

Eastern Pneumatology

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Eastern Orthodoxy can be expressed in one word: *theism*. The purpose and meaning of life is to become more like God. Deification is pursued by all means of human existence. This quest for divine likeness often includes the typical for the Eastern Church, speculation on the divinity and humanity of Christ, traditions on the doctrine of the Trinity and non-traditional mystical experiences. They appear in the context of both physical and spiritual characteristics in individual and corporate ecclesiastical environment. The role of the Spirit in the process of deification is threefold and involves: creation, re-creation and theism.

Eastern Pneumatology follows the graduate process of theism development. The Spirit is involved in the original creation of the world as well as the new-birth experience. His work however, does not end there, but continues throughout the process of personal deification of the believer.¹

The emphasis of Eastern pneumatological deification is the relationship between the Christian individual and the Holy Spirit as agents of the visible and invisible worlds. This association is reached through a continuing process of deep-devotional prayer, severe fasting and self-denying asceticism, resulting in an enlightening mystical experience, accompanied by the individual's denial of self and world and faithful dedication to God.

¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on Canticles*, in Herbert Musurillo trans., *From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 190.

The variety of spiritual experiences in the deification process can be categorized in three main groups. The first category focuses on the “sensory perception” of the Spirit. This includes experiencing the Spirit as vision of bright light, extraordinary feeling of “untold ecstasy” and even a sweet smell.² This category includes experiences through a long stretch of time from Pseudo-Macarius (ca. 300–ca. 390) to Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022). The second category argues that the Spirit can be experienced only intellectually in a high level of understanding and knowledge that is not limited by the human mind’s perceptions of reality. This experience is defined and defended by Evagrius Ponticus.³ Maximus developed the third experiential category, the Confessor (ca. 580-662). It claims that God, as light, can be experienced only in the uttermost darkness where all other created light disappears and only God’s light remains true.⁴

Prayer is a central and essential part of the above experiences. Without prayer one is not prepared to experience the Spirit, neither is he ready to understand and recognize the power and existence of the divine. Gregory Palamas (XIV c.) further claims that such understanding and recognition leads to an experience, which “transfigures the whole human body after the pattern of Christ’s own transfiguration.”⁵ Supernatural miracles, spiritual gifts, knowledge and wisdom are often the reflection of such an experience in one’s life. Such an experience of deep emotional state in a mystical context evolves into a total dependence on divine direction, as a replica of Christ’s obedience.

² John Cassian, *Collationes* 4.5, PL 49:col. 589.

³ Alphonsi Mangana, *Woodbrooke Studies 7, Early Christian Mystics* (Cambridge: W. Huffer and Sons, 1934), 71.

⁴ Stanley M. Burgess, *The Holy Spirit: Eastern Christian Tradition* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 1989), 4.

⁵ Burgess, 5.

The Orthodox Church before AD 1054

The experiencing of the Spirit in this period is characterized with the existence of spiritual gifts, the quest for spiritual knowledge and an experiencing of the kingdom of God. Beside attempts to explain the nature and existence of the Trinity, the ecclesiastical writings contain passages on sin and prayer (John Cassian), creation and re-creation (Maximus the Confessor). The main focus in this context remains on the mystical experiencing of the Spirit. A motto statement of this era is the expression of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagate that “God can be approached experientially beyond the bounds of sense perception and reason.”⁶

From a similar perspective John Cassian believed that spiritual knowledge comes only through the presence of the Holy Spirit.⁷ It is a result of one’s inflammation with the desire to possess the wisdom of God. This search for spiritual knowledge is accompanied by a personal quest for ethical and practical knowledge. The process contains one’s deliverance from the evil of the world and humility of heart as the fruit of the Spirit.⁸

The fruit of the Spirit is the context in which the gifts of the Spirit operate. They are not a product of one’s efforts, but rather acts of God’s grace. Cassian divides the list of existing spiritual gifts in three categories: (1) gifts of healing, (2) gifts for ecclesiastical edification and (3) gifts contrived by deceiving devils.⁹ The latter probably resembles a problem with false teachers and false prophets experienced within the Eastern Church of the late third and early fourth centuries.

