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# MORE THAN THE SPIRIT OF MISSION? REVISITING THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

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## INTRODUCTION

The role of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts provokes a range of interest across the 'evangelical' spectrum. Whether it is reflected in practice or not most Christians would enthusiastically affirm the Holy Spirit as indispensable to the church's task of world evangelisation. They would endorse the notion that the power that drives the Great Commission comes 'wholly and exclusively from the Pentecost event'.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, many would agree with the suggestion that the title of Luke's second volume might more appropriately be 'the Acts of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, enthusiasm for the book of Acts and the role of the Spirit in world mission has sparked something of a renaissance from within Pentecostal circles, as new mission theology is advanced from studies in Acts.<sup>3</sup> For example, South African Pentecostal scholar Allan Anderson proposes a 'Pneumatocentric Mission' in contrast to the *Missio Dei* of older Catholic and Protestant missions and the obedience to the Great Commission of Evangelical Christocentric missions.<sup>4</sup> He suggests that personal experience with the Holy Spirit was the key to the expansion of the church in Acts and remains so particularly in light of the globalisation of Pentecostalism.<sup>5</sup> The question remains whether these claims can be justified by Pentecostal NT scholarship.

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<sup>1</sup> H. R. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> The suggestion is made by Pentecostal and conservative evangelical scholars alike. See J. C. Thomas, 'The Charismatic Structure of Acts', *JPT* 13.1 (2004), pp. 19-30; D. A. Carson, D. J. Moo and L. Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), p. 181.

<sup>3</sup> Key journals including regular work on the Spirit in Acts are *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, *Journal of Asian Mission*, *Journal of Pentecostal Studies* and *Pneuma*.

<sup>4</sup> A. Anderson, 'Towards a Pentecostal Missiology for the Majority World', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 8:1 (2005), pp. 29-47.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, 'Towards a Pentecostal Missiology', pp. 32-3. See also, M. W. Dempster, B. D. Klaus & D. Petersen, eds., *The Globalization of Pentecos-*

Questions of Pentecostal missiology and praxis<sup>6</sup> are beyond the scope of this article. My intention is rather to engage with the pneumatology articulated by a prominent Pentecostal scholar, Robert P. Menzies. If this scholar is to be believed, Luke's view is that the Spirit is for missiological empowerment and thus has no salvific import, in contrast to Paul who identifies the Spirit with conversion-initiation and on-going Christian experience.

I will attempt to demonstrate how reading Acts as narrative theology yields a composite and cumulative portrayal of the Spirit. Four interrelated areas are identified: i) the Spirit who equips all believers with prophetic insight, ii) the Spirit who brings conviction and conversion, iii) the Spirit who initiates the spiritual edification of restored Israel and iv) the Spirit who is at work in the context of mission in Acts to unite Jew and Gentile. I conclude by drawing together some relevant observations as to the role of the Spirit in the church and her mission today.

#### ROBERT MENZIES: APPROACHING THE SPIRIT OF 'PROPHECY' IN ACTS

For Menzies, Luke's pneumatology excludes any soteriological dimensions.<sup>7</sup> Rather, the Spirit in Luke is given to those already 'saved', as the source of prophetic inspiration referred to as a *donum superadditum*.<sup>8</sup> Such a gift is manifested by special insight or inspiring speech acting in the service of mission which is reflected in Luke's narrative.<sup>9</sup> In each case the basic point is made that subsequent filling with the Spirit is inextricably linked to preaching, prophesying or speaking the word of God boldly.

Although making reference to narrative features (plot, characterisation, setting etc.) Menzies employs redaction critical methods to establish Luke's 'arrangement and modification of received material'.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, Ju Hur cautions that 'it is hard to deny that efforts to grasp Luke's

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*talism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> For example, the question of the places of 'signs and wonders' in the churches mission and the work of the Spirit in other religions.

<sup>7</sup> R. P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004). Menzies, writes (p. 44): 'I shall seek to establish that Luke never attributes soteriological functions to the Spirit and that his narrative presupposes a pneumatology which excludes this dimension (e.g. Acts 8:14-17; 19:1-7).'

<sup>8</sup> Literally, 'an additional gift' or more commonly a 'second blessing'.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Acts 2:1-41; 4:31; 8:4-25 and 19:1-7.

<sup>10</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*, p. 104.

original concept of the Holy Spirit have usually been preoccupied with scholars' own dogmatic or theological pre-understanding of the Spirit.<sup>11</sup> Therefore any consideration of Lukan pneumatology must come to terms with Luke as artist as well as historian or theologian. Against this background I will clarify the main tenets of Menzies' position.

First, Menzies rightly contends that the intertestamental Jewish literature is a key source influencing the NT writers' understanding of the Spirit, yielding an interpretation of the Spirit referred to in the Jewish context as the 'Spirit of Prophecy'. According to Menzies Jews at the time of Jesus viewed the Spirit as 'almost always related to inspired speech'<sup>12</sup> and as he shows in his survey of Diaspora, Palestinian, Qumran and Rabbinical literature<sup>13</sup> such activities are ascribed to the Spirit. For Menzies, Luke represents a pre-Pauline, Jewish pneumatology in continuity with the Spirit of prophecy but disassociated from soteriological and socio-ethical categories and based firmly on the principle of *donum superadditum*.

The pivotal argument both for Menzies and Pentecostal theology is that the Pentecost account in Acts 2 signals the Spirit as a *donum superadditum* of empowering. The disciples have experienced salvation *prior* to Christ's ascension. The Spirit does not produce faith, but is given to faith.<sup>14</sup> Menzies takes Luke's addition of *kai propheteusousin* (v. 18) as the hermeneutical key for the Pentecost event which, he insists, Luke demonstrates by recording the particular pneumatic events described in the ensuing narrative of Acts. In addition the Spirit of prophecy which was once the possession of prominent individuals within the covenant community is now universally available to all God's people. Of particular significance in Menzies' interpretation is the exclusion of any literary allusions between the giving of the Law at Sinai and Pentecost, removing any sense of a 'new Exodus' motif in the latter event. Together with his denial that Acts 2:42-47 is directly attributed to the work of the Spirit Menzies portrays the Spirit's coming at Pentecost exclusively as the source of prophetic inspiration, that is, 'the Spirit of mission'.<sup>15</sup>

Lastly, Menzies evaluates the work of the Spirit amongst the Samaritans, Paul and the Ephesian 'disciples'<sup>16</sup> demonstrating that the Spirit always comes to empower for witness those already saved. He concludes

<sup>11</sup> Ju Hur, *A Dynamic Reading of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*, p. 101.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.49-62.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>16</sup> Acts 8:9-25; 9:17-22; 19:1-10.

that ‘the spirit in Luke-Acts is not given principally for the benefit of its recipient; rather it is directed towards others.’<sup>17</sup> The question remains whether the Spirit of prophecy is *simply* the driving force of mission, and whether Spirit-filled individuals such as Peter, Stephen and Paul are prototypical for all Christians.

Taking our cue from Menzies we now examine Luke’s ‘distinctive’ Lukan pneumatology, asking whether it is as Menzies suggests intended ‘to teach a Spirit-baptism *distinct from conversion for empowering*’.<sup>18</sup> I will ask whether the ‘Spirit of prophecy’ (described by Menzies) is for Luke *only* this, and no more. Secondly, I will evaluate the validity of some of the exegetical and theological arguments that Menzies uses in support of his thesis, in order to begin to see how we should interpret the Spirit’s role in Acts.

### THE GIVING OF THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY IN ACTS

Without question the evidence suggests that the Spirit of prophecy is central to apostolic life and mission in Acts.<sup>19</sup> However, in insisting upon this Menzies appears to mislead in what he denies about the Spirit’s activity.<sup>20</sup> As already outlined Menzies’ thesis that Luke views the Spirit in non-soteriological, prophetic and missiological terms rests heavily upon an understanding of the Spirit in intertestamental Judaism. Two points must be made concerning the nature of the Spirit of prophecy in Menzies proposal.

