

**The Spirit and the Church:  
Pauline Perspectives on the Holy Spirit,  
the Contemporary Church, and a Postmodern World.**

***“That was then, This is now”***

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*If we are going to count for much in the  
post-modern world in which we now live,  
the Spirit must remain key to the Church's existence.*

Gordon Fee

**Introduction:**

Perhaps no other contemporary Evangelical theologian has written more on topics related to the Holy Spirit in recent years than Gordon D. Fee. In his massive work on the Holy Spirit entitled, *God's Empowering Presence*, Fee gives careful and responsible treatment to virtually every Pauline reference related to the Holy Spirit. In addition to this exhaustive treatment, Fee has also authored several smaller works related to the Holy Spirit's role in hermeneutics (*Listening to the Spirit in the Text*), and His relationship to the Church (*Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*). Furthermore, Fee authored the recent commentary on 1 Corinthians in the NICNT series in which he included several excursi on topics related to the Holy Spirit. Of particular interest is his treatment of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts in chapters 12 – 14 of his commentary. The reader should be aware that Fee does not take a cessationist position when it comes to the sign gifts, tongues in particular. Perhaps this is due in part to his old-line Pentecostal roots. However, it must be observed that Fee is among those rare individuals who present the case for the continuing presence of the sign gifts by attempting to handle the textual evidence responsibly. While I disagree with his conclusions, I do respect his attempt to handle the exegetical material in a responsible and fair manner.

Interestingly, Fee has also devoted considerable attention to the recent philosophical phenomenon known as Postmodernism. As a theologian, Fee has a strong interest in Pauline Pneumatology. As a contemporary philosopher, Fee has become a ranking expert on the Postmodern world-view. These two seemingly divergent interests intersect for Fee in his understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in the two specific areas: 1) hermeneutics, and 2) ecclesiology (specifically the Spirit's connection and role to the People of God). I addressed the first issue in earlier presentation. This presentation will deal primarily with the second area of interest to Fee: the relationship between Pneumatology, Postmodernism, and the contemporary Church. Much of the material in this presentation will reflect Fee's thinking as expressed in one of the concluding chapters of his book, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God* published in 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers.

## **I. Pauline Perspectives on the Spirit – *How it was Then***

Fee contends that as a whole, the experience and life of the Holy Spirit were much more central in the early Church than what seems to be the case in the contemporary Evangelical Church. Believers in the first century seemed to experience the Spirit in a more dynamic and genuine way than do believers in the modern and post-modern age.

Of the several factors that have contributed to this shift, three are perhaps most significant. First, Pneumatology was not a primary theological focus during the Reformation or the period that followed. The Reformation placed theological emphasis on justification and specifically on the work of Christ in procuring the atonement. While the role of the Holy Spirit was never denied, He was not given as much theological attention as were the other two members of the Trinity. This is evidenced in the paucity of written material on Pneumatology from that period. When the topic of Pneumatology was addressed, it often was in connection inspiration and inerrancy. Only recently have Evangelical theologians turned attention and energy toward developing a full-orbed theology of the Holy Spirit. Second, many conservative Evangelical theologians have been somewhat reluctant in regard to the Holy Spirit due to the excesses that are witnessed on almost a daily basis. Almost all the modern treatments on this topic are written on the popular level by non-theologians who for the most part add to the confusion and excess. Thankfully in recent years, there has been a concerted effort to deal with this area of theology by Evangelical theologians such as Millard Erickson (on the Trinity), Wayne Grudem (Systematic Theology), and Gordon Fee (Pauline Pneumatology). Finally, Modernism's rationalistic aversion to all things supernatural may have subtly permeated the thinking of Evangelicalism to a greater extent than initially realized. While most conservative theologians defend the supernatural elements of Scripture (inspiration, miracles, the virgin birth, the resurrection), often the Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent associated with these supernatural events. Surprisingly, He is given very little attention in comparison to the other two members of the Trinity.