⁶ Burgess, 38.

⁷ *Conf.* 14.16, NPF 2nd Series 11:444.

⁸ Colm Luibhead, *John Cassian: Confences*, CWS (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 14.10, NPF 2nd Series 11:440.

⁹ *Conf.* 15.1, NPF 2nd Series 11:445-46.

Cassian further claims that the spiritual gifts are given for a season, after which only love continues.¹⁰ Yet, on the other hand, he reports the experiencing and practice of spiritual gifts in his time.¹¹ It seems appropriate to assume that Cassian did believe in the operation of spiritual gifts not only through the apostolic time, but also in his own time. Thus, his postulation for the disappearance of the Spiritual gifts refers to a rather latter period when the church will not be present in the world any longer and spiritual gifts will not be needed in the context of the Kingdom of God. Love, however, will remain.

Another writer who focuses on the nature and the existence of the Kingdom of God is Maximus the Confessor (ca.580-662). Maximus was born and lived in the aristocratic circles of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. He was exiled in Thrace for opposing the heresies of monotheletism and monoenergism.¹²

In the pneumatological context of his claims, he assumed that the kingdom of God is the Holy Spirit. He proves the former by an interesting analogy between the kingdom, where God dwells, and the temple of the Spirit, which are the Christians. The spiritual temple is consisted only of the believers who have rejected evil and thus have accepted the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit.¹³ Since they have the kingdom of God inside of them, Maximus concludes that the Spirit and the Kingdom are identical equivalents.

The Kingdom of God, according to Maximus, is realized only in a state of continues prayer. It is only then, that the mind departs from all human knowledge and worldly ideas. Separated from all human perceptions, one receives understanding of God,

¹⁰ *Conf.* 1.11, NPF 2nd Series 11:299-300.

¹¹ *Conf.* 15.4-5, NPF 2nd Series 11:447.

¹² Burgess, 40.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 44.

but “only without the human senses.”¹⁴ This state is an ecstasy in which one abides in God in a complete, but rather momentary deification.¹⁵ The eternal deification is preserved for the ones who maintain a righteous life, and is reached only in the eternal union with the Trinity.¹⁶

The process and act of deification is described as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit by another systematic writer of this early period, by the name of Symeon the New Theologian. Burgess describes Symeon as the most mystical writer in description of his personal pneumatic experience.¹⁷ The New Theologian, claims that baptism of the Spirit opens the door for a continuous *theosis*. Thus, deification is impossible apart from the spiritual baptism.¹⁸ Denial of the fact that the Spirit baptism and deification cannot be experienced today is blasphemy or unforgivable sin.¹⁹ In this context, one can be neither saved, nor deified without the baptism of the Spirit.

Furthermore, the baptism of the Spirit is received only after extensive process of preparation and purification, which comes close to our modern-day, Pentecostal understanding of sanctification. During this process, one grows in meekness and humility, being aware of his/her sins.²⁰ The final stage involves purification with many tears, without which no one can receive the Holy Spirit.²¹ Symeon understands the above process of the baptism with the Holy Spirit as a return to a radical living of the Gospel in analogue to the primitivism of the first century Church.²²

¹⁴ Ambigua 10, PG 90:col. 1113.

¹⁵ Ambigua 7, PG 90:col. 1076.

¹⁶ Ambigua 10, PG 90:col. 1196.

¹⁷ Burgess, 38.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁹ Disc. 33.3-5, 341-43.

²⁰ TGP 3.23, 87.

²¹ Disc. 3329.5, 313.

²² Burgess, 62.

The Orthodox Church after AD 1054

The development of Pneumatism, in this latter period, is directly linked to three major political processes in Eastern Europe. The first one was the schism of 1054, after which the unity of the Church would never be the same. The ecclesiastical division, which is based more on the political situation than doctrinal differences officially completed a separation, which had started centuries ago.

