

# THEOLOGICAL TRENDS

## Theology of the Holy Spirit, I: Jesus and the Spirit

IT IS MY HOPE in this article and in a subsequent one to give something of an overview of what is being written in theology about the role of the Holy Spirit in christian faith and life. I begin in this article with the relation of Jesus to the Spirit. This is a topic which is being much discussed today and is meant to make up a much neglected theme in the history of christology. In recent years theologians have begun to take the notion of 'model' which has frequently been employed in the sciences and apply it to theology. Avery Dulles, for example, showed how various models of the Church have been operative in theology.<sup>1</sup> He pointed out that our theological model will affect our answers to a large number of questions. So in christology, we can talk about the alexandrian or the antiochene model for understanding the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the most significant model which the Church has used to understand Jesus is that of the incarnate *Logos*. This model is rooted in the johannine prologue. The pre-existent *Logos* took on a human nature in the Incarnation and became flesh. This idea has also been combined with another significant johannine theme: Jesus is the divine Son, he is Son of God in the absolute sense. Although this understanding of Jesus is normative for christian faith, theologians today have come to see more clearly that no one model can ever do full justice to the biblical data. The bible works with many concepts and images to reflect on Jesus's identity and mission. One significant concept is that of the anointing with the Holy Spirit. We say, for example, that Jesus is the Christ. The word 'Christ' literally means anointed one. The New Testament clearly affirms that Jesus possessed the fulness of God's Spirit. Hence theologians today are suggesting that valuable light could be shed on the significance of Jesus by doing christology in a pneumatic framework. In this essay I would like to explore some of the developments along these lines.

### *Biblical foundations*

Just a glance at the New Testament reveals how often Jesus's identity is linked to the Holy Spirit. According to St Luke, Jesus is conceived when the Holy Spirit comes upon Mary and the power of the Most High overshadows her (Lk 1,35). In the baptism the Spirit of God descends upon Jesus, thus inaugurating his public ministry and revealing for all to see that he is installed in the office of God's messiah (Mk 1,10-11). After his baptism, Jesus is led into the desert by the power of the Spirit (Mk 1,12). St

Luke indicates that Jesus begins his public ministry by referring to Isaiah 61: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor' (Lk 4,18). One of Jesus's important ministries is that of exorcism. This is a key sign of the coming of God's final eschatological reign and this is a special mark of the Spirit. 'But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you' (Mt 12,28). On the cross Jesus offers himself to the Father in the Holy Spirit (Heb 9,14) and in the resurrection St Paul says that he became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor 15,45). In one of the kerygmatic speeches of Peter in Acts, the notion of Jesus's anointing with the Spirit is a central feature in the early christian preaching about him. 'You know how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him' (Acts 10,38).

This brief sketch should be enough to indicate that Jesus's anointing by the Spirit was certainly an important interpretation of Jesus by the early community. According to their faith, Jesus was the bearer of the Spirit as no other man had been. The prophets of old had a measure of the Spirit for particular missions of the Lord. But Jesus had the fulness of the Spirit. In him there occurred the completion of God's sending of the Spirit. From his death and resurrection this Spirit had now been bestowed on the community of his followers. They were the community of the end-time, because Jesus, God's final ambassador, filled with the fulness of God's Spirit, had bestowed that same Spirit upon them, to be with them until the parousia when Jesus would hand over the kingdom to the Father. In other words, this was a significant image of their faith, the way Jesus was remembered in the community.

But theologians today also want to probe beneath the memory of the community to get back as far as possible to Jesus himself. This would be dangerous if one wanted to make a separation between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. With most moderate theologians I would want to maintain that there is only one Jesus in whom we believe. The Jesus of history and the Christ of faith are identical, though one would want to distinguish Jesus in his state of humility and Jesus in his glorification. Nonetheless, peeling away the layers of the New Testament is rewarding, for it sheds new light on Jesus and can allow him to appear in a new perspective. For example, the rediscovery of Jesus's central proclamation of the kingdom of God has acted as an important catalyst in reshaping our understanding of him and in forcing us to re-think the relation of faith to the problem of human hopes in history and man's search for justice and peace. A probing beneath the layers of the New Testament into the question of Jesus's relation to the Spirit likewise provokes a deeper understanding of Jesus's mission and identity.

Let us then look at some of the exegetical studies which have been done

along these lines. A number of years ago one of the Church's leading pneumatologists, Heribert Mühlen, offered some reflections on Jesus's relation to the Spirit.<sup>3</sup> He drew attention to the link in the bible between Jesus's divine Sonship and his possession of the Spirit. He pointed out that in the synoptic gospels 'Son of God' is not a title connoting divine Sonship in the absolute sense of the Fourth Gospel or of later trinitarian theology. When Jesus is designated Son of God in the synoptics, the evangelist does not mean the pre-existent divine Son but rather bearer of the Spirit. This can be observed, for example, in St Mark's gospel. Jesus possesses God's Spirit to drive out demons and the demons alone recognize his identity. Narrating the first exorcism story in his gospel, Mark records the words of the demon, 'Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the holy one of God' (Mk 1,24). Later in an exorcism story in Mark 5, a man possessed by an unclean spirit, recognizes Jesus and cries out, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?' (Mk 5,7). Thus there is a tendency to link together Jesus's divine Sonship and his possession of God's Spirit. Mühlen mentions the same tendency in the account of the baptism. In the theophany of the baptism the Spirit descends upon Jesus. At this moment he is identified as Son of God and given his eschatological mission. The use of Psalm 2,7 from the Old Testament 'You are my Son; this day I have begotten you' indicates that the gospel writer is interpreting the anointing of the king, the messiah, in a pneumatic way. According to Mühlen, Old Testament messianology is being reinterpreted pneumatologically. In the Old Testament, the messiah is God's Son by virtue of his regal anointing; in the New Testament, Jesus is God's Son because of his anointing by the Spirit.

