

A Continuing Pentecost:

The Experience of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Christianity

(With a View to Dialogue Between Orthodox Christians and Pentecostals)

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Introduction

In what follows I have provided a partial sketch of what an Orthodox Christian might say regarding the place of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Christianity, as his or her contribution to a dialogue with “Pentecostal” Christians.¹

Fr. Timothy Cromeens, who journeyed a good number of years ago from being a pastor in the Pentecostal “Assemblies of God” to being a priest in the Orthodox Church, gives a simple summary of the view of Church History which he was taught from a Pentecostal perspective:

. . . after the conversion of Constantine in the early fourth century, the Church went into apostasy. It lost the Apostolic faith and power it had been given at Pentecost. Tradition replaced Scripture, causing all sorts of errors – such as liturgy, bishops, and veneration of the saints – to creep into the Church. True Christianity wasn’t restored until the Reformation, and then only partially. With the

¹I use this term very generally, since there are many groups which emphasize the ideas which I am addressing. My apologies to anyone who considers this term misleading or inaccurate.

Pentecostal revivals of the early twentieth century the power of the Holy Spirit and His gifts as manifested in the *Book of Acts* were at last revived in the Church in these last days before Christ's return.²

I can quickly call to mind a number of personal acquaintances within Canadian Orthodoxy who, like Timothy Cremeens, were formerly Pentecostal pastors or laity, but are now clergy or laity in the Orthodox Church. These people have remained rooted in the Orthodox Church, without feeling that they have lost anything essential regarding the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Rather they feel that they have found a fullness of experience of the Holy Spirit, which they did not have before, a more solid framework for understanding it, and a proper context for growing in communion with the Holy Spirit over the course of a lifetime. I have had a fair personal acquaintance with a number of Protestant traditions myself in the course of 60 years, participating to some extent in Pentecostal gatherings and the charismatic movement, especially during the 1960's. In 1992, I entered the Orthodox Church. Being very interested in the encounter between Orthodox Christianity and Protestantism in this country, I offer the following reflections from an Orthodox point of view, as to what Pentecostals might find of interest regarding the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Christianity.

First, I shall provide a very brief and partial description of the place of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Church. Second, I want to suggest three possible reasons why there is often a sense among those drawn to Pentecostalism that something is missing regarding the experience of the Holy Spirit in Western Christianity, and in particular, Protestantism. This Orthodox view of Church History in relation to the work of the Holy Spirit, which I shall present, will differ in major ways from the Pentecostal view quoted above.

²See Chapter 10 "Back to Pentecost," in *Coming Home: Why Protestant Clergy are Becoming Orthodox*, ed. by Peter E. Gillquist (Ben Lomond, California: Conciliar Press, 1992), p. 90

On The Working of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Church

The Orthodox Church justly can claim to be the original "Pentecostal" Church. She is the Church of the Holy Apostles, upon whom the Holy Spirit descended, as our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ promised, on the Feast of Pentecost, fifty days after His Death and Resurrection. As members of the household of God, St. Paul says in *Ephesians 2:20*, we have been built up on

the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Furthermore, the Orthodox Church continues to live and act in the power of Pentecost to the present day, having kept, by the grace of God, this treasure given to her. Or, putting it another way, the Holy Spirit has kept the Orthodox Church in the Truth and Life of the Triune God, as our Lord Jesus Christ promised (*John 16:13*). The Grace of the Holy Spirit continues in the Church in her bishops through succession from the Apostles, in her Holy Mysteries or Sacraments administered by those bishops and the priests ordained by them. The Holy Spirit also continues in the Orthodox Church in her on-going apostolic mission to gather all peoples in Christ, in her Saints, and in the hearts and lives of her individual members, who are recipients of the Holy Mysteries, and are thus in the process of sanctification through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in those Mysteries. The Orthodox Church has been described as "a new life with Christ and in Christ, guided by the Spirit."³ Her Holy Tradition has been explained as

³ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988), p. 1.

