him, Jesus was able to refer to himself as "the temple" that could be destroyed but raised again (John 2:19).

Jesus' baptism is no small event, for, as a result of his baptism, he was now "full of the Holy Spirit" (Luke 4:1), even "without measure" (John 3:34). Nevertheless, as with the church and believers who would follow after him, Jesus too had subsequent experiences of the Spirit coming upon him. First, one might interpret the transfiguration as a trinitarian event, in which the Holy Spirit is the cloud that overshadowed Jesus (Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:34).³³ Additional subsequent experiences of the Spirit occur with the resurrection. The Spirit is not only active as God raises Jesus from the dead (Rom 1:4, 8:11; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 3:18), but after the resurrection, Luke reports, Jesus "received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" before baptizing believers in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:33). José Comblin describes this as "a new stage" in Jesus' reception of the Spirit.³⁴ It was indeed a subsequent reception of the Spirit by someone who was already full of the Spirit.

The Spirit in the Church

Subsequent experiences of the Spirit are not limited to individuals. Although one may understand the church as a place in which the Spirit dwells, the Spirit continues to fill the church. The church is clearly a place in which the Spirit already dwells. Paul reminded the church in Corinth that "you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you" (1 Cor 3:16). Accordingly, Irenaeus identified the church with the presence of the Spirit when he wrote, "For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is

³³ Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 12 and 172.

³⁴ José Comblin, *The Holy Spirit and Liberation*, trans. Paul Burns, Theology and Liberation Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), 145. He goes even further, suggesting that before the resurrection Jesus did not yet have "the full anointing." One may inquire into how Jesus' post-resurrection reception of the Spirit relates to the fact that Jesus had to go away before the Spirit would come (John 16:7); however, answers to this inquiry would not change my point that Jesus received the Spirit subsequent to being full of the Spirit.

the Church and every kind of grace.”³⁵ Recognizing this presence of the Spirit, however, the church has also continued to seek subsequent experiences of the Spirit’s coming. This is particularly evident in the epiclesis of the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic traditions. In the epiclesis, the church invokes the Spirit to come to the church, which is already a temple in which the Spirit dwells. One might say that the church seeks to be filled with the Spirit which is already filling it. In the liturgical prayers of Eastern Orthodoxy, the epiclesis concerns not only the elements of the Eucharist (on which discussions of the epiclesis generally focus); it also concerns the people participating in the moment. Paul Evdokimov describes some of these prayers, which include a prayer for the Spirit to fill the church. The liturgy begins with the prayer, “King of heaven, O Paraclete . . . come to us and live in us,” and continues, “May your Holy Spirit fall on these gifts and on your people.”³⁶ In the Western Church, the Spirit was “invoked in every liturgical action” during the Middle Ages and the epiclesis has again taken an important role in the liturgy since Vatican II.³⁷ Consistent with this liturgical practice (and not limiting the idea to the Eucharist), Yves Congar describes “the life of the Church as one long epiclesis.”³⁸

“Epiclesis” language is not common among Protestant traditions. Nevertheless, consistent with the above, Clark Pinnock affirms, “Spirit indwells the church as a perpetual Pentecost.”³⁹ Likewise, Macchia, in reflections on ecclesiology, proposes, “As a ‘Spirit baptism,’ the divine presence is a divine act or event that has happened but is also ongoing and yet to be fulfilled.”⁴⁰ These expectations of the still-coming presence of the Spirit and the epicletic call for the Spirit to come point to a sense that although the Spirit already dwells within the church, the church needs subsequent experiences of the fullness of the Spirit. The church continues to be a people who are “being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit” (Eph 2:22).

³⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III.24.1.

³⁶ Paul Evdokimov, *l’Esprit Saint dans la tradition orthodoxe*, Bibliothèque Oecuménique 10 (Paris: Les Editions de Cerf, 1969), 101.

³⁷ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 1:104 and 3:241 and 256.

³⁸ Ibid., 3:267 (cf. 271).

³⁹ Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 114.

⁴⁰ Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 197. To give the quote some context, Macchia continues, “It is thus something that involves but also that transcends the church.”