Similar conclusions have been reached by the English exegete James D. G. Dunn.<sup>4</sup> In searching for the foundational religious experience of Jesus, Dunn concentrates on two phenomena, Jesus's experience of Sonship and his experience of the Spirit. Exegetes are generally agreed that a peculiar feature of Jesus's life was his prayer to God as *Abba*. Jesus prayed to God with the intimacy of a child before his father. The retention of this aramaic word even in the letters of Paul (Gal 4,7; Rom 8,15) points to its importance in early Christianity and it is logical to deduce that this importance must be traced back to Jesus himself. Moreover, although Jesus invited his community to share in this intimacy, it is clear that the community's experience is dependent on and derivative from his. Jesus does not pray 'Our Father' but 'My Father'. Moreover, this use of *Abba* can be linked to Jesus's sense of being the fulfilment of history. The gift of divine sonship is a gift of the 'last times' as is reflected in the beatitudes. There we read for example, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God' (Mt 5,9).

Another important text in this connection is Mt 11,27, 'All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the

Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him'. This text is so johannine in character that it has been called the johannine thunderbolt in the synoptic gospels but Jeremias has shown that linguistically there is nothing against accepting it as an authentic saying of Jesus. What may lie behind the saying is an everyday analogy; just as a father knows his son and introduces him into his trade, so analogously does Jesus's Father introduce him to the intimacy of the kingdom. Dunn remains uncertain whether to trace the saying back to Jesus himself but if this logion is authentic it would be an additional argument to the already firm conviction of Jesus's strong experience of a special relation to God.

The other peculiar feature of Jesus's religious consciousness which Dunn discusses is precisely Jesus's relation to the Spirit (which, as we mentioned above, is linked to his Sonship in any case). A number of features call for comment. First of all, there is the general feature that Jesus saw himself and his mission as eschatological. In him the issue of history is being decided, the judgment of the world is taking place, the kingdom of God is happening. The claim of Jesus on human beings is decisive and unsurpassable: 'And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; but he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God' (Lk 12,8-9).

Besides the healings, the most decisive sign of the inauguration of the kingdom is the work of exorcism. This is Jesus's victory over Satan, the binding of the powers of evil which was looked for in the final age. The world is a vast stage on which the struggle between the Spirit of God and the evil spirit is being waged. The Spirit of God, in this sense the eschatological Spirit, is present in Jesus and with Jesus.

Moreover, Jesus is perceived by the people as a prophet. The significance of this should not be overlooked. Prophecy was a gift of Israel which was believed to have died out since the early post-exilic period. But Israel longed for the return of prophecy, that is, for a new outpouring of the Spirit. This was hoped for as a gift of the last days and Joel 2,28ff was interpreted in these terms. There is good evidence to think that Jesus himself interpreted his person and mission in prophetic terms. In addition to the biblical record that he was regarded as a prophet (Mk 8,28), there are also his own prophetic gestures such as cleansing the temple, cursing the fig tree, entering Jerusalem on an ass, feeding the five thousand. And there are also sayings in which Jesus speaks of himself as a prophet. In Luke 13,33 Jesus refers to his death in prophetic categories, 'Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem'. What distinguishes Jesus's attitude, however, is that he sees himself as the eschatological prophet. None will come after him. His possession of God's Spirit is not partial but complete.

One final aspect of Jesus as bearer of the Spirit deserves comment. This is the use which Luke makes of Isaiah 61. We have already mentioned that this text plays an important role of interpretation in the inaugural scene of Jesus's ministry in Luke 4. How much of this is lucan theology and how much can be traced back to Jesus himself? Although Dunn believes that the scene in Luke 4 as we have it is lucan redaction, he also believes that Luke's presentation of Jesus was inspired by authentic Jesus tradition. A key idea behind Isaiah 61 is that the poor shall have the gospel preached to them. Although this idea is prominent in Luke 4, it is also strongly present in at least two other places in the New Testament: first, in the beatitudes: 'Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven' (Lk 6,20) and secondly, in the answer of Jesus to the query of John the Baptist: 'Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear and the dead are raised to life, and the poor hear the good news' (Lk 7,22). Thus in Jesus's own thinking those who heard his message were the poor spoken of by Isaiah, men and women who were now experiencing the suffering of the end-time but who would soon enjoy the liberty of God's kingdom.