The second one includes the mission to the Slavs. What Burgess²³ fails to mention is the fact that the brothers Cyril and Methodius were born in a wealthy Bulgarian family and sent to Thessalonica to be educated early in their lives. After extensive study and research, they were able to invent an alphabetic structure called Glagolitza, which was the first Slavic alphabet. This success was dated as early as 881-882 A.D. Their work was not left unnoted by King Boris I, under who Bulgaria had adopted Christianity twenty years earlier in 863 A.D.²⁴

Thus, the work of “Thessalonica brothers,” as they are often called in the Bulgarian tradition, was not only “a great missionary effort,” as Burgess claims, but also rather a patriotic and nationalistic return to their roots in an attempt to adjust Greek ecclesiastical tradition to the needs of Slavs and Bulgarians. Their revolutionary plan included the formation of the Slavic alphabet, which was to be used as an instrument to translate, write and distribute liturgical literature in the language spoken by the Slavs in the land of Bulgaria. With this they not only fulfilled their original purpose, to limit the Greek influence on the Bulgarian Church, but also became a steppingstone in the development of the Bulgarian culture by the means of the written literature.

²³ Burgess, 67.

²⁴ Milcho Lalkov, *Rulers of Bulgaria* (Sofia: Kibea Publishing Co., 1995), 21.

The last major conflict was the invasion of the united Islamic armies to the Balkans. The Turks were cruel and in their aggression. In a typical Oriental model, their purpose was not only to conquer, but also to exploit the conquered lands. In their attempt to do so, they did not stop to only physical conquest, but attempted to change the culture, religion, customs, ethnos and national belonging of the conquered nations. Thus, preserving Eastern Christianity and Orthodox liturgical practices became the means of survival for the Balkan nations.

The focus in the writings of this period's pneumatologists is the idea of representation of the Holy Spirit as energy. This belief is so extreme that it leads to the conviction that divine energy is present even at the graves of dead saints.²⁵ This is in continuation with some of preceding writings from the pre-schism period.

Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) is a major example of this link with the past and preservation of the pneumatic experience. Living in the very beginning of the Turkish conquest over the Balkans and great political changes, Palamas wrote that the only way to know God is through an inner change, a transfiguration done only by the Spirit of God.²⁶

This act is the initiation of deification. The Holy Spirit is viewed as light in the process of edifying the church.²⁷ The believers are instruments in the hands of God.²⁸ They are led by the Spirit through the means of the spiritual gifts, which Palamas reports as possible and active in his days. He further lists three different categories of gifts: word

²⁵ Carmino J. deCatanzaro, *Nicholas Cabasilas: The Life of Christ* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 106-7.

²⁶ Burgess, 71.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ John Meyendorff: *Gregory Palamas: The Triads* (Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1983), 88.

of instruction, healing and miracles. The gifts are obtained only through “intense mental prayer.” Laying on of hands, after the example of the apostle Paul, is also required.²⁹

At the same historical moment, similar position is supported by Nicholas Cabasilas (1320-1371). While differs from Symeon the New Theologian, that there’s a special experience outside of the established sacraments, Cabasilas reports the practice of spiritual gifts.³⁰ He also claims that gifts are signs for the power of God being active in the world. The church is to partake into the gifts and enjoy the presence of the Holy Spirit.³¹

Palamas’ prime mystical focus, however, is on the essence and energies of the Holy Spirit. He claims that God is known through energies, and not essence.³² Similar position is taken by Irenaeus³³ and Athenagoras³⁴ as early as the second century. Basil,³⁵ Gregory of Nissa,³⁶ and later on Pseudo-Dionisius³⁷ and Maximius the Confessor³⁸ also distinguish understanding of God between energy and essence. Thus, through this position, Palamas becomes a preserver of centuries of theological research and experience, and provides a link with the doctrinal past of the early Eastern Church.

Seraphim Sarov has a similar role. Sarov lives in the later part of this period in eighteenth century feudal Russia. Although, his surrounding is primarily monastic, limited by Eastern sacramental tradition and severe ascethism, his experiences are of intense mystical nature and divine inspiration. For Sarov, the purpose of Christian life is

²⁹ Ibid., 52-53.

³⁰ Burgess, 77.

