CLINT TIBBS

Religious Experience of the Pneuma

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Religious Experience of the Pneuma

Communication with the Spirit World in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14

Mohr Siebeck

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In Memoriam

Dr. Michael Patrick O'Connor
1950 – 2007

שלום

Preface

This book is a revision of a dissertation completed for a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., November, 2005. In it, I argue that First Corinthians 12 and 14 provide a context for the study of religious experience in earliest Christianity. While religious experience has been done some justice in Biblical Studies, as Chapter Two indicates, First Corinthians 12 and 14 have yet to be discussed in any detail as religious experience. First Corinthians 12 and 14 are often read as concerning "spiritual gifts." This heading, however, highlights only one component of Paul's polemic, "gifts," to the neglect of other and equally important terms. The experiences Paul mentions in these texts, "speaking in a spirit," "prophecy," "glossolalia," "saying a blessing in a spirit," as well as the mention of "spirits" in three different places, suggest that Paul was actually writing about communication with the spirit world. This was one of the main religious experiences of the earliest Christians, evidenced elsewhere in *Didache* 11, the Shepherd of Hermas, *Mandate* 11, and Montanism. This book is also a reevaluation of the early Christian understanding of "the Holy Spirit." Biblical scholars routinely read "the holy spirit" in the New Testament as it came to be understood during the fourth century as a Deity, "the Holy Spirit." I conclude that early Jewish pneumatology is a more appropriate prism through which to view "holy spirit" in early Christianity than is Athanasian-Cappadocian pneumatology of the fourth century. The phrase "the holy spirit," as a collective noun, referenced "the holy spirit world."

I would like to thank, first and foremost, my dissertation director, Dr. Raymond F. Collins, whose seminar on First Corinthians in the Fall of 1997 at The Catholic University of American provided me the basis from which this book took form. Dr. Collins's knowledge of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians served as a tremendous guide in the rhetoric of Paul's exposition on "spiritual things," as his commentary masterfully shows. Dr. Collins was always patient and guided my writing carefully and thoroughly. He was ever keeping me abreast of the most recent research on my topic, supplying me with articles and monographs I had overlooked. This book would not be what it is without Dr. Collins's gracious acceptance to guide me through the labyrinths of writing such a work.

My two readers, Dr. Francis J. Moloney and Dr. Francis T. Gignac, provided insights into format and content that improved the work and clarified my thinking on pivotal points. Any mistakes, however, are my own, not theirs. Dr. Gignac's training in Greek (however rigorous!) proved rewarding by bringing the Greek text (and all of its problems) to life. Dr. Moloney's seminars on the gospels of Mark and John proved very insightful and exposed me to the field of

the historical Jesus and gospel studies. These scholars have played a leading role in my development as a biblical scholar. Thanks to them both.

Other scholars have also made long-lasting impressions during my graduate studies. Dr. Michael Patrick O'Connor offered sound training in Hebrew and Akkadian and also served as a significant guide in student-related matters. As a professor, O'Connor provided for the academic needs and advisement of graduate students as well as showing a genuine concern for their work and development as scholars. He will be missed. Dr. Douglas Gropp's training in Hebrew poetry and Aramaic was an indispensable resource and learning experience. Dr. Frank Matera's seminar on New Testament Theology introduced me to the "theology-religious experience" problem that is dealt with in this book. Sound tutelage in Old Testament studies, Syriac, and Second Temple literature was provided by Dr. Alexander Di Lella, Dr. Joseph Jensen, Dr. Christopher Begg, Dr. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Dr. David Johnson.

Commentaries are a dime-a-dozen. But the following scholars are those whose commentaries on First Corinthians that I have profited from greatly: Raymond F. Collins, Simon J. Kistemaker, Gordon D. Fee, David E. Garland, Richard B. Hays, Anthony C. Thiselton, and Hans Conzelmann.

A word of thanks goes to other individuals who have played a role during graduate studies. Thanks to Dr. Curt Lamar for his advisement during undergraduate days to pursue graduate studies at The Catholic University of America; Dr. James A. Scarborough for his conversations on "spiritual things"; Dr. Daniel (Donny) Kirsch for insightful talks over a Paulaner Salvatore; Evan Smith with help in Latin; Dr. Mary Katherine Birge, Pauline scholar in her own right, with gracious help during my initial ventures into Greek and Hebrew way back when; and Amy E. Pinky-Phillips for her library assistance during research pursued at the Harvard Divinity School library, Spring, 2004.

I also wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Henning Ziebritzki and the editorial staff of Mohr Siebeck Publishing House and Professor Jörg Frey and his team for accepting this work for publication in the *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*; and a special thanks to Bettina Gade.