#### *Spiritual and Ethical Transformation*

Turner posits a significant misunderstanding in Menzies’ work in terms of the false antithesis drawn between the Spirit of prophecy and ethical

<sup>17</sup> W. W. Menzies and R. P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), p. 90.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> As evidenced by the very gift of the Spirit promised in Acts 1:8 and explained in terms of Joel 2:28-32 – the *locus classicus* of the OT for expectation of the out-pouring of the Spirit of prophecy. Several passages in Acts directly or indirectly depict the Spirit as providing the gifts of the Spirit of prophecy – *revelatory visions and dreams* (for example 7:55-56 and 16:6-10); *revelatory words or guidance* (1:2; 4:25; 7:51; 8:29; 10:19; 11:12, 28; 13:2, 4; 19:21; 20:22,23; 28:25); *charismatic wisdom and discernment* (6:3, 5; 9:31; 13:9); *charismatic praise* (2:4; 10:46; 19:6) *charismatic preaching/witness* (Acts 1:4, 8; 4:8, 31; 5:32; 6:10; 9:17).

<sup>20</sup> Following E. Schweizer, ‘*pneuma*’ TDNT VI, pp. 389-455, who does not attribute the new life of the community in Acts to the Spirit because he argues that Luke understood the Spirit as the Spirit of prophecy alone.

or religious transformation by the Spirit.<sup>21</sup> Menzies seeks to substantiate that the Spirit of prophecy is of little ethical consequence for Judaism and that the function of the Spirit is almost always related to inspired speech.<sup>22</sup> However, the validity of extrapolating one dominant aspect of the Spirit's activity at least from first-century Jewish sources has recently been challenged by John Levison.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, despite Luke's distinctive pneumatology should we expect him to be as remote from Paul and John as Menzies argues? One would assume not if, as Menzies claims, he is influenced by Jewish sources, for as Turner concludes: 'neither the Old Testament nor Judaism know of any ethically transforming or recreating gift of the Spirit that is necessarily *other* than the gift of the Spirit of prophecy.'<sup>24</sup>

That the Spirit inspired prophetic words of inspiration and revelation is obvious, but is the Spirit *doing* more than functioning as the one who only inspires human speech. Wenk<sup>25</sup> argues that Spirit-inspired words in Scripture have a transformative force<sup>26</sup> and he goes on to claim that 'the Spirit's role cannot be limited to the *content* of the speech, stripping it artificially from God's intention *through* the speech.'<sup>27</sup> In his attempt to argue for Luke's unique emphasis on prophetic empowerment by the Spirit Menzies overlooks the broader intention and application of the Spirit's ministry which includes moral and ethical-religious transformation.

<sup>21</sup> M. Turner, 'The Work of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts' *Word & World* Vol. 23, no. 2 (2003), pp. 146-53.

<sup>22</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*, p. 102.

<sup>23</sup> J. R. Levison, *The Spirit in First Century Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 248-54 provides ample evidence from Jewish sources to show the association of the Spirit with creation, the conviction of wrong-doers, human purity and cleansing, community initiation and entrance into the life of faith.

<sup>24</sup> M. Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), p. 133 (emphasis his); Cf. Ju Hur, *Dynamic Reading*, pp. 37-73 who explores the meaning and use of *rūah* and *pneuma* in the MT and LXX to determine the background against which the Lukan portrait of the Holy Spirit is conceived. He notes that in addition to the engendering of prophecy and revelatory speeches 'God's Spirit is depicted as *the source or sustaining power for the Israelite's religio-ethical life*', p.73 (emphasis original).

<sup>25</sup> M. Wenk, *Community-Forming Power: the Socio-Ethical Role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), p. 47.

<sup>26</sup> Seen for example in the way that prophetic speech in the OT restores covenant loyalty with Yahweh. For example: Isaiah 1:2-3:26; Jeremiah 2:1-5:13; Hosea 2, 6:1-14:9.

<sup>27</sup> Wenk, p. 132 (my emphasis).

Against Menzies Wenk provides evidence to demonstrate the Spirit's transformative effect. For example, in the account of Paul's Spirit-prompted directive to Bar-Jesus (Acts 13:9-11) Menzies betrays his reliance upon redaction critical methods to reinforce his point that Luke emphasises the Spirit as the agent of the prophecy. He concludes that the action of the Spirit on Paul (v. 9) has an '*exclusively* prophetic sense'<sup>28</sup> because in verse 11 Luke states that the 'hand of the *Lord*' actually brings about Bar-Jesus' blindness. Luke therefore denies certain functions of the *Spirit* such as miracles. This, however, drives a wedge between the work of the Spirit and the Lord in Acts 13:9-11 for Menzies fails to see that through the words of Paul, the Lord by his Spirit is effecting change in Bar-Jesus. Thus, we agree with Wenk that 'the story is narrated in such a way that suggests not only that the content of Paul's curse was Spirit-prompted, but the effect thereof also.'<sup>29</sup> The Spirit-inspired prophetic word is foundational for effecting spiritual change in individuals.

### *Salvation and the 'New Exodus' Motif*

Menzies' exclusion of any soteriological dimension to the Spirit represents not only a deference to intertestamental Jewish sources as the primary loci for interpretation of Lukan pneumatology, but also the lack of a salvation-historical framework. If, however, Luke considers present salvation to include God's dynamic, restoring and transforming reign through Jesus' exaltation,<sup>30</sup> then the bestowal of the Pentecost gift is the obvious candidate to effect salvation this side of Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Without Pentecost the work climaxing in Christ's death and resurrection is unfinished and incomplete.<sup>31</sup> Pentecost cannot be understood apart from Christ's salvific work – territory unexplored by Menzies.

There is further reason to consider the soteriological role of the Spirit in Acts. David Pao has persuasively argued that Luke evokes Isaianic motifs throughout the Acts narrative, such that the entire Isaianic New Exodus programme provides the structural framework for the narrative of Acts.<sup>32</sup> He highlights how six themes in Isaiah's programme of restoration are shown to play a critical role in the first half of the narrative of Acts:<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*, pp.112-3 (my emphasis).

<sup>29</sup> Wenk, *Community-Forming Power*, p. 146.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Luke 4:18-19 and Acts 2:29-36.

<sup>31</sup> For an overview of the place of Pentecost in relation to salvation history, see G. W. Grogan, 'The significance of Pentecost in the History of Salvation' *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 4.2 (1986), pp. 98-100.

<sup>32</sup> D. W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

<sup>33</sup> Pao, pp. 112-42.

<b>Isaiah's 'new exodus' hope</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Luke's development of Isaianic motifs</b>	<b>Text</b>
The reconstitution of Israel	Isa. 40:10; 49:6; 63:17	The election of Matthias and reconstitution of the Twelve	Acts 1:12-26
The ingathering of the exiles	Isa. 40:11; 43:5-7; 35:8-10	The Diaspora Jews are first to hear the gospel in Jerusalem	Acts 2:5-11
The community of the Spirit	Isa. 32: 14-17; 42:1; 44:1-4	The Spirit is poured out to all who call on the name of the Lord	Acts 2:17f.; 3:20
The rebuilding of the Davidic kingdom	Isa. 9:6-7; 16:4b-5	The resurrection of Jesus Christ ensures an eternal kingdom	Acts 13:34-36; 15:16-18
The call to repent and turn to the Lord	Isa. 44:21b-22; 59:1-21	The call to repent is issued by the proclamation of the church	Acts 2:38; 3:19-20a; 5:31
The inclusion of outcasts	Isa. 11:12; 56:1-8	The church witness the inclusion of the Gentiles	Acts 8:26-40; 10:1-48; 11:18

The relevance of this for our understanding of the work of the Spirit in Acts is that Luke was unlikely casting the Spirit's work simply in terms of prophetic inspiration and therefore missionary witness as Menzies argues. Rather, it highlights the possibility that Luke used the Isaianic New Exodus as a paradigm to describe the breaking in of salvation in the early church. Jesus' eschatological rule was realized by the out-pouring of the Spirit of prophecy. Theologically speaking, Pentecost is portrayed as a redemptive-historical event 'not to be interpreted existentially and pneumatologically, but eschatologically and christologically'.<sup>34</sup> The logical conclusion is that Spirit-baptism is unlikely to be an empowering distinct from conversion as Menzies claims<sup>35</sup> and no wedge can be driven between missiology and soteriology in the pneumatology of Acts.

