VALUE FORMATION AND THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE WRITINGS OF J. RODMAN WILLIAMS

Paul W. Lewis

Introduction

One of the important dynamics within the discussion of pneumatology is the development of person in term of ethics and values. Yet frequently this focus within theological treatises is not always noted. The purpose of this paper is to look at the work of one such Charismatic theologian, J. (John) Rodman Williams, through the lens of the Holy Spirit’s working in the formation of values.

There will be five sections in this discussion of value formation and the Holy Spirit after a brief background of J. Rodman Williams. The first section will delineate Williams' theological locus of authority. The following three sections will be based upon the three avenues of the Spirit's activity in the formation of the person: the self, the community, and the Bible. Then, there will be a consolidation of the material and a discussion of Williams' salient points for this essay. ¹

Background on J. Rodman Williams

One of the most prominent theologians within the Charismatic movement is John Rodman Williams. Williams started his theological training at Emory University and later received his A.B. from Davidson

College in 1939. In 1943 he received his B.D. and a year later his Th.M. at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. In 1943 he was ordained by the Presbyterian church of the United States. From 1944 to 1946 Williams served as a chaplain in the United States Naval Reserves among the Marine Corps in New York. From 1949 to 1952 he was the associate Professor of Philosophy at Beloit College in Wisconsin. From 1952 to 1959 he was pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Rockford, Illinois. While in Illinois he completed his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary (New York). In 1959 he was appointed as the Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion at Austin Presbyterian Seminary in Austin, Texas where he remained until 1972. It was at Austin Presbyterian Seminary in 1965 that he became an active member of the Charismatic renewal in the United States. In this capacity, he became an early President of the International Presbyterian Charismatic Communion, and was a leader of several Charismatic conferences in Europe. He demonstrated his ecumenical perspective by participating in several years of Vatican-Pentecostal dialogues and by being a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. In 1972 Williams became the founding President and Professor of Christian Doctrine at Melodyland School of Theology in Anaheim, California. This graduate and undergraduate school was set up to promote Charismatic and ecumenical principles within an evangelical setting.

---


later he left Anaheim to become the Professor of Theology at CBN University (now Regent University) in Virginia, and he has filled this position up until the present. In 1985 he became the President of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, and has continued to support this organization as an active member. His most influential work, the three volume *Renewal Theology*, was published from 1988 to 1992. It was written specifically from a Charismatic perspective. His impact as an evangelical theologian was noted inasmuch as he has been included in the *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*. Williams continued to teach at Regent University until 2001 and was named ‘Professor of Renewal Theology Emeritus’ in 2002. On October 18, 2008, J. Rodman Williams passed away in Virginia.

Williams' theological career fits into three chronological periods: the pre-Charismatic period (up until 1965), the early Charismatic period (1965-82), and the later Charismatic period (1982-present). From his completion of his formal theological education until 1965, his major articles were for Presbyterian publications such as *Thy Will, My Will*, or *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition*. During this period of time, his works tended to be devotional and non-Charismatic.

---


5 Noted previously, and reaccessed April 24, 2012. http://www.regent.edu/acad/schdiv/faculty_staff/williams_r.shtml

Williams' most important work of this period, *Contemporary Existentialism and Christian Faith*, was strongly influenced by Williams' background under the teaching of Paul Tillich at Union Theological Seminary (New York). In this work, he discusses the existential issues of truth, humanity, God, death, anxiety and existence, while also evaluating them from the perspective of his Reformed tradition.  

Williams was truly a theological child of his age. His dissertation, "The Doctrine of the 'Imago Dei' in Contemporary Theology: A Study in Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Reinhard Niebuhr, and Paul Tillich," and his book, *Contemporary Existentialism and Christian Faith*, discuss the *imago dei* and existential concepts by analyzing and critiquing the prominent contemporary philosophical and theological thinkers from earlier in this century.

The great watershed event of Williams' theological career was his entrance into the Charismatic movement in November of 1965. Williams, in the first semester of 1965, was the visiting theologian in

---


Tainan Theological College in Taiwan. He was also writing a book on systematic theology, in which he hesitated before writing the chapter on the Holy Spirit. Through these events Williams had a growing feeling of spiritual emptiness and impotence, which led to months of prayer, soul searching, and seeking after God. After much prayer, during the week of Thanksgiving in 1965 he sensed the overwhelming reality of the Holy Spirit in his life. He started to speak in tongues, which was both unexpected and shocking. He had previously not given any value to glossolalia or speaking in tongues, and earlier had even rewritten some of his lectures to counter the Charismatic movement at Austin Presbyterian Seminary. Through this experience, he received a new awareness of the reality of God and considered this experience a powerful revelation from God. Since that time, he has provided leadership for the Charismatic movement from Austin Presbyterian Seminary until 1972, and from 1972 to 1982 he served as President and Professor at Melodyland Theological Seminary. His works in this period focused on the theological and historical precedent for the activity of the Holy Spirit, and on what was called in Charismatic circles the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit." His discussions frequently included the charismata, or gifts of the Spirit, and in particular, the volatile issue of speaking in tongues. During this

---


period (1965-82), Williams wrote several articles and essays on the Charismatic movement for the non-Charismatic populace, while also writing several significant works for the Charismatic audience.\textsuperscript{12}