Last but not least, I wish to give a thanks of appreciation to Mom and Dad and to the Dr. and Mrs. Robert C. Tibbs Fund for the Humanities in Religious Studies that allowed me to pursue graduate studies for so many years. Dad did not live long enough to see this book through. I dedicate this book to him and to Mom. Thanks to both of you for all of your support. I also wish to dedicate this book to my grandmother (Me-Maw) who passed away several weeks before Dad's passing. Above all, I thank Him who makes all things possible.

Cleveland, Mississippi, March 2007 Clint Tibbs

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Abbreviations

The abbreviations of journals follow the Catholic Biblical Quarterly style sheet. Otherwise, names of journals are spelled out in their entirety. Abbreviations for biblical books also follow this style sheet.

1. Ancient Editions of Biblical Texts

LXX	Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament, ca. third–second century B.C.E.)
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament

The numbering of chapters and verses of the OT follows the Hebrew MT (masoretic text).

2. Names of Biblical Books (with Apocrypha)

Gen	Genesis	Matt	Matthew
Exod	Exodus	Mark	Mark
Lev	Leviticus	Luke	Luke
Num	Numbers	John	John
Deut	Deuteronomy	Acts	Acts
Judg	Judges	Rom	Romans
1 Sam	1 Samuel	1, 2 Cor	1, 2 Corinthians
1 Kgs	1 Kings	Gal	Galatians
Isa	Isaiah	Eph	Ephesians
Jer	Jeremiah	Phil	Philippians
Ezek	Ezekiel	Col	Colossians
Zech	Zechariah	1, 2 Thess	1,2 Thessalonians
Ps (*pl.* Pss)	Psalm	1 Tim	1 Timothy
Job	Job	Phlm	Philemon
Dan	Daniel	Heb	Hebrews
1, 2 Chr	1, 2 Chronicles	Jas	James
Jdt	Judith	1, 2 Pet	1, 2 Peter
Sir	Sirach	1 John	1 John
Tob	Tobit	Jude	Jude
Wis	Wisdom	Rev	Revelation

3. The Dead Sea Scrolls

1QH[a]	*Thanksgiving Hymns*
1QHf	*Hymns*
1Q3	*1QLeviticus*
1QM	*War Scroll*
1QS	*Rule of the Community*, formerly *Manual of Discipline*
1QSb	*Rule of the Blessings*
4QShirShabb[a]	*Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*
4QS1	*Sapiential Work*
4Q502	*Ritual of Marriage*
4Q504	*Words of the Luminaries*[a]
4Q511	*Songs of the Sage*[b]
8Q5	*Hymn*
CD	*Damascus Document*

4. Other Jewish Literature

1 Enoch	*Ethiopic Enoch*
T. 12 Patr.	*The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*
T. Asher	*Testament of Asher*
T. Dan	*Testament of Dan*
T. Gad	*Testament of Gad*
T. Levi	*Testament of Levi*
T. Jud.	*Testament of Judah*
T. Reub.	*Testament of Reuben*
T. Sim.	*Testament of Simeon*
T. Ben.	*Testament of Benjamin*
T. Iss.	*Testament of Issachar*
Jub.	*Jubilees*

5. Targums

Tg. Onq.	Targum Onqelos
Tg. Ps.-J.	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

6. Early Christian Texts

Herm. *Mand.*	The Shepherd of Hermas, *Mandates*
Did.	*Didache*
Eccl. Hist.	Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History*
Haer.	Epiphanius *Panarion* (Against Heresies)
De princip.	Origen *De Principiis*
ad Serap.	Athanasius *Epistles to Serapion*
Hom. 24	Basil *Against the Sabellians, Arius, and the Anomoeans*

7. Plato, Plutarch, Josephus, Philo, Pseudo-Philo and Related Works

Ion	Plato *Ion*
Symp.	Plato *Symposium*
Phaed.	Plato *Phaedrus*
Mor.	Plutarch *Moralia*
De Def. Orac.	Plutarch *Obsolescence of Oracles*
A.J.	Josephus *Jewish Antiquities*
Fug.	Philo *On Flight and Finding*
Her.	Philo *Who is the Heir of Divine Things*
Mos.	Philo *Life of Moses*
Prov.	Philo *Foresight*
Spec.	Philo *The Special Laws*
Q.G.	Philo *Questions and Answers in Genesis*
L.A.B.	Pseudo-Philo *Biblical Antiquities*
Phars.	Lucan *Pharsalia* (*Bellum civile*, Civil War)
De bell. civ.	Lucan *On the Civil War*
De Div.	Cicero, *On Divination*
Geo.	Strabo *Geography*
De myst.	Iamblichus *On the Mysteries*
Pyth.	Heraclitus *The Pythia*