As a result, although the contemporary Evangelical Church has the same doctrinal position on Pneumatology as did the early Church, they do not have the same appreciation and dynamic experience of the Holy Spirit as did this early community of believers. The Holy Spirit was a very real personal presence in the early Church. They experienced a dynamic relationship with the Holy Spirit that the contemporary Church seems almost uncomfortable even talking about. For Fee, the answer can be found in surveying Paul's theological understanding of the Holy Spirit. By identifying the core elements of Paul's understanding of the Holy Spirit and His relationship to the Church, the modern Evangelical Church will discover a theological roadmap leading the way forward to what the early Church experienced back then in their relationship to the Spirit.

**A. Paul saw the Spirit as the Key to the Christian Experience**

While Fee acknowledges that Paul's theology is Christocentric, he hastens to add that the Spirit is ever present throughout. In fact, the Spirit is given a leading role in almost every aspect of Pauline theology. The Spirit has a key role in making Christ known and in empowering all genuine Christian life and experience. Rather than downplaying the place of the Holy Spirit, Paul reveals that the early Church viewed Him as having a much greater and prominent role in their lives (corporate and individual) than does the contemporary Church.

**B. Paul viewed the Spirit as God Breaking into Our Lives**

Both Paul's direct and passing references to the work of the Holy Spirit presuppose the Spirit as an empowering, experienced reality in the life of the Church and the believer.

This was much more than a theological proposition to which believers gave assent; rather, it was a dynamic relational reality. It was in part the abuse of this experienced relationship that Paul was correcting in his first letter to the Corinthian assembly. Paul used the relationship between the Thessalonians and the Holy Spirit to remind them of the reality of their conversion (I Thessalonians 1:4-6). For Paul, this relationship was prime evidence that life in Christ was based on faith apart from the Law (Galatians 3:1-5). This relationship with the Holy Spirit lay behind Paul's commands in 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22, and it served as confirmation of Paul's ministry as an apostle (1 Corinthians 2:4-5; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Romans 15:18-19). The reality of this relationship was why Paul could argue for the sufficiency of life in the Spirit (Galatians 5:13-6:10).

God did not leave us to attempt to live the Christian life on our own. Through the indwelling and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, God breaks into our lives in a dynamic way – the Spirit in us is in fact God with us.

**C. Paul considered the Spirit as the Evidence and Guarantee of Future Glory**

Fee argues that the coming of the Spirit was the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises. Obviously this is not how we would understand the Spirit's coming as Dispensationalists. However, there is no question that the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost had eschatological significance. Furthermore, the arrival of the Spirit combined with the establishment of the New Covenant ushered in an age where there is no doubt the Holy Spirit plays a central role.

In this age, the Holy Spirit is the assurance both that God has fulfilled certain of the Old Testament promises related to redemption and that He will fulfill the remaining promises left for Israel. The Holy Spirit functions as the guarantor of that final coming glory.

#### **D. Paul held that the Spirit is God Dwelling in and among Us**

For Paul, the Spirit is the fulfillment of God's promise to come and dwell among His people. The Spirit marks off God's people individually and corporately as God's temple, the place of His dwelling on earth in this age.

Paul uses the following Old Testament images/themes to serve as evidence that the promised presence of God has been fulfilled with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

- a. The theme of the presence of God expressed in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple imagery.
- b. The Old Testament references, predictions, and promises related to the role, power, and promised presence of the "Spirit of the Lord."
- c. The promised of a new covenant of the Spirit in both Jeremiah and Ezekiel where God promises to put a new heart in His people, grant a new power, and be personally present with them to cause them to live in and follow His ways.

For Paul, the coming of the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of these themes and promises. Paul generally avoids impersonal imagery when talking about the Holy Spirit. His use of personal imagery and verbs of personal action used elsewhere of God the Father and Christ all confirm that for Paul, the Spirit was a real person – the third member of the Trinity.

#### **E. For Paul, the Spirit is "God Very God"**

The Trinity was a foundational pillar in Paul's theology. While there is no "open" discussion related to the Trinity, the following four presuppositions abound in Paul's letters.

- a. God is one and personal
- b. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and is therefore also personal
- c. The Spirit and Christ are both fully divine
- d. The Spirit is as distinct from Christ and the Father as they are from each other

#### **F. Paul saw the Spirit as Salvation Made Effective**

Paul saw salvation as God's activity from start to end. In saying this, Paul had in mind all the members of the Godhead. Salvation in Pauline thinking was thoroughly Trinitarian.

