

The *Ruah Elohim* and the *Hagios Pneuma* in a Post-Mission World

Part 1: New Testament Perspectives

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Good morning, it is always good to come together and to know that we're working hard and collaborating even though we may be located long ways apart from one another.¹ So what I am going to do today and tomorrow morning is to give you a preliminary sort of pre-publication glimpse into a book that's in the making; I am not sure when exactly it is going to be out because I haven't finished it yet.² You'll get at least the basic ideas of what I have finished at this point. It has to do with the Holy Spirit in a post-mission world although I am conceiving of the book as a kind of biblical missiology, but yet understood from the perspective of the Spirit. And that's what I will attempt to unfold today, and tomorrow a little bit more, during our time together.

I will focus today on the New Testament perspectives, and tomorrow I will turn to Old Testament perspectives. As a theologian, I do not really know a whole lot of the things I am going to talk about today and tomorrow now; systematic theologians aren't really supposed to know much about the Bible, we just stay on the esoteric side of

¹ This and the next essay are transcriptions of two lectures I gave, "The Holy Spirit in a Post-Mission World," at Harvest Bible College in Melbourne (now Alphacrucis College Melbourne campus), Australia, 24-25 August 2017. Thanks to Jon Newton for the invitation to give those lectures, and for overseeing the transcriptions of those lectures (given from power point slides and notes). I have attempted to keep as much of the oral flavour of the talks as possible, and footnotes have been added. Thanks also to my graduate assistant, Nok Kam, for proofreading these essays.

² I can now announce, ten months later, that the book is under contract: *Mission after Pentecost: The Bible, the Spirit, and the Missio Dei*, Mission in Global Community (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), forthcoming; all such references to "this book" in this essay are to *Mission after Pentecost*.

things.³ So I am really going to be stepping out a lot in faith here and trespassing across a lot of disciplinary boundaries far away from my systematician's playground, venturing out into the deep dark field of New Testament and Old Testament studies.

The book itself will proceed in the reverse order of what I am presenting to you. It will start with the Hebrew Bible first and then New Testament. But for the purposes of our conversation today and tomorrow I am going to go in perhaps a more familiar direction. I will start in the New Testament, and then shift to the Old Testament. But I will say this: at this moment, that there are four chapters to each part, and I have finished the first draft of the four chapters to the Old Testament, and only the first chapter of part two. So, for the rest of this morning, by and large I am going to be winging it, speaking in an anticipatory manner about chapters that have not yet been written. Now tomorrow I'll still be winging it because I really do not know that much about the Old Testament either, even though I finished the first part.⁴

A "Post-Mission" World?

So, what is the context of this "post-mission" world? I think one of the things that it certainly entails is that we live in a world that is after colonisation, after the European colonisation of the early modern period when Christian mission as we know it emerged. I am the product of colonisation. I was born in Malaysia, about eight years after Malaysia gained its independence from Britain in 1957. I spent the first ten years of my growing up in Malaysia and I learned both Bahasa Malaya and English in school. My understanding was about two years after my parents and I emigrated to the USA, the language structure in Malaysia in terms of public school teaching went straight, all the way through in Malay.

So those are some of the effects that at least shaped my own upbringing, my own journey, and I am sure that given the way in which the world is now, and the way in which we've all been able to travel a lot in all kinds of ways, every one of us has a number of different perspectives from our own lives, from our own journeys, from our own families; we are all having to navigate what post-colonial means. I do not mean by *post-colonial* anything ideological; there are certainly a lot of ideologies that can be attached to "post-colonial," but I simply mean we live in a world that responds to, is reacting to, and still convulsing from the colonial legacy in a variety of different ways.⁵ For me, in the context of the USA and perhaps many others of you here as well in Australia, when we speak of "post-mission," we also mean something like after Christendom. Although we're not quite sure still exactly what this entails, it was from out of Christendom that the modern mission movement was generated.

³ This was meant to be a joke, but it also speaks to the chasm that at least once (in a prior generation) existed between biblical scholars and systematicians; in the present time, this gap is closing, a point to which I will return in a moment.

⁴ Tongue-in-cheek; although readers of the rest of this essay will get to determine whether or not what is said might prompt them to pick up the book and read the longer version (part I of the book is approximately 55,000 words, with the full text over 130,000 words in length).

