

**THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR:  
THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MISSION  
IN PROTESTANT MISSIOLOGICAL WRITINGS  
FROM 1945-95  
Robert L. Gallagher**

It was my first time with this small group of Christians and I could not stop crying. I was fresh out of high school and was very aware that Australian men should not cry. After years of attending church I was listening for the first time to the mission story of God's love through Jesus Christ. As the leader shared from the Bible, I could feel the presence of God. The Spirit was in the room speaking to me. From that night I became aware of the Holy Spirit in mission.

Over the next 20 years that house group grew into a thriving Pentecostal church. During that time I observed and experienced many aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit. However, I struggled with some of the pneumatology in Australian Pentecostal churches. It seemed to me that the emphasis in many churches centered on personal need rather than on kingdom concerns. People sought the Spirit for blessing in their lives, wanting to receive all they could. Churches displayed little interest in how they might cooperate with the Spirit in what He was doing beyond their walls. There seemed to be little understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in mission. My study of the book of Acts showed me that Luke stressed the work of the Spirit of God as the key to the growth of Christianity. If the Spirit was so vital to the mission of the early church, then why was there so little understanding of this dynamic among Australian Pentecostals?

My current research at Fuller Seminary has provided an opportunity to continue my quest for an understanding of the relationship of the Spirit and mission. This present essay, part of that quest, surveys the ways missiologists have understood the work of the Holy Spirit and mission. I limited my survey to the English writings of the 70 most influential Protestant missiologists be-

tween 1945-95.<sup>1</sup> In general, I found mention of the Holy Spirit to be sporadic, certainly not a major focus.

From writings on the Spirit that I did find, my survey revealed the following trends: In the 1950s missiologists evidenced little or no interest in the Holy Spirit. During the 1960s, evangelical missiologists considered the work of the Spirit in conversion. The next decade saw the influence of the Pentecostals, with a focus on the gifts of the Spirit and church growth. Also in the 1970s, liberation theology brought an awareness of the work of the Spirit in social change. In the 1980s, the focus of charismatic missiologists on signs and wonders was prominent in the literature. This decade of the 1990s shows high interest in spiritual warfare, a spin-off from the former trend.

Having completed the survey I felt disappointed. The 70 most influential missiologists in the last 50 years have largely neglected the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit seems to be a forgotten factor in missiological writings. My questions on the relationship between mission and the Spirit's work are only partially answered through this literature. I believe missiologists need to seriously consider the relationship between the Holy Spirit and mission.

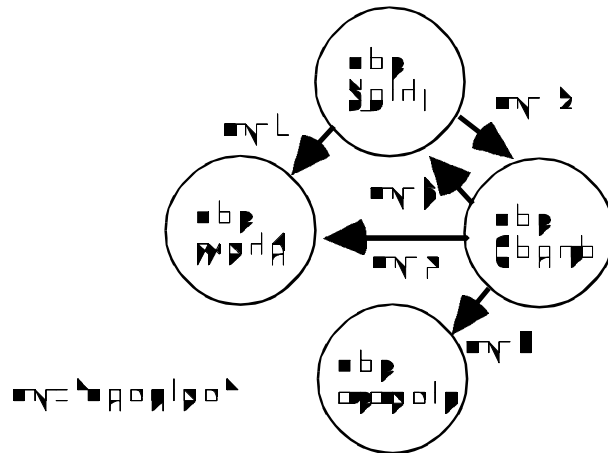
### A. The Work of the Holy Spirit

I have chosen to approach this survey by categorizing five functions of the Spirit's work

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<sup>1</sup> For the selection of the missiologists I referred to the evaluations of Gerald H. Anderson, David J. Bosch, Samuel Escobar, Wilbert R. Shenk and Johannes Verkuyl (see appendix of missiologists at the end of this essay). Altogether, I read 61 books, 116 chapters in books and 301 journal articles from the selected missiologists, and recorded any mention they made of the Holy Spirit.

observed in missiological writings. This relationship between the Spirit and mission is shown in the diagram below. My findings follow.



### A. 1. Function 1: The Spirit to the World

Missiologists identify three aspects that distinguish the Spirit's working in the non-Christian world. These aspects are pre-conversion, conversion and post-conversion.