In conclusion then, Dunn notes that the two strongest elements of Jesus's religious consciousness in so far as we can discern it beneath the layers of the New Testament are his consciousness of Sonship and his awareness of the Spirit, and he urges that we treat them as two sides of one coin. Spirit and Sonship are two aspects of the one experience of God out of which Jesus lived and ministered. Summing up these investigations, Dunn writes:

Jesus thought of himself as God's son and as anointed by the eschatological Spirit, because in prayer he experienced God as Father and in ministry he experienced a power to heal which he could only understand as the power of the end-time and an inspiration to proclaim a message which he could only understand as the gospel of the end-time.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Revisionist interpretations*

Although the re-emergence of these biblical perspectives is no doubt interesting, a difficulty immediately presents itself. How is this christology to be related to and reconciled with the classical chalcedonian christology? According to this picture, it could seem as though Jesus was a mere man in whom the Spirit of God dwelt. This could easily lead to the position of adoptionism, especially if the anointing with the Spirit is linked to a particular event in the life of Jesus such as the baptism. The question arises then whether a *Logos* christology and a Spirit christology are compatible. Do we have here two models, from which we must choose, according to our own taste; in other words, do we have here two incompatible models or do we have two complementary models? The answer to these questions

depends for the most part on the presuppositions of one's fundamental theology, which in part no doubt is determined by one's confessional allegiance. Here I will merely try to sketch how various dogmatic theologians are answering these questions by showing how they are integrating the biblical data into their own theological framework. I will begin with more radical approaches, in particular those of the anglican theologian, Geoffrey Lampe, and the dutch roman catholic theologian Piet Schoonenberg.

Lampe initially expressed his views on Spirit christology in a significant article in 1972.<sup>6</sup> These ideas were later developed in his Bampton Lectures of 1976.<sup>7</sup> His ideas are important not only in themselves but also because he represents a noteworthy trend in british theology and his ideas have recently been taken up by another like-minded theologian, Professor Maurice Wiles.<sup>8</sup>

The strength of Lampe's approach is to try to situate the event of Jesus as the Christ within God's universal salvific purposes. To this end he finds the biblical idea of spirit most helpful. God is no doubt transcendent and in this sense beyond the world. But God is also relational, immanent in his creation. The Old Testament sought to express God's relational nature through the concept of spirit. He writes:

In hebrew religious language 'spirit' is one of those 'bridge' words which express the idea of God's out-reach towards, and contact with, the created world. These are terms which link transcendent deity with the realm of time and space, for they speak of God directing his thought towards his creation, purposing, willing, bringing into being, sustaining, guiding the cosmos and everything within it.<sup>9</sup>

This is certainly true but Lampe also brings in a number of presuppositions which are not biblical but rather philosophical and they are at least problematical. Lampe so stresses the immanence of God that he maintains that God is not only always incarnate but also always being crucified.<sup>10</sup> Lampe has an aversion for any notion of God's interfering or intervening in the creative process. God's work as spirit is immanent within creation; he operates more by the way of final causality, by the method of lure or persuasion, as the process philosophers would say. Thus Lampe sees the need for a radical demythologizing. He cannot accept the idea either of a pre-existent *Logos* or a post-existent Christ. He finds it impossible to believe that Jesus will come again in the parousia. He rejects the notion of an end of history. Perhaps most significantly, he revises (in what to me seems a thoroughly unbiblical way) the whole notion of redemption. Since he cannot accept an original fall, he cannot accept any fresh initiative from God to overcome the estrangement between God and man. In one place, he writes:

The early Church's theology demanded a mediator between God and his creation, and the Logos-Son christology was developed with the praiseworthy intention of affirming that the mediator was himself of one and the same essence as God the Father. Yet in fact we need no mediator.<sup>11</sup>

If Jesus does not perform this mediatorial, soteriological role, how then are we to understand his mission? Lampe suggests the category of focus. He writes, 'Christ is the focal point of the continuing encounter between God and man which takes place throughout human history'.<sup>12</sup> In other words, Lampe stresses more God's continuing work of creation. Jesus is the revelation of God's purposes in the world. In him we see in a complete way what God intends for his world. In the same context in which he rejects the traditional doctrine of redemption, Lampe writes, 'If then we ask again, "What has God in Jesus done for man that man himself could not do?" our answer can be: "Created him"; or, rather, "Brought the process of creation to the point where perfect man appears for the first time"'.<sup>13</sup>

If God is incarnate everywhere through his Spirit, God is incarnate in a special, even in a supreme way, in Jesus as the Christ. In him we see the fulness of God's intentions. Thus Lampe is not hesitant to express his belief in the Incarnation. The question is, however, what belief in the Incarnation means. What Lampe wants to reject is the Incarnation of a pre-existent divine hypostasis, a pre-existent *Logos* or Son. Such an idea he finds incompatible with the genuine humanity of Jesus, although classical christology tried to preserve this. He recognizes the effort of the Church's classical christology but argues that it inevitably leads to a reduced humanity of Jesus Christ. Thus he wants to work with a new model, an inspirational model. The subject of Jesus is a human person fully penetrated by the divine Spirit. We cannot say that Jesus is God or that Jesus is a divine person but we can speak of his divinity. His divinity consists in his being penetrated with the fulness of God's Spirit. Lampe has chosen to say that Jesus is not God substantively or adjectivally but adverbially, i.e. he acts in a divine way.