⁵ I discuss the *post-colonial* in terms of the USA in my essay, "The Missiology of Jamestown: 1607-2007 and Beyond – Toward a Postcolonial Theology of Mission in North America," in Amos Yong and Barbara Brown Zikmund, eds., *Remembering Jamestown: Hard Questions about Christian Mission* (Eugene, OR.: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 157-67.

And what else is Christendom after all?⁶ Historically I suppose folks would want to say this is that long part of the western world's history after Constantine and perhaps through to the great wars in the seventeenth century in which church and state were linked in a variety of ways, or at least when the church was located closer to the centre of political power historically and of course in the emerging nation states of the modern world. And to the degree that the American experiment of separating church and state was at all legitimate and rightly done and whatever else that all means, to that same degree in some respects we are exploring what it means to live in a post-Christendom world.

Now, of course, that does not mean that in the USA Christianity still does not have a lot of social or cultural capital, in spite of the alleged political separation of church and state. Again, there are shades to what post-Christendom means, and there is certainly, even in a post-Christendom world, the long shadow of Christendom extending over history and our lives and the lives of regions of the world that all of us work in. So, we might live in a post-Christendom world in certain respects but we perhaps do not in other respects. And, if we want to say that the Christian faith has left some positive cultural legacy historically, in that respect we want to say there has been some positive aspects of the Christian legacy that perhaps is mediated by Christendom; in other respects we might want to say that to the degree that the church found itself colluding with the political powers that be, to the same degree perhaps we have sold what might have been our prophetic voice for political gain and there certainly is still a lot to be argued and debated about on all of these fronts.⁷

One of the things that we probably can agree on, whatever this post-mission world is, it is a complicated, complex, fraught, contested, and ambiguous space. And one of the things this means is that we're coming from this postcolonial, post or late-Christendom perspective and having to wrestle with how we did mission under colonial and Christendom terms and how we may not quite be able to proceed in exactly the same way in this more ambiguously or greyly shaded historical time.

From that perspective, the question is, "what does mission mean?" in this contested era, the world after the Enlightenment. What about the recognition of indigenous rationalities? What about the realization of non-Western cultural perspectives, traditions, ways of being in the world? Rationalities are also grammars that shape and guide historical life in all their complexities. The Enlightenment carried by the colonial governments attempted to westernise and bring the world into a kind of rational, scientific *modus operandi*. And again, none of this is intended to say that everything about the Enlightenment was bad or everything about rationalism is bad or everything about science is negative. But I think that at least part of what we're wrestling with is how to understand the value and legacy of the Enlightenment in the

⁶ My own treatment of the notion of Christendom is in "Many Tongues, Many Practices: Pentecost and Theology of Mission at 2010," in Ogbu U. Kalu, Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, and Peter Vethanayagamy, eds., *Mission after Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 43-58, 160-63.

⁷ See also Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology – The Cadbury Lectures 2009*, Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age series (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), ch. 5, for my post-Christendom theology of the political.

twenty-first century. Our post-modern context evokes perhaps some positive feelings about the Enlightenment from some of us, and it might evoke some very concerned feelings from others of us; and for a few of us it might evoke both and we are not quite exactly sure what to do that word, *post-modern*.

In my published work, I've used more often the term "late modern," denoting more so the sense that we still live under the long shadow of modernity, and its advances, such as the scientific revolution.⁸ The fact that we're using a PowerPoint in this talk is part and parcel of living in a world of scientific technology, so again, we're not naming this only in a pejorative way. I have been staying mostly at the descriptive level, but what I am trying to say here is that when most of us think about our mission experience, our mission past, our mission present, globalisation, the meeting of cultures, the emergence of indigenous cultures, perhaps here in Australia this is facilitated in part and perhaps contested in part by the role of aboriginal peoples within the context of the great Southland, even as in the USA, we do not often hear too much about native Americans, but that is part of the undertow of how we think about such matters in our nation. In Canada it certainly seems that they have got a lot further in terms of thinking about national identity in regards to the First Nations peoples and so on.