### *The Pentecost Event*

Menzies' failure to see this theological framework impacts his exegesis of the text. He correctly highlights that the Pentecost gift given in Acts 2 is in indubitably the 'Spirit of prophecy', particularly in light of Peter's appeal to Joel 2:28-32. However, in seeking to uphold the unity of Luke-Acts

<sup>34</sup> S. B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Leicester: IVP, 1996), p. 82.

<sup>35</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*, p. 238.

he argues that Pentecost was for the disciples what Jordan was for Jesus: empowerment for effective witness.<sup>36</sup>

Two key arguments used by Menzies to support his *donum superadditum* interpretation of the Pentecost event require attention. First, Menzies points to the presence of *loudaioi, andres eulabeis apo pantos ethnous ton hupo ton ouranon* (Acts 2:5) and the ensuing missionary proclamation of ‘the mighty works of God’ (v. 11) which may be attributed to *eplesthesan pantes pneumatos hagiou* in verse four. Whilst not denying the notion of empowerment by the Spirit for universal witness,<sup>37</sup> it is more likely that, due to the lack of a specific verb<sup>38</sup> implying an announcement or proclamation in verses four to eight,<sup>39</sup> *heterais glossais* (v. 4) should be regarded as ‘invasive charismatic praise’ directed to *God*, rather than prophetic gospel witness.<sup>40</sup>

Second, Menzies rejects the notion that Pentecost reflects a new Sinai event and explains away the suggestion that the Spirit is first said to be received within the context of conversion-initiation. In the case of the former Menzies is not alone in arguing that the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1) would not have evoked images of Moses, Sinai or the covenant renewal ceremony in the minds of Luke’s readers.<sup>41</sup>

However, Luke’s account of Pentecost leaves little doubt that Jesus’ ascension evokes the Sinai tradition, particularly when the out-pouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4, 33) is considered alongside Peter’s account of Jesus’ ascension (vv. 33-34). Turner comments, ‘If Acts 2 describes the “son of David”, we have to say he appears to go to his enthronement decked out

<sup>36</sup> The corollary is that Spirit reception in Luke is not concerned with cleansing and ability to keep the law nor a foretaste of future salvation. See Menzies *Empowered*, pp. 203f.

<sup>37</sup> See A. J. Köstenberger and P. T. O’Brien, *Salvation to the ends of the Earth* (Leicester: Apollos, 2001), pp. 133-5.

<sup>38</sup> For example, *kerusso* or *euangelizo*.

<sup>39</sup> So Turner, *Power*, p. 272.

<sup>40</sup> M. Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), p. 44.

<sup>41</sup> For example, C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles Vols. I & II* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2004), pp. 111-2; E. Lohse, *pentecoste*, in eds., G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* Vol. VI, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 48-49; I. H. Marshall, ‘The Significance of Pentecost’ *Scottish Journal of Theology* 30 (1977), pp. 347-69, who seems doubtful that this was Luke’s intention, but open to the possibility given that *some* Jewish circles associated Pentecost with the giving of the Law and renewal of the covenant. See also J. R.W. Stott, *The Message of Acts* (Leicester: IVP, 1990), p. 62.

in “Mosaic” regalia and with a Sinai chorus.<sup>42</sup> He asserts that Acts 2:1-13 contains sufficient structural and linguistic points of contact to evoke the Sinai tradition in a Jewish mind - the mysterious noise from heaven, wind and fire, the leader of Israel ascending on high to receive a foundational gift from God, the giving of the gift to the people and the word of God beginning to spread throughout the nations.<sup>43</sup> Just as the Last Supper and Calvary fulfil the Passover, so also Pentecost is inseparable from Sinai and its connotations for life within the redeemed community.<sup>44</sup> This conclusion seems more plausible especially in light of the literary style of Luke’s narrative demonstrating the Isaianic New Exodus motif.<sup>45</sup>

### IMPLICATIONS FOR LUKAN PNEUMATOLOGY

The hidden reality made public by Peter’s address at Pentecost is that the ascended Christ received from the Father the fulfilment of the promised Holy Spirit. Although Acts 2 echoes Moses’ theophanic Sinai experience Pentecost does not signal the transition into the new covenant age as understood by Dunn,<sup>46</sup> but is rather part of the on-going promised end-time salvation for all nations. Three implications for the role of the Spirit in Acts need to be noted.

#### *The Spirit and the Renewed Community*

Wenk<sup>47</sup> has shown how the Acts 2 narrative fulfils the prophecies given in Luke 3:16 and Luke 24:44-49. Continuity with Luke’s first volume<sup>48</sup> enables one to perceive the continuation of Jesus’ liberating ministry be-

<sup>42</sup> Turner, *Power*, p.279, Following L. T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), pp. 46f. who advocates Luke’s deliberate allusion to the giving of Torah and the similarity between 2:33 and 7:38 in reference to Moses.

<sup>43</sup> Turner, *Spirit in Luke-Acts*, p. 91.

<sup>44</sup> See Wenk, pp. 246-51.

<sup>45</sup> The importance and significance of allusion within literature is noted by R. Alter, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age* (London: Norton, 1996) who comments ‘Allusion is not merely a device, like irony, understatement, ellipsis, or repetition, but an essential modality of the language of literature’, p. 111.

<sup>46</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: a Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (London: SCM Press, 1970), p. 38f. understands Jesus’ reception of the Spirit at Jordan as paradigmatic for the disciples at Pentecost in terms of entry into the new covenant age.

<sup>47</sup> Wenk, pp. 232-58.

<sup>48</sup> ‘...all that Jesus began to do and teach’ (Acts 1:1).

gun in Luke 4:16-40 explained in terms of Joel 2:28-32. If so, we ought to expect to find evidence in the Acts narrative. The Spirit is evidently operative amongst believers in a manner apart from simply mission and witness.<sup>49</sup> For example, Menzies overlooks an apparent contrast between the Christian community 'filled with the Spirit' (Acts 4:31) and Ananias who's heart 'Satan has filled' (5:3) and makes only a glancing reference to the summary section in 2:42-47,<sup>50</sup> overlooking the literary features which make it an integral part of the chapter two narrative. However, Luke expresses on a micro-level the pneumatic origins of restoration available to *all* who call on the name of the Lord.

### *The Spirit and Conversion-Initiation*

This concept in itself provides the background for understanding Luke's intention in associating conversion so closely with Spirit-reception in Acts 2:38. Why else would the two be combined, if not to bring about immediate experience of this new exodus salvation? If we are to understand this verse as paradigmatic of the promise of prophetic enabling given to those already converted, then it is surprising that Luke does not emphasise that the new believers were immediately impelled to witness. Although the Acts narrative offers little evidence that believers are expected to receive the Spirit in the context of conversion-initiation there is however less evidence which suggests that the norm is for Spirit reception to be separate from conversion-initiation.

The Samaritan narrative in Acts 8 is allegedly a counter-example used by Menzies to justify that, for Luke, the gift of the Spirit 'is a supplementary gift given to Christians, those who have been incorporated into the community of salvation'.<sup>51</sup> Menzies argues that the solution to the problematic account of Spirit-reception in 8:12-17 is simply to see Luke's consistency. Thus the Samaritans experience the same prophetic endowment as did the disciples in Acts 2,<sup>52</sup> which is given by the laying on of hands. However, nothing in the narrative itself connects the gift with missionary witness.<sup>53</sup> If anything, this passage demonstrates Luke's *inconsistency*.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Acts 5:1-11; 6:3-6; 9:31; 11:28; 13:52; 15:28; 19:21; 20:22-23, 28; 21:4, 11.