³¹ deCatanzaro, 107.

³² Ibid, 77-111.

³³ *Fragment 5*, PG 7:col. 1232.

³⁴ *On the Resurrection 1*.

³⁵ *Letter 234*, PG 32:col. 869.

³⁶ *Against Eunomius 12* PG 14:col. 960.

³⁷ *On the Divine Names 2.7*, PG 3:col. 645.

“acquisition” of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ The Spirit is to be acquired as “a financial reserve,” which is done through prayer and is available to both monks and laity.

Both the idea of financial reserve and equality between clergy and laity are definitely reflect on the present situation in Russia during the time of Sarov. While the former is clearly a reflection on the economical crises in the monarchy, the latter reflects on the structural, hierarchical crisis of the Russian church. The above ideas are both prophetic and revolutionary, especially viewed in the context of the Bolshevik Revolution, which follows shortly after being published by Nicholas Motovilov in a 1903 issue of *Moscow Gazette*.

The above publications are our main source of Sarov’s experiences. They are recorded as a conversation one of Motovilov’s visit in November 1831.⁴⁰ The climax of this conversation is a moment of transfiguration of both Sarov and his guest. The glory of the Lord was visible as light. This was explained as grace viewed through eyes of flesh. The experience was accompanied with odours and “joy inexpressible.”⁴¹ This encounter is analogical to the experiences “untold ecstasy” and sweet smell portrayed by Pseudo-Macarius and Symeon the New Theologian.⁴² Sarov further related the transfiguration experience as what Pseudo-Macarius claimed to be the fullness of the Spirit. It is interesting to notice, that the pneumatic experiences Sarov had were not only a preservation of the experiences of pneumatists prior to his time, but also a reflection of his present political and economical surroundings.

³⁸ *To Nikandros*, PG 91:col. 96.

³⁹ Burgess, 79.

⁴⁰ Valentine Zander, *St. Seraphim of Sarov*, trans. by Gabriel Anne and Boris Bobrinovsky (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1963), 83-94.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 95.

⁴² John Cassian, *Collationes* 4.5, PL 49:col. 589.

The East Syrian (Assyrian) Church

The Assyrian Church is viewed in direct connection with the Jacobites.⁴³ The church grows in the context of Nestorianism and Assyrian practices.⁴⁴ Yet, the literature of the Assyrian Church is full of pneumatology including symbolic language and profound spirituality.⁴⁵ For example, Narsai's (413-ca. 503) pneumatology is strictly in the boundaries of liturgical and sacramental practices. An immediate contrast, however, is Isaac of Nineveh (7th c.), who, during sacraments, would suddenly fall on the floor, repeatedly rising up and kissing the cross.⁴⁶

For Narsai the Spirit sanctifies and edifies the church through baptism.⁴⁷ In a similar manner, Hazzaya (d. ca 690), another Assyrian writer, views the Holy Spirit not only as Edifier, but also as Perfector of the Church.⁴⁸ As such, He brings transformation in the life of the believer.⁴⁹ This state is reached with beyond the conscious prayer.⁵⁰ It is accompanied with sweet odors,⁵¹ tears of joy⁵² and sound of glorification heard in the soul of the individual.⁵³ This description fits the previously discussed experience of Symeon the New Theologian.⁵⁴ Isaac of Nineveh also describes the ecstasy in the Spirit in the means of tears of joy⁵⁵ and "a state of drunkenness."⁵⁶

⁴³ Burgess, 85.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 88.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 89.

⁴⁶ A. J. Wensinck, *Mystical treatises of Isaac of Nineveh*, trans. From the Bedjan Syrian text (Amsterdam: Koninklijke akademie van wetenschappen, 1923), 95-96.

⁴⁷ R. Hugh Connolly, *The Liturgical Homiletics of Narsai*, Studies and Texts 8 (Cambridge: University Press, 1909), 46, 49-50.

⁴⁸ Alphonsi Mingana, "Joseph Hazzaya: The Shortest Path that Leads us to God," *Early Christian Mystics*, Woodbroke Studies 7 (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1934), 148.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 149.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 171.