\textsuperscript{13}J. Rodman Williams, \textit{The Era of the Spirit} (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971), hereafter \textit{ES}. 
book of this period was *The Pentecostal Reality*, published in 1972. It was a series of essays written over the previous few years on various Charismatic and pneumatological topics.\(^{14}\) Williams also published his third work, *10 Teachings*, in 1974. This book, privately printed earlier in 1957, Williams revised for general publication. It is, essentially, short summations of his teachings on ten theological topics (e.g. sin, the Holy Spirit).\(^{15}\) The fourth book, *The Gift of the Holy Spirit Today*, published in 1980, was intended to look at the form and expression of the Holy Spirit found in the early church, and then to compare it to the contemporary Christian experience of the Spirit. From this analysis Williams articulated an in-depth discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit within the world and, in particular, in humanity.\(^{16}\)

The third phase of his theological career started with his move to CBN University in Virginia Beach, Virginia (now Regent University) as Professor of Theology. His most significant theological contribution from this period is his three volume systematic theology entitled *Renewal Theology*, which was published from 1988 to 1992. In these books he covered the traditional topics of systematic theology. The topic of the Holy Spirit covered nine chapters of his second volume. He wrote his systematic theology from a combined Charismatic and Reformed Perspective.\(^{17}\)

Another feature of this period was Williams’ discussion on the role of the Holy Spirit in understanding eschatology. Williams emphasizes that without the Holy Spirit and the scripture, the interpretation and the

---


\(^{15}\) J. Rodman Williams, *10 Teachings* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1974); see also Williams, *Renewal Theology 1*, 12.


comprehension of eschatology is impossible. During this period Williams has been a leading contributor to the Society for Pentecostal Studies and Charismatic periodicals, as well as to the Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements and the Evangelical Dictionary of Theology. Williams has continued to discuss many of the same concerns that he did in the earlier Charismatic period, such as the basics in Pentecostal/Charismatic theology, and the various aspects of the Holy Spirit.


There are three general features which have been present in Williams' works throughout all three periods. First, Williams is a self-proclaimed Reformed theologian. From his earliest writings, Williams was strongly bound to Reformed subjects and sources, especially John Calvin. Even in his works from the Charismatic period, including his *Renewal Theology*, he is very supportive of Calvinistic interpretations, and only on rare occasions does he disagree with Calvin. A second feature found in Williams is his continuous ecumenical concern. In the pre-Charismatic period he demonstrates this concern through numerous articles as he discusses various implementations of ecumenicism. After 1965 he maintained his ecumenical stance, but he refocused his emphasis. For Williams, the renewal movement was ecumenical in its divinely inspired essence, and

---

21 J. Rodman Williams, "He Studies the Creator of the Stars," 81; idem., "The Plan of Union," 24; and idem., *Spirit of Glory*; Although Williams tried to maintain his Reformed traditional past, his colleagues at Austin Presbyterian Seminary thought he had left the Reformed tradition due to his new found Charismatic life-style, Williams, "He Studies the Creator of the Stars," 80.


the Holy Spirit was the unifying force for this ecumenism.25 The third emphasis that Williams has maintained is a focus upon practicality and lay accessibility to theological reflection. He has made a point of making his works conversational so that the lay person, the pastor, or the student can benefit from them. In fact, the primary theological task for Williams is pedagogical by nature.26 In his delineation of the functions of theology he states that theology should produce the clarification of truth, the integration of beliefs, the correction of falsehoods, it should be a public declaration, and it should challenge areas of confession. Throughout his discussion on the function of theology, the need for theology to be communally accessible is implied.27 It is from his Charismatic works that Williams' position on value formation and the Holy Spirit will be delineated.


27J. Rodman Williams, RT1, 19-21.
Locus of Authority

Williams has articulated a strong position on the locus of authority in theology. He assumes from the start that the truth of Christianity and the depths of faith can only be discernible and appropriated through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The theological task starts with the recognition and openness of the Spirit's direction. There are many difficulties in the interpretation of the Bible, yet it is only through the Holy Spirit that these can be overcome. Further, the Spirit can only guide those who belong to the Spirit (i.e. believers) to understand those who wrote by the Spirit (i.e. Biblical authors). So, only Christians can understand and follow the Spirit's leading and guidance. Williams sees that the person of the theologian is intrinsic to the theological task. In the activity of the theological task, the theologian must have a consistent attitude of prayer, a deepening sense of reverence, a purity of heart, a spirit of growing love, and a focus to do all for the glory of God. For Williams, without these attributes a theologian can be misguided and may fall into error or may not be able to follow the Spirit's guidance. The theologian, or any Christian, must be guided by the Holy Spirit and must be open to the Spirit's guidance.

Primary to Williams' locus of authority is that theology must be based upon strong Biblical content. The scriptures are the foundation for all Christian doctrine. The scriptures "set forth in writing the declaration of divine truth and thus are the objective source and measure of all theological work." Critics of Williams and the Charismatic movement, such as John F. MacArthur Jr., have proposed that Charismatics are predominantly experience oriented, and that experience takes priority over the Bible in theological reflection.