God the Father initiated it in His eternal purpose and to the praise of His eternal glory (1 Corinthians 2:6-9; Ephesians 1). As such, it has both its origins and its ultimate end in God (1 Corinthians 8:6), and it was set in motion by God in that He sent forth both the Son and the Spirit (Galatians 4:4-7).

Christ the Son accomplished salvation through his death and resurrection and it was effectively applied in the lives of believers through the work of the Spirit. At salvation, God poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior (Titus 3:6). When Paul talks about the conversion experience of believers in his letters, he usually does so in terms of the Spirit's activity or presence.

#### **G. Paul believed the Spirit Constituted a Called People**

Paul also teaches that God has formed a new community of people for His name – namely the Church. They were constituted as a people through the death and resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Spirit. They enter into this community individually by faith in Christ. The Spirit plays an integral part in this spiritual process.

Formed by the Spirit, New Testament believers are God's family as evidenced by the Spirit's crying Abba from their hearts. They are God's temple, the place where He dwells on earth through the abiding presence of His Spirit. They form Christ's body and are baptized into this body by their common lavish experience of the one Spirit of God. They have received spiritual gifts from God administered through and by the Spirit for the mutual edification of the common body and for the effective work of the ministry.

#### **H. Paul understood the Spirit as Righteousness Made Possible**

For Paul, the Christian life has an accompanying corollary – a holy life. There is no true Christian living that is not also holy living. This holy life expressed in holy conduct is made possible by the Holy Spirit from start to finish. By the Spirit the believer is empowered to abound in hope, to live in joy, to pray without ceasing, to exercise self-control, to experience a pure conscience, and to endure all conceivable hardships and sufferings. To be a genuine believer means to live in and by the Spirit.

The Spirit empowers ethical living in every dimension – individually and corporately. Believers in Christ are “Spirit people” and thus are described in Pauline literature as people who live by the Spirit, are led by the Spirit, bear the fruit of the Spirit, and sow ethically to the Spirit. In short, practical ethics (Romans 14:17) is life in and by the Spirit!

## **I. Paul viewed the Spirit as the Key to Christian Worship**

Finally, the Spirit is at the center of all true spiritual worship and activity. It is by means of the gifts of the Spirit that believers are able to mutually edify one another. It is through the Spirit's intercession that believers are aided in proper prayer. The Spirit illuminates the believer's mind to rightly understand the Word of God, and then provides the power to live in the light of that message. Both in private and public worship, the Spirit plays a vital role in making our worship acceptable.

## **II. Contemporary Perspectives on the Spirit – *How it is Now***

### **A. The Spirit has been De-personalized in Contemporary Theology**

Fee notes that, "Paul's understanding of the Spirit is ultimately a matter of lived-out faith. The experience of the Spirit was how the early believers came to receive the salvation that Christ had brought, and how they came to understand themselves as living at the beginning of the end times. For them, the Spirit was both the evidence that God's great future for his people had already made its way into the present and the guarantee that God would conclude what he had begun in Christ. Thus the Spirit is the foundational to their entire experience and understanding of their present life in Christ." (*The Spirit, the Church, and the People of God*, p. 2).

Dispensational concerns aside, what is clear from the above statement is that for Paul, life in the Spirit was the very essence of faith. This was not an academic theological premise to be articulated in creedal belief – it was a theological truth to be dynamically experienced.

However, in recent centuries, modern believers have managed to keep the central focus and dynamic relationship with Christ theologically intact, but theologically the modern Church has been less sure about the Holy Spirit. While believers sing about Him, and affirm Him in creeds and doctrinal statements, He has been confined to prepositional theology.

Most Christians do not understand the personhood of the Holy Spirit nor do they experience a meaningful relationship with Him. The concept of being "filled" with the Spirit has perhaps created a view of the Spirit that has depersonalized Him and helped to create the warped view that he is a "power" or an "energy force" that fills us much like fuel fills and drives an engine.

The term "ghost" ascribed to Him has probably not helped matters. Most contemporary individuals do not think of ghosts or the spirit world in positive and relational terms.