“the life and voice of the Holy Spirit in her midst.”⁴ Her worship and prayers have been described as “the breathing of the Holy Spirit.”⁵

Those who are united with Christ in His death and resurrection through Baptism are members of his Body, the Church, and “have all been made to drink of the one Spirit” (*1st Corinthians 12:13*), who is sealed in the faithful by the Sacrament of Chrismation which immediately follows Baptism. This Spirit, in which we share, is the same Spirit Who anointed Jesus Christ at His baptism, and remained upon Christ in all fullness. He is the same Holy Spirit Who eternally proceeds from the Father, Who is one in essence with the Father and the Son, glorified with them, Who spoke through the prophets.⁶

St. Seraphim of Sarov (reposed in 1833) describes the meaning of Pentecost with clarity and power:

When our Lord Jesus Christ, after his Resurrection, vouchsafed to complete the work of our salvation, He sent to his apostles that breath of life which Adam lost, and He gave the grace of the Holy Spirit back to them. On the day of Pentecost, he bestowed on them the power of the Holy Spirit, which entered them in the form of a mighty wind and in the appearance of tongues of fire, filling them with the strength of his Grace. This light-filled breath, received by the faithful on the day of their baptism, is sealed by the rite of chrism on the members of their body, so that it becomes a vessel of grace. That is why the priest accompanies the anointing of the chrism with these words: “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit”. This grace is so great, so necessary and life-giving, that it is never withdrawn⁷

⁴ Lazarus Moore, *Sacred Tradition in the Orthodox Church*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Light and Life Publishing, 1984), p. 9.

⁵ St. John of Kronstadt, *My Life in Christ* (Jordanville, New York: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1984), p.174.

⁶ These last phrases regarding the Holy Spirit are all from the “Nicene” Creed, except for “Who is One in essence with the Father and the Son.” This latter is nevertheless the teaching of the Church and implied in the statements from the Creed.

⁷ Quoted in *St. Seraphim of Sarov [1759-1833]* by Valentine Zander. (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1975), p. 89.

Pentecostal grace thus abides in the Church and in each baptized and chrismated member of the Church. However, the Church does not presume upon this grace; instead, she ever guards and nourishes it and entreats the Father to continue this grace and to renew it in each of the Church's actions and in each of her members.

An Orthodox monk of our own day describes the Divine Liturgy itself as "a Pentecostal gathering; it consists of a Pentecost in and of itself. It marks a 'coming,' a descent of the Holy Spirit among and upon us. . . . Even in the context of the eucharistic liturgy, the Spirit is not given only for the sake of the Eucharist itself. The purpose of His coming is to lead us into 'Pentecostal life,' the life of the Spirit."⁸ At the heart of the Divine Liturgy, celebrated each Sunday in the Orthodox Church we plead with the Father in heaven through words given voice by the priest:

We ask You, and pray You, and supplicate You: Send down Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts here offered. O Lord, at the third hour You sent Your Holy Spirit upon Your apostles; do not take Him from us now, O Merciful One, but renew him in us, who pray to You And make this Bread the precious Body of Your Christ, and that which is in this Cup, the precious Blood of Your Christ, making the change by your Holy Spirit; that they may be to those who partake for the purification of the soul, for the forgiveness of sins, for the communion of Your Holy Spirit, for the fulfillment of the Kingdom of Heaven

In this inspired prayer, we ask that the Holy Spirit come upon us, as well as on the Gifts offered, and we receive forgiveness of sins in the Eucharist, "for communion with the Holy Spirit, and for the fulfillment of the Kingdom of Heaven." For, as the apostle St. Paul tells

⁸ A Monk of the Eastern Church, *Serve the Lord With Gladness* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990), pp. 49 and 51. Also, Chapter IV, "Christ, the Sender of the Spirit," in another work by the same author, called *Orthodox Spirituality: An Outline of the Orthodox Ascetical and Mystical Tradition* (second edition), by the same publisher, 1978, has some rich reflections on the place of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox spirituality.

us, "the Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (*Roman 13:17*), and these are only possible in Christ, Who is our righteousness, wisdom and sanctification (*1st Corinthians 1:29-30*). Thus, we begin the liturgy with the announcement of our goal, the Kingdom of God, when the priest declares "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" and then we reach the fulfillment of that goal in Holy Communion.