8. Reference Works

ABD	David Noel Freedman et al. (eds.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992)
ANF	*Ante-Nicene Fathers* (10 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994)
ANRW	H. Temporini and W. Haase (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (93 vols.; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1972–)
BAGD	W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (trans. F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker; 2d ed., rev. F. W. Danker; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979)
BDAG	W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature* (3d ed., rev. and ed. F. W. Danker; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974)
BDF	F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (trans. R. W. Funk; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961)
CAD	Ignace J. Gelb et al. (eds.), *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (21 vols.; Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956–)
CWDNT	Spiros Zodhiates (ed.), *The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 1992)
DDD	Karel van der Toorn et al. (eds.), *The Dictionary of Deities and Demons* (Leiden: Brill, 1995)
EDB	Adrianus van den Born, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible* (trans. Louis F. Hartman; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963)
EDNT	Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (eds.), *The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (5 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990)

ISBE	Geoffrey W. Bromiley et al. (eds.), *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (5 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)
Nestle-Aland[27]	E. Nestle and K. Aland, *Novum Testamentum graece* (27th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993)
NCE	M. R. P. McGuire et al. (eds.), *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (19 vols.; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967)
NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Ser. 2; 14 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994)
OTP	James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985)
TDNT	Gerhard Kittel (and G. Friedrich), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–76)
TDOT	Helmer Ringgren (and Johannes Botterweck), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (trans. John T. Willis; 14 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974–)
PG	J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia graeca* (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1857–1887)
PGL	G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961; 19th impression, 2005)
UBS	United Bible Societies Handbook Series

9. Journals, Serials

AcOr	*Acta orientalia*
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AO	*Aula Orientalis*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
Bib	*Biblica*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BT	*Bible Translator*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*

BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CTR	*Covenant Theological Review*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
GOTR	*Greek Orthodox Theological Review*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
Int	*Interpretation*
ITQ	*Irish Theological Quarterly*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSSR	*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
Noet	*Noetestamentica*
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OrAnt	*Oriens antiquus*
PSB	*Princeton Seminary Bulletin*
RHPR	*Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*
SBLSP	*Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
TBT	*The Bible Today*
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TS	*Theological Studies*
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VC	*Vigiliae christianae*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to VT

WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

10. Bible Versions

ASV	*American Standard Version*
BBE	*Bible in Basic English*
CEV	*Contemporary English Version*
DBY	*Darby Bible*
DRA	*Douay-Rheims Bible*
KJV	*King James Version*
NKJ	*New King James Version*
NRS	*New Revised Standard Version*
NAB	*New American Bible* (St. Joseph Edition, 1986)
NAS	*New American Standard Bible*
NIV	*New International Version*
NJB	*New Jerusalem Bible*
NLT	*New Living Translation*
REB	*Revised English Bible*
RHM	*The Emphasized New Testament: A New Translation* (J. B. Rotherham)
RSV	*Revised Standard Version*
TAY	*Living Letters: The Paraphrased Epistles* (Kenneth N. Taylor)
TEV	*Today's English Version*
TOB	*Traduction œcuménique de la Bible*
WNT	*The New Testament: An Expanded Translation* (Kenneth S. Wuest)

11. Other Abbreviations

B.C.E.	before the common era (= B.C.)
ca.	circa
C.E.	common era (= A.D.)
cf.	confer, compare
chap.(s.)	chapter(s)
Contra	against, in disagreement with

diss.	dissertation
ed.	edited by
e.g.	*exempli gratia*, for example
esp.	especially
et al.	*et alii*, and others
fl.	*floruit*, flourished (used with a date to indicate the productive years of a historical figure whose birth and death dates are unknown)
ibid.	*ibidem*, "in the same place" (in the same previously mentioned work)
idem	*id*, the same (author)
i.e.	*id est*, "that is"
masc.	masculine
n.(nn.)	footnote(s)
n.p.	no publisher
p.(pp.)	page(s)
Pace	with due respect, but differing from
repr.	reprinted
rev.	revised by (rev. ed. = revised edition)
ser.	series
sg.	singular
s.v.	*sub verbo* ("under the word," dictionary entry)
trans.	translated by
v.(vv.)	verse(s)
vis-à-vis	in relation to, compare to
vol.(s.)	volume(s)

Introduction

This research is an attempt to explain the meaning of πνεῦμα, prophecy, and glossolalia in First Corinthians 12 and 14. While many studies evaluate these terms from the perspective of contemporary pentecostalism or through historical-critical research worked out within a Christian theology of the Holy Spirit, I will argue from the perspective of religious experience. This perspective will be driven by historical-critical methodology but with an eye to the realm of spirits.[1]

A religious experience may be described as an experience that brings together human beings and spiritual realities from a world "beyond" the physical. The origin of the term "religion" is in the Latin *religio*. In the Classical and Roman understanding *religio* had to do with that which "binds" people to the gods whom they serve. This suggested the threshold at which both the world of humanity and the world of the gods converged or met during community rituals and festivals devoted to the celebrations of certain gods.