---

28 Williams, "The Holy Spirit and Eschatology," 55; idem., RT1, 21-2; and idem., RT2, 240-1.

29 Williams, RT1, 27-8; see also Williams, "He Studies the Creator of the Stars," 81; and idem., RT3, 186-91.

30 Williams, RT1, 22; see also Williams, RT3, 184.

31 John F. MacArthur, Jr., Charismatic Chaos (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992); see especially his discussions on Williams, 19, 45-6, 50-6.
light of this criticism, Williams strongly advocates that the Bible, and not experience, Christian tradition, nor creeds, sets the precedents for truth.\textsuperscript{32} The Bible is always the primary locus of authority. It is the authoritative guide for the Christian life, and the Bible is "the source from which a (or, possibly, "the") system of doctrine must be taken."\textsuperscript{33}

In fact, Williams argues not only for the primacy of the scripture in every regard, he also proposes that the Charismatic movement generally has a higher regard for scripture since they try to espouse and follow every aspect of the Bible. This is due to the "activity of the Holy Spirit in moving so forcefully in people's lives--the same Holy Spirit who inspired [the scripture]--they have found the scriptures to take on new life, meaning, and authority."\textsuperscript{34}

The Bible's authority has an outward acceptance, but also an inward confirmation: "the Holy Spirit vividly [confirms] the words and deeds of Holy Scripture in contemporary experience."\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{itemize}

\item \textsuperscript{33}Williams, "Theological Implications," 19.

\item \textsuperscript{34}J. Rodman Williams, "The Authority of Scripture and the Charismatic Movement," \textit{Logos Journal} 7 (May/June 1977): 35; see also Williams, "Charismatic Movement," 206.

\item \textsuperscript{35}Williams, "The Authority of Scripture and the Charismatic Movement," 35; see also idem., "Charismatic Movement," 206; and idem., \textit{RT2}, 242.
\end{itemize}
Although experience is second to the primacy of scripture, it is still important within theological discussions. Experience is not a test for truth but it "does serve to confirm the teachings of the Bible."\(^{36}\) Furthermore, through the guidance of the Spirit, the experience of the charismata, or gifts of the Spirit, can facilitate a deeper awareness and understanding of the Bible, and thereby of God. Both experience and participation are important for the vital understanding of Biblical truth.\(^{37}\) The spiritual gifts, especially prophecy, can speak today, but they do not take priority over the Bible. However, to deny the living God a contemporary voice is self-destructive, "as the living God who spoke in the Bible still speaks--He is not silent."\(^{38}\) In fact, Williams invented the term "subordinate revelation" to place them as secondary to the Biblical text.\(^{39}\) Evangelicals frequently give high place to preaching, which is not declared infallible, authoritative or normative truth; the spiritual gifts are viewed the same way. The revelation given through the gifts can build up the church and give a deeper awareness, but it is subordinate to the Word of God.\(^{40}\)

The theologian must always be aware of church history, and of the relevant theologians, creeds, confessions, and ecumenical councils. Church history, although important, is secondary to the scriptures. Among the creeds, the universal ones--the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Chalcedonian Creeds--are more important than the non-ecumenical confessions such as the council of Trent and the

\(^{36}\)Williams, "Biblical Truth and Experience," 26; see also Williams, "He Studies the Creator of the Stars," 81.

\(^{37}\)Williams, "Biblical Truth and Experience," 26; and idem., "Door Interview," 12; see also Williams, "The Pentecostal Reality," 1-9; and idem., "Pentecostal Spirituality," 59-60.

\(^{38}\)Williams, "Biblical Truth and Experience," 28; see also Quebedeaux, The New Charismatics II, 133.

\(^{39}\)Williams, RT1, 43-4.

\(^{40}\)Williams, "The Authority of Scripture and the Charismatic Movement," 35; idem., "Biblical Truth and Experience," 28-9; idem., RT1, 42-4; and idem., RT2, 332-9.
Westminster Confession.\textsuperscript{41} Williams is adamant on the secondary position of confessions and creeds, since they are historically situated and are open to error. Hence, the study of the creeds, confessions, and Christian tradition in general is helpful and should not be neglected in theological reflection, but tradition and church history are secondary to the Bible.\textsuperscript{42}

A theologian must be well acquainted with the contemporary situation. Theology is presented with the task of bringing Christian theology into our twenty first century world. The more informed a theologian is of her contemporary surroundings, the more relevant and timely her theological treatise can be. Further, it takes a good understanding of the current situation to properly translate the Biblical principles from the Biblical setting to the present. A theologian or pastor who has an awareness of the moods of the present is able to discern and to address more adequately the modern audience from the Bible.\textsuperscript{43}

The Self

In the late 1960's Williams noted that theology had left the era of the dominant theologians, namely Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Rudolf Bultmann, H. Richard and Reinhold Niebuhr, and Paul Tillich. For a short interim in the early 1960's, these theologians' work had been eclipsed by some of their students, William Hamilton, Thomas Altizer, and Paul Van Buren with their American-based "death of God" movement. This movement, for Williams, did not signify the end but, rather, the beginning of a new theological era. From the late 1960's onward he proposed that theology has entered the era of the Holy Spirit. This was to be both a theological and an ecclesiastical development.\textsuperscript{44} This is not to say that theology in general, and

\textsuperscript{41}Williams, \textit{RT1}, 25; and idem., "Theological Implications," 6.


\textsuperscript{43}Williams, \textit{RT1}, 26-7.

\textsuperscript{44}J. Rodman Williams, "A New Theological Era," \textit{Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition} 82 (Nov. 1966): 37-47; idem., \textit{Spirit of Glory}; and idem.,
Pentecostal theology in particular, is centered completely on the Holy Spirit. However, there is a strong awareness of the neglect of the Holy Spirit as a person of the Trinity. Historically, Western Christianity has operated with a functional subordination, with the Spirit as an instrument, and thereby functionally subordinated to Christ and the Father. However, a true Pentecostal theology is Christocentric and Trinitarian, but without subordination and without the filioque. Williams sees that there are essentially three major areas of the Spirit's activity: creation of the world, redemption of mankind (i.e. regeneration, sanctification, and conversion), and the energizing of the people of God.