At this point a number of observations are required. First, Lampe's theory is a strong defence of the humanity of Jesus, He sees an interaction between the free humanity of the man Jesus and the divine Spirit, an interaction going on everywhere in the creation. Secondly, Lampe's position is not the same as adoptionism, the heresy which maintains that the man Jesus at some point became divine. His theory is open to the idea that Jesus from the first moment of his conception was fully penetrated by the divine. But at the same time it must be said that, in Lampe's own mind, his form of Spirit christology is incompatible with the classical *Logos* christology. Whereas I have argued that the New Testament contains both models, Lampe believes that we are forced to choose between them.

In conclusion, it is critical to notice that a major presupposition of Lampe's whole approach is his conviction that the Old Testament concepts of *Logos* and Spirit are identical. He finds a critical flaw in the New Testament authors, namely that they saw *Logos* and Spirit as separate hypostases in God. In Lampe's mind they should have identified the two. The risen Christ and the life-giving Spirit of God are identical. In other words, God's Spirit, always active in the creation, was eschatologically active in Jesus. That same Spirit, since the end of the human life of Jesus, is let loose in the world and is now seen to be so stamped by the character of Jesus that it can be called the Spirit of Christ. But ultimately there is no distinction between the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. God is Spirit but there is no Holy Spirit as an independent hypostasis or person of the Trinity. In fact there is no Trinity in the genuine sense at all.

Lampe admits that he is here going both beyond and against the biblical data. He does so for the sake of consistency of vision (in harmony with certain philosophical presuppositions). But there is one datum which he cannot fit into his system and I think it is a critical one for most Christians. His demythologizing leads him to reject both the personal pre-existence and post-existence of Jesus of Nazareth. He writes:

The New Testament writers do not, of course, carry through a consistent identification of Christ with Spirit or of Christ with the philonic *Logos* or the cosmic Wisdom. Paul and John are inhibited from completing their partial identification of Christ with Spirit by their conception of the pre-existence, not simply of the *Logos*, the Wisdom, or the Spirit that was concretely manifested in Jesus, but of the actual person of Jesus Christ. Not only is Jesus Christ a pre-existent personal being; he is also post-existent.<sup>14</sup>

This is certainly a crucial issue for faith. On it, for example, hangs the issue of prayer. For Lampe one should not pray to Jesus Christ. Our prayer is always directed to the one God but for a Christian this means through Christ, which Lampe interprets to mean in his Spirit. Thus the issue of the living person of Jesus of Nazareth will be the critical one for deciding between Lampe's christology in which God's Spirit was in Christ and alternative interpretations in which the living person Jesus of Nazareth gives us access to the one Father through his Spirit. This is the issue between unitarianism and trinitarianism, an issue which is also central to the thought of Piet Schoonenberg to which we now turn.

Schoonenberg developed his ideas on christology at length in his book *Jesus the Christ*.<sup>15</sup> Like Lampe a major concern of his was to do full justice to the humanity of Jesus. He took as his starting point two data: first, the indivisibility of the one person Jesus Christ and secondly, his full humanity. Since Jesus is one and since what is best known to us is his



humanity, Schoonenberg argued that we should proceed on the assumption that Jesus is a human person.

In this he departed radically from the model of the Council of Chalcedon. Working with the categories of person and nature, Chalcedon taught that Jesus was a divine person who assumed a human nature. The principle of identity in Jesus Christ is the divine *Logos* which Chalcedon called the divine hypostasis. According to Chalcedon there is no human hypostasis or source of identity in Jesus. Rather the human nature is wholly the humanity of the divine *Logos*. The humanity of Jesus is created and assumed by the divine *Logos* at one and the same time. In this sense Chalcedon taught that one could not speak of Jesus as a human person.

Schoonenberg's christology proposed a radical revision of this approach. For him the principle of identity in Jesus is the human person. The divine *Logos* or Word comes to dwell in the human person. Again, like Lampe, Schoonenberg uses the category of presence. Jesus is a human person totally penetrated by the divine *Logos*. The fulness of God's being dwelt in him.

Schoonenberg's approach has not generally met with wide approval by his catholic colleagues. They argue that he does not do full justice to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and to his ontological constitution. His model seems to make Jesus different from us only in degree but not in kind. He does not bring out clearly enough that God has not only filled this man with his Spirit but has actually identified himself with him, so that one can say that Jesus is God's Incarnation. Michael Cook, for example, writes, 'Our main criticism of Schoonenberg's position will be that if he takes the language of hypostasis seriously, then he must mean by it an "identity-in-being" and not a "mere" christology of God's presence'.<sup>16</sup>

Another facet of Schoonenberg's thought which has met a critical reception is his trinitarian theology. Schoonenberg in *The Christ* argues that it is impossible to say anything about the pre-existence of Christ. We can only speak about God as he is in his revelation and not about God as he is in himself. God becomes our God in the Incarnation and bestowal of the Spirit. Thus in his revelation God becomes triune. Whether God in his eternal life is triune is a point about which we must remain agnostic. Both Walter Kasper and Michael Cook in their books on christology criticize Schoonenberg on this score. What is at stake is precisely the notion of revelation. They ask whether God really does reveal *himself*. If so (and that is what incarnation means), then God in his revelation must correspond to himself in his eternal being. God becomes *for us* what he already is in himself.