In pre-conversion the Holy Spirit is at work preparing people for the gospel. He is indispensable in missionary witness since he alone prepares the world to receive the church's message<sup>2</sup> and "opens the hearts of hearers."<sup>3</sup> In the view of D. T. Niles, the Spirit goes ahead of the church "preparing a response to the Gospel" and then leads the church to those people and places that he has already prepared.<sup>4</sup> In a

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<sup>2</sup> Harry R. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions* (Grand Rapids, 1961), p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel T. Niles, *Upon the Earth: The Mission of God and the Missionary Enterprise of the Churches* (New York, 1962), p. 64.

similar fashion, David J. Hesselgrave suggests that persuasion, to be genuine and effective, must be the work of the Spirit: "It is the Holy Spirit who takes the Word and makes it understandable and operative in the hearer."<sup>5</sup> Dutch missionary and theologian Johan H. Bavinck says that the Holy Spirit first convicts the individual of their sins. Then, through that repentant person, the Spirit convicts the world by revealing their unwillingness to follow God.<sup>6</sup>

A second way missiologists distinguish the work of the Spirit in the world focuses on how people come to God. The Latin American missiologist Orlando E. Costas refers to this work of the Holy Spirit as "transformation" -- the power of the Spirit works to transform persons and communities.<sup>7</sup> As Alan R. Tippett puts it: "When the Holy Spirit falls on a group, that group becomes transformed. It is this new dynamic that gives the group outreach and makes it witness and leads to what Roland Allen called 'spontaneous expansion.'"<sup>8</sup>

Lesslie Newbigin and Walter Holsten prefer the term "conversion" to "transformation." They insist that

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<sup>5</sup> David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, 1991), p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> Johan H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, translated by David Hugh Freeman (Philadelphia, 1960), p. 272.

<sup>7</sup> Orlando E. Costas, "Church Growth as a Multidimensional Phenomena: Some Lessons from Chile," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 1981, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Alan R. Tippett, "The Holy Spirit and Responsive Populations" in Donald A. McGavran, ed., *Crucial Issues in Missions Tomorrow* (Chicago, 1972), p. 95.

only the Spirit can convert people.<sup>9</sup> It is “his work (only his) of bringing men and women to conversion and faith in Christ.”<sup>10</sup> However, the work of the Spirit brings human beings to conversion through the action of the church -- the faithful believers who are “partners in his tribulation.”<sup>11</sup>

A third group of missiologists concentrates on the fruit of conversion. Here the relationship between the world and the Spirit deals with people being filled with the Spirit,<sup>12</sup> thereby receiving freedom<sup>13</sup> and new life in the Spirit of God.<sup>14</sup> Such life in Christ can only be possible

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<sup>9</sup> See Lesslie Newbigin, “Context and Conversion,” *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 68, No. 271, p. 307 and Walter Holsten, “The Muslim Presence in the West,” *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 55, October 1966, p. 456.

<sup>10</sup> Newbigin, “Lesslie Newbigin Replies,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 6, No. 4, October 1982, p. 154.

<sup>11</sup> Newbigin, “Integration -- Some Personal Reflections 1981,” *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 70, No. 280, p. 255. See Newbigin, “Context and Conversion,” *op. cit.*, p. 307 where he says, “It is the Spirit who converts, not the Church. Where, then, does the Church come into the picture? ... At the point where it is on trial for its faith, at the point where it confesses the sole Lordship of Jesus in the face of the overwhelming power of that which denies it, at the point -- therefore -- where it bears the marks of the cross.”

<sup>12</sup> Tippett, “The Holy Spirit and Responsive Populations,” *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100. Also see Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97 and Arthur F. Glasser, “The Evolution of Evangelical Mission Theology since World War II,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 1985, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> Emilio Castro, “Mission in the 1990s,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 14, No. 4, October 1990, p. 149 and Johannes Aagaard, “The Soft Age Has Come,” *Missiology*, Vol. 10, No. 3, July 1982, p. 276.

<sup>14</sup> See Newbigin, “Co-operation and Unity,” *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 59, No. 233, January 1970, p. 72; Niles, *Upon the Earth*, *op. cit.*, p. 69; McGavran, “Wrong Strategy, the Real Crisis in Missions,” *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 54, October 1965, p. 459; and Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

through the power of the Spirit.<sup>15</sup> Donald A. McGavran, for instance, says, “God wants all people to believe in Jesus Christ, become members of his body, be filled with the Holy Spirit and live in him. The Holy Spirit leads Christians everywhere in this direction. Anything less than this is not biblical.”<sup>16</sup>

The three aspects of the Spirit’s working in the world showed that ecumenical and evangelical missiologists wrote on pre-conversion in the early 1960s. In the early 1980s, evangelicals wrote on the Spirit and conversion, while writing on the post-conversion results of the work of the Holy Spirit occurred in the late 1980s, also by ecumenicals and evangelicals.