Williams emphasizes that the Holy Spirit comes into both the individual and the community. There are both individual and corporate fillings of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit in the past enabled the judges, rulers, prophets and artisans of the Old Testament, and also operated in and through the messianic vocations of Jesus Christ. This culminated with the teaching by Jesus of the paraclete to come, the gift of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit came at Pentecost, it was the divine mode of the Spirit, which persists today. The Triune God now is relating to


47 Williams, "Pentecostal Reality," 2-4; idem., "The Plan of Union," 20-1; and idem., RT2, 155-79.
humanity through the third member of the Trinity--the Holy Spirit.48 Through this mediation, we are aware of the Triunity, not through the scripture or church dogma, "but as the summons to a life of Triune existence--life lived in the reality of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."49

For Williams, regeneration is being born again or a spiritual rebirth--creating the person into a new being through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit "who goes forth in the proclamation of the Word, moves upon human beings who are in darkness and death and brings them into life again."50 Regeneration is through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and water baptism is symbolic of the inward cleansing and the renewal of the Spirit. However, this does not suggest that there is a Biblical basis for "baptismal regeneration." Baptism does not bring regeneration, because the Holy Spirit is the only mediating agent who does the regenerative work.51 Regeneration occurs through the implanted Word--the gospel proclaimed. There is an assurance that, as the Word is sown in the heart and is activated by the Holy Spirit, salvation will certainly result.

The Spirit's work is partially found in the illumination of the Word to the mind darkened by sin. The Spirit first convinces the person of his or her lostness. Then the Spirit brings a conviction of the sin and evilness of the human heart. In response to the Spirit's work, the person repents and wills to move from sin to God--turning from the old to the new. The repentance of the person is made in the mind, the heart, and the will, yet the will is primary in repentance.52 In fact, the

48Williams, RT1, 83-94; idem., RT2, 181-207; Note that many in the west, although they espouse the Trinity, they operate with a functional subordination, J. Rodman Williams, "The Coming of the Holy Spirit," Theology, News and Notes [Fuller Theological Seminary] (March 1974): 14-6; and idem., RT2, 206-7; Williams notes that no model is completely adequate, but the social model is a better model than the psychological model. J. Rodman Williams, interview with author, 21 December 1993, Virginia Beach, VA.


50Williams, RT2, 37; see also Williams, RT2, 35-6.

51Williams, RT2, 38.

52Williams, RT2, 40-9.
person's will takes priority over the influence of the community within a person's Christian life and following of God's will. However, the conversion or regeneration of a person has both divine and human aspects. The Holy Spirit brings about the gracious conditions, while the human must respond positively through his/her own decision expressed in faith. The individual is, ultimately, responsible for his/her own decisions.

In regeneration, the Holy Spirit takes residence in the believer's life, an act or process that results in the believer's becoming a new being. First, this new being has a changed heart that is cleansed, inscribed with God's law, and unified in its essence. Second, this new being with Jesus Christ as the source has a renewed mind, which produces a different attitude and a new mental outlook. Third, the new being has a liberated will, which is delivered from the bondage of sin, from everything which binds humanity, and from the power of Satan in order to obey the will of God. The regenerated person also has a new nature, which rejects sin, since sin is no longer a part of the divine nature which dwells within the Christian. With this new nature based on God's nature, the regenerated person shows faith, holiness, love, and truth. The regenerated person enters into a new life which, first, has an aliveness and awareness to God's presence. Second, the new life of the believer brings true happiness through the abundant life in Jesus Christ. Third, this new life is the birth into a life eternal. This regenerative work is the Holy Spirit's enablement of the new life in Jesus Christ.

Sanctification is the process by which the believer is set apart or made holy. This separation or apartness is "grounded essentially in the reality of God Himself." This holiness is seen by an inward purity, a purity of both the body and the soul. This purity will also develop into moral perfection. Sanctification has three aspects: it begins with

53 Williams, RT2, 416.
54 Williams, "The Plan of Union," 30; idem., RT1, 215-9; and idem., RT2, 37-50, 100-17; Faith is the only requirement for receiving God's regenerative grace. Williams, Gift, 105-21.
55 Williams, ES, 39-40; and idem., RT2, 50-9.
56 Williams, RT2, 83; see also Williams, "Holiness," in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, 514-5.
conversion, it is continuous, and it has a goal. In the initial stage of sanctification, those who are the people of God are separated from sin. The source of this separation is the reality accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross. Sanctification is also a progressive formation as it relates to the continuing life of the people of God. There is an increasing transformation which occurs, "the call is for non-conformity to the world and an ongoing transformation. Although . . . . [t]his is not a movement toward sanctification (for believers are already holy) but a growth in it, a gradual process of transformation."\textsuperscript{57} Sanctification is also concerned with the goal of entire sanctification. This goal is ever present, yet it will occur only in the return of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{58}

Sanctification is the renewal of the person into the likeness of God which involves the whole person—the spirit, the soul (mind, feelings, and will), and the body.\textsuperscript{59} This process is the conformity into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Although human beings have a role to play within the sanctification process (e.g. obedience), sanctification is the work of God. God is the source, Jesus Christ is the agent and the Holy Spirit is the energizer of sanctification.\textsuperscript{60} The Holy Spirit works within and indwells the community of believers as well as the individuals. The person must completely die to sin and self by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. This progressively sanctified person must also live for righteousness by the means of obeying God's Word, looking toward, following after, abiding in Christ, and walking in the

\textsuperscript{57}Williams, \textit{RT2}, 89; see also Williams, \textit{RT2}, 86-93; see also Williams, "Holiness," 515-6.