All of this is not to say that the Spirit is not present in the Church or in believers– the Scriptures confirm His constant presence. However, for many contemporary believers, He is not an experienced reality.

Modern theology has given little attention if any to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit until very recently. When we do give theological attention to the Spirit, we have tended to focus more on His activity and work than on His nature and person. Our understanding of positional justification and sanctification have at times overshadowed the progressive aspects of these same doctrines. Since it is in the progressive aspects of justification and sanctification that we most experience the dynamic relationship with the Spirit, our lack of attention to these areas has led us to marginalize the Spirit theologically.

The net result of these combined reasons is the depersonalization of the third Person of the Godhead.

## **B. The Spirit has been Domesticated by the Contemporary Evangelical Church**

This theological marginalizing of the Spirit has had serious consequences in the contemporary Church. Because we have reduced Him to creedal status, many contemporary Churches only experience the Spirit in terms of theological statements, doctrinal or creedal expression, or in singing.

Furthermore, He has been reduced to the role of the “power” or “fuel” for ministry. In some quarters of the contemporary Church, He is sought after as the solution to greater power and effectiveness in ministry rather than as an individual member of the God-head to be related to in the same way the Church relates to God the Father and God the Son.

Others, rejecting the excess in some Churches in the name of the Spirit, have avoided the Spirit altogether or at best; have approached His involvement in the life and worship of the Church with suspicion, fear, and apprehension. Phrases like “led by the Spirit,” “life in the Spirit,” “praying in the Spirit” and “in the power of the Spirit” have been judiciously removed from our public expressions lest we be misunderstood, or worse – lest we unwittingly unleash an over emotional, seemingly irrational expression of “spirit driven worship” in the worship (corporate and private) of the Body.

All of this has happened for good reasons. There have been gross excesses in the Church that have been defended in the name of the Holy Spirit. However, the ensuing reaction has resulted in a truncated view of the Spirit – a view that has robbed the contemporary Church of the very thing that was so essential for Paul and the early believers, namely an experienced life in the Spirit.

### **C. The Spirit has been Devalued by the Individual Believer**

Not only has life in the Spirit been marginalized by the Church at large, He has been devalued by the individual believer. This devaluation has come about as a result of four things. First, there has been a lack of comprehensive teaching related to the Holy Spirit in the community of believers. Many individuals sincerely believe that the Holy Spirit is the third member of the Godhead and that He is somehow connected to baptism, gifts, and tongues. However, that pretty much is the extent of their knowledge when it comes to the Holy Spirit. It is very difficult to have a dynamic relationship experience with someone about whom you know very little.

Second, the Spirit was an experienced reality in the early community because the greater part of them had come to Christ as adults and had recently experienced the Holy Spirit coming into their lives. The dynamic life transformation produced in them by Him was further evidence of the reality of their experience with Him. However, the modern church has been populated by believers who were saved as children and who for the most part have never experienced the radical life change that was experienced by those who come to Christ as adults. While we can be thankful that these young converts were spared from the effects of personal sin action, we should also realize that this blessing on the one hand has led to a truncated view of the Spirit on the other hand.

Third, some contemporary believers have devalued the Holy Spirit in their misguided attempts to exalt Him. In claiming to live by the Spirit, very often the things they claim the Spirit has led them to do are in direct conflict or outright contradictions with things the same Holy Spirit inspired in Scripture. This view devalues the Holy Spirit in the sense that it presents a Spirit that is either unable to or unconcerned about maintaining any consistency what He states in the Scripture. In divorcing the Spirit from the Word, believers actually devalue the Spirit they claim to exalt.

Finally, some believers devalue the Spirit by misunderstanding His role and place in the progressive sanctification of their lives. They either embrace a form of legalistic Christianity that depends almost exclusively on them (although token statements are made about the Spirit); or they stop any personal attempt to live in holiness and claim that it is “all of God and His Spirit and none of us.” Since we have no power to live in holiness, we will simply wait until the Spirit chooses to change us. These believers commit a grave error and in the process devalue the true nature and power of the Spirit.