By the seventh century the term "religious" seems to have lost its "pagan" associations among Christian communities in which the term *religio* was used as a designation for those people who dedicated their lives to the service of God. These were the *religiosi*, a term that gave rise to the English expression "religious," describing those who belonged to an order committed in faith to serving God.[2]

In contemporary society the expression "religious experience" covers a broad range of feelings, emotions, and activities from both religious and secular realms. The expression sometimes suggests an "awesome" event in a person's life. It may also be used to describe experiences of mystics who believe that they have visions and/or auditions of a divine world. A person who is deeply committed to his or her faith through a rich prayer life may also be considered "religious." The expression is reserved for some extraordinary experience (religious or secular) that transcends the usual daily experiences of most human beings who go about their lives of work, rest, and play.

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[1] Historical criticism traditionally restricts itself to that which can only be known through empirical sources. The "spiritual" or "transcendental" is something that history is unable to explain. See Edgar Krantz, *The Historical-Critical Method* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 36–37.

[2] So Ernst Feil, "From the Classical Religio to the Modern Religion: Elements of a Transformation between 1550 and 1650," in *Religion in History: the Word, the Idea, the Reality* (ed. Michel Despland and Gerard Vallee [Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1992] 31–43) 32.

The social sciences attempt to define religious experience through the study of religious movements and their impact on the lives of individuals. These works cut across three related disciplines, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. Sociology and anthropology describe religious experience in the context of social and cultural conditions.[3] Psychology studies the personal psychological conditions associated with religious experience in order to define the nature of that experience.[4]

Much of this work tends to define religious experience as an opium or "hallucination," a reaction to a dysfunctional or stressful lifestyle within a given culture. In the social sciences, "deprivation theory" defines religious experiences as those formed out of the need of individuals who are "deprived" of social status and stability. These individuals look for an outlet in a form of cultic experience that gives them a sense of power over their lives.[5] Thus, the perspective of social and anthropological theorists reduce the experience to "psychological" or "cultural." A sympathy for the category of "spirit" in religious experience in these studies is undermined.

The anthropologist Erika Bourguignon, however, has provided biblical scholars with material from anthropological field research in the areas of possession, trance, and altered states of consciousness.[6] Her student, Felicitas Goodman, explores possession and exorcism in the modern world, revealing the beliefs in and the experiences with spirit beings.[7] The work of these two

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[3] See the classic work William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1902; repr. New York: Vintage Books, 1990); and more recently Ioan M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (Hammondsworth, England: Penguin, 1971; repr. New York: Routledge, 2003); and C. Daniel Batson and W. Larry Venti, *The Religious Experience: A Social-Psychological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[4] See André Godin, *The Psychological Dynamics of Religious Experience* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1985; trans. Mary Turton of *Psychologie des expériences religieuses: La désir et la réalité* [Paris: Le Centurion, 1981]).

[5] Sometimes, this theory, or a variation of it, is applied to women in Greek antiquity who were empowered by daemons. See Ruth Padel, "Women: Model for Possession by Greek Daemons," in *Images of Women in Antiquity* (ed. Averil Cameron and Amélie Kuhrt; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983; repr. 1993) 3–18. See also Ioan M. Lewis, "Spirit-Possession and Deprivation Cults," *Man* 1 (1966) 307–29.

[6] See Erika Bourguignon, *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973); and idem, *Possession* (San Francisco: Chandler & Sharp, 1976; repr. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1991).

[7] See Felicitas Goodman, *How about Demons? Possession and Exorcism in the Modern World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

scholars is utilized by some biblical scholars to explain phenomena related to trance states, possession, and visions in the NT.

John J. Pilch is one of the foremost biblical scholars to profit from the work of Bourguignon and Goodman. A biblical scholar who works with social scientific models for interpreting the bible, Pilch uses the anthropological field research of Goodman to explain trances and visions in the NT within a cultural context.[8] Pilch's work is quite effective in explaining religious phenomena in the NT from contemporary religious experiences in the modern world. Despite theological prejudices against religious phenomena outside of Christianity,[9] Pilch's work shows that experiences in third-world countries are useful models for interpreting similar experiences in the world of the NT.[10]

Sometimes experiences of spirit possession in the biblical, historical, and contemporary record are studied within the fields of psychology and psychiatry, but only in the "negative" sense of demonic possession. Both the Protestant and Catholic churches believe and teach that demonic possession is the actual invasion by an evil spirit of the body of the person who becomes the spirit's victim, not unlike the reports of demoniacs in the NT.[11] In psychology, however, the belief in spirits is usually cast aside as an archaic, pre-modern, and pre-scientific explanation for what is otherwise diagnosed as a psychological disorder, e.g., schizophrenia or multiple personality disorder, whose provenance is located in an organic aberration.