\textsuperscript{58}Williams, \textit{ES}, 43; idem., \textit{RT2}, 90-3; and idem., \textit{10 Teaching}, 82-4; Williams suggests that "entire sanctification" (Wesleyan Christian perfection) is not possible in this life, but a "relative perfection" is possible. Williams, \textit{RT2}, 91-2; c.f. Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 297-8.


\textsuperscript{60}Williams, \textit{RT2}, 101; see also Williams, \textit{ES}, 40-3; and idem., "The Event of the Holy Spirit," 21-6.
Unfortunately, there is frequently a confusion about the distinction between sanctification and regeneration. Regeneration is a new beginning, while sanctification is an ongoing process. For Williams, "sanctification is a process of working out what was there in the beginning and not the second thing following upon regeneration."  

Williams has emphasized that the contemporary move of the Spirit does not fit into traditional theological categories. The contemporary movement of the Spirit demonstrates the dynamism involved in the person. For "what is at stake in this dynamic movement of the Spirit is the release of the sanctifying Spirit, the breaking through into the totality of the self; hence . . . it is the making operational of sanctification."  

Sanctification, regeneration, and other theological categories demonstrate the work of the Holy Spirit, but it is only through the ongoing dynamism of the Holy Spirit that these are made operational. It is this dynamism that is important in the Holy Spirit's activity, not just the form of theological categories and doctrines. It is through this dynamism of the Holy Spirit, as experienced in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that the dual aspects of God are demonstrated. The transcendent God becomes real and immanent in humanity through the activity of the Spirit.  

As a proponent of the Charismatic movement Williams has developed a position on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Since 1969 he has maintained that the role of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is separate and subsequent to salvation. The baptism in the Holy Spirit

---

61 Williams, RT2, 100-17; see also Williams, 10 Teachings, 81-2.
62 Williams, ES, 42.
63 Williams, ES, 42-3.
64 Williams, ES, 40-3; see also some aspects of Williams attempt at an 'operational' theology, Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 293-304.
65 Williams, ES, 57-8; idem., Gift, 32-3; idem., "A New Era in History," 32-3; idem., "A New Theological Era," 40; and idem., "A Pentecostal Theology,"
66 Williams, "Pentecostal Spirituality," in PR, 61-5; idem., RT2, 186-90; and idem., RT3, 143; subsequence can also be communal, Williams, ES, 54-5; For a
is a new reality of God. It is the empowerment to be a witness. Yet it is not "instant sanctification." In his earlier work Williams did not espouse the standard Pentecostal view that glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, was the initial evidence of the Spirit baptism; rather, he stated that speaking in tongues could accompany the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It was important, but speaking in tongues was not always the initial evidence. Williams realized that "we can draw no conclusion that speaking in tongues invariably followed the reception of the Spirit; however, the texts do incline in that direction." Later, upon reflection on the passages in Acts and the contemporary Charismatic movement in regard to the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he came to the conclusion that glossolalia is the primary evidence of Spirit baptism. In spite of its significance, it is important to remember that the gift is the Holy Spirit, of which tongues is just a sign.

Williams also discusses the gifts of the Spirit, charismata, which are available to all believers. It is due to the renewal movement's emphasis on the embracing of these gifts today that this movement has been called the Charismatic movement. When delineating the charismata Williams mainly deals with the nine gifts listed in I Cor. 12:8-10. He has divided these nine gifts as follows: the logos or mental gifts (word of wisdom and word of knowledge), the extramental gifts (faith, gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy, and discerning of spirits), and the tongues or the supramental gifts (tongues and interpretation of tongues).

Inasmuch as Williams emphasizes the need for the Spirit

---


68 Williams, "A Profile of the Charismatic Movement," 9, 11.

69 Williams, "A Pentecostal Theology."


baptism and charismata today, he does not equate the gifts with the fruit of the Spirit or the virtues. The charismata are gifts from the Holy Spirit, but they have no fundamental connection with the fruit of the Spirit, which is the effect of the Holy Spirit's inner presence.  

Due to the new life in God, the Christian is clothed by the virtues and becomes a bearer of the virtues. The source of all virtue is God, and humanity is endowed with the virtues as they are a reflection of God. First, the foundation of all righteous living and participation in the virtues comes from following Christ. This calls for self-renunciation, daily cross-bearing, the priority of Christ in one's life, and the constant return to scripture. Second, believers are to seek after the highest. This means that Christians set their minds on the things of good report and so forth, as these things are a representation of the things above. The Holy Spirit is the true guide into putting on the virtues. For to "put on [the virtues] is to set one's mind on Christ . . . for in doing so there is vision and motive power. Without this mindset any attempt at putting on such virtues as compassion, humility, and patience would be entirely artificial and empty." The highest is exemplified and demonstrated by its source, Jesus Christ. Setting the mind on the highest is needed for the internalizing of the virtues, for without it the virtues become artificial. The Holy Spirit also helps the person to bear fruit (i.e. the virtues). "Guided by the Spirit of freedom, believers may express these virtues in a great variety of ways so that they increasingly flourish in the believer's lives." The bearing of fruit also implies the need for the maturation process--time to grow and develop. Through the Spirit's enablement the law is fulfilled, since the virtues are the heart of the law. The epitome of walking in the 

72 Williams, "Charismatic Movement," 208; idem., "The Greater Gift," 46-7; and idem., RT2, 330-1, 342-5, 423, 429; nor are the gifts to be equated with salvation, Williams, RT2, 413.