⁵¹ Ibid., 148-49.

⁵² Ibid., 183.

⁵³ Ibid., 183.

⁵⁴ Disc. 3329.5, 313.

⁵⁵ Wensinck, 330.

The above is strictly a personal experience.⁵⁷ In a corporate, ecclesiastical context, the union of individual experiences builds the Kingdom of God. In this sense the Kingdom is an already-not-yet reality, in which the direction of the Holy Spirit is essential.⁵⁸

The gifts are essential for the life of the Kingdom. According to Narsai, they are received through laying on of hands.⁵⁹ Healing is obtained through a similar ritual.⁶⁰ Isaac claims that they are bestowed in a time of prayer.⁶¹ They are accepted in humility out of which comes as burning compassion for the creation.⁶²

Hazzaya, furthermore, gives five practical signs for recognition of the works of the Holy Spirit: (1) love of God burns within the heart of the believer, (2) growth in humility of the soul, (3) kindness to all people, (4) true love and (5) vision of mind. His main tool to recognize demons and demonic visions from God and divine revelations is the peace of heart, which follows the heavenly presence.⁶³

Peace can be also reached through reading of Scripture. According to Isaac of Nineveh, Scripture delivers us from every evil thought and turns our minds to good.⁶⁴ Scripture is to be read not by chapters, but a passage at a time with prayerful desire for understanding.⁶⁵ This is one of the first recorded attempts explaining the connection between pneumatic experiences and Scripture.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 253.

⁵⁷ Mingana, 157.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Connolly, 8, 21, 34, 40, 49, 53, 63.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 35, 44.

⁶¹ Wensinck, xxxix, 116-17.

⁶² Ibid., 388.

⁶³ Mingana, 173-74.

⁶⁴ E. Kadloukovsky and G. E. H. Palmer, *Early Father from the Philokalia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 242.

⁶⁵ Wensink, 84.

The Non-Chalcedonian Eastern Church: Armenian

The Armenian Church claims to be found by St. Bartholomew in the midst of the first century.⁶⁶ The Armenian faith practices focused on preservation of the apostolic doctrines and habits. In this act it links its story with history and remains not only a discoverer, but also a preserver and a carrier of the past Christian tradition.⁶⁷

Remarkable remains the role of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the Armenian tradition. A prime example is the number of congregational songs dedicated to the Holy Spirit, in which the Spirit: (1) descended from heaven upon the apostles, (2) filled them all, (3) arming them with “fire by miracle,” (4) giving them “diverse tongues,” (5) and “manifold gifts.”⁶⁸ Because of the hardship in its long history, the Armenian Church has developed an extraordinary pneumatic heritage.

An Armenian apostle, patron and national saint by the name of Gregory the Illuminator (ca. 240-325), led the restoration of the Armenian Church. His studies were focused on the theology of the Holy Spirit and catechism shows examples of deep and concentrated pneumatic research.

For example, he includes a study of the Holy Spirit in both the Old and the New Testaments. In the former, He is present in the band of the prophets, as a sign of their office.⁶⁹ In the later, He is present in the baptism of Christ signifying His purity and sinlessness.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.13 in NPF 2nd Series, 1:100-2.

⁶⁷ Burgess, 113.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 115-16.

⁶⁹ Gregory the Illuminator, *Catechism* parag. 502., in Robert W. Thomson, ed., *The Teachings of St. Gregory: An Early Armenian Catechism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 116.

⁷⁰ Gregory the Illuminator, *Catechism* parag. 418, 420; Thomson, *Teaching*, 91.