As the Church does not take for granted the gift of Pentecost, which is the Holy Spirit, so also each member who has received the Holy Spirit in Baptism and Chrismation, must not take this gift for granted. "Do not deprive me of Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" is the refrain from *Psalms 51 (the Septuagint 50)*, which is heard in many of the services of the Church and in the prayers of her faithful. Precisely because we have tasted the reality of the Holy Spirit, we seek through repentance and confession and a life of righteousness and prayer and struggle for purification of heart, not to lose this grace. We pray a Pentecostal prayer whenever we begin our worship of God, whether together as the Church or in our personal prayers:

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who are present everywhere and fill all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and abide in us, and cleanse us of every impurity and save our souls, O Good One.

Living in sin and disobedience to God's commandments quenches the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and we then experience that fire as judgement. Continual repentance is necessary for a continuous Pentecost in our lives.

However, not only do we want to avoid "quenching the Spirit," we also want actively to seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit through continual remembrance of God and love for Him. St. Theophan the Recluse (reposed in 1894) describes the need for being filled with the Spirit:

The Spirit of Grace lives in Christians from the time of Baptism and Chrismation. And to participate in the Sacraments of Repentance and Communion – is not this to receive the most abundant floods of grace? To those who already have the Spirit, it obviously is appropriate to say: “Quench not the Spirit” (*1st Thessalonians, 5:19*). But, how can one say to such people: “Be filled with the Spirit” (*Ephesians, 5:18*)? Indeed the Grace of the Holy Spirit is given to all Christians, because such is the power of the Christian Faith. But, the Holy Spirit, living in Christians, does not effect their salvation by Himself, but works together with the free actions of each individual. In this sense, the Christian can offend or extinguish the Spirit – or else he may contribute to the perceptible manifestation of the Spirit’s action within him. When this happens, the Christian feels himself to be in an extraordinary state, which expresses itself in deep, sweet, and quiet joy Therefore, the commandment to be “filled with the Spirit” simply is an injunction to behave and act in such a manner as to co-operate with or allow free scope to the Holy Spirit, to make it possible for the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself by perceptibly touching the heart.⁹

St. Seraphim of Sarov said that the goal of the Christian life was to acquire the Holy Spirit; that is, to have all our words and actions prompted by the Holy Spirit, with our conscious cooperation.¹⁰

When Pentecost becomes more or less continuous in anyone, that person has become a Saint. May God grant us the grace to become aware of the continuing Pentecost which flames forth in the

⁹ St. Theophan the Recluse, quoted in *The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox Anthology*, compiled by Igumen Chariton of Valamo and translated by E. Kadloubovsky and E.M. Palmer (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), pp. 173-4.

¹⁰“Prayer, fasting, works of mercy -- all this is very good, but it represents only the means, not the end of the Christian life. The true end is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit.” St. Seraphim of Sarov, quoted in *St. Seraphim of Sarov* by Valentine Zander (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1975, p.85). This famous statement of the goal of the Christian life being the acquisition of the Holy Spirit was made by St. Seraphim of Sarov in response to his disciple, Motovilov’s, desire to understand how he could know whether he had the Holy Spirit. For the full account of this event in which both St. Seraphim and his disciple were transfigured in the Divine Light, see *St. Seraphim of Sarov* by Archmandrite Lazarus Moore.

whole of the life of the Orthodox Church, the continuing Pentecost which burns within each of us. May He help us to allow that Pentecost within us to be continually expressed in every word and deed and expression through our willing submission to Him. May He grant us perseverance, zeal, patience faith, hope, and love in our journey into His life, through union with the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit!

Explanation of the Sense of the Missing Power and Reality of the Holy Spirit Within Protestantism

Separation from the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and the Apostolic Succession

St. Irenaeus of Lyons, toward the end of the second century, said "Where the Church is, there is the Holy Spirit and the fullness of grace."¹¹ Where is "the Church" today? I think that this is a primary question, for which many today would supply the answer "everywhere" and "nowhere," at the same time; "everywhere" because it would be arrogant and scandalous to say that the fullness of Christ's presence may be found in any one body claiming to be Christ's Church, and "nowhere" for the reason that such fullness and unity of the Church is invisible and understood only by God, and is not truly present now in any group calling itself Christian, but will only be a reality in the age to come. But is that an adequate answer? The experience and teaching of the Orthodox Church is that the Church was constituted by Christ's authoritative commissioning of the apostles,

. . . He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained (*John 20:23*).