73 The virtues are based on God. Williams, RT1, 59-70; Humanity reflects the virtues as they abide in God and reflect God. Williams, RT1, 201-8.

74 Williams, RT2, 113; see also Williams, "Holiness," 515-6.

75 Williams, RT2, 115; see also Williams, RT2, 110-7.

76 Williams, RT2, 431.
Spirit is walking in love. Walking in love is based upon the example of Christ Himself. In following His loving example, Christians become more and more like Him. Hence, the virtues are not only derived from the conforming to Christ's image, but also from the imitation of Him.

One of the more instructive chapters in Williams’ *Renewal Theology* is the chapter on "Christian Living." Here he attempts to articulate the ethical life-style of the Christian. The primary calling of the Christian is to do God's will. A person knows His will as one who is a seeker, given to much prayer, constantly studying the scriptures, constantly helping others, and progressively renewing his mind. For the "more we surrender ourselves totally to God the more we will know his will." God's will must be conducted with energetic action, endurance, and the supernatural strength which is grounded in God. God's will is not just cognitive or revelatory, it also demands an active response. Within the Christian life, a Christian also walks in the light. This walk is a progression into goodness, truth and righteousness. These Godly character traits should not be equated with the charismata, nor can a community with these traits allow sin within their midst.

The motivation for this walk is based upon the premise of what is pleasing to God. Furthermore, what is pleasing to the Lord "is both the motivation and goal for the Christian walk." Christians are the light, and are to shine the light and walk in the light. The walk in which the Christian finds himself is strongly opposed to and surrounded by the evil darkness. Indicative of walking in the light, Christians are to speak out against public evils and personal corruption. This walking in the light also assures the ongoing cleansing of Jesus and the genuine fellowship together with fellow believers.

---

77 Williams, *RT2*, 115-7, 430-1; see also Williams, *10 Teachings*, 82.

78 Williams, *RT2*, 411-45.

79 Williams, *RT2*, 417.

80 Williams, *RT2*, 420-3.

81 Williams, *RT2*, 424.

Christian lifestyle is also shown in the way of love. This love is exercised through patience and kindness. The primary example of love is Jesus Christ, and it is best articulated by Paul in I Corinthians 13.83

The Community

The church is the primary community for Christian development of the person. The church is the *ekklesia*, the "called out" ones, who are called out from evil, called together for assembly, and called for obedience. The church also has two intrinsic characteristics: the spiritual and the social. The spiritual aspect is evident in the understanding of the divine origin and the destination of the church. The church is also social, in that it is an assembly of those following the Lord. For "there is no genuine Christian life outside the church."84 The spiritual and the social aspects of the church historically have been seen in terms of the invisible and visible features of the church, respectively. For Williams, this latter terminology is not used since its derivation is outside the Biblical texts.85 The church also has universal features which are seen in its unity based on Christ. The church is also holy or separated from the world by Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. The church’s catholic nature is demonstrated in its worldwide wholeness, wherever Christ is. Its apostolic feature is seen as it is founded on and faithful to the teachings and instructions of the original apostles.86

The church by nature is also locally contingent in that the expression of the universal church of Christ is demonstrated to the local person within a local body. The church in the Bible was a local community in three senses: a household, a city-wide church, and the church of a larger region.87 The church is transcendent in that it also

83Williams, *RT2*, 427-45; see also Williams, *RT2*, 56-7; see also on the relationship of the spiritual gifts and love, Williams, *RT2*, 339-45.

84Williams, *RT3*, 19; see also Williams, *RT3*, 20-3.

85Williams, *RT3*, 23.


87Williams, *RT3*, 38-41.
includes the saints in heaven. This transcendent church is a spotless church which has finished the perfecting process. This is the goal and yet the reality of both the universal and local church. The Holy Spirit likewise provides the communion of the saints both past and present. 88 In the present it is obvious that there are problems within the church, but "the Holy Spirit [is] active even in these faulty ministrations." 89 The church can be described as the people of God who are new people-redeemed, purified, and changed. These people are the people with whom God resides. The people of God are grounded by the internal witness of the Spirit. 90  The church is also described with the terms of the building, the body, and the bride of Christ, each term describing differing aspects of the relationship between the church and Christ. The building shows the structure, the body the organism and the bride the love of Christ for the church. 91  The church is also the community of the Holy Spirit. It is enlivened by the very breath of the Holy Spirit. This community is a pneumatic community, as it "is not a community of natural but of spiritual togetherness. It is the only place in the world where true fellowship can be found." 92  This fellowship is with God by the work of reconciliation of Jesus Christ and through the presence of the Spirit. Fellowship can take place with God; "it can be an ongoing reality . . . . the church is both the actuality of and the occasion for fellowship with God." 93 Through the Holy Spirit there is also fellowship with one another, koinonia. The Holy Spirit unifies believers in a way qualitatively different from that found in human societies. The Holy Spirit "can bring people together in a self-transcending unity." 94

88 Williams, RT3, 41-3, 77-83.
89 Williams, "In the Holy Spirit," 184.
90 Williams, RT3, 49-58.
91 Williams, RT3, 59-71.
92 Williams, RT3, 79.
93 Williams, RT3, 80.
94 Williams, RT3, 82; see also Williams, RT3, 79-85.
For Williams, the kingdom of God is set purely within the parameters of eschatology. From creation to Christ is the preparation for the kingdom of God. Christ established the kingdom of God with those who were transformed and brought into His kingdom. The kingdom of God will be consummated in the eschaton. In the eschaton, the hidden aspects of the kingdom will be revealed, and those who do not actually belong to the kingdom of God will be separated from those who do. The church is not the same as the kingdom, but only in the eschaton will the distinction become clear.  