In this context, Gregory the Illuminator describes the Spirit is described as a furnace, which burns sin away.⁷¹ Fire is the sanctifying agent of the Spirit.⁷² Only after the twelve were led through the fire experience, they received divine knowledge and supernatural interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies, in order to reveal the mysteries of the Word.⁷³

Similar view in this tradition holds Gregory Narek (ca. 950-ca. 1010), who claims that the Spirit pardons our sins, and thus gives birth of the Church.⁷⁴ He further states that the Spirit equips the Church with both spiritual gifts and fruits, which coexist only in the ecclesiastical environment.⁷⁵ Interesting in this context is his description of “intoxicating joy” through which he comes close to a number of experiences from different cultural and ethnical settings among which the already discussed Seraphim Sarov and Narsai.⁷⁶

The Non-Chalcedonian Eastern Church: Coptic

The connection between the Egyptian Church and the Holy Spirit can be traced back all the way to the birth of Jesus in the beginning of the Gospel narrative. Following the early ecclesiastical history, the development of the church continues with the desert fathers, among who Anthony of Egypt is a prime example.

In this context, the Coptics focus on anointing with oil, laying on of hands, and even laying on of the Bible or other holy objects on the sick person as a healing method.

⁷¹ Gregory the Illuminator, *Catechism* parag. 682; Thomson, *Teaching*, 170.

⁷² Gregory the Illuminator, *Catechism* parag. 676; Thomson, *Teaching*, 168.

⁷³ Gregory the Illuminator, *Catechism* parag. 661-63, 672; Thomson, *Teaching*, 164-65, 167.

⁷⁴ Robert W. Thompson, “Gregory of Narek’s Commentary on the Song of Songs,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 43:2 (October 1983): 453-96, 6.8, 7.13, 8.5; Thomson 484, 490-92.

⁷⁵ Mischa Kudian, *Lamentations of Nerek: Mystic Soliloquies with God* (London: Mashtots Press, 1977), 3.1, 15.1.

⁷⁶ Thompson, “Song of Songs,” 4.10.

Because of their teaching about the connection between demons and deceases, exorcism is practiced along with healing.⁷⁷

This is consistent with the writings of one of their prime writers by the name of Shenoute of Atripe (4th-5th century), who believed that the Holy Spirit is a life-giving force needed in order to obtain victory in both the spiritual and material worlds.⁷⁸ Impacted by the problems of the monastic life, his theology further reflected on the Spirit as “a consistent vigilance.”⁷⁹

The Spirit is also the one who maintains the walls of the individual’s heart. In this sense, the spirit is the agent of continuous victory in the life of the Christian. Shenoute’s teaching of momentarily and continuous victory is similar to what we consider today as sanctification of the believer. This is further revealed in his belief of the fruits of the Spirit being manifested as a result of the believer’s victory over evil.⁸⁰ This element of Shenoute’s credo integrates a continuation with the previously discussed positions on the fruit of the Spirit by Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Narek.

Even wider range of mystical experiences in the context of the Coptic Church is provided by Pseudo-Macareus (4th c.). In his view, the Spirit is the one who nourishes the Church, and as such He is also the source and the provider of the pneumatic experiences.⁸¹ Similar to John Cassian, he describes the Spirit in the means of light and “inflammation.”⁸² In his description of the pneumatic experience as “intoxication,”

⁷⁷ Otto F. A. Meinardus, *Christian Egypt: Faith and Life* (Cairo: American University Press, 1970), 224.

⁷⁸ Johannes Leipoldt and W. E. Crum, eds., *Sinuthii archimandritae vita et opera omnia*, CSCO 73 Coptic 5 (Paris: e Typographeo reibulicae, 1913; reprint Louvain, imprimerie orientaliste L. Durbecq, 1954), 12-31-32.

⁷⁹ Dimitri Cozby, “Abba Shenute of Atripe: First Homily on the Patriarchs,” in Dwight W. Young, ed., *Studies Presented to Hans Jacob Polotsky* (Bacon Hill: Pirtle and Polson, 1981), 17-20.

⁸⁰ Leipoldt and Crum, 81.2-21.

⁸¹ Granville Penn, *Institutes of Christian Perfection* (London: John Murray, 1816), 5.12.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 5.4.