This authority was confirmed by the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This Christ-given authority and Spirit-given power continue in the Church through the apostolic succession and laying-on-of-hands at the appointment of each bishop by at least two or three other bishops on behalf of the whole Church, and through the teaching and

¹¹ *Against Heresies* 3:24:1.

sacramental ministries performed by those in that succession. “. . . the Church . . . is” [and remains] “His Body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” as St. Paul the Apostle says (*Ephesians, 1:22-23*). There is a continuing Pentecost in the (Orthodox) Church. Each sacrament involves a calling upon the Holy Spirit and a Pentecostal outpouring, though the focus is not at the level of the emotions, but on something much deeper. Thus, it is not necessary for individuals to seek out the Holy Spirit and “baptism in the Holy Spirit” on their own initiative, nor to depend on certain strong feelings or extraordinary signs to confirm the Holy Spirit’s presence and working.

Sergius Bulgakov speaks of the Holy Spirit’s presence in the Church as follows:

The grace of the Holy Spirit given to the Church is not a personal, subjective inspiration of one or another person, which may exist or not; it is rather an objective fact in the life of the Church, the power of a universal Pentecost continuously active. The tongues of fire of Pentecost, sent down on the Apostles, live in the world and are communicated by the Apostles who received them to their successors.¹²

While Bulgakov does not deny that the Holy Spirit “blows where it wills” and is not therefore absent from those who are baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, though they may not be in the Orthodox Church, he does say the following, which seems to me, from my experience as a Protestant and my experience of the charismatic movement, basically true, though it may be a hard word for Protestants to embrace:

Such is the effect of the abolition of the apostolic succession in Protestantism. It has deprived the Protestant world of the gift of Pentecost, transmitted in the Sacraments, and the cult of the Church by the hierarchy, which received its power from the

¹² Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1978), p. 42.

Apostles and their successors. The Protestant world thus became like Christians who, although baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus," have not received the Holy Spirit transmitted by the hands of the Apostles (*Acts, 19:5-6*).¹³

This last Scripture passage referred to by Bulgakov is one of those used by Pentecostals and charismatic groups to show the need for a "second blessing" or "baptism in the Holy Spirit." Actually, in this situation, referred to by Bulgakov, the disciples whom the Apostle Paul met at Ephesus not only had not received the Holy Spirit when they believed, but had not even heard of Him. They had only received "John's baptism." So they were then baptized "in the name of Jesus" and received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands through the Apostle Paul and entered into full communion in the Church. They were thus able, through baptism and the laying on of hands, to participate in the Pentecostal life and blessings of the Church. This has been the pattern to this day in the Orthodox Church – Baptism, Chrismation, and participation in the Eucharistic communion – though the laying on of hands later became the anointing with special ointment, or "chrism," by the bishops who were successors to the Apostles. Chrismation is thus an "ordination" of all believers (in distinction from the ordination of clergy, which is still done by laying on of the hands of the bishop) for ministry in the Church and witness in the world. Despite some efforts to spread the charismatic movement within the Orthodox Church a number of decades ago, those efforts had very little impact.¹⁴ One major reason, in my opinion, is that there

¹³ Ibid., p.43. The word "cult" here might be found confusing by some. In this context it means the worship services and ceremonies of the Church.

¹⁴ A figure connected with this movement is Fr. Eusebius Stephanou. With a commendable view of encouraging spiritual renewal among Orthodox people, and drawing upon Orthodox saints such as St. Symeon the New Theologian and liturgical rites of the Orthodox Church, this writer, in my opinion, re-interprets them very much from within a Protestant charismatic perspective rather than from a thorough rootedness in Orthodox Tradition, and also takes only certain things from their teachings, and those out of the context needed for their proper understanding in the full teaching of such saints. For example, he quotes from St. Symeon re: baptism in the Holy Spirit, but fails to mention that St. Symeon says that few arrive at this exalted state, and then only after a most vigorous ascetic life and acquisition of virtues. Furthermore, what St. Symeon describes is something much different from the experience of "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" as described in the charismatic movement. Baptism in the Spirit, which St. Symeon understands to be an immersion

was already a fullness of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Church's life and experience and whole Tradition. If there was any lack, personally, one could simply enter into the life and discipline of the Church as it has always been, in order to know the fullness of the Spirit's working in one's life.

