

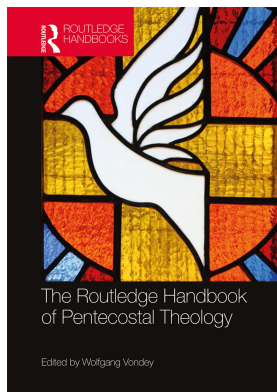
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PNEUMATOLOGY

Eschatological intensification of the personal presence of God

Andrew K. Gabriel

For all their talk about the Holy Spirit, one might think that Pentecostals have a well-developed pneumatology. Instead, historically, Pentecostals have tended to focus on interpreting their experiences of the Spirit—such as Spirit baptism or the gifts of the Spirit—rather than on developing a formal and comprehensive pneumatology. I do not mean to suggest that Pentecostals neglect pneumatology altogether. In fact, Pentecostals typically make it clear that the Spirit belongs everywhere in their theology. Pneumatological theology and the pneumatological imagination, which focus on exploring how pneumatology penetrates, affects, or supplements other doctrines, are a predominant paradigm that Pentecostals employ in developing their theology overall (see Chapter 14). In light of this emphasis, one could rightly describe Pentecostal pneumatology primarily with reference to the ways that Pentecostals have made pneumatological contributions to ecclesiology, soteriology, theology of religions, and other theological loci (Althouse 2020). However, at the heart of these contributions stands a pneumatology proper, that is, the important question of how Pentecostals understand the Holy Spirit as person in order to develop a genuine Pentecostal pneumatology.

The historical consensus of the church has been that the Holy Spirit is a divine person. That is, the Spirit is fully God and personal being, rather than, for example, a force or attribute of God. Theologians throughout the ages have also debated how the Spirit relates to the Father and the Son within the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity, with particular focus on the filioque clause (see Chapter 18). While Pentecostals tend not to be creedal in popular expression, and therefore have not been concerned with the historical debates (Goss 2003; Macchia 2014), they do affirm the historic Christian doctrine of the Spirit as divine person—but in their own unique way. To convey this pneumatological distinctiveness, this essay argues that Pentecostals regard and experience the Holy Spirit, poured out at Pentecost, as the divine person who is experienced as the eschatological intensification of the presence of God. In order to demonstrate this argument, this essay begins by explaining how Pentecostals affirm the personhood of the Spirit and then discusses how the Spirit is regarded as divine within Pentecostal experience and theology. These foundational considerations allow for an exploration of how Pentecostals view the Spirit as the intensifying and eschatological presence of God.

Experiencing the Holy Spirit of Pentecost

The distinctiveness of Pentecostal pneumatology comes not so much in its conclusions regarding the divine personhood of the Spirit but in the way in which Pentecostals reach these conclusions—through an emphasis on experiences of the Spirit of Pentecost. Indeed, the theological symbol of Pentecost and the experience of the Spirit are foundational for Pentecostal theology as a whole (Vondey 2017) as well as for Pentecostal pneumatology more specifically. Given the Pentecostal emphasis on experiencing the Spirit, at times, some from outside of the Pentecostal tradition have accused Pentecostals of basing their theology, and their pneumatology in particular, solely on the notion of experience (see Chapter 8). However, as we consider how Pentecostals reach their conclusions regarding pneumatology, it becomes clear that Pentecostals ground their theology primarily on the biblical texts, even while taking their experience of the Spirit seriously.

While Pentecostals recognize the work of God's Spirit in the Old Testament, Pentecostal pneumatology finds its impetus, in the first place, from the day of Pentecost when Jesus poured out the Spirit on all flesh (Yong 2005). Pentecostals also emphasize the work of the Spirit in the life of Jesus Christ, but this is largely with the aim of reminding believers that, after Pentecost, the same Spirit who was upon Christ, empowering him for his ministry, now fills those who have been baptized in the Spirit in order to continue Christ's ministry today (see Chapter 20). This means Pentecostals regard Pentecost not only as a unique event in redemptive history, but they expect that believers today can participate in the ongoing nature of the Pentecost event as they encounter the Spirit in their own lives. They expect, then, that the event of Pentecost can be repeated, in some ways, as the Spirit continues to be poured out (Acts 2:38). This sentiment is expressed prominently in the headline on the cover of the first newspaper issue (1906) published from the Azusa Street revival: "Pentecost Has Come!" In other words, Pentecostal pneumatology is inseparable from Pentecost.