But the point is that these are all very challenging aspects of what it means to live in the twenty-first century after colonialism, after awakening to the realisation that amongst the good that has come out of European expansion around the world there has also been a lot of very negative aspects. Knowing that our classical missional endeavours were also intertwined with that expansion ought to give us pause about how those missional efforts ought to now proceed.

So "post-mission," let us be clear, does not mean that we are at the end of mission but it might mean that we're at the end of much of the way in which we used to do mission. Again, that might be debated, but I think that in part is what my book is attempting to explore, and that's what I am going to take a few moments to share with you about today.

Theological Interpretation of Scripture

The second venue this book attempts to explore, besides the whole issue of missiology in the twenty-first century, is what some call "theological interpretation of Scripture," which some of you might know concerns the conversation between the arenas of biblical studies and theology.⁹ That's been a theological conversation that has emerged in the academy probably in the last fifteen or so years. It is constituted by both folks working in biblical studies connected to the Society of Biblical literature on one side and those connected to theological studies working primarily in groups like the American Academy of Religion on the other side. It used to be that both of these groups had to have separate guilds in part because they saw themselves doing two separate things and using two separate methodologies.

The theological interpretation of Scripture conversation has really emerged as a

⁸ E.g., Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2007).

⁹ See Craig G. Bartholomew and Heath A. Thomas, eds., *A Manifesto for Theological Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016).

result of folks in the biblical studies guild feeling like the domination of historical critical methods only allowed certain questions to be asked, and did not allow, for instance, confessional or faith commitments to be registered in the arena of biblical studies, biblical enquiry, and biblical scholarship. And on the other side there were theologians that felt increasingly that they were not willing to allow the biblical studies guild that was constrained by certain methodologies to dictate how scripture ought to be interpreted for theological purposes. So that's where both sides started to ask similar kinds of questions and out of that ferment has come this movement called theological interpretation of Scripture. There's a journal called *Journal of Theological Interpretation*, that has been about ten years running at this point, which is one of the dominant carriers of this conversation.¹⁰

Pneumatological and Pentecost-al Interpretation of Scripture

My book is an attempt to make a contribution not only to the missiological conversation but also to this discussion of theological interpretation of scripture. And I see this effort consisting of a few major thrusts. First, part of what I hope this particular book but also other books that I have written does, is to emphasize that we read Scripture not only theologically but also pneumatologically, or that part of what it means to do theological interpretation of Scripture involves what I call doing pneumatological interpretation of scripture. Of course, I come to that particular claim from my perspective as a Pentecostal scholar or theologian and I think that from a Pentecostal perspective we can make suggestions about what it means to do pneumatological interpretation, or to do pneumatological hermeneutics, or to do Pentecostal hermeneutics. I suggest that one of the obvious contributions that Pentecostals can make is to live fully into the word, the concept, the reality, that their name derives from, which is Acts 2 – the day of Pentecost – which is why they are called Pentecostals. Oftentimes, when you talk about a Pentecostal hermeneutic or a Pentecostal theology, the guild thinks of Pentecostal in relationship to the Assemblies of God or the Australian Christian Churches or something along those lines. It is not that I am opposed to the guild responding in that way, but I think the earliest Pentecostals, the modern Pentecostals in the beginning of twentieth century, did not really intend to start these denominations. They really intended to experience a revitalisation of their churches.

I think the goal of being Pentecostal and of the Pentecostal message is really an ecumenical message. It is a message for the church. Increasingly over the years, when I say I am a Pentecostal theologian, what I am really calling attention to is the message of Pentecost and not my denomination or church. I do hope my church could do a good job of lifting up the message of Pentecost. But from that perspective I prefer to say that I believe that our contribution is less to a “Pentecostal” this or that, which then gets dismissed and parochialised to a particular group of people, and more that we are heeding the Pentecost message. To call attention to the Pentecost message is to call attention to the work of the Holy Spirit. And that is also why I am proposing we call it not just a Pentecost or Pentecostal reading of scripture, but a pneumatological reading of

¹⁰ My own contribution herein is “Unveiling Interpretation after Pentecost: Revelation, Pentecostal Reading, and Christian Hermeneutics of Scripture – A Review Essay,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 11:1 (2017): 139-55.