## A. 2. Function 2: The Spirit to the Church

Similarly, missiologists have developed different approaches in perceiving the function of the Spirit to the church. The first thing missiologists recognize is that the Spirit is the gift of God to the church.<sup>17</sup> At Pentecost God gave the gift of the Spirit to communicate the gospel to all peoples. Newbigin puts it as follows: “The gift of the Spirit is always for mission, is always the

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<sup>15</sup> Bosch, “Evangelism: Theological Currents and Cross-currents Today,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 11, No. 3, July 1987, p. 100. Also see Edmund Ilogu, “The Contribution of the Church to National Unity in Nigeria,” *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 53, July 1964, p. 276.

<sup>16</sup> McGavran, “My Pilgrimage in Mission,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 10, No. 2, April 1986, p. 58.

<sup>17</sup> See Aagaard, Niles and Mark Albrecht, “New Religious Movements,” *Missiology*, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 1979, pp. 80-81; Castro, “Mission in the 1990s,” *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149; R. Pierce Beaver, *The Missionary Between the Times* (New York, 1968), p. 43; and Tippet, “The Holy Spirit and Responsive Populations,” *op. cit.*, pp. 91-100.

equipping of God's people for their witness to the world, exactly as the gift of the Spirit to Jesus at his baptism was his anointing for his mission as the Messiah."<sup>18</sup>

The next item is the various gifts that come from the Holy Spirit. For missiologists, the manifestations of the Spirit center on evangelism. It is in the witness of the church that the gifts of the Spirit are prominent.<sup>19</sup> These gifts of witness are a promise to the church.<sup>20</sup> To make disciples in the world, the church needs to discover the different gifts the Spirit has given and seek the Spirit's guidance how best use these resources for evangelism.<sup>21</sup> According to Arthur F. Glasser, this will allow the church to be obedient to both the cultural and redemptive mandates.<sup>22</sup>

What are some of these gifts? Let us consider these gifts bestowed to the church by the Holy Spirit under three expressions -- the initiation, the nature and the renewal of the church.

At Pentecost the church came into existence as a gift of the Spirit through the resurrected

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<sup>18</sup> Newbigin, *Journey into Joy* (Madras, 1972), p. 46.

<sup>19</sup> See Melvin L. Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission -- A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, 1977), p.50 and Gary B. McGee, "The Azusa Street Revival and Twentieth-Century Missions," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 12, No. 2, April 1988, p. 60.

<sup>20</sup> Newbigin, "Context and Conversion," *op. cit.*, p. 308.

<sup>21</sup> Costas, "Churches in Evangelistic Partnership," in C. Rene Padilla, ed., *The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant* (Downers Grove, 1976), p. 156.

<sup>22</sup> Glasser, "The Evolution of Evangelical Mission Theology Since World War II," *op. cit.*, p. 12. According to Niles, *Upon the Earth, op. cit.*, p. 69, the Holy Spirit then gives to people the gifts of repentance and faith to believe what they have heard proclaimed.

Christ.<sup>23</sup> As a direct result of this visitation, the church became the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and was “continuously aware of the presence of the Spirit in her midst.”<sup>24</sup>

The Spirit also imparts to the church the gifts of God’s nature -- namely, understanding, wisdom and power. First, the Spirit alone makes it possible for the church understand the signs of the Kingdom of God. Niles maintains that these are the signs that need proclaiming to the world.<sup>25</sup>

A second gift of the nature of God to the church is wisdom. The church needs the wisdom of the Spirit to allow his presence and action to do his mission in our world. This is the prayerful call of Emilio Castro to the World Council of Churches.<sup>26</sup>

Third, there is the gift of power to the church. Missiologists mention this gift more than any

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<sup>23</sup> Jerald D. Gort, “Contours of the Reformed Understanding of a Christian Mission: An Attempt at Delineation,” *Occasional Bulletin*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1980, p. 159.

<sup>24</sup> Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>25</sup> Niles, *Upon the Earth*, *op. cit.*, p. 63. Aagaard, “Mission after Uppsala 1968,” in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, eds., *Mission Trends No. 1* (Grand Rapids, 1974), p. 20 calls this an “eschatological and pneumatological urgency” and adds: “Most of us do agree that missiology is a part of eschatology and that missions are pneumatological realities and therefore that missions have a peculiar urgency as their nature.”

<sup>26</sup> Castro, “Mission in the 1990s,” *op. cit.*, p. 148.

other,<sup>27</sup> usually within the context of witnessing.<sup>28</sup> The Spirit gives power to proclaim Jesus Christ “under all circumstances.”<sup>29</sup> “It was for this task and privilege that the power of the Holy Spirit was promised and given.”<sup>30</sup>

Harry R. Boer in his book, *Pentecost and Missions*, addressed this issue.<sup>31</sup> At Pentecost, he says, the Holy Spirit indwelt the church and became universal in his operating power. The disciples did not carry out the Great Commission primarily out of obedience, but by the guidance and power of the Spirit. Boer argues that the dominant motif of Acts is the expansion of the Faith. This occurs through missionary witness in the power of the Spirit of God.