The Loss of the Holy Mystery of Chrismation which Follows Baptism

My experience through more than forty years within various branches of Protestantism was that there seemed to be a constant need to reform the Church, in fact a constant drive to restore the Church, to re-establish authentic New Testament Christianity according to various emphases. On the other hand, besides looking backward to restore what had been lost, and to re-create the New Testament Church and its experience, there was often also a constant looking for the next movement or trend or experience or teaching which would somehow resolve and fill up what was sensed to be lacking, and prove to be the key to the successful and satisfying spiritual life. It is interesting that in the Orthodox Church, when a new priest is ordained and the Holy Spirit is invoked, the Holy Spirit is described as the One "who heals what is broken and fills up what is lacking." It is significant that in most contexts Protestants, baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, are admitted to the Orthodox Church by Chrismation, which is described by many Orthodox writers as a personal Pentecost in the life

in the Holy Spirit, is neither achieved nor maintained by instant or repeated calling upon God, but only by full purification of heart and the moulding of our will completely to that of God. Fr. Stephanou's views on demonic influences and his notion of how one deals with them by prayers of exorcism, rather than by extended spiritual struggle for purity of heart, do not correspond with the description of how great saints like St. Anthony the Great, St. Seraphim of Sarov, or St. Silouan the Athonite overcame demonic attacks. The views put forward by Fr. Stephanou regarding dealing with the demonic, can, again in my opinion, be very misleading and, in fact, harmful. Also his view that health is a privilege of all Christians which can be claimed by them, is taken, in my opinion, from certain Protestant charismatic teachings, and is not Orthodox teaching. These views are found in various booklets which he has published. According to the most recent information which has been given to me, his publications may be obtained through St. Symeon the New Theologian Orthodox Renewal Center, 244 N. Holiday Road, Miramar Beach, FL 32550. These criticisms are not intended to discourage a thorough quest for the fullness of the Holy Spirit's working in our lives, but to guard against confusion and distortion of teaching on this matter in Orthodox Tradition.

of each Christian. Bulgakov says of the person who receives this sacrament of “the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit” that:

. . . he receives the gift of the Holy Spirit which is proper to him; he receives anew the glory inherent in the soul and body of the first Adam, lost after the fall (*Romans, 3:23*), the germ of transfiguration and the resurrection.¹⁵

Others, such as St. Seraphim of Sarov and Archpriest Alexander Schmemmann, say virtually the same thing about the reality of Baptism and Chrismation; that is, that Chrismation is a personal Pentecost, in which the Spirit lost by Adam is restored to each member of the Church,¹⁶ which Church bears the Pentecostal fullness continuously from her beginning. The Protestants who seek Pentecostal experience are right in believing that there is something more, something missing, but they assume that the Holy Spirit comes and goes in individuals as people seek Him. They do not consider that the Church herself is united with the Holy Spirit and hence contains all the means for acquisition of the Holy Spirit and conscious participation in His working by the members of the Body of Christ when they co-operate and live within the fullness of teaching and life of the Church. They take their own “churches” which are not apostolic,¹⁷ and have lost or added to much of the faith “once for all delivered [“traditioned” or “handed over”] to the saints” (*Jude, verse 3*), as norms for their knowledge of the Church and do not know about, or seriously consider, the Church which has a continuous life from the time of the apostles, with her full “life in the Spirit.”

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁶ See for St. Seraphim, p. 3 above, and for Fr. Alexander Schmemmann see his assertion that human beings are restored to the position of the first human being as prophets, priests and kings, in Chapter III “The Sacrament of the Holy Spirit” in *Of Water and the Spirit* (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974).

¹⁷ By “apostolic” here I mean having an uninterrupted experience of Pentecost from the time of the apostles.