scripture.¹¹

Missiological Interpretation of Scripture

If our first endeavour is theological interpretation by reading scripture according to or after Pentecost – or pneumatologically – our second objective is to read scripture missiologically. Now you might say that missiology is more a set of practices, rather than a theological platform, and at some level that is true. But I hope, if you’ve been following some of the missiological literature, like *Missio Dei* for example, that such is a deeply theological notion that really locates the whole of salvation history within God’s missionary sending. So, to read Scripture missiologically is more than to say I am going to read scripture according to the five things we are going to do when we go do missions (I will leave it to the ground practitioners to figure out what those five things are). I am more interested in clarifying what is the *Missio Dei* about? What is *Missio Trinitas* about? What is the *Missio Spiritus* about? What is the mission of the triune God about?¹² And I think if we can get further clarity on that, it might be that those five things that we are supposed to do will suggest themselves within the appropriate contexts within which we find ourselves participating in God’s mission.

The point is that to read scripture missiologically is a theological undertaking. It is not an attempt to identify what the Bible says from a kind of neutral perspective. Rather, such an approach is theologically funded, theologically committed, and asks the question, “what is the *Missio Dei*?” It wagers that such is the question that scripture invites us to ask, rather than that is a question we are imposing upon scripture. But it is a theological question. It is not identical, although it includes, the question, “how did the mission of God proceed among the judges?”, for instance. As an historical question, we might well say, “the judges can be interpreted from the perspective of Israel conquering the nations,” so from that perspective it was a missionary undertaking and we can just try to understand that historically. I am not saying that is not an important question to answer, but the theological question is instead: “how do we understand the book of Judges as something that is part of God’s mission?” That’s a little bit more complicated, because then we have to think about God somehow authorising or somehow calling us to participate in that mission. The Native American theologians have long been saying that they read the book of Judges from the perspective of the Canaanites, and the news isn’t all that good.¹³ If you’re part of the Canaanites that got wiped out..., anyway that is tomorrow’s lecture!

Canonical Interpretation of Scripture

Beyond reading scripture pneumatologically and missiologically, we also read scripture canonically. That’s part of what I am going to be doing in this book. A canonical reading is not to say that we are going to marginalise the historicity of text or ignore the

¹¹ See my book, *The Hermeneutical Spirit: Theological Interpretation and the Scriptural Imagination for the 21st Century* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2017).

¹² See my book, *The Missiological Spirit: Christian Mission Theology for the Third Millennium Global Context* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2014); these essays expand such a pneumatological missiology in a more scriptural direction.

¹³ E.g., Robert Allen Warrior. “A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians,” *Christianity and Crisis* 49 (1989): 261–65, reprinted in R. S. Sugitharajah, ed., *Voices from the Margins: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 277–85.

history of or behind the text.¹⁴ But a canonical reading seeks to read the text in relationship to other texts within the received order and sequence of writings taken as revelatory or sacred. There are going to be some texts that we are going to be unable to date. And if we are unable to date them quite directly, then historical reading of scripture is less useful for comprehending those texts. But if we have a canonical spread then we can ask questions like: How did these become scripture to the people of God at its various points in history when the canon emerges in whatever forms that it emerges? These are less historical than theological questions because the canonical formation of these texts involve theological judgments about them and the authority they wielded over those particular communities. That is what makes, at least in part, for canonical reading of scripture, or from my perspective, for theological readings of scripture.

This book therefore intends to engage in theological interpretation of scripture along these three fronts: pneumatologically, missiologically, and canonically. The only thing I am doing for the purposes of these two lectures is to switch their order. I will start with the New Testament and move to the Old Testament tomorrow, though the book proceeds canonically.

Reading Scripture Pneumatologically

I think that there is a historical fact that gives us justification for reading Scripture pneumatologically or from the perspective of Pentecost, simply because all the apostolic writings are not just after Easter but also after Pentecost. Christian faith, Christian life, and Christian reflection, proceeds not just after the Christ event, period, but after a Christ event that includes Jesus pouring out His Spirit on all flesh. The Christ event by definition includes the Pentecost event. And the Christ event by definition is the Messianic or anointed event (that is by definition what Christ is) and therefore from that perspective all of the apostolic writings are written not just in light of Easter, which they are, but also in the light of Pentecost, meaning by the power of the Spirit.¹⁵ This itself warrants what I call Pentecost reading of scripture, meaning a reading after Pentecost, a reading after the experience of the Spirit poured out on all flesh, which includes the life, death, resurrection and the ascension of Jesus of Nazareth to the right hand of the Father (see Acts 2:33).