One of the foremost proponents of the psychological argument is Juan B. Cortés, S.J., who believes that what the biblical authors lacked in knowledge

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[8] See John J. Pilch, "Appearances of the Risen Jesus in Cultural Context: Experiences of Alternate Reality," *BTB* 28 (1998) 52–60; idem, "Paul's Ecstatic Trance Experience near Damascus in Acts of the Apostles," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 58 (2002) 690–707; and idem, *Visions and Healing in Acts of the Apostles: How the Early Believers Experienced God* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004).

[9] See Karl Rahner below, pp. 5–6.

[10] See also Stevan L. Davies, *Jesus the Healer: Possession, Trance, and the Origins of Christianity* (New York: Continuum, 1995), who uses the research of Bourguignon and Goodman to explain prophets, prophecy, and spirit possession in the NT. I disagree, however, with Davies's conclusion that Jesus was a "spirit-possessed prophet" (ibid., 51). Jesus possessed the spirit in that he had access to the realm of divinity or spirit that enabled him to perform miracles and healings. It seems unlikely that spirits possessed Jesus and spoke out of him.

[11] See Adolf Rodewyk, *Possessed by Satan: The Church's Teaching on the Devil, Possession, and Exorcism* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975; trans. Martin Ebon of *Die Dämonische Besessenheit* [Aschaffenburg: Paul Pattloch Verlag, 1963]).

about the human psyche, modern-day psychology more than makes up for.[12] This perspective reduces the biblical belief in possession to something that is not inherent to it: psychology and psychiatric medicine. The synoptic gospels, at times, seemed to have distinguished illnesses from demonic possession as if to suggest possession was not always considered a physiological illness (cf. Matt 8:16).

The application of psychology may not always adequately explain the effects of πνεῦμα in the NT. Admittedly, the symptoms of possession and of psychological disorders may be similar, as attested in antiquity.[13] But if "spirits" are to be explained as a psychological disorder in the negative spiritual experiences in the NT, then positive experiences with spirits, e.g., prophetic possession, are to be likewise reduced to the disorders of the psyche. This reduction, historically, does not explain the beliefs of the early Christians. Apart from demonic possession, spirits may also serve a community positively by communicating divine knowledge via prophetic possession. The knowledge and information conveyed during the possession state that is beyond the possessed person's normal intellectual capacity gives rise to two different perspectives: biblically, the divine knowledge is that of a communicating spirit; in the psychology of modernity, the provenance of the knowledge is the subconscious.

Philosophy has also contributed to the study of religious experience. The work of Edmund Husserl concerning the phenomenology of philosophy is a major contribution.[14] Husserl's study serves as a method for understanding the nature of metaphysics and epistemology. Essentially, phenomenology is based on the realities designated by two terms that Husserl introduced, *noema* and *noesis*. *Noesis* refers to a subject's experience and *noema* refers to the subject known. The interplay between these two realities is taken into careful consideration while "bracketing" (*epoché*, holding in suspension) judgments about the metaphysical existence or non-existence of that which is perceived by the subject. Luke Timothy Johnson has recently applied Husserl's

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[12] Juan B. Cortés and Florence M. Gatti, *The Case Against Possessions and Exorcisms: A Historical, Biblical, and Psychological Analysis of Demons, Devils, and Demoniacs* (New York: Vantage Press, 1975). See also Adam Crabtree, *Multiple Man: Explorations in Possession and Multiple Personality* (New York: Praeger, 1985).

[13] See Chapter Three, 141 n. 119 below.

[14] See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* (trans. Dorion Cairns; Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1950); and idem, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (trans. W. Boyce Gibson; Boston: Nijhoff, 1983).

phenomenology to a study of religious experience in earliest Christianity with effectiveness.[15]

Theology has also contributed to delineating religious experience. Both Protestant and Catholic theologians have written at length on the experience of "spirit" in the early church. One of the main contributors from the Protestant tradition is Jürgen Moltmann, who approaches the subject from a holistic, ecumenical perspective.[16] Moltmann describes the historical experiences of the spirit denoted by the Hebrew noun רוח, "wind," "spirit," in the OT as experiences of divine energy and divine power in the lives of the patriarchs and the Israelites.[17] Moltmann sees the OT experience of spirit continued in the NT. The experience is a "Trinitarian experience of the spirit," a spirit christology initiated in the synoptic gospels and continued by Paul and John, who have a "christological doctrine of the Spirit."[18]

In the Catholic theological tradition, Karl Rahner contributes a volume to the experience of the spirit.[19] The phenomena of the spirit in the NT and the early church is treated in a chapter entitled "Religious Enthusiasm and the Experience of Grace."[20] From the beginning of his exposition, Rahner claims that the comments of a dogmatic theologian are unable to express the "concrete and specific characteristics" of experiences of the spirit. He attempts to locate the description of experiences of the spirit within dogmatic theology, particularly within the theology of divine grace.