<sup>50</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*, p. 258, following Haya-Prats, 'there is no indication that Luke considered the diverse aspects of community life mentioned in this summary...to be the direct result of the Spirit's activity'.

<sup>51</sup> Following the Pentecostal doctrines of separability (the gift of the Spirit is given separate from the grace of the Spirit involved in the forgiveness of sins) and subsequence (the Spirit is granted in this manner, subsequent to 'salvation'), cf. Menzies, *Empowered*, p. 211.

<sup>52</sup> Based on linguistic comparisons with 2:38; 8:15, 17, 19.

<sup>53</sup> Ju Hur, p. 240, fn. 181.

Menzies overlooks the significance of Luke's reaction to the Samaritan situation and subsequent explanation in verse sixteen (*oudepo gar en ep' oudeni auton epipeptokos*). Such a comment is superfluous if Luke thought the norm was for a delay between baptism and Spirit-reception. The point of the narrative is not to justify empowerment for mission subsequent to conversion, but to emphasise the dramatic incorporation of the Samaritans into God's restored community Jews.

Clearly Luke had other intentions in Acts 8 rather than highlighting the gift of the Spirit as a *donum superadditum*. In terms of the overall narrative plot the Samaria incident is portrayed as the fulfilment of the second stage of Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8 demonstrating the historical uniqueness of the Spirit's work at this point.<sup>54</sup> Rather than a repeat of Pentecost the Samaritans enter into the Pentecost event.<sup>55</sup> The fact that Acts 8 represents the absence of the Spirit as anomalous makes it difficult to sustain Pentecostal doctrines of subsequence and separability.

### ***The Spirit and Renewed Prophetic Activity***

Given that the Spirit was sent with the promise that all who call on the name of the Lord will prophesy (Acts 2:17f.) in what sense is the 'new exodus' community to exercise the prophetic gift? Can we say that such individuals as Peter, Stephen and Paul are prophetic types for *all* Spirit-filled Christians as Menzies implies?

We contend that these three individuals demonstrate continuity with Jesus the 'prophet like Moses' (Acts 3:22-26) and are authoritative in their teaching of the Jews and Gentiles.<sup>56</sup> We can also point to other figures who by virtue of their gospel-based exhortation or even title *prophetes*, are no less 'prophetic' but show a different level of authority or prophetic expression, as those filled with Joel's Spirit of prophecy. These include Philip (8:5f.), Barnabas (13:23-24), Agabus (13:28; 21:11), Judas and Silas (15:27, 32) and Philip's daughters (21:9). Elsewhere we notice that gospel

<sup>54</sup> M. Turner, 'Interpreting the Samaritans of Acts 8: The Waterloo of Pentecostal Soteriology and Pneumatology?' *Pneuma* 23:2 (2001), p. 280.

<sup>55</sup> Ferguson, p. 86, cf. Stott, p. 62, who makes relevant comments about 'the Ephesians' in Acts 19: 'They experienced a mini-Pentecost. Better, Pentecost caught up on them. Better still, they were caught up into it, as its promised blessings became theirs', pp. 304-5.

<sup>56</sup> For a recent and comprehensive analysis of the prophetic and other parallels Luke draws between Jesus, Peter, Stephen and Paul see A. C. Clark, *Parallel Lives: The Relation of Paul to the Apostles in the Lucan Perspective* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001), and D. P. Moessner, 'Paul and the Pattern of the Prophet Like Moses' in K. H. Richards, ed., *Society of Biblical Literature 1983 Seminar Papers*, 22 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983).

expansion came as a result of unnamed believers who went about preaching and speaking the word (8:4; 11:19). The implication is that ordinary Christians filled with the Spirit are clearly authoritative in their proclamation of the gospel and exhortation of new converts in the faith.

This prophetic activity indicates that Luke intended to show different levels of prophetic authority, but nonetheless equally derived from the Spirit described in Acts 2:17f. To his credit Menzies is correct in pointing to the church as a community of prophets, but he has not accounted for the fact that equal possession of the Spirit of prophecy does not mean equal rôles and authority. Under the old covenant the temple was the sphere of operation for the prophetic few who mediated the word of God to the people.<sup>57</sup> Yet Jeremiah promised that God would enable *all* his people to know him (Jer. 31:34) under the new covenant just as Moses had wished (Numbers 11:29). Beale helpfully comments,

Joel 2 transforms Moses' prophetic wish into a formal prophecy. Peter quotes Joel's prophecy to show that in his day it was finally being fulfilled in Pentecost. The Spirit's gifts, formerly limited to prophets, kings and priests, usually for service in connection with the temple, are universalized to all God's people from every race, young and old, male and female.<sup>58</sup>

The Acts narrative provides a corrective, not a confirmation of Menzies' proposal.

#### HERMENEUTICS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN NARRATIVE PROGRESSION

In light of the above discussion, a fresh assessment of the Spirit's work in Acts is necessary at least for the following two reasons. Firstly, our expectations of the Spirit's activity in Luke-Acts should not be restricted to, nor emphasised as, empowerment for mission alone. The Holy Spirit is the executive power who accomplishes this (consistent with expectations in intertestamental Jewish literature) as expressed in the narrative of Luke-Acts. Secondly, we need to pay greater attention to Luke-Acts as

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<sup>57</sup> For example, Jeremiah's indictment of Jerusalem's prophets in Jeremiah 23:9-40 indicates by virtue of their *failure* to represent his word to the people, what was in fact required of a prophet serving the people. Verse 22 shows God's requirement of a prophet: 'But if [the prophets] had stood in my counsel, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds.'

<sup>58</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission* NSBT (Leicester: Apollos/IVP, 2004), p. 210.

narrative.<sup>59</sup> This includes paying attention to narrative features and the manner in which the Spirit's character and activity are portrayed. It is to this latter issue that I now turn outlining the rationale behind such an approach, and re-examining the scope and activity of the Spirit of prophecy in Acts.

### *Acts and Hermeneutical Development*

In his appraisal of the current hermeneutical climate amongst biblical scholars, and with particular reference to Luke-Acts, Menzies states,

Pentecostal scholars have seized the opportunity afforded by the new hermeneutical context and raised important questions concerning the nature of Luke's pneumatology (doctrine of the Holy Spirit) and its relationship to that of Paul.<sup>60</sup>

Embedded in this statement is the assumption that Pentecostals have brought us closer to an understanding of the Spirit in Acts because of recent shifts in evangelical hermeneutics. Regarding hermeneutics Menzies rightfully endorses Osbourne's perspective on narrative interpretation who avers,

I oppose the current tendency to deny the theological dimension on the grounds that narrative is indirect rather than direct...narrative is not as direct as didactic material, but it does have a theological point and expects the reader to interact with that message.<sup>61</sup>

Menzies rightly sets out to establish Luke's own theological perspective rooted in his 'narrative' and 'orderly account' (Luke 1:3). However, they make more of Luke's distinctive pneumatology than is warranted by a

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<sup>59</sup> Following B. R. Gaventa, 'Toward a Theology of Acts: Reading and Rereading', *Interpretation* 42:2, (1988), pp. 146-57 and W. S. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993). For example, intertextuality (a text alluding, quoting or echoing another text, e.g. Acts 1:8 and Isaiah 32:15), transtextuality (see Pao, op. cit., for example, the way in which Isaiah 40-55 lingers behind the narrative of Acts 1-8), allusion (Acts 2 and the giving of the covenant at Sinai), summary passages (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37; 9:31 highlighting the community transforming effect of the Spirit). See also D. Marguerat and Y. Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism*, trans. J. Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999).

<sup>60</sup> Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, p.43.