Furthermore, deprived of the holy mystery of Chrismation, it is natural that they seek what it provides, the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit, in God's mercy does work among these people and in their assemblies, which I believe certainly happens (along with things which may not be of the Holy Spirit, or which become distorted by personal perspectives and lack of full theology grounded in the Tradition of the Church), the reality and power of the Holy Spirit as a sustained presence is not kept because its continuance is not based on the apostolic succession and communion with the fullness of the life of Christ in the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Nor is the whole structure and order and spirituality and way of life given in the Orthodox Church available to build life in the Spirit, but spiritual striving is based often on feelings and spectacle. Also it is not possible to keep the sustained presence of the Holy Spirit if it is not based on holiness and discipline in the Christian life, and the long-term formation of Christ-likeness in us through the development of virtues. It is often the case that the presence of the Holy Spirit in these groups is rather based on the quest for experiences, often self-centred, though expressed in religious or pious terms. What is of God may very easily become confused with what is of self (or even of the evil one), and the sobriety and perseverance and watchfulness and humility and teaching and asceticism and forms in which spiritual life may be strengthened, which are necessary for the spiritual struggle and sustained spiritual growth, are largely missing, along with regular participation in Christ in the Eucharist. I still remember my visit as a (Presbyterian) university student, to a new friend's "Holiness" Church. When a man stood up to say that he had received a second blessing and had acquired a state of holiness by it, I was astonished and then felt very sad, for I knew enough of the Christian life that this man was shortly going to have to encounter his own sinful thoughts and actions again, and be discouraged and confused, since the theology he espoused would not be able to make sense of his experience.

Furthermore, the Protestant world, while having many sincere and godly people, is also deprived of the true "saints," as examples and intercessors in the spiritual life. It is by their own teaching and

rejection of belief in such people who come to be transfigured by the Holy Spirit, that these churches deprive themselves of such examples of the accomplishment of the goal of the Christian life. These Saints, in every period of history and circumstance of life in Orthodoxy, demonstrate in tangible form how it is possible to acquire the Holy Spirit as an abiding presence, and how that true and full indwelling of the Holy Spirit manifests itself. This presence may be manifest in miraculous powers, but it is established and characterized by humility, love, and holiness of life, and knowing and doing the will of God. The Saints teach clearly that, while God may use sinful people through whom to work miracles and act in specific situations, this is most dangerous for the spiritually immature, often leading to spiritual delusion and pride, the most difficult sin from which to escape. At the same time, to be able even to raise the dead, or to be raised from the dead, is quite insignificant in relation to salvation, since these miracles are not necessarily related integrally to the transformation, in character and being, of the person through whom they are performed or who is the recipient of their action, nor do they guarantee perseverance in the way of life, without the full co-operation and spiritual development of the person.

One of the Saints declared that it is much greater benefit to be able to see one's sins (so that one can be humbled and can repent of those sins to one's salvation) than to be able to raise the dead. Of course there has been, within the Orthodox Church, a constant history of miraculous events and healings through the prayers of the saints, both with a capital "S" and a small "s," but they are understood within a very thorough framework for the spiritual life and in a spirit of great sobriety. The best treatment of which I know, regarding miraculous gifts and experiences, is the 15th "conference" of St. John Cassian with the desert fathers, written early in the 4th century. He explains very clearly and soberly the Orthodox understanding of the place of miraculous spiritual gifts in relation to salvation, both with regard to

those through whom they are exercised, and in regard to those who are recipients of them.¹⁸

Besides the loss of apostolic succession and communion with the fullness of Christ's life and that of the Spirit in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and the loss of the Holy Mystery of Chrismation, there has also been the loss in Protestantism, and even in Roman Catholicism, to a significant extent, of the integral relation of the sealing of the gift of the Holy Spirit in Chrismation, to Baptism and Holy Communion. The Roman Catholic Church, during the Middle Ages, separated Chrismation, or what came to be called "Confirmation" from Baptism, and made it a requirement (at an age when a person could clearly understand and consciously commit himself or herself), for participation in the Eucharist. Or else the rite of confirmation was celebrated after one was admitted to the Eucharist.¹⁹ Thus the "seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit" was not administered immediately after Baptism, and its purpose and meaning became altered. In the Orthodox Church anyone, including an infant, who is baptized, is also chrismated, and admitted to Holy Communion.

The mainline Protestants continued to separate baptism, at least for infants, from "confirmation" and the reception of the Eucharist, following the practice of the Roman Catholic Church.²⁰ More radical reformation groups, to which the Pentecostals are indebted for their views of Baptism, discarded infant Baptism completely as invalid, and therefore had no need for "confirmation," and treated adult Baptism and the Lord's Supper, not as Mysteries in which we participate in the

¹⁸ In *John Cassian: Conferences* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).

¹⁹ For a historical summary of the separation of baptism from Chrismation (Confirmation) and Communion, one may consult an essay by Fr. Thomas Hopko called "Children and Holy Communion: which is found in a collection of essays by Fr. Thomas, *All the Fullness of God* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982), pp. 129-147.