Spirit Baptism as Intensity

Pentecostals often view Spirit baptism as an experience in which people who are already full of the Spirit are filled with the Spirit. As I noted in the introduction, this idea of filling what is already filled is problematic for Pentecostals. As a result, some Pentecostals have downplayed or even stopped using the language of being “filled with the Spirit” with respect to Spirit baptism and have preferred instead to speak of Spirit baptism as a “release” of the Spirit that already dwells within a believer (terminology not explicitly found in Scripture).⁴¹ To some extent, this seems justified, especially since theologians have generally realized that the biblical authors were employing a variety of metaphors to describe their experience of the Spirit rather than attempting to offer precise theological language. So, for example, Luke sometimes employs the terms *filling*, *come upon*, and *baptized* interchangeably in reference to the Spirit.⁴² Nevertheless, despite the variety of metaphors that do occur in the Scripture to refer to experiences of the Spirit, it is not necessary to abandon the idea that believers are “filled” with the Spirit when they are baptized in the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, given the fact that Luke prefers to use the terminology of “filled” when speaking of Spirit baptism and other subsequent experiences of the Spirit, and given that other biblical authors use this terminology as well, Pentecostals would be prudent to continue using the biblical concept of being filled with the Spirit in reference to Spirit baptism.

While the idea of filling someone with the Spirit who already has the Spirit dwelling within them may seem problematic, the Pentecostal problem of subsequence seems much less problematic and even acceptable, when one realizes that there are numerous instances in the Scriptures and Christian tradition in which one can discern a subsequent experience of being filled with the Spirit. As seen above, although we live in a Spirit-filled world, the Spirit again fills believers at conversion and may continue to fill them throughout their life. Similarly, Jesus was full of the Spirit without measure, and yet he had subsequent experiences of receiving the Spirit from the Father so that he could fill his followers with the Spirit. Finally, the church is filled with the Spirit, and yet it continues to pray for the Spirit to come and abide within the church. To state it explicitly, the supposed Pentecostal problem of subsequence is not a problem unique to Pentecostal interpretations of Spirit baptism.

⁴¹ As observed (and appreciated) by Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 77.

⁴² Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, 49-50.

Basil of Caesarea observed, "The Spirit is said to dwell *in* created things in many and various ways."⁴³ Given this, it seems necessary to make some sort of distinction, for example, between the presence of the Spirit in a tree and the presence of the Spirit in a believer.⁴⁴ The distinction should not, however, consist in saying that there is a different Spirit dwelling in these two places. There is only one Spirit who is present in both creation and redemption, though in different ways. I propose that all subsequent experiences of being filled with the Spirit may be expressed with the metaphor of the intensity of the Spirit. When the Spirit fills a person, the Spirit's presence becomes more intense. As a divine person, the Spirit is fully present everywhere in as much as God has no parts that would allow the Spirit to be partially present in a place. The Spirit may, however, be at work in different ways (sustaining, creating virtue, giving wisdom, regenerating, justifying, sanctifying, empowering, renewing) according to the intensity with which the Spirit is present. Amos Yong seems to presuppose this idea of the intensity of the Spirit when he speaks of "experiencing the 'increasing fullness' of the Spirit" and when he maintains that "although the Spirit is God present and active in the world, this presence and activity are still eschatological—not yet fully experienced but punctuated here and now by the Spirit."⁴⁵

As I engage the metaphor of intensification with respect to Spirit baptism, I am drawing on a number of theologians who have already used this metaphor in various ways within their pneumatology. Yves Congar, for example, proposes that the Holy Spirit is present in "an intense way in the Christian communions" and Norman Pittenger refers to the church as "the place where the Holy Spirit is intensively present and intensively active."⁴⁶ Following this manner of speaking of the presence of the Spirit, one may similarly refer to Spirit baptism as an instance or instances in which people are filled with the Spirit as the presence of the Spirit intensifies within them.

James K. A. Smith is another person who has employed the metaphor of intensification regarding creation's relationship with God. As Smith employs this metaphor, he wishes to affirm a "participatory ontology" in which there is

⁴³ Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 26.63.

⁴⁴ Edwards, *Breath of Life*, 119. Cf. Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 12.

⁴⁵ Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 99 and 252.

⁴⁶ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3:272, and Norman Pittenger, *The Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia, PA: United Church Press, 1974), 81. Terence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 61 (esp.), 64-67, 69, 72, 89, 100-101, 165, also refers to different intensities of God's presence. Cf. Shults's discussion of intensive vs. extensive infinity in *Reforming the Doctrine of God*, 130-32.

a sense that all humanity and all cultures participate “in the divine through the animating power of the Spirit.”⁴⁷ At the same time, however, he seeks to affirm that the church has a unique relationship with the Spirit that sets it apart (holy) from the world. Rather than suggesting that the former participation (of all humanity) in the Spirit is an ontological participation in the Spirit and that the latter participation (of the church) in the Spirit is a soteriological participation, Smith proposes that “a soteriological participation in the Spirit (regeneration, indwelling) is an intensification of just that ontological participation” (255, n. 9).⁴⁸ Readers will note that Smith is presenting an intensification of participation of *humanity in the Spirit* (emphasizing Acts 17:28: “In him we live and move and have our being”), whereas I am proposing an intensification of *the Spirit in humanity*.⁴⁹ In spite of this distinction, our proposals complement one another.⁵⁰