<sup>61</sup> G. R. Osbourne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Guide to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1991), p.78.

narrative reading, relying too much upon redaction criticism. Although Luke presents the Spirit in different terms to Paul and John, the question is whether Luke is so distinctive as to have so little in common with them. This necessarily leads to questions of other Pentecostal conclusions. Does Luke attribute missiological empowering and inspired prophetic witness to the Spirit at the expense of ethical and spiritual edification within the church? Do he and Paul contradict one another? Should all 'Spirit-filled' believers expect the same prophetic gifting as seen in Luke's portrayal of Peter, Paul and Stephen?

### *A Narrative Approach*

The answers to these questions depend largely on the interpretive methodology applied. The most comprehensive attempt to understand Luke's pneumatology from a narrative critical perspective is that of Ju Hur. By careful analysis of the literary repertoire of Luke's Holy Spirit<sup>62</sup> and the narrator's characterisation of the Holy Spirit, he arrives at the same conclusion as Turner. Besides the Spirit's undeniable function of empowering the leading witnesses to carry out God's purposes in a unique way (for example, Acts 1:8; 9:15-19; 13:1-4; 19:21) Ju Hur also notices that as the plot of Luke-Acts develops so do the functions of the Holy Spirit. Thus he concludes,

We also saw, on the one hand, that references to the Spirit function to verify group characters as incorporated into God's people; and on the other, the Spirit is employed in relation to the life-situations of believers in settled communities by granting them charismatic gifts, or comforting and encouraging them or initiating forms of patriarchal leadership<sup>63</sup>.

In other words by categorising the Spirit's activity we discover significant breadth in the Spirit's ministry, rather than one overriding pneumatological emphasis as credited to Luke by Pentecostal Lukan scholarship. The study of the Spirit in Acts reveals narrative complexity such that rather than 'reducing Acts to propositional statements or systematic affirmations'.<sup>64</sup> Luke sustains a variety of elements concerning the Spirit's work not recognised by Pentecostal interpretative frameworks.

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<sup>62</sup> Ju Hur, p. 280 examines *ruah* and *pneuma* in the Jewish Bible and portrays the Spirit's role in the following way: 'giving prophecy or revelatory speeches, miracles, wisdom, craftsmanship and the interpretation of visions-dreams to members of the Israelite communities, and inspiring fidelity to God and social justice among the Israelites'.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

## THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY IN NARRATIVE PROGRESSION: RECEIVING AND TRANSMITTING THE WORD OF GOD

Consideration of Luke's vocabulary describing the bestowal of the Spirit in Acts has recently given rise to a helpful metaphor which views the Spirit's ministry as different currents of the wind blowing through the narrative.<sup>65</sup> Hamilton examines the words describing the bestowal of the Spirit under three categories: the gale of the eschatological Spirit,<sup>66</sup> the constant breeze of the Christian life as full of the Spirit,<sup>67</sup> and the empowering zephyr of special fillings with the Spirit.<sup>68</sup> Hamilton concludes that these categories describe the ministry of the Spirit, but he admits that they do not exhaust the 'song of the Spirit in Acts'.<sup>69</sup>

In what follows I will observe how Luke's presentation of the Spirit of prophecy combines different 'currents' than those categorised by Hamilton. It is the eschatological gift of the *Spirit of prophecy* quoted by Peter in Acts 2 who is active in three distinct but inter-related categories as the narrative of Luke-Acts develops: proclamation and prophecy, conviction and conversion, and edification and ethics.

***Proclamation and Prophecy***

Acts 1-2 highlights both continuity and discontinuity in terms of the Spirit's prophetic enabling before and after Pentecost. Luke uses other characters to refer to the Spirit's work prior to Pentecost such as Peter in Acts 1:16.<sup>70</sup> Peter, *not yet* filled with the Spirit of Pentecost, assumes the role of teacher, and by his reference to the Psalm 69 and 109, reflects how the Spirit under the old covenant spoke through notable persons.

This stands in sharp contrast with Peter's proclamation in 2:14f. concerning the new manner in which the Spirit would work through *all* who called on the name of the Lord. The contrast in the narrative permits the observation that the Spirit was soon no longer to be exclusively the privi-

<sup>65</sup> J. M. Hamilton, Jr., 'Rushing Wind and Organ Music: Toward Luke's Theology of the Spirit in Acts' *RTR* 65:1 (2006), pp. 15-33.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, where the following verbs overlap to describe this aspect of the gift of the Spirit: *didomi* (11:17); *lambano* (8:17); *baptizo* (1:5; 11:16); *eperchomai* (1:8; 19:6); *ekcheo* (2:17-18); *epiipto* (8:16; 10:44).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, where the adjective *pleres* is used with regard to the Spirit (6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24) as well as other states of character (Tabitha in 9:36; Elymas in 13:10) and the verb *pleroo* (13:52).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, where the verb *pimplemi* is employed prior to extraordinary verbal declarations – inspired proclamation of the Gospel (2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17, 20), authoritative denunciation (13:9).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* p.33.

<sup>70</sup> Ju Hur, p. 94.

lege of the prophetic few (cf. Luke 1:67-79; 2:25-38), but the one enabling all to know and proclaim the Lord.

This last point is clearly illustrated on the day of Pentecost. Peter, filled with the Spirit (2:4) rises to address the gathering of Diaspora Jews, and it is the prophetic use of the Scriptures which explains what is going on (Joel 2:28ff.). Peter's use of scripture explains what prophecy and proclamation might look like in this new stage in salvation history, the main clue lies in 2:17f. A note of inclusivism the 'rhetoric of reversal'<sup>71</sup> is sounded by the reference to sons, daughters, young and old men, and male and female servants. Clearly there is something of a fulfilment of Moses' longing that *all* the Lord's people would have the Spirit of prophecy, without exception (Num. 11:29). In addition, the Spirit transforms and enables the unlikeliest of individuals paying no attention to social standing or oracular skill as shown in the response of the crowd in 2:7b: 'are not all these who are speaking *Galileans?*'<sup>72</sup>

Luke gives hints as to how this 'democratisation of the Spirit of prophecy'<sup>73</sup> looks throughout Acts, but we must first distinguish how Luke characterises the Spirit's prophetic work in terms of different levels of authority. Perhaps most striking is the attention given to prominent individual prophetic figures who proclaim the gospel such as Peter,<sup>74</sup> Stephen<sup>75</sup> and Paul.<sup>76</sup> Less conspicuous but no less important is the evidence relating to the church at large who embark on a public ministry of gospel proclamation, thereby fulfilling Joel's prophecy. First, Luke draws attention to the outward prophetic ministry of Spirit-filled believers in terms of bold proclamation of 'the word of God' in 4:31; 8:4 and 11:19. On each of these occasions Luke demonstrates how the word of God was boldly spoken despite or even because of persecution, thus, characterising it as Spirit-inspired prophetic ministry,<sup>77</sup> albeit less prominent than Peter, Stephen and Paul.

<sup>71</sup> Wenk, p. 236.

<sup>72</sup> My emphasis. In addition, the astonishment of the Jewish religious leaders to Peter – 'filled with Holy Spirit' – in 4:8 (cf. v13) is worth noting. They perceived that they were 'uneducated, common men'.

<sup>73</sup> Turner, *Power*, p. 442.

<sup>74</sup> Acts 2:14f.; 3:22-26; 4:8f.; 10:3,11, 34-44.

<sup>75</sup> 6:5; 7:2-53.

<sup>76</sup> 9:17-22; 13:16-41; 17:22-31; 20:18-35; 22:1-21; 24:10-21; 26:12-23.

<sup>77</sup> D. Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 121 says 'the work of the Spirit is essentially a work of the Word, which places Christians in the line of the prophets'; similarly, J. Jervell, 'Sons of the Prophets: The Holy

Secondly, we are given various insights into the kind of prophetic activity undertaken *within* the church by certain individuals. The use of the title *prophetai* is rare and attributed only to certain individuals,<sup>78</sup> suggesting that it ought to be seen as one office of the corporate 'prophesying' ministry foretold by Joel in Acts 2. It is first attributed to Agabus who gives an inspired prediction in 11:28 by the Spirit concerning an impending famine, before reappearing in Caesarea in 21:10. As Stott<sup>79</sup> notes, however, the focus in 11:28-30 is more upon the response to the prophecy to send relief, than the prophecy's fulfilment. The Spirit is therefore understood primarily as edifying the church through Agabus' indication of a future event (*esemanen dia tou pneumatos*).