Beyond this fundamentally important historical datum that we often forget, there is the fact that the Christian life is initiated by an encounter with, and being born again by, the Spirit. There is no Christian confession of the Christ apart from the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3). In other words, there is no way anybody is ever going to get started in Christian reflection outside of the Spirit. Christian life is life in the Spirit. So, all Christian theology, even by those who do not even know (consciously) the Spirit, in the Pentecostal sense, do theology after Pentecost. We might say that some are “anonymous Pentecostals.” Not anonymous Pentecostal in the Assemblies of God or Australian Christian Churches sense, which are marginal senses of being Pentecostal.

My point is about the Christian life as a whole. Anyone that confesses Christ does

¹⁴ The history of the text has traditionally been the domain of what is called source and form criticism; the history behind the text has been the purview of, unsurprisingly, historical criticism.

¹⁵ I develop such a Spirit- or pneumatological Christology elsewhere – e.g., *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity*, images and commentary by Jonathan A. Anderson (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2014), ch. 8.

so by the Spirit and therefore that confession and its accompanying reflections are all after Pentecost. There is just no other way to get to theology or hermeneutics or anything reflective outside of Pentecost and the work of the Spirit. This would be a deeply experiential and existential reality for all of us and for anybody who is a Jesus follower. When Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2 that the natural person in his or her mind cannot understand the things of God, this is not to say that you and I (as believers) have perfect exhaustive completely illuminated understandings; we still, as he says later in 1 Corinthians 13, peer through a glass dimly. But that peering is spirited, even in all of its ambiguity, in all of its groaning, in all of its aspiring if you will. Christian understanding is always in and through the Holy Spirit. So, we read scripture pneumatologically and we understand scripture pneumatologically, because our lives are in the Spirit and drawn by the Spirit and because that is the mode of prayer and we pray seeking understanding and faith seeking understanding marks our posture. And again, that is even for anonymous Pentecostals. We're all in this posture of seeing through a glass dimly. Some of us say, "come Holy Spirit" or "be with us Holy Spirit," in this posture and others might not quite say that but nevertheless can only wait on the Lord in the Spirit.¹⁶ So this is a truism, that there really is no other way to do theological interpretation of Scripture except pneumatologically. Everybody in this sense interprets Scripture after Pentecost; but very few of us ever use that language.¹⁷

Reading Scripture Pneumatologically and Missiologically: Gospel Warrants

So, what does it mean to read scripture pneumatologically and missiologically? Most importantly, there are some Gospel warrants. Think about the great commission as a Trinitarian text. So, to read Matthew pneumatologically and missiologically means that we read Matthew backward to forward; we read the First Gospel from Matthew 28:18, and now go all the way – back and forth – through the text in light of that. These are hermeneutical strategies I invite you to embrace as your own and see how your perspective on Matthew might be enriched. The point is Father, Son, *and* Spirit. For most of the Christian tradition, Trinitarian means Father and Son. And even for most of Pentecostals, when we say Father, Son, and Spirit we mean Father, Son, and speaking in tongues and healings.

Mark's version, thinking about the longer ending as some might say is the Pentecostal ending, may get a little tricky. Is verses 9-16 of the final chapter part of the canon of Scripture or not? Pentecostals read it that way and in fact from the second century onward the argument is, even in reception history, that the longer Markan ending was a missiological ending.¹⁸ Yet the Markan ending also include the charismatic manifestations and work of the Spirit, and from that perspective it perhaps provides us

¹⁶ For more on my pneumatological reading of 1 Corinthians, see *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2012), 116-20.

¹⁷ This is my way of putting what I learned from D. Lyle Dabney, "Otherwise Engaged in the Spirit: A First theology for the Twenty-First Century," in Miroslav Volf, et al., *The Future of Theology: Essays in Honor of Jürgen Moltmann* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 154–63, and "Starting with the Spirit: Why the Last Should be First," in Stephen Pickard and Gordon Preece, eds., *Starting with the Spirit: Task of Theology II* (Hindmarsh, Australia: Australian Theological Forum, 2001), 3–27.