Smith’s presentation of intensification of participation in the Spirit is helpful for explicating the ways in which the Spirit’s presence may intensify in the world and in humanity in particular. Just as, according to Smith, “*all that is participates in the Creator, or all is animated by the dynamic presence of the Spirit*” (256), the Spirit is also in all of creation. And just as “this does not mean that all participates *in the same way or to the same degree*” in the Creator (256), I have proposed that the Spirit may be in humanity in different ways or in different degrees. Continuing, Smith makes a distinction between “a *structural* participation of a low-grade intensity and a more robust, *directional* participa-

⁴⁷ James K. A. Smith, “The Spirit, Religions, and the World as Sacrament: A Response to Amos Yong’s Pneumatological Assist,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15, no. 2 (2007): 254. In-text citations refer to this article (italics are original emphasis).

⁴⁸ Similarly, a number of recent Catholic theologians “understand actual human historical existence as graced so as to see the grace of Christ as already implicit within [all] human life.” These theologians therefore challenge the “scholastic bifurcation of nature and grace as two separate categories” (observed by Frank D. Macchia, *Justified in the Spirit: Creation, Redemption, and the Triune God*, Pentecostal Manifestos [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 31).

⁴⁹ Elsewhere I affirm that this extends to creation at large (Gabriel, *The Lord is the Spirit*, 173-74, 178).

⁵⁰ Indeed, similar to my proposal, Smith himself discusses an intensification of God’s presence in his *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009). Here Smith writes, “There is a sense in which the special presence and action of God in the sacraments is an intensification of a general presence and action of God in creation (‘sacramentally’)” (151, fn 42; cf. 148-50). Perhaps it would be fair to say that as a person’s participation in the Spirit intensifies, the Spirit’s presence intensifies in that person.

tion of a high-grade intensity" (256).⁵¹ Something that has a structural participation in the Spirit does not participate "*fully or properly* in God" (256). In contrast, something that has a directional participation in the Spirit "is properly ordered or directed *to* the divine; to participate *properly* in the Creator is to also be directed to the Creator" (256). Relating this to the history of fall and redemption, Smith suggests that the fall involves a deintensifying of participation in the Creator in as much as the fall resulted in creation being directed away from the Creator or, in other words, being improperly ordered. By contrast, redemption involves the intensification of participation in the divine, as creation is reordered and directed toward the Creator.

With Smith, I propose that the Spirit's presence does intensify in creation, and in humanity in particular, as people are redeemed and redirected toward their Creator. One may speak of a structural presence of the Spirit in all things, as well as a directional intensification of the Spirit's presence.⁵² In other words, there is a sense in which the Spirit fills creation as the Spirit gives life and sustains creation and there is a different sense in which the Spirit fills all believers in redemption. The Spirit is already present in all of creation, but a greater intensity results in and comes with redemption.⁵³

The different manner of the Spirit's presence throughout creation and in believers is not the only place in which a distinction can be discerned with respect to the intensification of the Spirit. A distinction regarding the intensity of the presence of the Spirit may also be discerned with respect to the various religions. Hence, Smith claims that all religions indicate a "pneumatological participation in the divine" in as much as they all display a structural desire for God in the human heart by virtue of being a part of creation (259). In contrast, the church, which is being properly directed toward God, manifests a greater intensity of the Spirit within it; namely, a directional intensity of the Spirit that leads the church to worship the Father through the Son. Furthermore, even

⁵¹ Likewise, Fretheim, *The Suffering of God*, 61, refers to the "structural" presence of God in contrast to the intensification of divine presence.

⁵² This distinction helps address the issue of theodicy that arises when one considers the fact that the Spirit is in human beings who commit immoral acts. This question of theodicy, however, is only one instance of the larger question regarding the problem of evil, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

⁵³ One might ask if the intensification of the Spirit in a person happens only with divine initiative, or if it can also happen with human initiative. While this is not an issue that I intend to examine at any length here, it does seem that human initiative is involved at times, given that people receive the Spirit "by faith" (Gal 3:2), and also given that the Spirit sometimes comes upon a person after a believer lays his or her hands on and prays for that individual (e.g., Acts 19:6).

within the distinction between the structural low-grade intensity of the Spirit's presence and the directional (greater) intensity of the Spirit, there remain different intensities of the Spirit that come as the Spirit is present working in different ways. Believers experience different intensities of the directional presence of the Spirit (which is already more intense than a structural presence of the Spirit) as they continue to have subsequent experiences of the Spirit and thereby continue to be properly ordered toward the divine. Consider, for example, the spiritual gifts (the *charismata*). Following my proposal, one may say that a person who manifests a gift of the Spirit is experiencing an intensification of the Spirit in them. Similarly, Smith proposes that spiritual gifts are "abilities that flow from a more intense and properly ordered participation in God through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit" (257).