The Pentecostals refer to this gift of the Spirit’s power as “the baptism of the Spirit.” They

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* See Escobar, “Recruitment of Students for Mission,” *Missiology*, Vol. 15, No. 4, October 1987, pp. 534-535; Beaver, “The Apostolate Church,” in Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *The Theology of the Christian Mission* (New York, 1961), p. 265; McGavran, “Wrong Strategy -- the Real Crisis in Mission,” in Donald A. McGavran, ed., *The Conciliar-Evangelical Debate* (Pasadena, 1977), p. 106; and Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>28</sup> See Newbigin, “Co-operation and Unity,” *op. cit.*, p. 72 who says that there “is a life in the fellowship of the Father and the Son through the power of the Spirit.” Furthermore, Costas, *The Integrity of Mission: the Inner Life and Outreach of the Church* (San Francisco, 1979), p. 34 suggests that to motivate the church for this evangelism there needs to be a dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit. It is this empowering presence of the Spirit in the preaching and teaching of the churches’ leadership that will motivate believers for witness.

<sup>29</sup> Niles, *Upon the Earth*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>30</sup> Beaver, “The Apostolate of the Church,” *op. cit.*, p. 258. Also see Beaver, *The Missionary Between the Times*, *op. cit.*, p. 43 and “The Legacy of Rufus Anderson,” *Occasional Bulletin*, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 95-96; Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59, 61 and 205; and Glasser, “What is ‘Mission’ Today,” in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, eds., *Mission Trends No. 1* (Grand Rapids, 1974), p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 74, 109 and 161.

believe that it enables a person to do missionary work<sup>32</sup> as they are Spirit-directed and empowered.<sup>33</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger comments on the baptism in the Spirit: “It is meant for the church on earth. . .without it. . .the church cannot be a missionary church.”<sup>34</sup>

The last gift of the Spirit for the church observed in this survey is that of renewal.<sup>35</sup> John V. Taylor speaks of the church being constantly renewed in its relationship with God. This is an activity of the Spirit<sup>36</sup> and is a vital element of our missionary proclamation. The Spirit brings renewal which in turn brings missionary commitment.<sup>37</sup> The evidence is in the emergence of new Christian communities “that claim a new awareness and a new presence of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>38</sup>

The influence of the Pentecostal movement is evident in this function of the work of the

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<sup>32</sup> See McGee, “The Azusa Street Revival and Twentieth-Century Missions,” *op. cit.*, p. 58 and Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission*, *op. cit.*, p. 19 where he says, “The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church and becomes the source of power and equipment for missions as believers receive His fullness.”

<sup>33</sup> See Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission*, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39 and “A Pentecostal’s View of Mission Strategy,” in Donald A. McGavran, ed., *The Conciliar-Evangelical Debate*, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>34</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London, 1972), p. 332. Also see Hollenweger, *ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>35</sup> See McGavran, “Introduction,” *Crucial Issues in Missions Tomorrow*, *op. cit.*, p. 18 and Newbiggin, “Context and Conversion,” *op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>36</sup> John V. Taylor, “The Lord’s Prayer: The Church Witnesses to the Kingdom,” *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 69, No. 275, July 1980, p. 296.

<sup>37</sup> Castro, “The Bible in the Mission of the Church,” *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 70, No. 279, July 1981, p. 115.

<sup>38</sup> Castro, “Mission in the 1990s,” *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.

Spirit. Writings on the gifts of the Spirit span the 1970s. These include Pentecostal missiologists such as Melvin Hodges and his book, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission* and Swiss missiologist Hollenweger and his work, *The Pentecostals*. In comparison, ecumenicals tended to write on the gift of renewal in the 1980s.

### A. 3. Function 3: The Church and the Spirit

The third function of the Holy Spirit's work that I observed is that between the church and the Spirit of God. This involves the Spirit moving in the church towards God. It is different from the previous function since it is not the Spirit giving to the church, but the church giving to the triune Spirit. It is the task of the Spirit to strengthen this relationship in obedience, righteousness and devotion.<sup>39</sup> The Holy Spirit creates "the spirit of missionary devotion, perseverance and self-sacrifice."<sup>40</sup> He directs the Christian's life in willing obedience to God rather than through religious observance.<sup>41</sup>

By prayer, the church expresses its dependence on the Spirit as it seeks God's guidance.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> McGavran, "Introduction," *Crucial Issues in Missions Tomorrow*, *op. cit.*, p. 18 describes what he sees as "the rising tide of revival and renewal." He states: "In answer to earnest prayer for in-filling, the Holy Spirit is descending on His church and empowering it to be righteous, do justice and rejoice in the Lord."