²⁰ There are some changes taking place where children are being given communion in some "mainline" Protestant Churches, though there is often not a thorough theological presentation, especially in relation to the historical practice of the Church from the beginning, of why this change is being implemented.

divine energies, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, but as primarily public declarations of our response to Christ's work of salvation, and dedication to follow Him. These rites then become centred exclusively on our human response, and not on the Divine grace given to us in them, with which we need to co-operate. Obviously the Pentecostal movement found something important lacking in this arrangement. Simply being "born again" in one's heart by faith, was not enough, and there was a felt need for experience of the Holy Spirit and some outward signs of His presence and power, both in relation to His initial "anointing" of believers, and also in relation to His continuing working in one's life. The Pentecostals filled these lacks, they believed, by a "second baptism" or "second blessing" or "baptism of the Holy Spirit" after being born again within. By prayers for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian believer, often connected with the "laying on of hands" by leaders or any "Spirit-filled" Christians, these "Pentecostals" or "charismatics" expected this "second baptism" to be accompanied often (or in many groups necessarily) by "speaking in tongues" or languages unknown to the user, as in *Acts* chapter 2 at Pentecost, and *1st Corinthians* chapters 12 and 14. This ability to pray in tongues is considered "praying in the Spirit" and is an ability which is usually assumed to continue permanently after one has received this blessing. Along with this emphasis, there is also in Pentecostal groups constant prayer for, and expectation of, miracles of healing and other clearly supernatural workings.

The Implications of the Doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son

A third explanation of the sense of the lack of the presence of the Holy Spirit, which some Western Christians have identified – a lack to which Pentecostalism is a response – is the addition to the Nicene Creed that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also "from the Son." The official addition of "and the Son" (*filioque* in Latin) by the Bishop of Rome around 1000 A.D., has been a major source of division between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church since the Great Schism which took place around the 11th century in the

Church. The Church had been essentially one to that point in history, and from the Orthodox standpoint, remained one, though the Roman Catholic West separated from it. The *filioque* may seem an obscure point of theology to some, a matter of words which have no application to reality, but many thoughtful spokespersons from within the Orthodox Church believe that this doctrine, which became widespread in the West, perhaps originally in part to exalt Christ and confirm His full deity against the Arian heresy which denied His deity, diminished the role and dignity of the Holy Spirit and clarity about His Personal workings in salvation and in the Church. These spokespersons within Orthodoxy point to alterations in the West to doctrines of the Church, its structure and worship, its understanding of salvation, and many practices which have developed over the succeeding centuries, which do not do full justice to the work of the Holy Spirit, in contrast to the East, where this work and presence of the Holy Spirit has always been very prominent.²¹ Also, things such as the supreme authority of the Pope of Rome indirectly, but very powerfully, undermined the need for the Holy Spirit's presence in the leading of the bishops and the whole Church into the fullness of the Truth on a continual basis, and hence, a distancing from constant invocation, and seeking of, the Spirit's working in our midst. Though many Pentecostals (and many other Protestants) may not even have heard of the *filioque*, and would scorn

²¹ Some of these spokespersons are Vladimir Lossky, Dumitru Staniloae, Archmandite Vasileos of the Holy Mountain, Bishop Kallistos Ware and Philip Sherrard, to name a few whose writings are accessible in English. It is not possible here to go into these implications of the *filioque* here. A list of some of the effects on various areas of the Church's life in Roman Catholicism of the acceptance of this doctrine, is given by Dumitru Staniloae in *Theology and the Church* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), p. 107. There are also some writers within Orthodoxy who do not agree with the assessment of those mentioned above, such as Constantine Tsirpanlis, "Pneumatology in the Eastern Church" in *Greek Patristic Theology: Basic Doctrines in Eastern Church Fathers*, vol. 1. New York: C. N. Tsirpanlis, 1979, p.99 (for the whole article, see pp. 98-106), but I definitely agree with the former and more numerous spokespersons. An irenic, but nevertheless very clear delineation of the scope of differences, based in different ways of living and understanding the faith, between Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholicism, is given in *From the Bishop's Desk: Writings of Vladyka Seraphim of Canada* (Montreal, Quebec, Canada: Alexander Press, 2004), pp. 157-172.