Rahner notes that phenomena of the spirit and charismatic enthusiasm (glossolalia) in and of themselves are not inherently Christian for they may occur in different sects, both inside and outside of Christianity. Thus, Rahner proposes that only the doctrine of divine grace as outlined in the Jesuit tradition can define an experience of the spirit as truly "Christian." Otherwise, phenomena related to charismatic enthusiasm, which may or may not be

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[15] Johnson's work is surveyed in Chapter Two. In the field of philosophy, see further John E. Smith, *Experience and God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); William P. Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); and Louis Roy, *Transcendent Experiences: Phenomenology and Critique* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

[16] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

[17] Ibid., 39–57.

[18] Ibid., 58.

[19] Karl Rahner, *Experience of the Spirit: Source of Theology* (Theological Investigations 16; trans. David Morland; New York: Crossroad, 1983).

[20] Ibid., 35–51.

Christian, would reduce Christianity to the level of other religions.[21] In the final analysis, Rahner limits his perspective to a contemporary theory of divine grace without allowing the insights of exegesis to inform his exposition of the phenomena of the spirit any further.[22]

Within theology, the unwillingness to deal with "spirit" in terms of experience has been somewhat of a conundrum.[23] This stems partly from the way in which the study of theology and the study of religion are treated in the academy. Traditionally, theology and religion are two different disciplines within academia: theology deals strictly with Christianity (whether biblical, historical, or systematic theology) and religion deals with practically everything else, both western (Judaism, Islam) and nonwestern (Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism) religious traditions.[24] Sometimes, however, the demarcation between "theology" and "religion" is not always clear.[25]

At a deeper level, theology tends to focus on ideas that originated from individuals whose writings reflect "thinking about God." Sometimes these writings contributed to the formulation of Christian doctrine that later served as a documentation of the beliefs of the church.[26] As such, theology deals with

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[21] Ibid., 39.

[22] Ibid., 35, 40. Rahner revealingly states, "One might in certain circumstances regard such phenomena as very useful or as an inevitable concomitant of religion, but the exact elucidation of their origin would be a question in which dogmatic theology could happily declare itself to have no interest" (p. 40).

[23] This is especially the case within academic theology such as Moltmann and Rahner. Rahner admits of no interest (happily so!) in his exposition of phenomena related to experiences of the spirit except within the limits of divine grace. In contemporary society, however, theology has sometimes engaged that branch of fringe science known as psychical research or occultism. This has brought theology into a conversation with explicit experiences of "spirit" in present-day society, e.g., dreams, mediums, trance states, visions, Marian apparitions, Eucharistic miracles, etc. See Alois Wiesinger, *Occult Phenomena in the Light of Theology* (trans. Brian Battershaw; Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1957; repr. Fort Collins, CO: Roman Catholic Books, 1999); and Donald I. Bretherton, "Theology and Psychical Studies," in *Life, Death & Psychical Research: Studies on Behalf of the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies* (ed. J. D. Pearce-Higgins and G. Stanley Whitby; London: Rider, 1973) 240–57.

[24] See Gillian R. Evans, *Old Arts and New Theology: The Beginnings of Theology as an Academic Discipline* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); and Edward Farley, "The Place of Theology in the Study of Religion," *Religious Studies and Theology* 5 (1985) 9–29.

[25] See Paula M. Cooey, "Fiddling While Rome Burns: The Place of Academic Theology in the Study of Religion," *HTR* 93 (2000) 35–49. Judaism possesses a body of work that is, arguably, theological, i.e., the Talmud and the Mishnah. Moslems also possess the Quran.

[26] I say "sometimes" because many of the writings in church history that bear on "theology" were not always accepted as orthodox by the church. Classic examples are the Arian controversy and Origen, whose views on salvation and reincarnation did not follow those of the

topics that might not always reflect the NT itself, but rather reflect what a certain writer thinks the NT might be saying or its possible implications. The writer may even elaborate and embellish in ways that go beyond what a NT text actually says, yet remain within the realm of theology. This commitment to "thinking about God" gives the added legitimacy to extraneous theological musings as authoritative affirmations for certain NT texts. The origin of doctrine and dogma arises from such theological musings.[27]

The German history-of-religions school argued that later doctrinal developments in church history, having become theological perspectives of scholars, obscure the views expressed in the NT. The experiences in the NT have been recast with theological verbiage that do not accurately depict those original experiences. Hence a line was drawn between "theology" and "experience" by the history-of-religions school.