As Jesus continues to pour out the Spirit on the church, Pentecostals expect to experience the Spirit. For many, this emphasis is what defines Pentecostalism as a movement (Anderson 2014). One might say that Pentecostals hold to a pneumatological realism (Tyra 2018). That is, they not only acknowledge the existence of the Spirit and presume that the Spirit is hidden and at work in the lives of believers, but they expect to encounter the Spirit in what many would call tangible and material ways (Volf 1989). While it might go without saying, Pentecostals are not cessationists regarding the spiritual gifts, but continuationists (Ruthven 1993). Therefore, they expect to experience not only the quiet guidance of the Spirit but the charismatic presence and gifts of the Spirit including also more dramatic events like speaking in tongues or miraculous healings (Alexander 2006). While such theological accents are not absent from other theological traditions, Pentecostals uniquely emphasize their encounters with God in the presence of the Spirit through their theological narrative of the full gospel (see Chapter 16) and in their theological articulations of the experience of the Spirit through being baptized in the Spirit (see Chapter 23) and the manifestations of spiritual gifts (see Chapter 28). We can therefore identify at least the outlines of several affirmations regarding the Holy Spirit that form the foundation for developing a comprehensive Pentecostal pneumatology: the personhood of the Spirit, the passion of the Spirit, the power of the Spirit, and the identification of the Spirit with love and divine presence.

The personhood of the Holy Spirit

With the rest of the church, Pentecostals affirm that the Spirit they experience is a divine person. For trinitarian Pentecostals (in distinction from “Oneness” Pentecostals, who deny the doctrine of the eternal immanent Trinity), their understanding of Pentecost leads them to conclude that the Spirit is a divine person distinct from the Father and the Son, for they emphasize that, after his ascension, Jesus “received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:33) in order to pour out the Spirit on the church (Vondey 2017, 269). In other words, the Spirit is not simply the spiritual presence of Christ in the world today, but a divine person distinct from God the Son. While Oneness theology rejects this distinction of persons, it can affirm the personhood of the Spirit albeit with no distinction from the personhood of the Son. In other words, in Oneness theology the Spirit is Jesus coming to dwell in human beings in another form and relationship (see Chapter 18).

Second, and perhaps more importantly, all Pentecostals affirm that the encounter with the Spirit is a personal experience. This emphasis is one of the main reasons that Pentecostals are sometimes cautious of the historical tendency of the Western traditions to speak of the Spirit as the mutual love between the Father and the Son along with the common corollary of the filioque clause. That is, Pentecostals have a deep concern that one should “not de-personalize the Spirit” (Macchia 2010, 302), which speaking of the Spirit as “love” might do. As a divine person, and as the Spirit “determines” (1 Cor. 12:11), Pentecostals emphasize that the Spirit gives spiritual gifts to everyone (Lim 1991). While the way that Pentecostals frequently speak of the Spirit as “filling” people or of the need to be “re-filled” with the Spirit might sound like understanding the Spirit in impersonal ways, Pentecostals speak of the Spirit both in terms of the divine nature and a divine person, although the distinction is not very clear (Vondey 2016). Important for trinitarian Pentecostals is that the Spirit is a person, like the Son, with whom one can (and should) have a personal relationship, that is, a relationship between persons. For Oneness Pentecostals, this relationship is identical with a relationship with Jesus; while for trinitarian Pentecostals the Spirit relates believers to both the Son and the Father as persons.

Pentecostals emphasize that “the Spirit is a personal, immediate, dynamic and perfect guide. He speaks and so must be listened to. This demands developing a personal relationship with him, learning to recognize and respond to his guidance” (Warrington 2008, 47). Believers should be “led by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:18; Rom. 8:14) and “keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25). And while the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed reminds believers that the Holy Spirit “spoke through the prophets,” Pentecostals remind the church that the Spirit continues to speak through prophets and even directly to individual believers. Although Pentecostals consider the Scriptures authoritative, the Spirit as person “has more to say than Scripture” (Land 1993, 100). The Spirit affirms that one is a “child of God” (Rom. 8:16) or may speak to correct a person (Gabriel 2019a). At times the Spirit also speaks to offer advice and guidance, if not particular direction, although this perception always requires spiritual discernment (Parker 1996). It is the encounter with the Spirit as person that leads Pentecostal pneumatology to affirm the divinity of the Spirit.