A review of the history of the *filioque* and the dialogue regarding it between Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity in North America, entitled "The *Filioque*: A Church-Dividing Issue" (October, 2003) can be found at <<http://www.usccb.org/seia/dialogues.htm>>

what they regard as quibbles over doctrine and words in light of the reality and power of spiritual experience, and though they would say they have repudiated Roman Catholicism, they are nevertheless, in large part connected with, and a response to, the difficulties of Western Christianity over the ages.

The Pentecostal response is a legitimate recognition of something missing in Western Christianity. However, not being in touch with, or in communion with, the Church which has continued to hold the fullness of the faith, Pentecostals have developed on their own, in a seeking of what was lacking, in large part unaware of a fuller and more comprehensive understanding and continuous experience of the Holy Spirit's working in the Church and in salvation throughout the ages. I know personally of one situation where a Pentecostal pastor, who began reading and exploring the Fathers and Orthodox theology, introduced into the worship of his parish the so-called Nicene Creed from the one, undivided Church of the fourth century, without the much later addition of the *filioque*. He eventually entered the Orthodox Church.

An Orthodox Response to the Quest for Experience of the Holy Spirit

Orthodoxy has a real mission in our world to respond to this hunger for personal experience of God's working in people's lives and to make people aware that the Holy Spirit abides in the Orthodox Church, in her hierarchy, her holy mysteries, her services, her saints and her members. Pentecostals and charismatics, sometimes whole parishes, have converted to the Orthodox faith, and, along with other Christians who have entered the Orthodox Church, do not find the experience of the Holy Spirit in Orthodoxy to be unknown or foreign to them, but rather in Orthodoxy it is sustained and rooted in a fullness of the spiritual life and proper understanding which is not present in the heterodox groups of which they were previously a part. For example, Fr. Charles Bell, now an Orthodox priest, described in his

book *Discovering the Rich Heritage of Orthodoxy*,²² the previous charismatic Protestant parish of which he was a pastor, and the journey of a large part of that parish into the Orthodox Church. He said that groups such as theirs prided themselves on not being among those whom the apostle Paul described as having “the form of religion, but not the power,” such as more “institutionalized” churches with more formal rituals. He said that they began to realize, as they encountered Orthodox Christianity, that form and power go together, and that to progress in holiness we need the forms, structures, practices and especially the Holy Mysteries of the Orthodox Church. Water simply poured out on the ground flows away and disappears, but water directed through a pipe under pressure has great power.

As a previous Protestant, with experience in a number of different forms of Protestantism, including significant personal acquaintance with charismatic and Pentecostal experiences such as speaking in tongues, I would say the same about my transition from Protestantism to Orthodoxy. While there is such a major shift in understanding and orientation and experience in entering the Orthodox faith, that it may be spoken of as a conversion, there is also definite continuity of belief in and experience of life in Christ. Spiritual life in Protestantism was a bit like continually trying to fill a sieve (or leaky cistern) with water, which always left one seeking a new experience of God’s presence to renew the fading reality, rather than adding to spiritual life, and being gradually filled with the Spirit in a steady progress in the spiritual life. I was asked by friends if I felt any different after my Chrismation and entry into the Orthodox Church. I said that I felt rooted and grounded in the Church of Jesus Christ, as on a rock which could not be moved.

The Pentecostal goal of pursuing the fullness of life in the Spirit is, in my opinion a thoroughly Orthodox concern. In a companion article for the next issue of this *Journal* I shall go on to claim that

²² Charles Bell, *Discovering the Rich Heritage of Orthodoxy*, Minneapolis, Minnesota: Light and Life Publishing, 1994.

Pentecostal concerns regarding seeking the fullness of the Holy Spirit are legitimate concerns, in fact Orthodox concerns, and may be used as a challenge to Orthodox Christians to embrace this aspect of their life in Christ. The focus of that article will be on the richness of the means by which each one may seek, and hopefully acquire, the fullness of the Holy Spirit within Orthodox Christian Tradition. The article will centre on teaching from the great saints of the Church, who achieved the goal of “acquisition of the Holy Spirit,” and therefore speak with authority from their experience. I would encourage responses to these articles, both personally by e-mail or in articles for the *Journal*, as part of a comparative theology theme in current Canadian context, which may be developed within the *Journal*.

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