¹⁸ See James A. Kelhofer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.112 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

with even an additional reason to read the rest of Mark in light of this new ending. In other words, if this was a new ending, it was something that said, “this is missing, this is important, and we need to revisit the entire book from this perspective.” I am not suggesting that we go ahead and just add something else on, although I’ve written about the 29th chapter of Acts, but that’s another point.¹⁹

Of course, Luke’s version is the original source of the Pentecost narrative. You have Luke 24 instructions to wait for the power from on high that then anticipates Acts 1:8 and the rest of the book of Acts. There’s no way to read Luke-Acts or Acts-Luke in any other way than as pneumatological and missiological.²⁰ Luke is concerned from the very beginning about being a light to the Gentiles, the restoration of Israel, and the gospel to the nations. Those are themes that are intrinsic to the Lukan theological construct and framing.

The centre of Matthew is in chapter 12 that includes a remarkable text in which Jesus, almost like what happens in the gospel of Luke chapter 4, is defined by an Isaianic text:

Here is my servant, whom I have chosen,
my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles (Matt 12:18, NRSV; cf. Is 2:1).

The Spirit at the heart of the Matthean account connects very well and is consistent with the trajectory that is announced in the trinitarian Great Commission text at the end of the book.

Reading the New Testament Missionally after Pentecost

In the rest of this first essay, I want to provide, in a very cursory manner, missional readings of the New Testament from a pneumatological perspective. We will take the gospels, the epistles, and the Johannine literature in order.

Pneumatic Gospel Mission

Picking up from the preceding, it is not as if Matthew’s Gospel is directed only to the Jews. This has been a long debate amongst Matthean scholars: if this is a Jewish Gospel for Jewish community, what is “to all nations” doing at the end of the book? But if we read the rest of the book in light of 28:18, we see that the nations appear rather frequently in Matthew. If we had read it as simply as a Jewish text we may have dismissed these as incidental references because part of the tradition that the five sermons of Jesus in this gospel correlate with and update the first five books of the Old Testament (the Torah), along with other reasons for seeing Matthew as being for the Jews. But now we might begin to notice that this very Jewish gospel communicates in,

¹⁹ The point about the 29th chapter of Acts is that Jesus followers are invited to extend the apostolic narrative, which is arguably also what a putative 17th chapter of Mark could involve regarding the Second Gospel; see Pamela M. S. Holmes, “Acts 29 and Authority: Towards a Pentecostal Feminist Hermeneutic of Liberation,” in Michael Wilkinson and Steven M. Studebaker, eds., *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 185–209.

²⁰ My own reading of Acts-Luke is in *Who is the Holy Spirit? A Walk with the Apostles* (Brewster, Mass.: Paraclete Press, 2011).

through, and against a Gentile horizon. And this is also the work of the Spirit. It is the work of Jesus the Messiah with his Jewish genealogy, and we Gentiles who are connected to this message.

When I then read Mark 16 in light of the Gospel of Mark,²¹ all of a sudden, the work of the Spirit in Mark 16 is contrasted with the work of all the unclean spirits, which is much more of Mark's interest than in the other gospels. I am only pointing out how our particular bifocal hermeneutic attends to missiology and pneumatology together. Such an approach does not tell us everything about mission and about the Spirit of mission in a post-mission world, but I think it gives us an informative lens. How do we talk about unclean spirits in the post-mission world? Does the Markan narrative give us perhaps some fresh language and perspective on such phenomena? Here we can think not just about exorcisms but about exorcisms from a missiological perspective.²²

And then, of course, when you read and connect Luke-Acts in light of how Acts 1:8 provides the table of contents for this Lukan sequel and how Luke 4:18 structures the Gospel, we see these reinforcing each other as pneumatological missiologies or as missiological pneumatologies. Those are interchangeable from the Lukan perspective – albeit with distinctive accents: the former emphasizes the *Missio Dei* as empowered by the Spirit while the latter highlights how the Holy Spirit is also the missionary (sent and sending) Spirit – and I try to make that argument here in what I call “pneumatic gospel mission.”