The passion of the Spirit as person

The way from discussions of personhood to the divinity of the Spirit leads through concerns for God’s presence in creation. Pentecostals affirm the personhood of the Spirit in their recognition of the passion of the Spirit. Indeed, an awareness of the “Spirit’s sigh” may be

one of the key characteristics of Pentecostal spirituality, especially as it relates to the practice of speaking in tongues (Villafañe 1992). Pentecostals speak in tongues for various reasons, sometimes during celebration and praise, sometimes during turmoil. With respect to the latter, Pentecostals find a correlation between their personal groaning and the groaning of the Spirit (Palma 2001). As they pray in tongues, they believe “the Spirit himself intercedes . . . with groans that words cannot express” (Rom. 8:26). In such times of prayer, Pentecostals sense the passion of the Spirit as person in relation to their own personal suffering.

Most Pentecostals affirm that the Spirit suffers with creation, even though some show caution and therefore speak of God as suffering impassibly (Castelo 2009, 2012). The Holy Spirit suffers when grieving from human sin. Pentecostals observe that the Israelites “rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit” (Isa. 63:10), and that Paul warned the Ephesians that they should not “grieve the Holy Spirit of God” (Eph. 4:30) by how they treat one another. Pentecostals typically conclude that the Spirit suffers with all of creation (Althouse 2003, 138). Though not incarnate in creation, the Spirit empathetically participates in the travail of creation: the Spirit groans within the groaning of creation (see Rom. 8:22) as the Spirit anticipates and draws creation toward the day when “creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay” (Rom. 8:21) (Gabriel 2011). The passion of the Spirit is therefore an important way that Pentecostals affirm both the personhood of the Spirit and the divine presence.

The divinity of the Spirit

Pentecostals affirm that the Spirit they experience as person is fully divine. While the Father is regarded as the transcendent divine person who dwells in heaven, and the Son has ascended to heaven to pour out the Spirit at Pentecost, the Spirit is now “God with us”—the divine person by which the world experiences God most directly (Land 1993, 32; Vondey 2017, 267–71). The immediacy of the Spirit as divine power and love is foundational to both trinitarian and Oneness Pentecostal experience and theology.

Pentecostals affirm the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit—an attribute of the divine being. While the historic creeds appropriate divine omnipotence to God “the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,” Pentecostals remind the tradition that since creation was an act of the triune God, the Son, and the Spirit, too, were involved in the creative act and continue to sustain creation (Yong 2011). And from within biblical scholarship, Pentecostals emphasize that the Spirit of God was not only “sweeping over the face of the waters” at the beginning (see Gen. 1:2) but also continues to “renew the face of the ground” (Psalm 104:30) and to give breath to all of creation (Hildebrandt 1995, 106).

Beyond the work of the Spirit in creation, Pentecostals also tend to associate their current experiences of the Spirit with the exercise of divine power (Menzies and Menzies 2000). The most prominent biblical verse in Pentecostal pneumatology is likely Acts 1:8: “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” Pentecostals believe that just as Jesus ministered “filled with the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14, cf. Acts 10:38) as he healed people and drove out demons, believers today can continue the ministry of Jesus in the power of the Spirit of Jesus (Shelton 1991; Stronstad 1998). Hence, pneumatology bears significance for extending theological conversations into the domains of mission (see Chapter 26), ecclesiology (see Chapter 27), spiritual warfare (see Chapter 30), and public life and social justice (see Chapter 40).

Pentecostal theology underlines that the power of the Spirit is at work not only in Spirit baptism but also in salvation and sanctification. Pentecostals emphasize that “there can be no justification apart from the fullness of life in the Spirit” (Macchia 2010, 4), for it is through

“the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” that believers are “being justified” by God’s grace (Titus 3:5, 7). By the power of the Spirit, God makes believers more like Christ as God transforms them into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Pentecostals regularly preach that “the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living” in every believer (Rom 8:11), and that this resurrection power is at work to set people free from sin and to create virtues in believers (the fruit of the Spirit). The Spirit empowers Jesus’ followers to forgive others; to bring deliverance, healing, and restoration; to show hospitality; and to transform society (Yong 2005; Augustine 2012). Hence, Pentecostals can conclude that the omnipotence of the Spirit is a power that brings freedom (2 Cor. 3:17).