Just as we see different intensities of the Spirit in creation, Christ, the church, and believers, I have proposed that Spirit baptism is another instance in which the presence of the Spirit intensifies. Viewing Spirit baptism as an intensification of the Spirit fits well with an expanded metaphor of Spirit baptism that some Pentecostal theologians are employing today. These Pentecostals view Spirit baptism as something much greater than a one-time experience that occurs subsequent to salvation; instead, they view Spirit baptism as an ongoing event. Amos Yong, for example, describes Spirit baptism as "a New Testament metaphor for the full salvific work of God," past, present, and future, including both Christian initiation and empowerment for service.⁵⁴ Similarly, Macchia presents baptism in the Holy Spirit as a process that began at Pentecost, continues still, and will continue until the full consummation of the kingdom of God.⁵⁵ My proposal to view Spirit baptism as an intensification of the Spirit is consistent with such views of Spirit baptism. In fact, at one point Yong even explicitly employs "intensification" language himself as he remarks that Spirit baptism includes "the possibility of multiple deepening and intensifying experiences of the Spirit."⁵⁶

In order to avoid the apparent conflict between numerous experiences of being filled with the Spirit, one does not need to limit Spirit baptism to Christian initiation, nor does one need to abandon the terminology of being "filled with the Spirit" in favor of speaking of Spirit baptism as a "release" of the Spirit. Indeed, one can continue to speak of Spirit baptism as being filled with the Spirit. By understanding the filling of the Spirit that occurs with Spirit baptism

⁵⁴ Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out*, 119; cf. 101 and 105-6.

⁵⁵ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 17 and 103.

⁵⁶ Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out*, 119.

as an intensification of the Spirit's presence, it becomes clear that being filled with the Spirit through Spirit baptism neither contradicts the previous filling that an individual has by virtue of being one of God's creatures, nor does it contradict the filling one may have had since his or her conversion. In other words, rather than being contradictions (filling what is already full), these subsequent experiences of being filled with the Spirit are times at which the believer experiences the intensity of the Spirit within them.

Although it is not inappropriate to speak of a "release of the Spirit," in many cases "intensification" will serve as a better metaphor than "release" for expressing the experience of being baptized in the Spirit. First, "release" seems to suggest that subsequent experiences of the Spirit are only internal (that is, coming from what is already present), whereas Scripture often describes the Spirit as coming or being given from the outside in newness as the Spirit "comes upon" a person or is "poured out" on people (with the result that they are filled). In other words, being filled with the Spirit is not only a "welling up" from within (John 4:14). The metaphor of "intensification" better accounts for this fact. Second, utilizing the metaphor of the "release of the Spirit" might suggest that being baptized in the Spirit is the only subsequent experience of being filled with the Spirit (making the problem of subsequence unique to Spirit baptism). In contrast, given that the intensification of the Spirit can be identified in many instances (I have highlighted intensification in Jesus, the church, and believers), speaking of Spirit baptism as an intensification of the Spirit serves well to illustrate that Spirit baptism is only one of many examples of subsequent experiences of Spirit-filling.

Conclusion

Pentecostals are not alone in observing that the Spirit can fill a place in which the Spirit is already present. While Pentecostals often describe Spirit baptism as a subsequent experience(s) of being filled with the Spirit, it is also clear that all believers, regardless of their understanding of Spirit baptism, have had an experience of Spirit filling that is subsequent to their being filled with the Spirit by virtue of being part of the Spirit-filled creation. One can also discern subsequent experiences of Spirit filling in the church, which, although it already has the Spirit dwelling within it, continues to call for the Spirit to fill her, as well as in Christology, where Jesus Christ was full of the Spirit without measure and yet subsequently received the Spirit from the Father after Jesus' resurrection. In each of these cases there is a subsequent experience of the Spirit after one is

already filled with the Spirit. Rather than viewing these fillings as contradictory, one can view these experiences as instances in which the Spirit becomes more intense. They are instances of the intensity of the Spirit in a Spirit-filled world. Following this line of thought, I propose that Spirit baptism can be understood as an instance in which a person is filled with the Spirit as the presence of the Spirit further intensifies within that person.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Thank you to the referees and editors of *Pneuma*, whose comments and questions greatly assisted me in strengthening this article.