In Agabus' second appearance we face the question of whether the Spirit distributes contradictory insight to Paul (19:21; 20:22-3), the Tyrian disciples (21:4) and Agabus (21:10-11). The tension is resolved when we see 21:4 as the Spirit consistently revealing Paul's impending hardships to the disciples just as he had done so to Paul and Agabus. Hur<sup>80</sup> points out that in 21:4 (cf. 21:11, 8:29; 13:2) the narrator reports the disciple's *interpretation* of Paul's persecution rather than the Spirit's direct speech, which is perhaps why this prompting of the Spirit seems incongruous with the other texts. Also, knowing as we do from verse twelve the extent and validity of the disciples' concern for Paul we can conclude that, far from exercising mere 'human concern'<sup>81</sup> the Spirit inspired such a love for Paul that their anxiety could not be restrained.

There is nothing extraordinary in what the Spirit is doing at this point in the narrative. Rather, the Spirit prompts Paul's obedience (20:22), makes him aware of his calling (20:23), and inspires a deep love and loyalty towards a fellow brother (21:4, 11-12). As Shepherd and Moessner argue<sup>82</sup> such a call reflects the prophetic pattern Luke uses in his narrative of Jesus, regarding the prophet's obedience in going to Jerusalem to suffer and die (cf. Lk. 11:49-51; 13:33-34). I conclude therefore that the enabling of the Spirit of prophecy in Acts 20-21 is that of making known and applying (albeit graphically in Agabus' case) what has been established as a

Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles' in *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), pp. 96-121.

<sup>78</sup> 11:27, 13:1; 15:32 and 21:9-10.

<sup>79</sup> Stott, pp. 205-6.

<sup>80</sup> As in Acts 21:11, cf. 8:29; 13:2, Ju Hur, p. 265.

<sup>81</sup> Barrett, p. 990.

<sup>82</sup> W. H. Shepherd, Jr., *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts* SBLDS, 147 (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1994), pp. 237-8; D. P. Moessner, pp. 203-12.

biblical precedent.<sup>83</sup> In this instance Luke describes what Paul's prophetic ministry will involve upon arrival in Jerusalem.

The ministry of Judas and Silas in 15:32 (*autoi prophetai ontes*) supports this view. That these 'leading men' (15:22) have a prophetic ministry is unquestionable. The issue is rather the precise nature of this ministry.<sup>84</sup> Their task (v. 27) is simply to spell out in their own words (*autous dia logou apangellontas*) 'the things' (*ta auta*) contained in the apostolic decree, notably the need to abstain from idolatrous pollutions (v. 29). Following their arrival in Antioch it seems logical to take their prophetic ministry (v. 32) as the task of encouraging the Gentile believers in their quest to abstain from these practices. The 'many words' (*logou pollou*, v. 32b) surely consist of guidance and wisdom in applying the decree given by exhortation. This then is another example of what a Spirit-empowered prophetic ministry looks like for Luke and in summary, we see the Spirit's activity through a designated 'prophetic ministry' is understood as inseparable from the apostolic word (15:27) and the edification of the church (15:32-33).

### ***Conviction and Conversion***

Having argued that the Lukan Spirit is defined as Christ's executive in applying the benefits of salvation and the restoration of Israel, we assume that when the narrative describes the Spirit coming at conversion, Luke actually implies more than simply forgiveness and assurance of final salvation.<sup>85</sup> The Spirit's work before and at conversion is seen implicitly in the Acts narrative. Acts 2:38-39 indicates that Spirit-reception, for Luke, is normally<sup>86</sup> in the context of repentance and conversion and is therefore not a subsequent gift of missiological empowerment. Similarly, Peter's address to those who witnessed the healing of the lame man also issues

<sup>83</sup> See Luke 13:34 for Jesus' analysis of how Jerusalem treats the Lord's prophets.

<sup>84</sup> Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology With Special Reference to Luke-Acts*, JSNTS 54 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), p.224 (fn 2) associates all references to prophetic activity in Acts with the mission of the church. However, as 'prophets', Judas and Silas clearly exercise their prophetic gift in a teaching context *within* the church.

<sup>85</sup> Following Turner, *Power*, pp. 346-7 (contra Menzies *Empowered*, pp. 276-279). This is not to say that Luke minimises the forgiveness of sins (for example) – see Luke 1:77, where knowledge of salvation is seen 'in the forgiveness of sins'.

<sup>86</sup> Admittedly 2:38 does not give a precise order of salvation, for the accounts of mass and individual conversions in Acts 2 and 8-10 are at odds with this pattern (notably 10:44-48).

in a call to repentance (3:19-20). Here Luke indicates the connection between conversion and 'times of refreshment' by the purpose construction (*hopos*) which, given the context and literary link with 2:38, suggests that the gift of the Spirit is commensurate with such refreshment.

As already discussed above, both Acts 10:43-44 and 11:17-18 suggest the norm of the Spirit's coming at conversion. Inasmuch as 11:17 identifies the experience of the apostles with the events of 10:44 I disagree with Hamilton's interpretation that 'the Spirit falls upon the Gentiles at Cornelius' house *after* they believed'.<sup>87</sup> The participle *pisteusasin* (11:17) is best interpreted by events in 10:44 to mean 'when we believed' rather than 'having believed'.<sup>88</sup> The genitive absolute construction in 10:44 implies that it was *as* Peter was speaking that the Spirit fell upon them, not after. Additionally, 11:17 seems primarily about Peter's attempt to convince the Jerusalem church of the *fact* of God's approval of the Gentiles by giving them the Spirit (cf. 15:8), not the *timing* of it, which in any case seems clear enough from 10:44.

Despite this evidence it is not necessary to assume the Spirit is inactive *prior* to conversion.<sup>89</sup> A reasonable case can be built to suggest that the narrative implies the Spirit is at work in individual hearts prior to conversion. Given the inseparability of the word and Spirit and the response of the crowd to Peter's Pentecost address it is logical to assume that the Spirit aroused such a response prior to their conversion in 2:41. It is by the Spirit-inspired prophetic words of Peter's sermon that his hearers' hearts are exposed (2:37). Luke therefore implies what John explicitly states in his gospel (John 16:8) that the Spirit convicts of sin and righteousness. Luke is more emphatic about the Spirit's prevenient work when he describes Stephen's indictment of the Sanhedrin following his speech in 7:51. Their habitual resistance of the Spirit (*aei to pneumati to hagio antiptete*)<sup>90</sup> augments what the preceding narrative has highlighted already as both serious (5:3, 9) and futile (6:10).<sup>91</sup> To resist the word is to resist the Spirit. The implication is that the Spirit has the power to bring about both *rejection* of the gospel for the hard-hearted (7:51), but *reception* of the gospel for others (Acts 2:37).

<sup>87</sup> Hamilton, p. 23.

<sup>88</sup> See D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), p. 624.

<sup>89</sup> Even though Luke nowhere says anything such as 'the Spirit opened their hearts' for instance, but ascribes 'Jesus' (5:31), 'God' (11:18; 14:27); 'Lord' (16:14) as active in bringing conversion/repentance.

<sup>90</sup> Literally, 'constantly, the Holy Spirit you resist', cf. Isa. 63:10.

<sup>91</sup> F. S. Spencer, *Journeying Through Acts: a Literary-Cultural Reading* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), p. 90.