In light of the reception of his ideas, Schoonenberg has revised his position, but he has at the same time moved even more clearly in the direction of a Spirit christology. He published his reflections in an article in 1979.<sup>17</sup> In this, he modified the christological stance which he took in his

book *The Christ*. He does not want to surrender his original insight that Jesus is a human person in whom God's Word dwells, but he is willing to balance this assertion with the additional one that the human person also dwells in the divine Word. This is not quite the same as what Chalcedon taught, since the Council spoke of the human *nature* being en-hypostatic in the Word. Schoonenberg talks about the human *person* being en-hypostatic in the Word. He sees a mutual reciprocity: the Word dwells in the human person and the human person in the Word. This conception seems to be based on a more general philosophical notion that God is always immanent in his creation and his creation is immanent in him. He writes, 'Because each presence of God in a creature includes the presence of that creature in God, the enhypostasis of the Word in Jesus (which I proposed and maintain) includes the enhypostasis of Jesus in the Word (which I now affirm with the classical doctrine)'.<sup>18</sup> Since this position seems to be a general philosophical one, it still seems to be a question whether it does justice to the uniqueness of the Incarnation.

The other extremely interesting position of Schoonenberg in this article is his reflection on God's becoming triune. Like Lampe, he stresses the idea in the Old Testament of God's extension of himself toward his creation. But, strictly speaking, God in the Old Testament is only one person. However, the hebrew mentality sought ways to express a person's extension of himself. Categories such as Word, *Logos*, Spirit, Wisdom are Old Testament ways of speaking of the immanence of God or of the extension of his personality outwards. But God *becomes* genuinely tri-personal only in the event of the Incarnation and the pouring out of the Spirit. A dialogue of persons within God only becomes possible after the Incarnation. An I-Thou dialogue between God and his *Logos* in the Old Testament is impossible. But an I-Thou dialogue between Jesus and his Father becomes a reality in the Incarnation. Hence the monotheistic God of the Old Testament becomes tri-personal in his self-revelation in Jesus Christ. Schoonenberg understands this revelation as a real becoming in God's own being.

Schoonenberg opens his article with the question which we raised early on in this essay: are Spirit christology and *Logos* christology complementary or contradictory? At the end of his article he seems to suggest that no hard and fast lines can be drawn between *Logos* and Spirit. In other words, he seems close to Lampe's position that the early Church should have logically identified them. Schoonenberg's position remains ambiguous. At times, he seems to maintain the doctrine of God's *becoming* triune. At times, he seems closer to a binitarianism. The two poles in God are his immanence and transcendence. God is both transcendent and immanent in his creation. It matters little whether we call this immanence of God *Logos* or Spirit. In other words, he seems close to Lampe in seeing the real significance of the affirmation of God as Spirit to be God's presence in the world, a presence

which has been realized in a complete eschatological way in Jesus of Nazareth. Schoonenberg's method and style are irenic and he wants to preserve as much of the substance of the biblical witness and of the tradition as possible, but I wonder in the end if his conclusions are not reductionistic. Is the trinitarian faith of Nicaea and Constantinople reduced to a bare monotheism or to a di-polar theism whose God is closer to the God of Whitehead than to the God of Aquinas? Before accepting these conclusions, we should at least look at the synthesis of one catholic theologian who is firmly committed both to the classical incarnational theology and to the Spirit christology of the bible. I am thinking of the work of the german pneumatologist, Heribert Mühlen, who has laboured to renew the theology of the Holy Spirit in catholic theology and who has brilliantly offered a possible synthesis of a *Logos* and a Spirit christology.

*Creative orthodoxy: the pneumatology of Heribert Mühlen*

The sources of Mühlen's thought are twofold.<sup>19</sup> First, he is keenly aware of the biblical foundations of Jesus's anointing with the Holy Spirit, as we have outlined them in our introduction. In the virginal conception, in the baptism, in the inaugural sermon at Nazareth, in the early kerygmatic preaching of the Church, Jesus is proclaimed as the bearer of the Spirit. Moreover, the particular legacy of Jesus after his death and resurrection is his bestowal of this same Spirit upon his community. The Holy Spirit has been given to us, poured into our hearts, is the down-payment of the end-time, dwells within us as in a temple. The texts of Paul's epistles can be multiplied indefinitely. But secondly, Mühlen is consciously writing out of the tradition of western catholic spirituality and theology. In the background is Augustine's notion of the Holy Spirit as the bond of love, also the whole scholastic doctrine of the Trinity and of grace.