On Pauline and Other Letters: Missional Life in the Spirit

When we turn to Paul, we see that the language of the kingdom is much less prevalent than in the gospels. If Jesus was constantly talking about the reign or kingdom of God, Paul mentions that much less; but the latter certainly talks a lot about life in the Spirit and there's been those who have suggested that what Jesus means by the reign of God, Paul talks about as life in the Spirit or about being in Christ.²³ And of course being in Christ is not just being in Jesus of Nazareth, but it means being empowered by the messianic anointing and finding life in the anointed one's Spirit that now has been poured out upon all flesh (to use now Lukan language). In that respect one can potentially read all of Paul – and Gordon Fee has helped us a long way down this road²⁴ – from this pneumatological perspective. Is Paul *the* pneumatologist of the New Testament? We know that he was also a missionary par excellence so there is no way to separate Paul's pneumatology from his missiology or vice versa.

What happens then when we read his letters from this bifocal perspective of pneumatology and missiology? Reading Romans pneumatologically means that the Spirit is poured out into our hearts.²⁵ I suggest we can go from something like the Spirit

²¹ E.g., John Christopher Thomas and Kimberly Ervin Alexander, “‘And the Signs Are Following’: Mark 16.9-20 — A Journey into Pentecostal Hermeneutics,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11:2 (2003): 147-70.

²² I am reminded, for instance, of John Wimber and Kevin Springer. *Power Evangelism* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986).

²³ See Youngmo Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul: An Attempt to Reconcile These Concepts* (Waynesboro, Ga.: Paternoster Press, 2007).

²⁴ Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994).

²⁵ Cf. my pneumatological reading of Romans in *Spirit of Love*, ch. 8.

poured out into human hearts (Rom 5:5) to the groaning Spirit liberating all of creation (Rom 8). Romans 5-8 then becomes the fulcrum upon which the rest of the gospel can turn in terms of providing angles and perspectives to understand justification and the fall in the first four chapters, the message to Israel and the covenant with Israel in chapters 9 to 11, and the practical missiological unfolding of the theological imagination in the concluding chapters 12 to 16.

What I am trying to suggest with these very preliminary and exploratory exercises, is what happens when we approach familiar texts with these other (pneumatic and missiological) glasses. We can obviously impose a variety of tinges on our bifocals and sometimes those tinges will obscure something that's important. But I hope that this exercise can be recognised as one that the texts themselves invite, even if not exactly the way I am suggesting. But I think the power of Scripture is its capacity to elicit and catalyse life in response to these words. We might recognize that the nature of what it means to do theological scholarship was anticipated along the Corinthian way when Paul said: "Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said" (1 Cor. 14:29, NIV). I approach scholarship this way not because I am a prophet but since I am a theological author: others – listeners and readers – will judge.

My book thus goes through every one of Paul's letters that actually mentions the Spirit (Philemon gets left out, because Philemon does not mention the Spirit) and I read them again as missiological tracts. I also look at what Paul says about the Spirit specifically in these letters and that becomes then another focal point through which we explore and then ask the question: how is the mission of God unfolded in this context in relationship to the understanding of the Spirit's person and work in this particular church community, locale, and context?

Briefly, I do the same when I turn to Hebrews and the so-called General or Catholic letters. This section of my book I call pastoral and catholic – meaning ecumenical, related to the church universal, not designating the Roman Catholic Church – mission. One of the questions which has been asked historically is: which way does the Spirit go in the pastoral and catholic epistles? These texts reflect various ecclesiastical developments, the argument being that they are mostly late first century and perhaps even early second century writings. The churches reflected herein have been institutionalised in some respects; the Spirit is gone, so it is said. But no, the Spirit is not absent completely. There are remnants of the Spirit's work. Part of what we are trying to ask here is how to understand the Spirit and mission in these texts. How do we understand Titus as a missionary text in relation to the regenerative work of the Spirit? How do we understand the sanctifying work of Spirit as missional in the diasporic context of 1 Peter?²⁶ What about the prophetic Spirit and mission amidst the eschatological delay of 2 Peter? The goal here is to look again at these documents, understand them as missional report, and look at what is said about the Spirit in each text and then ask the missional question again in light of these pneumatological hints, data, and trails.