<sup>40</sup> Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>41</sup> Niles, *Upon the Earth*, p. 64.

<sup>42</sup> Costas, *The Integrity of Mission*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

This submission to the Holy Spirit leads to worship and it is through worship that the Spirit meets with the church.<sup>43</sup> In the words of Taylor: “It is through worship that we constantly renew, by the activity of the Holy Spirit, our Abba-relationship with the God of Jesus Christ.”<sup>44</sup> Christian worship is to God through Christ in the Holy Spirit.<sup>45</sup> This keeps the church in close relationship to God<sup>46</sup> which in turn promotes involvement in God's mission. Costas says: “Mission is a comprehensive and dynamic process. It involves the missional action of the Spirit, moving to-and-fro in the world, pointing to the Lamb and eliciting responses of faith, and adoration from the human family.”<sup>47</sup>

A few missiologists wrote on prayer and the Spirit in the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, by-and-large, the function of the Spirit's work between the church and the Trinity is a neglected area. The relationship between spirituality and mission deserves further study.

#### A. 4. Function 4: The Church and the Demonic

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<sup>43</sup> Aagaard, Niles and Albrecht, “New Religious Movements,” *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>44</sup> Taylor, “The Lord's Prayer,” *op. cit.*, p. 296.

<sup>45</sup> See Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>46</sup> Beaver, “The Apostolate of the Church,” *op. cit.*, p. 265. Also see Glasser, “Foreword,” in Paul A. Pomerville, *The Third Force in Missions* (Peabody, 1985), p. vii and L. Grant McClung, “Mission in the 1990s,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 14, No. 4, October 1990, p. 153. Both observe that the Pentecostals believe that the presence of the Spirit moves the church closer to Christ.

<sup>47</sup> Costas, *The Integrity of Mission*, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

The fourth function of the Spirit involves action against demonic forces. Newbigin maintains that the effectiveness of “the communication of the Good News of the reign of God”<sup>48</sup> depends on a number of factors. He mentions the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit and the church bearing “the scars of the conflict between the reign of God and the usurped power of Satan.”<sup>49</sup> In the view of Costas: “The battle against the principalities and powers requires not technological know-how and speculative knowledge, but commitment to God’s truth and righteousness, obedience to God’s Word and sensitivity to God’s Spirit.”<sup>50</sup>

The 1990s have seen a number of evangelical missiologists focus on the church and the demonic. The two missiologists who have written most in this area are C. Peter Wagner and Charles H. Kraft. Wagner contends that the Holy Spirit enabled Jesus to defeat the demonic powers he met. Jesus cast out demons by “the finger of God,” a metaphor for the Spirit.<sup>51</sup> In turn, he taught his disciples to do likewise, relying on the same power of the Spirit.<sup>52</sup> Wagner then suggests that with the Holy Spirit, the Christian can have the same power ministry as Jesus and his

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<sup>48</sup> Newbigin, “Integration -- Some Personal Reflections 1981,” *op. cit.*, p.255.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Costas, “The Whole World for the Whole Gospel,” *Missiology*, Vol. 8, No. 4, October 1980, p. 403.

<sup>51</sup> Compare Matthew 12:28 with Luke 11:20.

<sup>52</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Confronting the Powers: How the New Testament Church Experienced the Power of Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare* (Ventura, 1996), p. 134.

disciples. Commenting on this “strategic-level spiritual warfare” he says:

Only the Holy Spirit can overcome the territorial spirits, destroy their armor and release the captives under their wicked control. Where is the Holy Spirit today? He is in us who have been born again and have asked God to fill us with the Holy Spirit. . . . One high-priority use of the Holy Spirit power by those who wish to serve Jesus in evangelism is to overcome whatever strongman may be holding a particular neighborhood or city or people group in spiritual captivity. Nothing I know of could be more important for winning the lost.<sup>53</sup>

In a similar vein, Kraft believes that Jesus gave believers the authority to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit. This involves not only preaching the gospel, but also demonstrating the Good News through healing and deliverance. Jesus did not use his divine attributes on earth, but relied on the insight of the Spirit. This is also the way Christ wants his followers to continue his ministry today. As Kraft puts it: “He [Jesus] did his works as a human being empowered by the Holy Spirit. When Jesus left, then, he promised the same Holy Spirit to his followers to enable us to do the same and greater works than he did. As with Jesus, then, the Holy Spirit is our Source of power and Jesus himself our Authority-giver and our model.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>54</sup> Charles H. Kraft, “‘Christian Animism’ or God-Given Authority?” in Edward Rommen, ed., *Spiritual Power and Missions: Raising the Issues* (Pasadena, 1995), p. 96.