#### **D. The Spirit has been Depreciated by the Postmodern World**

Jesus observed that when the Spirit arrived He would have a powerful function in the world – that of reproofing the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). This was certainly true on many occasions in the life and experience of the early Church. Two examples will suffice. Acts 4 reveals the role that the Spirit played in reproofing the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment in the account of Peter and John standing before the Sanhedrin for righteousness sake. Furthermore, the Spirit’s revelation and subsequent action with regard to the sin of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 was done before the “world” and consequently, many feared. Upon seeing both the judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira and the signs and wonders done by the Apostles in the power of the Spirit, many of them believed (Acts 5:11-14). A second example of the Spirit activity of convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment is seen in Paul’s testimony before Felix in Acts 24:25. So powerful was this reproof that Felix trembled and begged Paul to depart and come again at a more convenient time.

Sadly, the world no longer trembles at the reproof of the Spirit. This sad state has not come about simply because the world has progressed in hardness and wickedness – it has always been wicked and hard of heart. Rather it has come about as believers have become increasingly more like the world they are to reprove by the Spirit. When the unbelievers see believers adopting the values, activities, and lifestyle of the world around them, then they have no real reason to value the Spirit that indwells these worldly believers.

Furthermore, instead of witnessing the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit through Spirit empowered saints and experiencing the accompanying “fear” that Felix felt, the world has witnessed all manner of wicked behavior and foolish activity all done by believers and often done in the name of the Holy Spirit. The laughing revival, the ecstatic utterances, the opulent and often sinful excess of believers are often justified as “the leading of the Spirit.” No wonder the watching world senses no conviction or no fear. This certainly is not the Holy Spirit of the New Testament. None-the-less, these abuses combined with the worldly behavior of the church have caused the unsaved to deprecate the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the world itself.

### **III. Future Perspectives on the Spirit – *How will it be Tomorrow***

So where does all of this lead? What lies ahead for Evangelical theology in regard to the Holy Spirit? While Fee does not address this particular issue in his work, there are some obvious conclusions that can be drawn from what he has said. Evangelical theology must address at least five major areas related to the Spirit in the coming days if we are to chart a sound and Biblical Pneumatology for the Church living in a Postmodern world.

## **A. The Spirit and the Word**

Theology must address the recent developments in relationship to the Holy Spirit's role in both hermeneutics and homiletics. It is no longer sufficient to rest in the belief that the battle for the Bible is over and won. The battle has resurfaced and Postmodern theologians are making subtle but significant shifts in areas related to inspiration, hermeneutics, and homiletics that do not bode well for the Biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in these areas.

A new generation of apologists are needed – apologists for the person, nature, and role of the Spirit. The new openness to certain developments that have arisen to replace the old theories of Higher Criticism (narrative criticism and reader response criticism as examples) combined with a move away from propositional truth and toward image driven truth indicate that conservative Evangelical theologians will soon have a battle on their hands. One of the main arenas of the fight will be understanding the Spirit role in the new hermeneutic.

## **B. The Spirit and Worship**

The contemporary emphasis on worship has created a new interest and focus on the Spirit. Unfortunately, the lack of theological understanding on the part of most worshippers has led (and will continue to lead) the Church at large into a precarious and shallow view of the Holy Spirit.

Additionally, there has been a distinct move away from corporate and controlled worship to a more spontaneous and individual expression of worship. Praise has replaced proclamation as the center of much contemporary worship. Singing is rapidly replacing preaching as the medium of biblical communication and instruction. While there is little doubt that the biblical role of singing did include instruction; the content of much of what is being sung in praise and worship is appallingly shallow in theological content. Furthermore, the worship of the contemporary Church has become increasingly infiltrated by the values and mediums of the surrounding culture. This has resulted in the unconverted feeling as comfortable with the Church as they do with the world. Much of this is done in the name of the Spirit or with the Spirit as its focus. This has grave ramifications for the future of Evangelical Pneumatology.

## **C. The Spirit and Spiritual Warfare**

Postmodernism's new openness to the "spiritual world" has opened the door for a host of errors and excesses in the Christian community related to the Holy Spirit. It is becoming more common to hear of new strategies by which the Church can bind Satan, demons, and territorial spirits all in the name of Christ and through the power of the Spirit.