Pentecostals affirm the divinity of the Spirit also as they affirm that “God is love” (1 John 4:8) and that the Spirit is the love of God. Consistent with much of pneumatology in the Western tradition, they observe that numerous biblical texts associate the Spirit with divine love. Romans 5:5, for example, reads, “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (cf. Col. 1:8, 2 Cor. 6:6, Phil. 2:1). The manner in which 1 John 3–4 describes both love and the Spirit dwelling in believers allows Pentecostals to identify the Spirit with the divine love (Yong 2012; Gabriel 2019b).

This emphasis continues to emerge in histories of Pentecostal pneumatology. Early classical Pentecostals described the baptism of the Holy Spirit not only as an experience of glory and power but also as a reception of divine love (Alexander 2010). For example, one testimony in the *Apostolic Faith* paper published by William J. Seymour, leader of the Azusa Street revival, recounts an experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit saying, “It was a baptism of love. Such abounding love! . . . This baptism fills us with divine love” (“The Old-Time Pentecost” 1906). Similarly, more recent Pentecostal theology regards “the Day of Pentecost outpouring [as] God’s excessive and universal gift of love to the world, in and through the gift of the Spirit of God” (Yong 2012, 98). Pentecostals affirm the divinity of the Spirit because God is love, and the Spirit is the gift of divine love to the world, a manifestation of God’s presence and the transformation of creation.

The divine presence

One of the main reasons that Pentecostals affirm the divinity of the Spirit is that they regard their experience of the presence of the Spirit as an experience of the presence of God. This conclusion comes in part as they recognize that the Spirit shares with the Father and the Son the attribute of omnipresence—the Spirit is present everywhere sustaining creation (see Psalm 104:29–30; Job 33:4) with the result that there is nowhere to flee from the presence of God (see Psalm 139:7–8) (Gabriel 2011). This recognition of the Spirit’s presence permeating the natural world is predominant particularly among Pentecostals in the majority world, with the result that the whole world becomes sacred in some sense (Hollenweger 1978). This emphasis also reinforces recent Pentecostal approaches to a pneumatological ecotheology (see Chapter 33). The whole cosmos is filled with the Spirit of God.

Aside from connecting the omnipresence of God with the Spirit, Pentecostals also connect God’s presence to the unique ways that the Spirit is present in the world in a particular way. This emphasis is consistent with how the apostle Paul refers to the church as “God’s temple” because “God’s Spirit” is present within it (1 Cor. 3:16). The Spirit’s presence is not always obvious within the church, however, and when Pentecostals speak of the presence of the Spirit, they are usually referring to times when they have a heightened sense of the presence of God, particularly during times of praise and worship. They often refer to this sense as the “manifest presence of God” (Albrecht 2004). For example, they view each gift of the Spirit as

a “manifestation of the Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:7), with the result that when a spiritual gift is practiced in a congregation, a person might exclaim, “God is really among you!” (1 Cor. 14:25). As enabled by the Spirit, prophecy, or speaking in tongues, for example, become “the audible medium for realizing the presence of God” (Macchia 1993, 63). As a result, Pentecostals sometimes refer to tongues as a sacramental sign, in as much as tongues are an audible sign of the empowering presence of God in the person of the Spirit (see Chapter 29). All of the charismatic dimensions of the Christian life affirm the Pentecostal experiences of the presence of the Spirit as experiences of God’s presence. Divine presence, power, and personhood are intimately related (Del Colle 2001).

Intensifying presence

The presence of the Spirit is not static. Pentecostals believe, at least implicitly, that the divine presence, manifested by the Spirit, can become more intense. While they affirm the omnipresence of God, and the omnipresence of the divine person of the Holy Spirit specifically, Pentecostals regard the presence of the Spirit as particularly dynamic (Smith 2010, 45–46). The very idea of “Spirit” in the biblical texts indicates movement in the images of the “breath” or “wind” of God that blows wherever it pleases (see John 3:8). At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is not simply “given” but “poured out” like water on all flesh and became present in a more intense way (Isa. 32:15, 44:3; Ez.39:29; Joel 2:28–29; Acts 2:17–18, 33, 10:45). These dynamic images of the Spirit lead Pentecostals to conclude that the presence of the Spirit can intensify, not always consistently but certainly with moments or instances of intensity (Gabriel 2012).