Peter Balla offers a brief yet insightful summary of the challenges that religious experience poses to theology.[28] He debates the contributions of the history-of-religions school to the dividing line between "theology" and "experience." Any theological interpretation of the NT ran the risk of introducing doctrinal beliefs that were not clear in the NT. The affirmation that theology was somehow inadequate for the study of the NT was common to the history-of-religions approach. Balla notes that this approach assessed theological ideas (e.g., of Paul) as secondary theories meant to interpret the experiences mentioned in the NT text.[29]

In an attempt to extend the range of theology beyond that of doctrine, Balla modifies the traditional view of theology to include a wide range of religious phenomena.[30] He argues that the history-of-religions approach is problematic.

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church at the time. Even ideas from "orthodox" theologians such as Augustine and Aquinas did not always meet with the sanction of the church.

[27] For instance, ὑπόστασις is a term that occurs in Heb 1:3 for the Son of God, but in later Greek theology it described God, Christ, and the Spirit as three "persons," contributing to the theology of the Trinity. The "triadic" position of "father," "son," and "holy spirit" in Matt 28:19 can certainly be seen as the basis from which the idea of ὑπόστασις was elaborated. So, there exists NT precedence for a given theological idea that developed later. But such precedence does not necessarily mean that later theological ideas adequately describe that precedence.

[28] Peter Balla, *Challenges to New Testament Theology: An Attempt to Justify the Enterprise* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998) 20–32.

[29] Balla, *Challenges*, 31.

[30] Ibid., 23. Balla's proposition for theology to encompass religious experience is also maintained by Eric O. Springsted ("Theology and Spirituality: Or, Why Religion is Not Critical Reflection on Religious Experience," *PSB* 19 [1998] 143–59) who claims, ". . . theology precisely is 'critical reflection on religious experience,' whether one's own or somebody else's" (p. 151–52).

Balla takes to task the idea of "distinguishing between experience and interpretation." He argues that what might be called a theological affirmation in the NT is, in fact, the only available data to assess the experience described in the affirmation.

Admittedly, the experience that is reduced to writing, i.e., the experience "behind" the text, may not at all be accessible to the historian. Thus, the primary study should be the theological affirmation of the text itself. Any theological reflection of biblical figures or authors who were thinking through an experience that had happened to them and reduced it to writing as their "interpretation" of that experience must serve the historian as primary source material for the experience that may or may not be recoverable from "behind" the text. Balla believes that theology should deal with both experience and its subsequent interpretation in the NT. His thought represents a major advance in the field of theology.

A definition for "religious experience" is not always desired by some scholars. Caroline Franks Davis, for instance, notes that definitions involving the term "God" are difficult since the term "God" connotes a variety of possible interpretations. Because there exist many religious traditions and many types of experiences within each of those traditions Davis evades a definition for religious experience.[31] The term "experience" itself is also difficult to define. One may posit, however, that, despite its ambiguity, an experience is the "acquirement of genuine knowledge furnished by the world considered as external to the mind: the concept thus expresses the empirical sum of one's total knowledge."[32]

An experience of a religious nature needs further qualification. Larry Hurtado notes that Christian religious experience in the NT is expressed in the phrases "Spirit of God" or "Holy Spirit."[33] The key term then for religious experience in the NT is "spirit." The illustrious biblical scholar Hermann Gunkel once stated, "In the history of primitive Christianity the activities of the Spirit [*die Wirkungen des Geistes*] are a factor of greatest significance."[34] The

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[31] Caroline Franks Davis, *The Evidential Force of Religious Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 29. Davis (ibid., 33–65) offers six categories of religious experience: (1) interpretive experiences; (2) quasi-sensory experiences; (3) revelatory experiences; (4) regenerative experiences; (5) numinous experiences; and (6) mystical experiences.

[32] Antoine Vergote, "Religious Experience," in *From Religious Experience to a Religious Attitude* (ed. A. Godin; Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1965) 17–18.

[33] Larry Hurtado, "Religious Experience and Religious Innovation in the New Testament," *JR* 80 (2000) 183–205.

[34] See Chapter Two, nn. 1 and 3 for bibliographic data.

"activities of the Spirit" in the history of early Christianity relate experiences that "bind" the human world with the spirit world – a *religio* experience. Thus, a definition for religious experience that reflects this may be "immediate contact with the realm of the Divine"[35] or "the realms of spirit."[36]

The term "spirit" (Hebrew רוח, Greek πνεῦμα, and Latin *spiritus*) has a varied and complex history extending from the Bible and Stoicism to nineteenth-century scholastic philosophy. The meanings originally denoted by the term "spirit" relate the idea of an invisible and active force: wind, vapor, divine breath, moving air. By analogy these meanings were applied to an equally invisible yet real sentient reality: "a spirit." The same term was used for both "wind" and "a spirit" because both were thought of as penetrating or pervading material objects. It is from the analogous meaning of πνεῦμα, that of "a spirit," that this study delineates religious experience or "immediate contact with the realms of spirit."