An increasingly detailed understanding of the spirit world has been fleshed out by some Christian communities extending far beyond anything revealed in the Bible. Believers are increasingly exhorted to seize the power that is available to them in the Spirit and to go to war against the “gates of Hell”.

Another aspect in this area facing Evangelical theology is the renewed emphasis on the continuation of the sign gifts for believers of all ages. The Church as a whole as well as individual believers are being encouraged again to seek to recover the missing or lost gifts. The lack of power and the worldliness of the Church are explained as the result of the loss of these gifts from the contemporary Church. There is a new emphasis on experiencing the Spirit in a dynamic and fresh way, but the modern presentation of dynamic experienced Spirit life are very different than that which Paul described in his letters.

#### **D. The Spirit and the Gospel**

Postmodernism’s foundational commitments to relativism and pluralism have grave ramifications for almost every area of soteriology. There is a new openness to Christianity and the Gospel on the part of modern society, but their idea of the gospel is very different from the exclusive gospel of the New Testament. Since the Spirit plays a pivotal role in every area related to soteriology, these new shifts will by nature affect the future understanding of His role by the believing community.

Furthermore, Postmodernism’s commitment to radical individualism will have major implications for the communal life of the Body. The unity and common life of the Church is directly tied to the Spirit’s ministry. In the future, discussions related to the Spirit’s baptism, gifts, and empowerment for service will all be areas of possible debate given the radical commitment to individualism pervasive in Postmodern thinking.

Finally, new thinking related to sanctification lies ahead for the Evangelical community. There are rising debates between those who hold strongly to the experiential side of progressive sanctification and those who focus more on the positional truth of sanctification. All of this will affect the Church’s view of Pneumatology in the future.

#### **E. The Spirit and the Future -- Eschatology**

A final area of potential debate relates to the Spirit and the future. With interest in covenant theology on the rise, believers will need to prepare for the coming trend to rethink much of the Spirit’s role in eschatology. Progressive Dispensationalists have increasingly blurred the distinction between Israel and the Church and have adopted the “already-not-yet” eschatology of Ladd. This will have ramifications related to certain works of the Spirit that are clearly tied to the coming of the kingdom. If in fact, the promised Old Testament kingdom has

already been inaugurated, then on what basis are the gifts, signs, and wonders that accompany the inauguration of that kingdom prohibited by the contemporary church? The cessationist position with regard to certain spiritual gifts will come under increasing attack in the future.

Furthermore, the debate over the openness of God has brought the nature and role of prophetic utterance into serious question. As the Holy Spirit is directly involved in prophetic utterance, these new questions will eventually have major implications for the understanding of His role both in prophetic speech and ultimately in inspiration.

## **Conclusion:**

Having begun with Fee's own words, it seems only appropriate to end this discussion by letting him have the last word.

*“If the church is going to be effective in our post-modern world, we need to stop paying mere lip service to the Spirit and to recapture Paul’s perspective: The Spirit as the experienced, empowering return of God’s own personal presence in and among us, who enables us to live as a radically eschatological people in the present world while we await the consummation. All the rest, including fruits and gifts . . . serve to that end.*

*Hence I offer this ‘invitation’ to read Paul afresh, to recognize the crucial role of the Spirit in his life and thought, and in that of his churches. Such a reading, I insist, must be thoroughly exegetical . . . and fully theological, to see how the Spirit fits into the bigger picture of things Pauline. This fresh reading of Paul will make clear that for him the presence of the Spirit, as an experienced and living reality, was the crucial matter for Christian life, from beginning to end.” (Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God, p. xv)*

How is this to be accomplished on a practical level? Fee offers three final suggestions as a way forward. First, we need the Spirit to bring life into our present institution, theologies, and liturgies. The answer is not necessarily tearing down the structures we have, but rather asking the Spirit of God to revive and revitalize them. Second, we need to recapture a genuine understanding of Paul's theological understanding of the Holy Spirit and then we need to experience that understanding as he and the early Church experienced Him. Finally, as we live out our theology of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives, this dynamic life of the Spirit will result in a more effective evangelism of the lost and thereby breathe fresh life into existing communities of believers.