*Edification and Ethics*

There are different occasions in Acts where Luke draws attention to the Spirit as forming and building up God's people. We can speak of this as edification or 'temple-building' by the Spirit. Acts 2:4 is certainly suggestive of a new Sinai theophany and Beale<sup>92</sup> argues that because Sinai was a prototype of the 'temple',<sup>93</sup> so the theophany at Pentecost indicates 'the irrupting of a newly emerging temple in the midst of the old Jerusalem temple that was passing away'.<sup>94</sup>

Not only does the dwelling of God, by his Spirit amongst his people redefine the administration of prophecy it makes the parameters for holy living more immediate and less remote. This is demonstrated in the episodes concerning the life of the church following Pentecost in addition to other indications Luke gives as to how the Spirit builds the new temple.<sup>95</sup>

The starkest example of this is the Spirit's role in Acts 5:1-11. Luke makes the striking contrast with the Spirit-filled church community in 4:31-37 repeating key phrases.<sup>96</sup> Despite Peter's centrality in the narrative, the offence of Ananias and Sapphira is not primarily directed at the

<sup>92</sup> Beale, pp. 105-6 provides the following reasons: (i) Sinai as 'the mountain of God' (Ex. 3:1; 18:5; 24:13) is synonymous with 'house of God' (cf. Isa. 2:2; Mic. 4:2). (ii) Mount Sinai was divided into three sections of increasing sanctity just the tabernacle and temple were – Israelites at the foot of the mountain (Ex. 19:12, 23), the priests and seventy elders allowed on the mountain (Ex. 19:22; 24:1) and Moses alone could ascend the mountain (Ex. 24:2). (iii) Sinai was the place where God's theophanic 'cloud' and presence 'dwelt' (Ex. 24:15-17) as was the tabernacle (Ex. 40:35; Num. 9:17-18) and the temple (1 Kgs 8:12-13).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Beale points to the following evidence for Pentecost as marking the dawning of the church as the new temple-dwelling place of the Spirit. He points to Exodus 40:34 where following Moses' construction of the tabernacle, the 'glory-cloud' descended and filled it. Similarly, when Solomon finishes the temple (1 Kgs. 8:6-13) the same events take place. The parallel to the 1 Kings 8 text in 2 Chronicles 7:1 is even stronger with Pentecost: '*fire came down from heaven...and the glory of the Lord filled the house...and they...gave praise to the Lord.*' Acts 2:11 records the onlookers saying, 'we hear them speaking...of the mighty deeds of God', pp. 204, 211-2.

<sup>95</sup> Not only so, but this provides another reason to draw similarity between Lukan and Pauline pneumatology, See Ephesians 2:18-22.

<sup>96</sup> R. C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: a Literary Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984), p. 79, for example, selling property – 4:37 & 5:1; laying money at the apostles' feet – 4:35,37 & 5:2. It is interesting to note how in 4:31 the disciples are 'filled' (*eplesthesan*) with the Holy Spirit, but in 5:3 Satan has 'filled' (*eplerosen*) Ananias' heart.

church's leadership, nor those gathered in general, but at the Spirit who builds the community. Marguerat comments: 'Ananias and Sapphira have not sinned against morality, but against the Spirit in his function of constructing unity.'<sup>97</sup> The prophetic exposure of deceptive hearts and death penalty seems indicative of the standards God has always had for his temple reinforcing the way that horizontal relationships amongst God's people affect the vertical relationship to God. To lie in the community of the church is to offend the Spirit of God himself.

Luke highlights Spirit-reception as the grounds of preserving unity at another point of conflict and disunity in the church (15:1-2, 5, 7). At the previous assembly in Jerusalem in Acts 11 Peter reported that the Spirit told him to go to Caesarea 'making no distinction' (v. 12). Therefore Luke makes sure that both 'Gentiles' (11:12, 17-18; cf. 8:14-17) and 'Jews' (15:8-9) know that the Holy Spirit himself provides divinely-sanctioned solidarity.

Related to the church's holiness and unity is the role of the Spirit in guidance, but space only allows for brief comment on the high point of the Acts narrative – the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15).<sup>98</sup> The issue at hand was the Jerusalem church's response to God's acceptance of the Gentiles, through faith by grace, apart from circumcision (15:1-21). Luke leaves the reader in little doubt that unity was established between Jerusalem and Antioch via the deliberations of men, with the assurance of the Holy Spirit. Variations on the verb 'to consider' (*dokeo* in vv. 22, 25 and 28) illustrate the pattern of guidance amongst the apostles. In 15:28 Luke asserts that it was the Holy Spirit in particular who bought unity of mind. Such guidance came as a result of deliberation upon the divine pattern of mission (v. 8f.), evaluation of Scripture (vv. 15-17) and subsequent corporate musings (vv. 22, 25). The narrative flow therefore cuts against a purely 'Spirit-led' form of guidance, maintaining that the Spirit is the one who brings united conviction on pastoral matters.

In two other passages Luke indicates how the Spirit oversees the church's leadership, a matter of critical importance during the establishment of Christian communities. The first mention is in 6:3 where the Jerusalem church's growth called for leadership of exceptional spiritual quality (cf. 11:24).<sup>99</sup> Such Spirit-endowed wisdom facilitated the application

<sup>97</sup> Marguerat, p. 123.

<sup>98</sup> In what follows, I am indebted to Rev. Prof. David Peterson for his insights on 'guidance' at the Jerusalem Council (in lectures given on Acts 15 on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2006 at Oak Hill Theological College, London).

<sup>99</sup> Turner, *Power*, pp. 165-9 argues that for Luke the term 'full of' (*plereis* + subjective genitive of quality) often denotes a 'long term state of affairs' (cf. Lk. 4:1; 5:12; Acts 6:5, 8; 7:55; 9:36; 11:24). Used with the Spirit, we understand it

of the Gospel pastorally within the day-to-day praxis of the church. Later in 20:28 Paul declares that the Holy Spirit legitimated the appointment of overseers in the Ephesian church. Not only so, but the Spirit appoints leaders in order that they might 'shepherd' God's flock. The implication is clear: leaders minister on the basis that the Spirit has appointed them with the primary interest that they teach and nurture the church, guarding against false teaching (cf. vv. 29-30). Wenk puts it succinctly, 'It is doubtful that [the Spirit] can even be restricted to empowerment for ministry. It seems rather that the Spirit placed elders as overseers over the flock *for the wellbeing of the community*.'<sup>100</sup>

Chapter 9:31 is perhaps the clearest example of Luke's association of the Spirit with the church's edification. Regarding this verse Menzies argues that 'Prophetic inspiration in Acts is always given principally for the benefit of others (not the recipient of the Spirit) and ultimately for the expansion of the church.'<sup>101</sup> Yet this conclusion is unsatisfactory. The growth attributed to the *parakleseis tou hagiou pneumatos* manifest in the Church is more likely a secondary effect. Undoubtedly a church walking in the fear of the Lord, exhibiting peace and encouragement attracts converts (9:31), but as in 5:1-11, Luke's focus is clearly on the inner life of the church. Whatever form this comfort by the Holy Spirit took it would most likely have been mediated through a teaching ministry not unlike that ascribed to Judas and Silas in Acts 15:31-32 who also encouraged (*parekalesan*, 15:31-32) the brothers in Antioch.

#### THE SPIRIT AND MISSION: WHITHER THE GIFT OF MISSIOLOGICAL POWER?

That the Holy Spirit in Acts empowers the mission of the early church is undisputed both by Luke<sup>102</sup> and many scholars writing throughout the modern missionary movement.<sup>103</sup> However, when the overall thrust of the

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to mean there is exceptional (not extraordinary) evidence of the Spirit's gifts and graces over a period of time. This is contrasted with the passive 'being filled with' (*pimplemi* + genitive) indicating Spirit-prompted manifestations of shorter duration (Lk. 1:15; Acts 2:4; 4:31; 9:17).

<sup>100</sup> Wenk, p. 287 (fn. 42) (my emphasis).

<sup>101</sup> Menzies, *Empowered*, p.187, fn 4.