²⁶ See also my essay, "Diasporic Discipleship from West Asia through Southeast Asia and Beyond: A Dialogue with 1 Peter," *Asia Journal of Theology* 32:2 (October 2018): forthcoming.

Apocalyptic Spirit and Eschatological Mission

When we get to the Apocalypse the questions that I would want to ask are something like this: what is the Spirit saying to the churches about mission in anticipation of the things that are to come? How does mission get shaped when you are engaging within an imperial context? The seven spirits of God are sent out to the four corners of the earth to engage the many tribes, tongues, people, and nations; what are the implications of that for mission in a post-mission world?²⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, Come (Rev. 22:17); is this the culmination of mission and what are the implications then for Christian missional imagination in light of this clarion ultimate call and invitation?

We will see how these actually turned out after I finished these chapters. But as I anticipate the arguments that are going to unfold I am intrigued by the fact that all of these New Testament voices, including but not limited to Revelation, are located within Empire. In relation to *Pax Romana* (the Peace of Rome), the apostolic missionaries are all marginal political figures. But they are nevertheless central to the mission of God. In Acts, we see Imperial interaction all the way through, including manifestly in Paul's citizenship claims. The gospel narratives are also situated in the days of Caesar: in days of Augustus or of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 2:1, 3:1). The point is that we need much more intentionality about identifying the imperial sites within which early Christian mission unfolded. There is a lot that we can learn in our time when we might feel that we are no longer in charge politically, socially, economically, and in every other way in carrying out and responding to the call of the *Missio Dei*.

The Spirit in a Post-Mission World: Preliminary Takeaways

Often, we have read these texts from a Christendom perspective or from a colonial point of view as the ones in charge and in power and therefore have actually misread most of these texts because they were not written at the imperial center. So how do we recover what this post-mission notion means? This post mission notion, I am suggesting, actually invites us to get right back to the heart of the original apostolic mission, long before we adopted bad missional habits.

These pneumatic witnesses show us many tongues, many voices, and many practices for pre-Christendom mission, and such has implications, I wager, for post-Christendom mission. It is anachronistic to impose our contemporary situation back onto the New Testament but I think that when we go back to reading the entirety of the New Testament both pneumatologically and missiologically, we are going to have a much less bifurcated set of categories about organising our world than otherwise. What I mean is that the binary of community versus individual dissipates, or nature versus super-nature, life now versus the after-life, body versus soul, etc. Intriguingly, we Pentecostals are some of the worst at such dualisms, perhaps because we emphasise the Spirit that the Enlightenment dismissed. So if the Enlightenment emphasised nature, history, and materiality, we say, "come Holy Spirit." But my point is that we have actually bought into such divisions and so we assume Pentecostal mean supernatural versus natural. Yet from

²⁷ See my article, "Kings, Nations, and Cultures on the Way to the New Jerusalem: A Pentecostal Witness to an Apocalyptic Vision," in S. David Moore and Jonathan Huntzinger, eds., *The Pastor and the Kingdom: Essays Honoring Jack W. Hayford* (Dallas, Tex.: TKU Press, 2017), 231-51.

another perspective, we have allowed the world to dictate how we define the work of the Spirit, e.g., as super-natural. I do not wish to eliminate whatever we think supernatural realities are. I am only trying to get us to recognise how our language has been dictated by external perspectives. Put alternatively, to impose nature and super-nature on the New Testament itself is anachronistic.²⁸

That's why when you are reading New Testament pneumatologically, it is not about reading the New Testament supernaturally. That does violence to the New Testament by imposing an Enlightenment perspective on the New Testament that the apostles did not have. Instead, a holistic and charismatic perspective to mission was prevalent then and should also be now, which gives a lot more traction to do mission in our twenty-first century post-mission world. Thus, the groaning of the Spirit and cosmic mission then (Rom. 8) and now invites us to be both more humble and more hopeful in mission as opposed to being triumphalist and otherworldly. Something along these lines and this is what I am gesturing toward, and hoping and praying for, from this work.

²⁸ The point I make in my book, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), ch. 7.