Mühlen is preoccupied with a number of concerns. First, how can one develop a theology of the Holy Spirit which is applicable in all the major areas of theology? If, as Rahner has suggested, the three primordial mysteries of Christianity are Trinity, Incarnation and Grace, then can a theology of the Holy Spirit be developed which would bear fruit in illuminating all these three mysteries? Secondly, how can one understand the relation of Incarnation and anointing with the Spirit in Jesus's earthly life? Thirdly, what is the relation between Jesus's possession of the Spirit and ours?

Let us first consider briefly the role of the Spirit in the Trinity. Mühlen builds on the biblical notion of revelation. The primordial word of revelation in the Old Testament is 'I am'. This is God's fundamental self-disclosure in Exodus 3,14. The New Testament takes up this revelation and associates Jesus with the 'I am' of the old covenant. A key text is John 8,24 (also v 28): 'I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he'. The same claim is contained in

John 8,58, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am'. As Mühlen comments, 'The "I am" is the revelation of the *Father*, but in his name Jesus is included'.<sup>20</sup> In other words, God must be defined in terms of the I-You relation of Father and Son. This is the meaning of John 10,30, 'I and the Father are one'.

But how then are we to understand the Holy Spirit? Mühlen's creative suggestion is that the Holy Spirit is the 'We' of the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit's personhood consists in being the bond of communion between Father and Son. He is 'We' in person. A faint human analogy can be found for this in human marriage. A marriage covenant can only be created by the 'Yes' of an 'I' and a 'Thou'. But the marriage is greater than both partners. It is not 'mine' or 'yours' but 'ours'. The concrete sign of the covenant is the child, the fruitfulness of the spouses' conjugal love. The child is an independent person, the permanent symbol of the covenant love. Of course, the analogy breaks down in that the child leaves the community of the parents and pursues an independent existence in a way in which the Holy Spirit never does. Thus the Holy Spirit has no other personhood than this bond of union. Mühlen is here building on the classical theory of Augustine and on biblical theology, especially the 'We' passages of John's gospel, in particular John 14,23. Given the context of this passage, Mühlen argues that the 'We' is not only the Father and the Son, but also includes the Holy Spirit.

However, his most creative suggestion comes in regard to the Incarnation. Here he addresses the problem which has perplexed all the authors we have considered. How to relate *Logos* christology and Spirit christology? For Mühlen they are complementary. The Incarnation means that the *Logos* takes on a human nature. The divine person does not unite himself to a human person. There is one person and source of identity, namely the divine *Logos*. In the Incarnation this *Logos* creates a human nature in assuming that nature as his own. But what of the Holy Spirit? Mühlen argues that from the first moment of Jesus's incarnate existence he is filled with the Holy Spirit. The baptism is the public proclamation that he is filled with this Spirit and the instalment of Jesus in his messianic (anointed) office. In the incarnate life of Jesus, the Holy Spirit continues to be the bond of unity. The Spirit unites Jesus to the Father. The Spirit is one person in two persons; the Spirit is the 'We' of the Father and the Son. Hence the Spirit's role in salvation history is not hypostatic union. Only the *Logos* takes on a human nature. The Spirit's role in revelation is the same as in the Trinity: to be one person in two persons. Moreover, because Jesus has the Spirit, he has the fulness of grace. Here Mühlen uses the scholastic categories of uncreated and created grace. Uncreated grace is nothing else than the Holy Spirit. The effects of the Spirit in the creature are the created gifts or charisms of the Spirit. Jesus in his human nature is filled with all the graces of the Spirit. His fulness of grace is not for himself but

for us. The grace of the head is ordered to the multiplicity of his members.

In this light it is clear that the completion of Christ's mission consists in his pouring out the Holy Spirit upon his people. Thus to be in Christ and to be in the Spirit are two sides of the same coin. The sending of the Son and the sending of the Spirit are inextricably linked together. But Mühlen goes even further and makes another creative suggestion. He shows that the Holy Spirit fulfils the same ontological role in the Church as he does in the Trinity and in the Incarnation. The Holy Spirit continues to be one person in many persons. The Church is one person in so far as all share in the one person, the Holy Spirit. The Church is many in so far as the charisms, the created graces, have been bestowed upon each one in a diverse and unique way. Mühlen has developed a profound theory of the Church. The Church is not a reality based on a decision of its members from below. The foundation of the Church is based on the decision of Christ. He has chosen us to be his bride, we have not chosen him. Without his outpouring of the Holy Spirit there would be no Church. On the other hand, the Church is not a prolongation of the Incarnation. There is only one Incarnation, one hypostatic union. The Holy Spirit has not entered into hypostatic union with the baptized. Rather the Holy Spirit continues to be one person in many persons. Because the Church is not a hypostatic union, it cannot be divinized. The Church lives by the Holy Spirit but it is human and hence weak and sinful and in need of continual purification.