## A. 5. Function 5: The Church and the World

Next I will consider the function of the Spirit working in the church to reach the world.

Below I will discuss the terms missiologists use to describe the works of the Spirit, how they view the guidance of the Spirit and lastly, how they classify the results of mission through the Spirit.

Some of the terms used by missiologists to describe the work of God's Spirit in sharing the gospel are: "communication,"<sup>55</sup> "evangelism"<sup>56</sup> and "mission."<sup>57</sup> However, the most common term used is "witness."<sup>58</sup> The Spirit witnesses that in Christ, God has reconciled the world to himself.<sup>59</sup> The church acts as a witness only because the Spirit is present with it. Witness is not so much an activity of the church, as an activity of the Spirit.

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<sup>55</sup> See Newbigin, *Journey into Joy*, *op. cit.*, p. 46; "Context and Conversion," *op. cit.*, p. 312; "Integration -- Some Personal Reflections 1981," *op. cit.*, p. 255 and Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>56</sup> See Costas, *The Integrity of Mission*, *op. cit.*, p. 34 and McGee, "Assemblies of God Mission Theology: A Historical Perspective," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 10, No. 4, October 1986, p. 169.

<sup>57</sup> Bosch, "Reflections of Biblical Models of Mission," in James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote, eds., *Toward the Twenty-first Century in Christian Mission* (Grand Rapids, 1993), pp. 184-185; McGee, "Assemblies of God Mission Theology," *op. cit.*, p. 166; Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>58</sup> See Costas, *The Integrity of Mission*, *op. cit.*, p. 34 and Tippett, "The Holy Spirit and Responsive Populations," *op. cit.*, p. 95.

<sup>59</sup> See Newbigin, "Context and Conversion," *op. cit.*, p. 308; "Common Witness and Unity," *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 69, No. 274, p. 158; Beaver, "The Apostolate of the Church," *op. cit.*, p. 258; and "The Legacy of Rufus Anderson," *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

Missiologists that use the word “witness” tend to have different definitions for the word. Newbigin defines “witness” as the church’s identification with the suffering of the world. This occurs when “the church is being faithful under pressure.”<sup>60</sup> This action of the Spirit causes change in both the church and the world. On the other hand, Costas understands “witness” to be God’s people trusting in the transforming action of the Spirit,<sup>61</sup> whereas Boer, sees the “witness” of the Spirit as the verbal proclamation of the church.<sup>62</sup> It is the Spirit that “must establish the spoken word.”<sup>63</sup>

Concerning guidance, many missiologists recognize that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is essential for the church to do Christ’s mission.<sup>64</sup> The Spirit “is seeking to lead the church in its

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<sup>60</sup> Newbigin, “Context and Conversion,” *op. cit.*, p. 308; Also see Newbigin, “Common Witness and Unity,” *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160; and “Integration -- Some Personal Reflections 1981,” *op. cit.*, p. 255. Compare Beaver, “The Worldwide Christian Community in 1952,” *Occasional Bulletin*, Vol. 4, No. 4, February 27, 1953, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> Costas, “Church Growth as a Multidimensional Phenomena,” *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> See Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59, 63.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>64</sup> See Ronald K. Orchard, “Joint Action for Mission: Its Aim, Implications and Method,” *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 54, January 1965, p. 87; McClung, “Explosion, Motivation and Consolidation: The Historical Anatomy of the Pentecostal Missionary Movement,” *Missiology*, Vol. 14, No. 2, April 1986, p. 161.

mission”<sup>65</sup> and the Church needs to seek his leadership, if there is to be any success in mission.<sup>66</sup>

Mission is foremost a work of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, it is a work requiring the participation of the people of God.<sup>67</sup> Mission depends upon the integrity of the witness of the church and its faithfulness. As Wilhelm Andersen put it: “Mission is at the same time the work of God in the world which he shares with men as his instruments. . .bestowing upon them and honoring them with his Spirit to be his fellow workers.”<sup>68</sup>

Newbigin sees in the book of Acts a model for the church of today. The Spirit always leads and the early church follows. In this way the church “confesses that the Spirit is sovereign, the only true controller and strategist of the mission of the church.”<sup>69</sup> The leading of the Spirit is un-