Consequently, Pentecostals expect that the Spirit’s presence sometimes intensifies within the church. They regard the church as a place where the Spirit dwells (see 1 Cor. 3:16). At the same time, Pentecostals continue to pray for the Spirit to come and abide within the church in a more intense manner. In sacramental traditions, this occurs through the epileptic prayers preceding the Eucharist. Similarly, in Pentecostal circles, those leading a worship service might pray for the Spirit to “come” and work in their midst. On the popular level, Pentecostals may speak of the Spirit as being “tangibly” present in a worship service where they sense God in a unique way, perhaps through the manifestation of spiritual gifts during their worship (Archer 2011, 60–63). Moreover, Pentecostals expect that they will experience the intensification of the Spirit’s presence when they respond to altar calls. Indeed, they “flock to the altar in expectation of a divine, often supernatural, interruption of their circumstances and in that sense of an initiation or repetition or revival of Pentecost in their own lives” (Vondey 2017, 42).

The primary theological theme suggesting that the Spirit’s presence intensifies is the notion of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But with respect to each individual, even before Pentecostals have post-conversion experiences of Spirit baptism, they believe the Spirit’s presence becomes more intense within them at the points of conversion and sanctification. Pentecostals affirm that there is a sense in which the Spirit was in all people, even before Pentecost, sustaining their very existence. This is consistent with Job 32:8, which speaks of “the spirit in a mortal, the breath of the Almighty.” Furthermore, it is apparent that if God “should take back his spirit to himself,” then “all flesh would perish together, and all mortals return to dust” (Job 34:14–15; see Gen. 6:17, Eccl. 12:7). The Spirit is present within every individual giving them life and breath. And yet, Pentecostals would add that a person can further “receive the Spirit . . . by believing” (Gal. 3:2; cf. Rom. 8:15) the gospel. In this reception, the presence of the Spirit intensifies within a person. That is, when Pentecostals affirm that

the Spirit comes to “dwell” within them (Rom. 8:9), this experience is already a moment of the intensification of the Spirit’s presence (Gabriel 2012). Hence, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience that can occur subsequent to the reception of the Spirit at the point of conversion (Menziez and Menziez 2000; Palma 2001). The events of conversion, sanctification, and Spirit baptism represent moments of a further intensification of the Spirit in their lives. And the Spirit may further intensify in Christians as they continue to be “filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). There is, then, a “repetitive character” to the gift of the Spirit (Stronstad 1984, 81). This character parallels Jesus’ experience of the Spirit (Matthew 3:17). After Jesus had been baptized in water, he was now “full of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:1), even “without measure” (John 3:34). And yet, he had a subsequent experience of receiving “the promise of the Holy Spirit” from the Father (Mark 1:11) so that he could fill his followers with the Spirit (Acts 2:33). This later reception was an intensification of the Spirit’s presence in both the life of Jesus and the life of his followers.

When speaking of Spirit baptism, some Pentecostals would say that there is “one baptism” of the Spirit and “many fillings” of the Spirit (Menziez and Menziez 2000, 48; Palma 2001, 174). Others would say that Spirit baptism is not a one-time experience but rather a process identified with the coming of the kingdom of God and encompassing the Spirit’s work in saving, sanctifying, and empowering believers for witness and, eventually, even being raised by the Spirit at the return of Christ (Macchia 2006). But regardless of how each Pentecostal defines Spirit baptism, the different positions imply that believers can continue to experience a greater intensification of the Spirit’s presence. Furthermore, some Pentecostals regard this “intensification of the divine presence” as the “increasing of the giving away of the divine Spirit” (Vondey 2017, 269–70) or as a “kenosis of the Spirit” in the last days (see Althouse 2009). In short, the intensifying presence of the Spirit is always eschatological.

Eschatological presence

The anticipation of a greater experience of the Spirit’s presence in the future points to the eschatological dimension of Pentecostal theology (see Chapter 25). In fulfillment of Old Testament eschatological expectations, Jesus “received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:33) in order to pour out the Spirit “in the last days” (Acts 2:17). Pentecost, then, is understood as a key marker of the beginning of the eschaton, and, as a result, Pentecostals regard the experience of the Spirit as an eschatological experience (Althouse 2003). They observe that the presence of charismatic activity among believers, in particular, fulfills eschatological expectations concerning the coming of the Spirit announced in the Old Testament. Joel 2:28–29 anticipated widespread visions, dreams, and prophecy. These expectations began to be fulfilled when the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost (Acts 2:17) and, Pentecostals argue, continue to be fulfilled as subsequent believers have visions (Acts 9:10; 26:19) and dreams (Acts 16:9; 18:9).