A final aspect of Mühlen's theory calls for comment. Mühlen argues forcefully against the theory of appropriation. According to this theory, God in a general way dwells in the believer. The indwelling of God is merely appropriated to the Holy Spirit. Such theories, developed in the middle ages, were meant to protect the unity of God and to ward off the danger of tritheism. Mühlen argues for a personal, proper indwelling of the Holy Spirit, of the 'We' of the Father and the Son, in each Christian. This is a critical point, for what is at stake is our whole access to God. Mühlen's theory preserves the salvific and experiential character of the christian belief in the Trinity. God in his primordially is Father, who always dwells in inaccessible light. Between us and this God there is only one mediator, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is not a new mediator. Rather Christ is present to us through this Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the same in Christ and in us. Hence I live and pray to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Mühlen has gone a long way, I think, towards showing why the Holy Spirit is affirmed in christian theology as the third person of the Trinity. This doctrine makes sense, since Jesus Christ is alive now and forever as our mediator. Christ never becomes 'past' and hence dispensable. The Holy Spirit and Christ are certainly inextricably linked but they cannot be fused into one. The Spirit lets Christ live in us but the Spirit also glorifies the Son. Their respective roles both in the Trinity and in the economy of salvation are distinct.

*The universality and particularity of God's saving activity*

Before bringing this article to a close, a final point must be touched upon, even if it cannot be developed at length. The Holy Spirit is, as we have seen, not just God's Spirit in general but also the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit lets Christ dwell in us, recalls his teaching to our minds and is always linked to that most decisive of events, the cross and resurrection. But from that event, radically concrete and particular, located at a decisive moment in space and time, the Spirit is poured forth to gather the whole of creation into God's kingdom.

The relation of Jesus to the Spirit is therefore the relation of universality and particularity, one of the issues which forever haunts christian theology. St Paul claims that anyone who says 'Jesus be cursed' is not speaking in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12,13). Thus according to Paul, God's Spirit is always linked to Jesus of Nazareth. But St John says that the Holy Spirit blows where he will (Jn 3,8). This issue is a burning one today. If God's Spirit is everywhere operative, if every man and if all religions are somehow graced, does Jesus Christ not become superfluous? In seeing grace everywhere, do we not surrender our christian identity? On the other hand, can we confine God's salvation exclusively to the believers and baptized? This seems to whittle down God's generosity to human dimensions. The key to resolving this dilemma lies in the relation of Jesus to the Spirit.

It is commonplace in theology today to recognize that the most radical shift made in early Christianity was the transference from hebrew to greek categories of thought. The early councils of the Church defined Jesus's identity in terms of 'natures'. What was lost was the perspective of history. From the biblical viewpoint, Jesus can only be understood in terms of God's action in history. Jesus is seen as the fulfilment of God's involvement in human history. His preaching was in terms of God's final action in him. His resurrection was the confirmation of his claim. From this perspective the mission and identity of Jesus are intrinsically linked to man's hopes in history, his sufferings, his search for justice.

Jesus is utterly unique, because he is the fulfilment and completion of God's plan and also the answer to all man's hopes. But in this historical perspective, his uniqueness also leads directly to his universality. God's work did not begin with the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth in our human history but rather his work came to its completion with the coming of Christ. The key to the universality of God's activity is the Spirit. As theologians such as Lampe have rightly perceived, the Spirit is God's involvement in time and history. From the point of view of our faith in Jesus of Nazareth, we must look back to God's plan of creation and his involvement in the history of Israel. God in the universality of his Spirit has always been at work in creation, in electing a people, in inspiring the prophets and in an eschatological way in filling his most beloved Son with the fulness of the Spirit.

How then are we to understand the relation of this prior involvement of God as Spirit to God's self-revelation in the act of the Incarnation? First, we can accept Rahner's brilliant suggestion that we must understand Incarnation as the condition of possibility of creation and not vice-versa. God's plan from the very beginning was to offer himself as a total self-gift. God's desire has always been to communicate himself. And when God fully communicates himself outward, what comes to be is Jesus of Nazareth. Thus if the Incarnation is God's perfect self-expression, the creation is a deficient mode of his expression and exists for the sake of and by virtue of God's perfect expressability. Temporally it may be the case that God's gift of himself in grace preceded the Incarnation but this does not render the Incarnation superfluous, for all God's involvement in history was directed from eternity toward the perfect union of his own offer of himself and his own acceptance of the offer in the Incarnation.

The ultimate foundation and union of these two modes of God's self-communication must be located in the Trinity. Here we see the significance of the pre-existence texts of the New Testament. That Jesus of Nazareth is pre-existent Son of God means that he is no after-thought to God's purposes. God's activity in history is rooted in God's eternal being. But here again we see the crucial role of the Spirit. The Spirit is the eternal love between the Father and the Son. But we must not only say with western trinitarian theology that the Spirit is the bond of love in the Trinity. We must also stress with eastern theology that the Spirit is the overflowing of this love. As Walter Kasper says, 'In the Spirit, God's innermost essence, his freedom in love impels him outward. The Spirit as mediation between Father and Son is at the same time the mediation of God into history'.<sup>21</sup>