<sup>102</sup> Numerous texts in Acts associate enabling for missionary activity and the evangelistic growth of the church as inextricably linked to the Spirit: for example, 1:8; 2:4f.; 4:31; 8:29, 39; 9:17-20, 31; 10:19; 11:12, 16-17; 13:4; 16:6; 20:22-3.

<sup>103</sup> R. Allen, 'Pentecost and the World: The Revelation of the Holy Spirit in the "Acts of the Apostles"' (1917) reprinted in D. M. Paton (ed.), *The Ministry of*

church's mission in Acts is considered we are bound to conclude that, for Luke, the emphasis lies on the uniting of Jew and Gentile as the restored people of God and the subsequent inauguration and sanction of mission to both.

In terms of the missionary-theology of Acts Robert Wall contends that Acts 15 explains retrospectively (vv. 8-9) and prospectively (vv. 19, 28, 35) how God's mission has and will advance.<sup>104</sup> These two watershed moments in the 'mission' of the church are both interpreted by Scripture to demonstrate and justify the movement of God's universal salvation from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth in accordance with Jesus' programmatic statement in Acts 1:8. With respect to Acts 15 Wall comments,

For the first time in Acts the theological principle is explicated that non-Jews may be enrolled among the people of God. James now appeals to another Scripture (Amos 9:11-12) to explain that...Gentile conversion does not annul God's promise of a restored and redeemed Israel, but rather expands it.<sup>105</sup>

What is significant for this paper is that twice the Spirit is mentioned in relation to this Gentile mission – first as the divine sign of approval of the Gentiles (vv. 7-9) and second as divine approval to the church as to the way forward (v. 28). Thus, in keeping with the Jerusalem Council's evaluation of God's plan of salvation in incorporating Gentiles, we note other instances of the 'divine frame of reference' at crucial points of the narrative, verifying the mission to the non-Jews.<sup>106</sup> These include an angel of the Lord,<sup>107</sup> heavenly voices<sup>108</sup> and visions with divine ori-

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*the Holy Spirit: Selected Writings of Roland Allen* (London: World Dominion Press, rev. edn., 1965); G. W. H. Lampe, 'The Holy Spirit in the Writings of St. Luke' in D. E. Nineham, ed., *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955) and H. R. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975). In recent years works such as C. D. McConnell, ed., *The Holy Spirit and Mission Dynamics*, Evangelical Missiological Society Series Number 5 (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1997); M. W. Dempster, B. D. Klaus & D. Petersen, eds., *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999); A. H. Anderson & W. J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostals after a Century* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

<sup>104</sup> R. Wall, 'Israel and the Gentile Mission in Acts and Paul: A Canonical Approach', in Marshall & Peterson, eds., *Witness to the Gospel: the Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), p. 441.

<sup>105</sup> Wall, pp. 449-50.

<sup>106</sup> Ju Hur, p. 283 (fn. 9).

<sup>107</sup> Acts 8:26; 10:3; 27:23.

<sup>108</sup> Acts 10:13, 15; 11:7, 9.

gins.<sup>109</sup> Combining this theme of the new people of God together with the question of the ministry of the Spirit in Acts, we see that the primary mission motif associated with the Spirit is not empowering for witness (though it is certainly there), but the Spirit who incorporates and legitimises non-Jews into God's eschatological people. Luke has consciously characterised the Holy Spirit to make this point more clearly in the narrative, as Ju Hur comments: 'the Spirit's direct speeches and actions *are noticeably highlighted in relation to the witness-mission to non-Jews*.'<sup>110</sup> Whether this is intentional by Luke or not it certainly emphasises for the reader how the Spirit prompts and oversees the inclusion of Gentiles into restored Israel. The great out-pouring of the Spirit to Jews on the day of Pentecost is matched by Luke's portrayal of the Spirit as the possession of the Gentiles too.

### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

This overview of the Acts narrative shows a composite and cumulative picture of the Spirit much needed in today's churches. An appreciation of the broader contours of Luke's narrative demonstrates that the gift of the Spirit is given both to intensify knowledge of Christ and his purposes for the church as well as empower the communication of the apostolic witness. The Pentecostal reading is untenable if it argues that the Spirit comes subsequent to conversion and/or primarily for the sake of empowering the church's witness. If some scholars are prone to reading Pauline theology into Luke's narrative, it seems that the Pentecostal tendency is to read missiological empowering into all Spirit-related texts.

In terms of the relationship of the Spirit to mission I conclude that in light of the narrative flow and significance of Acts 2 and 15 Luke's emphasis is upon the Spirit as the one who initiates and verifies the mission to the Gentiles and their inclusion into restored Israel. Therefore, we cannot appreciate the Spirit of mission and the notion of 'empowerment for witness' until we have first considered the Spirit who unites people across the greatest of social divides to be God's restored people. It is as the Spirit exercises dynamic and transforming power within the church that he helps God's people fulfil the Old Testament promises to be a light to the nations.

The following propositions seek to safe-guard against the polarisation of views described in the introduction. Luke is an artist as well as theologian-historian. We must therefore appreciate the different currents

<sup>109</sup> Acts 10:3, 17, 19; 11:5; 16:9, 10; 23:11.

<sup>110</sup> Emphasis, mine. See also 10:19; 11:12; 13:2-4; 15:28; 16:6-7; 19:21; cf. 8:29, 39.

blowing from the one wind of the Spirit. The evidence of the Spirit's ministry should be felt in the following ways:

***Enablement of all believers to know and proclaim the Lord***

The Spirit is sent to effect and deepen knowledge of the Lord. Though the Spirit may provide a special equipping for particular tasks or circumstances<sup>111</sup> it is not separate from the one gift given at conversion. There is no special class of spiritually-gifted Christians. The ascended Jesus makes himself known to *all* through the Spirit's ministry and gifts enabling *all* believers to make known the ways of the Lord.

***Temple transformation as well as empowerment***

The Spirit not only imparts wisdom and knowledge, but effects change in the life of God's church – the temple, on a corporate level as well as individually. For example, shared conviction of sin as prophetic words confront hearts and minds,<sup>112</sup> the incorporation of outsiders,<sup>113</sup> the extravagance of financial stewardship,<sup>114</sup> and fellowship across all social classes and genders<sup>115</sup> exemplify the transformation and ethical imperative effected by the Spirit. It is curious that Menzies does not recognise this dynamic given the proliferation of social change implemented by Pentecostalism across the globe.<sup>116</sup> In this respect the Spirit in Acts challenges individualistic complacency and urges a deeper sense of solidarity amongst believers.

***Preservation of a holy church and united mission***

The Spirit does not tolerate the flouting of God's holy standards.<sup>117</sup> By purifying the church the Spirit preserves unity and humility within congregations.<sup>118</sup> At another level the gift of the Spirit and not the law is the identity marker for belonging to the community of faith, bringing oneness of heart and soul.<sup>119</sup> When the church slips into discrimination or prejudice the note of Acts 15:9a needs to be sounded. With thoughtful delibera-

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<sup>111</sup> Hamilton, pp. 29-32.

<sup>112</sup> Acts 2:37; 5:1-11; 6:10; 8:12; 13:9f.

<sup>113</sup> In particular the conversion stories of Acts 8-11 including the Samaritans (Acts 8:5f. cf. Luke 9:51-53), the Ethiopian Eunuch (cf. Deut. 23:1-9), Saul (Acts 8:1; 9:1) and Cornelius (Acts 10:34).

<sup>114</sup> Acts 2:45; 4:32, 34-37; 11:29; 20:35.

<sup>115</sup> Acts 10:48; 11:3; 15:1-35; 16:15.

<sup>116</sup> For example, Anderson and Hollenweger, *Pentecostals*, pp. 89-107.

<sup>117</sup> Acts 5:3, 9.

<sup>118</sup> Acts 5:11.

<sup>119</sup> Acts 2:44; 4:32.

## THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN ACTS

tion of gospel principles and reflection on the imperatives of Scripture the Spirit brings unity across the most diverse denominations and traditions and unites missions to different people groups.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> For example, the unity forged between the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch in Acts 15:1-35.