There are some fundamental aspects of the community which Williams espouses. First, the community can play an important role in a person's walk in Christ and in seeking God's will. However, it is not a substitute for the personal seeking of God's will. Although the community is influential in individual development, it does not replace individual responsibility. Yet the Christian life cannot happen apart from the community. So much of the Christian life, such as fellowship with God and each other, is intrinsic to the Christian community, and cannot be grasped without the Christian community. Further, the baptism in or the event of the Holy Spirit is essentially tied to the community. The event of the Holy Spirit, typified by the charismata, takes place in gatherings of fellowship and worship.

The three functions of the church are the worship of God, the building up of the church, and the outreach to the world. The worship and praise given to God is a primary function of the church. This is seen throughout the Biblical texts. The true worship of God is suffused with the characteristics of reverence and awe, praise and thanksgiving, humility and contrition, supplication and intercession, and consecration and dedication. The worship of God should take place in three

---

95 Williams, RT3, 289-95.
96 Williams, RT2, 416; see also Williams, RT1, 215-9.
97 Williams, RT3, 19-23, 80.
99 Williams, Gift, 28-31; and idem., RT3, 87-101.
ways. First, our worship should be Trinitarian; "it involves the worship of one God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit."\textsuperscript{100} The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the foundation for the rich worship of God. For Williams, "the Holy Spirit inspires . . . worship, and the more that inspiration is present, the more fully God is glorified."\textsuperscript{101} Second, the worship of God also involves a constant tension between freedom and order, for both are needed for the true worship of God. Without freedom, worship becomes form without content and devoid of the life in the Spirit; without order, worship becomes chaos with a loss of meaning.\textsuperscript{102} Third, worship must be participatory, because the true worship of God must include the whole person and the whole assembly.\textsuperscript{103}

The second function of the church is the building up or the edification of the Church. The first way in which this is done is through the imparting of the Word to the church body. The Word must be proclaimed by the church, but the hearers must be open to hear the Word in order to mature and grow. Both the proclaimer and the hearer have a responsibility. The methods of Bible training can be through mutual teaching and small groups. The Word alone can satisfy the deep spiritual hunger of the person, can counteract false teaching, and can guide a Christian’s daily life.\textsuperscript{104} The church also edifies the body of Christ by its deeds, which maintains unity, shows love, exercises

\textsuperscript{100}Williams, \textit{RT3}, 101; The act of celebration in worship must be centered on God Himself. Williams, "The Plan of Union," 22-3.

\textsuperscript{101}Williams, \textit{RT3}, 103; see also Williams, \textit{RT3}, 101-4.

\textsuperscript{102}Williams, "A Theological Critique of Some Contemporary Trends in Worship," 53; and idem., \textit{RT3}, 104-7.


\textsuperscript{104}Williams, \textit{RT3}, 109-17.
discipline, and serves each other.\textsuperscript{105} The church can also be edified through the combination of the Word and deed which would be by an expression of the \textit{charismata}.\textsuperscript{106}

The third function of the church is outreach to the world. The church is responsible for this outreach because of Christ's declaration of the Great Commission, which told believers to make disciples of Jesus, teach them the teachings of Jesus and baptize them into the church. The outreach can only take place through the powerful, directed and supernatural enablement of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{107} This outreach is for the whole human condition. There "is no human need that should be outside the concern of the church."\textsuperscript{108} This outreach must incorporate social action and evangelism. Both are necessary within the Christian message of good news.\textsuperscript{109}

Since 1965 Williams has been a dominant voice within the Charismatic renewal movement. Williams has noted that the current renewal movement is, in fact, "a recurrence of the primordial power of the New Testament church."\textsuperscript{110} Williams says that there is a need to study and accept this movement. He has noted that other theologians such as Hendrikus Berkhof, John MacKay, Leslie Newbigin and others have likewise emphasized the need to study and to positively respond to the Charismatic movement.\textsuperscript{111} While Williams notes the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Williams, \textit{RT3}, 117-25.
\item Williams, \textit{RT3}, 125-33.
\item Williams, \textit{RT3}, 141-51.
\item Williams, \textit{RT3}, 152; see also Williams, \textit{ES}, 56-7; and idem., "A Profile of the Charismatic Movement," 12.
\item Williams, \textit{RT3}, 151-4; see also Williams, "The Plan for Union," 35; and idem., "A Profile of the Charismatic Movements," 12.
\item J. Rodman Williams, "A New Era in History," in \textit{PR}, 29; see also Williams, "The Pentecostal Reality," in \textit{PR}, 1-9; and idem., \textit{RT1}, 27; this is a major premise of two of Williams' works, Williams, \textit{The Gift of the Holy Spirit Today}; and idem., \textit{The Era of the Spirit}.
\item J. Rodman Williams, "A Profile of the Charismatic Movement," 11-2; idem., "Theological Perspectives of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit;";
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
importance of being open to the Charismatic movement, he is quick to say that

I have not intended to suggest . . . that the only hope for our future rests in simply adopting everything in Pentecostal theology and practice. Such of course would be quite unwise and surely impossible. Indeed, even if it were possible, we in the Reformed tradition (and Christendom in general) would only come off the losers, since there is doubtless much in Pentecostalism that is unessential, perhaps even misleading. Moreover, I would insist that we are called upon to give as well as to receive, and that it is in the manifold witness of the great traditions of Eastern Orthodoxy, Western Catholicism, and Protestantism-- and possibly others-- that richness of truth is to be found. Nonetheless . . . I am convinced that what Pentecostalism represents -- which is far more than a particular tradition of the twentieth century--remains utterly essential for all of our churches: the renewed experience of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.112

Williams sees the Pentecostal experience of the Holy Spirit as fundamental to Christianity, but not to the exclusion of other positive influences.