The increasing presence of prophecy is even more apparent. Pentecostals emphasize that the book of Acts records numerous instances when believers were “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8, 31; 7:55; 11:24; 13:9, 52) followed by inspired prophetic speech—just as the Spirit inspired the prophets in the Old Testament (Shelton 1991; Stronstad 1998). The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost fulfilled numerous eschatological expectations of the Spirit, and this eschatological recognition motivated early Pentecostals to engage in mission. They believed that in their own experiences of Pentecost, they had received “power” to be “witnesses” (Acts 1:8) in the “last days” (Acts 2:17), so that the whole world might hear the

gospel before the soon return of Jesus. Eschatology was interpreted soteriologically and mis-siologically because of the eschatological experience of the Spirit.

When Pentecostals recognize that their experience of the Spirit's presence is eschatological, they are not only recognizing that the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost fulfills previous expectations regarding the coming of the Spirit, they are also recognizing that Pentecost raises anticipations of the further eschatological work of the Spirit. This eschatological anticipation means that as Christians "have shared in the Holy Spirit," they experience "the powers of the age to come" (Heb. 6:4–5). Pentecostals regard the gifts of the Spirit, then, as "eschatological, proleptic, signs of a kingdom of joy where sorrow, death and sin are put down and banished" (Land 1993, 177). As a result of their experience of Spirit-fullness, at times, Pentecostals can become triumphalistic, expecting complete victory in this life—including lives of wealth and health (Courey 2015). In more moderate views, however, Pentecostals recognize that "the powers of the age to come are already in some measure present in signs and wonders—but only a measure" (Chan 2000, 110). In other words, while affirming that the Spirit has been "poured out" (Titus 3:6; Rom. 5:5), they are also aware that Christians only "have the first fruits of the Spirit" now (Rom. 8:23). These are the first fruits of the beginning of a full harvest (i.e. the Spirit) that is yet to come (see Deut. 18:4), just as the Spirit is the seal and deposit that guarantees what is yet to come (see 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5; Eph. 1:13–14, 4:30). As a result, while Pentecostals generally recognize that their prayers will not always result in immediate healing, they still anticipate their eventual full healing or "redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8:23) by means of the Spirit at the resurrection (see Chapter 24). Increasingly, these eschatological anticipations regarding the future also lead Pentecostals to posit that one's present experience of Spirit baptism always has an anticipatory aspect to it that relates to the fullness of the eschaton: "the Second Coming of Son and Spirit [in resurrection] means a cosmic Pentecost and a full presence of the Triune God in the world in glory" (Thompson 2010, 143) with the result that the whole world is transfigured as God is "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28; see Rev. 21:3–5).

Conclusion

The distinctiveness of Pentecostal pneumatology comes not so much in its conclusions regarding the personhood of the Spirit but in the unique emphases that Pentecostals make to support their convictions: the Holy Spirit is the divine person through whom Christians experience the eschatological and intensifying presence of God. Even though other theological traditions also affirm the historic Christian doctrine that the Spirit is a divine person, this important dimension of Pentecostal pneumatology is emphasized less elsewhere. The Pentecostal understanding of the Spirit as person is closely tied to the intensifying experience of the divine presence and eschatological power in the life of the believer, the church, the world, and creation.

Rather than delineating the personhood of the Spirit in relation to the other divine persons, Pentecostals typically emphasize the personhood of the Spirit in relation to humanity and creation—the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Pentecost whom Jesus has poured out on all flesh. Pentecostals regard the Spirit as a divine person in as much as they emphasize that people can have a personal relationship with the Spirit, that the Spirit speaks, that the Spirit is passionate, and that in the Spirit we encounter the divine power and love in a particular way. While some Christians outside of the Pentecostal tradition reject that the Spirit speaks today, that the Spirit suffers, or that the Spirit's presence intensifies with the coming of the eschaton, Pentecostals regard the Spirit's presence as the very presence of God—an intensifying

presence that brings both eschatological fulfillment and anticipation. As a result, Pentecostals ascribe more agency to the person of the Spirit than is typical in the Western theological tradition. It is in light of these perspectives that form the foundation of pneumatology proper that we can understand the hospitality of Pentecostal pneumatology and its reach into all other aspects of Pentecostal theology.

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