Thus we can conceive a funnel from God in the Spirit outward into history reaching its climax and narrowest point in Jesus of Nazareth, his Incarnation, death and resurrection. But from this particularity, the funnel again reaches outward. Jürgen Moltmann has suggested that we can conceive of two orders of God's trinitarian relation to the world, the order of his sending love and that of his gathering love. In the first, the order of relations is Father → Spirit → Son. In the climax of this order, the Father sends the Son (filled with the Spirit) and the Son sends the Spirit. But from Pentecost the orders are reversed. Here again the Spirit takes the *prius*. The Spirit recalls the memory of the Son, glorifies the Son and in leading the believer to be conformed to the Son and to carry on the work of the Son, also leads to the completion of God's trinitarian history in which the Son will hand over the kingdom to the Father. Here there is an interesting reversal of roles. The Spirit is active and the Father passive as he receives the kingdom from the Son and is glorified. In the time of the Church the full, active personality of the Spirit is revealed. The Spirit is not just neuter 'bond' but 'person'. This order can be diagrammed as Spirit → Son → Father.<sup>22</sup>

In the era of the Church, the period of the end-time, in which we now live, the link between Jesus and the Spirit remains crucial. Western theology has tended to stress the unsurpassable character of the Christ-event. True as this is, there lies in this theology the danger of christomonism. There also lurks in this theology the danger of a new bondage under the law. The Spirit is certainly bound forever to the Christ-event. The Spirit has the noetic role of recalling to our minds all that Christ said. But seen in the universal perspective of God's trinitarian dealings with the world, the Spirit is always more. The Spirit blows where he will. The Spirit is freedom. The Spirit is novelty and improvisation. No one can say in advance where he will lead us. To be sure, he will not lead us to deny Jesus Christ. But in each epoch, how he will interpret the Christ-event remains a matter of his unpredictable creativity. The reason for this is that the Spirit is the Spirit of the future. The Spirit leads us into God's future. The Spirit leads us into the kingdom of the Father, the Father to whom the Son points and whom the Son acknowledges as even greater than himself (Jn 14,28). Thus the Spirit's role is not only a noetic one, the task of recalling the past, but also an ontological one, the task of creating the future. Our reconciliation has been achieved but God is not yet all in all. Toward this end the glorified Son has let loose his Spirit into the world.

In this perspective, I hope it will be clear that the classical *Logos* christology and the rediscovery of the Spirit christology of the bible are by no means contradictory, but beyond being complementary, they even require one another. Christianity, to be sure, will always be a faith bound to the Word. But the more deeply one probes into the person of Jesus, the more one is challenged to accept the risk of the transcendence beyond the Word into the Spirit and into the freedom which is his gift.

*John O'Donnell S.J.*

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Dulles, Avery: *Models of the Church* (Dublin, 1976).

<sup>2</sup> Theologians of the alexandrian tradition employed the model of Word-flesh to understand the person of Jesus Christ, while antiochene theologians employed the model of the Word-man. The former stressed the divinity of Jesus and the unity of his person, the latter his humanity and the duality of the two natures.

<sup>3</sup> Mühlen, Heribert: 'Das Christuserignis als Tat des Heiligen Geistes', in *Mysterium Salutis* 3/2 ed. J. Feiner and M. Lohrer. (Einsiedeln, 1969), pp 513-44.

<sup>4</sup> Dunn, James D. G.: *Jesus and the Spirit. A study of the religious and charismatic experience of Jesus and the first Christians as reflected in the New Testament* (London, 1975).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p 67.



<sup>6</sup> Lampe, G. W. H.: 'The Holy Spirit and the person of Christ', in *Christ, faith and history*, ed. S. W. Sykes and J. P. Clayton (Cambridge, 1972) pp 111-30.

<sup>7</sup> Lampe, G. W. H.: *God as Spirit. The Bampton Lectures, 1976* (Oxford, 1977).

<sup>8</sup> See especially chapter 7 'God as Spirit', in Maurice Wiles, *Faith and the mystery of God* (London, 1982).

<sup>9</sup> Lampe: *God as Spirit*, p 35.

<sup>10</sup> One must ask whether such a position does not contradict the once-for-all character of the Christ-event as attested by the New Testament witness, also whether it does not philosophically compromise God's transcendence as so many critics have objected against process philosophy. To me, a more subtle biblical approach, trinitarian in scope (as opposed to Lampe's unitarianism), has been developed by Eberhard Jüngel in his book *The Doctrine of the Trinity, God's being is in becoming* (Edinburgh and London, 1976).

<sup>11</sup> Lampe: *God as Spirit*, p 144; see also pp 15-17.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p 13.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p 17.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 116-17.

<sup>15</sup> Schoonenberg, Piet: *Jesus the Christ* (London, 1972).

<sup>16</sup> Cook, Michael L.: *The Jesus of faith. A study in christology* (Leominster, Herefordshire, 1981), p 140.

<sup>17</sup> Schoonenberg, Piet: 'Spirit christology and Logos christology', *Bijdragen* 38, (1977), pp 350-75.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p 365.

<sup>19</sup> The following reflections are based particularly on *Der Heilige Geist als Person, in der Trinität, bei der Inkarnation und im Gnadenbund*, 4th edition (Münster, 1966).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p 91.

<sup>21</sup> Kasper, Walter: *Jesus the Christ* (London, 1977), p 250.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Moltmann, Jürgen: *The Trinity and the kingdom of God, the doctrine of God* (London, 1981), pp 90-94, 125-26.