Pseudo-Macareus is consistent with the previously discussed example of Isaac of Nineveh.⁸³ Analogically to Symeon the New Theologian, Pseudo-Macareus claims that the above experience is strictly personal.⁸⁴ And along with John Cassian, Maximus the Confessor, Seraphim Sarov, Narsai and many others he holds “that a true communion with God is possible only as an individual takes time to enter a quiet place for solitary prayer.”⁸⁵

The Non-Chalcedonian Eastern Church: Ethiopian

The Ethiopian Church is not a significant source of information in our study, because the Holy Spirit is not a prime issue there until the fourteenth century.⁸⁶ Surprisingly, gifts and fruits of the Spirit are not mentioned. For the Ethiopians, the Holy Spirit the one who teaches us the nature and unity of the Godhead.⁸⁷ Similar to the teaching of Hazzaya, the Spirit is the Perfector of the creation.⁸⁸ Like the Father and the Son, He blesses the believers and speaks to the church.

The experience of the Spirit for the Ethiopic saints is a vision of the Trinity. In one occasion of such a vision, a man received the elements of the Eucharist from the Trinity. In a similar pattern, nine of the fourteen anaphorae of the Ethiopic church refer to the Holy Spirit changing of the Eucharistic elements into the Body and the Blood of Christ.⁸⁹

⁸³ *Inst.*, 66.

⁸⁴ Burgess, 148.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Getatchew Haile, “Religious Controversies and the Growth of Ethiopic Literature in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries,” *Oriens Christianus* 65 (1981): 102-36.

⁸⁷ G. W. B. Huntingford, “Saints of Medieval Ethiopia,” *Abba Salama* 10 (1979): 287-89.

⁸⁸ Mingana, 148.

⁸⁹ O. H. I. Hadji-Burmester, “A Comparative Study of the Form of the Words of Institution and the Epiclesis in the Anaphorae of the Ethiopic Church,” *Eastern Churches Quarterly* 13:1 (Spring 1959): 41.

The Non-Chalcedonian Eastern Church: West Syrian (Jacobite)

The Jacobites viewed the presence of the Holy Spirit in three prime settings. Firstly, He is the agent of the original *ex-nahilo* creation and the spiritual re-creation in the second birth. Secondly, He is present in the baptism and chrismation. Lastly, He is the Transfigurator of the Eucharistic elements representing the body and the blood of Christ.⁹⁰

Our prime source of information on the corporate ecclesiastical Coptic tradition is a document entitled *The Odes of Solomon*. Interesting to notice in this context of this writings is the fact that the Spirit is referred in a feminine gender.⁹¹ However, this conception declined as the devotion to the person of Mary grew.⁹²

Such a devotion is extraordinary noticeable in the life and writings of Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306-373). He further compares the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Mary as the Spirit's descent over both the water baptism and the elements of the Eucharist.⁹³ This is why in the Syriac baptismal service; the holy oil is powered onto the water.⁹⁴ For the same reason, Ephrem states that the Eucharist means involvement with the hosts of heaven.

Ephrem recognizes Spirit-activity through the entire panorama of salvation. The Spirit is present in the transformation of the fallen human creature into "the pristine of

⁹⁰ J. H. Barnard, *The Odes of Solomon*, Texts and Studies 8:3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 120-21.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 67, note on verse 17.

⁹² Robert Murray, "Mary, the Second Eve in the Early Syriac Fathers," *Eastern Church Review* 3:4 (Autumn 1971): 373.

⁹³ Ephrem, *Nisibene Hymns* 37.4 in CSCO 241, Syr. 103:13, and NPF 2nd Series 13:295.

⁹⁴ Ephrem, *Hymns of Paradise* 11, in CSCO 175, Syr. 79:43-46.

paradisiacal state.”⁹⁵ The gift of the Spirit is received in the water baptism where the believer receives a divine armor.⁹⁶

A follower of Ephrem is Philoxenus of Mabbug (ca. 440-523). Among other issues, in his writings, he states that the life in the spirit is nothing else but a process of sanctification. He refers to it also as the spiritualization of the body, which is expressed through the domination of the body by the soul. The above results are possible only after fasting and prayer.⁹⁷ A contemporary of Philoxenus by the name of Severus of Antioch (ca. 465-ca. 539) adds to the above process the presence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church as a sign of God’s divine election. In this sense, the Jacobites are carriers of the already-not-yet idea.⁹⁸