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<sup>65</sup> Niles, *Upon the Earth, op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>66</sup> Hodges, “Answers from the Whole World,” *op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>67</sup> Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally, op. cit.*, p. 638 says, “The Holy Spirit works in and through the missionary to bring unbelievers to repentance and faith.” Compare Wagner, “A Vision for Evangelizing the Real America,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol 10, No. 2, April 1986, p. 64. See Beaver, *The Missionary Between the Times*, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32 and “Race and Nationality in North American Foreign Missions,” *Occasional Bulletin*, Vol. 4, No. 11, p. 1; McGavran, “My Pilgrimage in Mission,” *op. cit.*, p. 58; and Hodges, “A Pentecostal’s View of Mission Strategy,” *op. cit.*, pp. 142-143. The Spirit “directs the campaign in which the Christian is a participant,” says Niles in *Upon the Earth, op. cit.*, p. 64. Further, McClung, “Theology and Strategy of Pentecostal Missions,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 12, No. 1, January 1988, pp. 2-6 discusses a person in prayer hearing “the Holy Spirit whisper to his heart” the exact location of the place he is to share the gospel.

<sup>68</sup> Wilhelm Andersen, “Further Toward a Theology of Mission,” *The Theology of the Christian Mission*, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

<sup>69</sup> Newbigin, “Bringing Our Missionary Methods Under the Word of God,” *Occasional Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No. 11, November 1962, p. 8.

predictable, but the early church followed. Newbigin compares the church of today with the church of Acts and suggests that our priorities need adjusting. He asks, “Why is it we have created in so many situations a picture of the work of missions which seems to be centered more in the office than in the sanctuary, more in the program than in prayer, more in administering than in ministering?”<sup>70</sup>

Costas believes that through prayer the church obtains the guidance of the Spirit in preaching and teaching. This motivates the believers for witness.<sup>71</sup> Also, through prayer, the church discovers the most effective way to use the gifts of the church for evangelism.<sup>72</sup> Costas uses the separation of Saul and Barnabas from the Antioch church (Acts 13) to reinforce the importance of prayer to reveal the plans of the Spirit.<sup>73</sup>

When regarding the results of mission, missiologists consider two main issues: church growth and social change. Some missiologists focus on the fact that the Holy Spirit causes church growth.<sup>74</sup> Mission historian Gary McGee attributes the success of the Assemblies of God

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Costas, *The Integrity of Mission*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>72</sup> Costas, “Churches in Evangelistic Partnership,” *op. cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>73</sup> Costas, “The Mission of Ministry,” *Missiology*, Vol. 14, No. 4, October 1986, p. 466.

<sup>74</sup> See Glasser, “Timeless Lessons from the Western Missionary Penetration of China,” *Missiology*, Vol. 1, No. 4, October 1973, p. 453.

to the work of the Spirit in church growth. In his words: “It [the Assemblies of God] has successfully demonstrated that the pneumatological dynamic of its mission theology is relevant for twentieth-century church planting.”<sup>75</sup> In a similar vein, McGavran of the Church Growth movement, acknowledges that the Spirit grants growth, yet recognizes that he uses the complex world of our society to achieve his will.<sup>76</sup>

One cause for the growth of the church is the Holy Spirit’s demonstration of healing power. Missiologists who believe in divine healing for today, operate under the assumption that Jesus performed miracles through the Spirit. In his book, *How to Have a Healing Ministry*, Wagner states his theological premise: “The Holy Spirit was the source of all of Jesus’ power during his earthly ministry. Jesus exercised no power of or by himself. We today can expect to do the same or greater things than Jesus did because we have been given access to the same power source.”<sup>77</sup>

For this group of missiologists, doing the work of Jesus in today’s world involves healing the sick through the supernatural power of the Spirit. In the 1980s, Wagner studied how signs and wonders related to the growth of the church and how they would likely affect the church in the future. He examined various models of power and came to the conclusion that power evange-

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<sup>75</sup> McGee, “Assemblies of God Mission Theology,” *op. cit.*, p. 169. Also see McGee, “The Azusa Street Revival and Twentieth-Century Missions,” *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>76</sup> McGavran, “Wrong Strategy, the Real Crisis in Missions,” *International Review of Mission*, *op. cit.*, pp. 459-460.

<sup>77</sup> Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry* (Ventura, 1989), p. 114.

lism resulted in the most vigorous growth for the church.<sup>78</sup>

Another group of missiologists views mission as causing political and economical change. This, they believe, will not come from radical preaching, but rather, from the Spirit's involvement with the marginalized.<sup>79</sup> The people of God, filled with the Spirit of God, will cause transformation in their society. Peter Beyerhaus comments on this approach: "People truly indwelt by the Spirit of the gospel of liberty work for the elimination of inhuman structures and principles, and for a reconstruction of society which does justice to the dignity of humanity for which Christ sacrificed His life."<sup>80</sup>

A belief in the guidance of the Spirit is strongly evidenced in the writings of Protestant missiologists, with different groups maintaining various perspectives. Ecumenicals wrote on social change in the early 1970s, while evangelicals in the same decade, studied church growth. In the 1980s, charismatic missiologists concentrated on signs and wonders as a means to the growth of the church.