The concept of "a spirit" is rarely discussed. Before we proceed any further it is necessary to discuss what is meant by "a spirit." Until twenty-five years ago, little investigation was made into the concept of a spirit by philosophers of religion. According to P. J. Sherry, there were two reasons for this reluctance: 1) Rudolph Bultmann's demythologizing that led to a rejection of a belief in spirits and angels as archaic, outdated nomenclature for the modern world; and 2) the rejection of a dualistic concept of a person as both body and spirit for a person as a single psycho-physical organism. This second point hinges on the belief in a resurrection of the body and not of the spirit.[37]

Sherry observes that recent trends in the philosophy of religion define a spirit as "a person without a body," an "incorporeal agent," or an "incorporeal personal substance." From an empirical perspective, a major flaw in such definitions is that the qualification "incorporeal" negates the identifying content of the term "substance."[38] Sherry ultimately adopts an alternative definition for a spirit as "a non-physical power permeating creation, particularly men's

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[35] Vergote, "Religious Experience," 19.

[36] Some studies that use "religious experience" in relation to the OT, NT, and Judaism have nothing to do with explicating religious experience in terms of contact with the realms of spirit. See William J. Hutchins, *The Religious Experience of Israel* (New York: Association Press, 1919), a theology of the OT; Percy Gardner, *The Religious Experience of Saint Paul* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1911), a theology of Pauline thought; and Eugene Mihaly, *Religious Experience in Judaism* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, 1957), whose focus on "keeping God's law" serves his definition for religious experience.

[37] Patrick J. Sherry, "Are Spirits Bodiless Persons?" *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 24 (1982) 37–52, esp. 37–38.

[38] Ibid., 38–39.

hearts."[39] This definition reflects the way in which Stoicism conceived of πνεῦμα as a non-personal substance that permeated the universe and through which everything in creation was in sympathy.

Part of the problem raised by the phrase "incorporeal substance," i.e., "non-physical substance" (an oxymoron) among contemporary philosophers was not so much of a problem among early Jews and Christians. The term πνεῦμα denoted both the substance of a spirit (a non-physical substance) and the spirit being itself, i.e., πνεῦμα was "a kind of immaterial substance proper to spiritual beings" and "of angels' substance."[40] From this vantage point, spirits were non-corporeal, in the sense of non-physical, beings, but this did not deny them a body, a spiritual body.[41]

Sherry notes that biblical texts make use of both personal and impersonal language for the spirit. Some of the impersonal language, e.g., the spirit is "poured out," is "given to men to drink," "fills" men, or is "quenched" by men, is metaphorical language not appropriate to a person but rather more appropriate for a power. On the one hand, the terms "person" and "power" as they relate to the concept of a spirit are distinguished. On the other hand, Sherry states that "the different terms 'power' and 'person' both indicate that a spirit exists independently of men and has causal efficacy."[42]

Thus, as Sherry observes, the idea of a spirit as "a power" of some kind can only be identified with reference to a substance or a person. The issue of "power" and "person" for the meaning of "spirit" in the NT is sometimes related to Greek grammar. Since Greek does not possess the English indefinite article "a," the anarthrous forms of πνεῦμα in the NT can be rendered as "holy spirit." Translating anarthrous forms as simply "holy spirit" might suggest that spirit here denotes a material or a substance, e.g., "he has holy spirit," not unlike the use of "silver" in the phrase "the coin is silver." The anarthrous form of "spirit," however, is indefinite in meaning and so the translation into English as "a spirit" is also appropriate. This translation holds the possibility that "spirit"

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[39] Ibid., 48.

[40] *PGL*, s.v. πνεῦμα; and Philo, *Q.G.* 1.92 wherein the "substance" (οὐσία) of angels is "spiritual" (πνευματική), and *Mos.* 1.274,277 wherein angels are "spirit beings" (πνεύματα).

[41] The phrase σῶμα πνευματικόν, "spiritual body," is oxymoronic in Greek, for the term σῶμα refers to the living physical (flesh, bone, blood) body of a human being (see LSJ, s.v. σῶμα). Paul seems to have been aware of this, for in 1 Cor 15:44 he takes care to distinguish the σῶμα ψυχικόν, "natural body," of mortals from the σῶμα πνευματικόν, "spiritual body," of spirits, i.e., the "resurrection body." This distinction is also made in Luke 24:39, . . . πνεῦμα σάρκα καὶ ὀστέα οὐκ ἔχει . . ., ". . . a spirit does not have flesh and bones . . ."

[42] Sherry, "Spirits," 47.

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