Departures from Orthodoxy

And thus, we arrive at the point of departure from Orthodoxy. Similar to Eastern Pneumatology, this departure can be expressed in one word, dualism. A prime example of the dualistic heresy is the Messalian movement. Arising around AD 360 in Edessa, the Messalians are described as polytheistic. They believe that every human creature has a personal demon, and that Satan and the Holy Spirit together can dwell in the individual. The believers receive a share of the divine Spirit and become equal to God in their incapability to sin.⁹⁹ Interesting enough, the Messalians are highly feministic allowing their women to the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

⁹⁵ Jean Danielou, *From Shadows to Reality* (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1960), 23-30.

⁹⁶ Ephrem, *Hymns of the Epiphany* 3.1-3, in CSCO 187, Syr. 83:18-19.

⁹⁷ E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Discourses of Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbogh*, AD 485-519 (London: Asher and Co., 1894), “Eleventh Discourse on Assistance,” Budge 264.

⁹⁸ Burgess, 178.

⁹⁹ John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus Compendio*, 80, PS 3/1:col. clxxvi.

A similar movement arises under the name Paulicians. Due to the mass persecution through which the Paulicians go, the preserved documents about their existence in history are limited. We do know that they appeared in Armenia and the Byzantium Empire. The final trace of Eastern dualism is in on the Balkans, and more particular in Bulgaria under the name Bogomils. 18¹⁰⁰

Ministry Implications

The next three brief ministerial applications are inspired and drawn from the above research on the experiences of the Oriental Orthodox. They are taken in chronological order in its direct context of Pentecostal practices.

1. ***Prayer*** is the constantly present element through which pneumatic and mystical experiences in the East are obtained. For example, Pallamas reports that the gifts of the Spirit are obtained only through intense *mental* prayer, which is often accompanied with tears.¹⁰¹ In the same charismatic context Cassian concludes that after a season the gifts will disappear. My personal implication is that this is precisely the season when prayer and have become strange to the church, and when tears have become are sign of weekends rather than a sign of humility in the presence of the Almighty God. Unfortunately, at the end of the twentieth century, this is precisely our general present satiation.
2. ***Peace of Heart***: Hazzaya gives five practical signs for recognition of the works of the Holy Spirit: (1) love of God burns within the heart of the believer, (2) growth in humility of the soul, (3) kindness to all people, (4) true love and (5) vision of mind. His main tool to recognize demons and demonic visions from God and

¹⁰⁰ Steven Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee: A Study of the Christian Dualistic Heresy* (Cambridge University Press, 1974), chapters 2, 4, and 5.

divine revelations is the peace of heart, which follows the heavenly presence.¹⁰² I am persuaded that today the rule of the peace of heart is still true in the hearing of the voice of God.

3. ***Return, reclaim and preservation:*** The Armenian faith practices focus on preservation of the apostolic doctrines and habits.¹⁰³ Symeon the New Theologian also calls for a return to a radical living of the Gospel.¹⁰⁴ In a similar way, the early Church of God claimed to have as a main goal the reclaiming of the power of Pentecost; however, the church today has evolved to a structure that is quite far from this former idea. Furthermore, in this process the church has become too distinguished, replacing the primitivism of the Pentecostal experience with higher education, development programs, sophisticated structures, etc. And while a century ago we were the persecuted and ridiculed, now we are the people who reject and mock churches that carry the Pentecostal primitivism. Through this, we not only deny our historical relationship with them, but also abolish our Pentecostal heritage, which we often like to brag about.

Nevertheless, similar to the early Pentecostal movement, revival will not come to our churches through sophisticated worship liturgies, but rather through a genuine return to the initial Pentecostal experience. At the end of the twentieth century, simply reclaiming the power of Pentecostal is not sufficient. We need to preserve the Pentecostal primitivism in the reality of our present ecclesiastical setting. Only then we will be who we claim that we are.

¹⁰¹ Burgess, 52-53.

¹⁰² Ibid., 173-74.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 113.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 62.