## **B. In Conclusion**

My survey of Protestant writings considered over 470 pieces of literature from the 70 most

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<sup>78</sup> Wagner, "The Church Growth Movement After Thirty Years," in C. Peter Wagner, ed., *Church Growth State of the Art* (Wheaton, 1989), pp. 36-37.

<sup>79</sup> Taylor, "Small is Beautiful," *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 60, No. 239, p. 338.

<sup>80</sup> Peter Beyerhaus, "Mission, Humanization and the Kingdom," in Donald A. McGavran, ed., *Crucial Issues in Missions Tomorrow*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

influential missiologists in the last 50 years. I recorded every mention of the Spirit and then classified it in this paper. I felt amazed at how little missiologists, for the most part, have reflected on the Holy Spirit's work. Apart from Boer and Taylor, little significant work has been done. I am reminded of the statement of the Ephesian disciples to Paul: "We have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."<sup>81</sup>

Why the silence? It could be argued that the selected missiologists have focused their energy in other areas. This may be so, but many of the prolific authors do not even mention the Holy Spirit. Perhaps this surprising dearth comes from an attitude that relegates the responsibility for the study of the Spirit to the systematic theologians. Indeed, for the last 30 years the study of mission has centered on anthropology and the social sciences to the neglect of mission theology.<sup>82</sup>

Even more surprising is the lack of Pentecostal writings on the Spirit. Being too busy doing mission is a poor excuse for not being in reflection. Through reflection comes a greater understanding and the accompanying power of the Spirit to do his mission. It seems that Australian Pentecostals are not the only Pentecostals struggling to articulate their pneumatology.

Another possibility is that Western missiologists have had a hermeneutic of cynicism towards issues of the Spirit. Perhaps this stems from a Western emphasis on propositional theology, while ignoring the narratives from Scripture and life experience. Our appreciation of the work of the Spirit may change as more and more Majority World missiologists enter the academic

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<sup>81</sup> Acts 19:2.

<sup>82</sup> See Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, 1994), pp. 9-10.

arena.

There are many areas that need further study. A reading of the book of Acts reveals two main categories. The Holy Spirit worked in the disciples of the early church to bring joy in the midst of persecution,<sup>83</sup> paradigm shifts from a mono-cultural to a cross-cultural perspective,<sup>84</sup> boldness in preaching,<sup>85</sup> contextualization of the message,<sup>86</sup> the selection and training of leadership,<sup>87</sup> planning and development of the church,<sup>88</sup> and deep spirituality.<sup>89</sup> In addition, the Holy Spirit also worked in the non-Christians through the gifts of the Spirit,<sup>90</sup> the empowerment of the

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<sup>83</sup> Acts 5:41

<sup>84</sup> Acts 1:6-8; 2:21; 3:25; 4:24; 8:14-25; 9:43; 10:44-48; 11:15-18; 15:6-11; Galatians 2:11-21.

<sup>85</sup> Acts 4:29-31.

<sup>86</sup> See Peter's speeches in Acts 2:14-40; 3:12-26 and Paul's speeches in Acts 13:16-41; 14:15-17; 17:22-31.

<sup>87</sup> Acts 6:1-7; 13:1-4; 20:28.

<sup>88</sup> Acts 15:28; 16:6-7.

<sup>89</sup> Acts 1:14; 3:1; 4:31; 6:4; 8:15; 10:1; 13:3.

<sup>90</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

weak and the lowly,<sup>91</sup> as well as the creation of a sense of awe and wonder<sup>92</sup> through the fear of God<sup>93</sup> and the joy of the gospel.<sup>94</sup> These are some of the areas that Protestant missiology has not considered seriously as works of the Spirit in mission. It is time for missiologists to stand in the gap.

It has been over 25 years since I first experienced the mission of the Holy Spirit in my life. My understanding of the blessed Spirit has grown and my sense of his presence is as strong today as when he touched me in the lounge of the home group, tears flowing down my face. I desire to see people experience the eternal presence of the Spirit in their lives.

Is it possible to foster the influence of the Holy Spirit to mobilize the churches in mission? To do this, the discipline of missiology needs to grow in its understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. In this way we can better recognize and cooperate with what the Spirit of Jesus is already doing in his kingdom.

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<sup>91</sup> Acts 1:13-14; 2:17-18; 9:32-42; 16:14-15, 25-34.

<sup>92</sup> Acts 2:6-7, 12; 3:10-11.

<sup>93</sup> Acts 5:5, 11.

<sup>94</sup> Acts 8:8.

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