Williams originally accepted the classical Pentecostal position that the Spirit has only been actively present in the church in the first and twentieth centuries. This absence of the dynamic Spirit in church history was due to the officialism and the institutionalism of the church; he did, however, make note of some of the seemingly Spirit-lead revivalist groups.113 Williams read Eddie Ensley's *Sounds of Wonder*, which states that within the Roman Catholic Church from the second century until the sixteenth century there was an accepted practice of "jubilation" which was speaking and praying in the realm of the Spirit (*glossolalia*). From the sixteenth century on, however, formalism within the church helped exclude jubilation from catholic worship. Jubilation became neglected within mainstream Christianity, and was found in fringe groups only. Williams, following Ensley, has

---

112Williams, "The Upsurge of Pentecostalism," 348 n. 21.

113Williams, "A New Era in History," 29-55.
became convinced that there has been an ongoing dynamic work of the Holy Spirit throughout church history.\footnote{Eddie Ensley, \textit{Sounds of Wonder}, Preface by J. Rodman Williams (New York: Paulist Press, 1977); Williams, \textit{Gift}, 43-4; idem., "Preface," in \textit{Sounds of Wonder}, ix-xii; idem., \textit{RT2}, 228-9; and idem., "Why Speak in Tongues?" 14-6; On Williams change toward seeing the Spirit's ongoing work see Burgess, "J. Rodman Williams," 317-8.}

Williams has strongly endorsed the theological position that emphasizes the continuity of the Spirit's work within the church in the early church and today. Therefore, he has opposed the theological school of thought of dispensationalism, and in particular, the cessationists doctrine, which believes that miracles, tongues, healings, prophecies, and so on, cannot take place today since the ability to do them died with the apostles. Two of the dominant figures whom Williams specifically addresses on this issue are John F. MacArthur Jr. and Benjamin Warfield.\footnote{John F. MacArthur, Jr., \textit{Charismatic Chaos} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992); and Benjamin B. Warfield, \textit{Miracles: Yesterday and Today, True and False} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann's Publishing House, 1953); on Williams responses to MacArthur and Warfield, respectively see J. Rodman Williams, "Biblical Truth and Experience: A Reply to \textit{Charismatic Chaos} by John F. MacArthur Jr." \textit{Paraclete} 27 (Summer 1993): 16-30; and idem., \textit{RT2}, 162-7.}

For Williams, the cessationists doctrine cannot be substantiated Biblically, and the evidence for the Charismatic perspective Biblically, historically and in contemporary society is easier to substantiate. Throughout Williams' charismatic career, he has been adamant that what is happening today is the same work of the Holy Spirit which is found in the early church as noted in Acts.\footnote{Burgess, "J. Rodman Williams," 317-8; idem., "A New Era in History," 29-55; idem., "The Pentecostal Reality," 1-9; idem., "A Profile of the Charismatic Movement," 10; and J. Rodman Williams, "Charismatic Movement," in \textit{Evangelical Dictionary of Theology}, 208; see also Quebedeaux, \textit{The New Charismatics II}, 181.}

Williams also discusses the relationship of the church to the state. The function of the government is to establish justice in society and to punish wrongdoers. The civil government is also to promote the public good, make a provision for the exercise of religious faith, and promote moral standards. It is in some sense a moral entity that "can encourage
and stimulate its citizens to moral activity."\textsuperscript{117} As citizens, members of the church are to submit themselves to the authority of the civil government. Christian citizens are also to intercede for those who are in authority over them, to pay taxes, and to participate in the public and civic affairs.\textsuperscript{118} The church's responsibilities to the civil government are to provide and demonstrate a higher ethic and a higher loyalty, which are based upon Christ. Christian citizens are not subject to civic authorities who "either demand worship or seek to prevent the proclamation of the gospel . . ."\textsuperscript{119} Ultimately, within all aspects of political life, Christ must be and is the Lord over all.\textsuperscript{120}

Williams also expresses the importance of the ordinances of the church, an ordinance being a prescribed practice or ceremony. There are only two visible ordinances of the church, namely, baptism in water and the Lord's supper. These two ordinances were both given by Jesus Christ. They are related in that baptism in water demonstrates the Christian's beginning life in Christ, and the Lord's supper shows the Christian's ongoing life in Christ.\textsuperscript{121}

Baptism in water is the initiation into the Christian faith. Baptism has a close connection with the forgiveness of sins, regeneration, and the union with Christ, which includes His burial and resurrection, and our irrevocable commitment to Jesus Christ. Baptism is a sign and a seal of God's grace, but it is also a means of that grace.\textsuperscript{122} The role of the sacraments, in particular of water baptism, in relation to Spirit baptism, has changed. In 1970, Williams suggested that water baptism and the laying on of hands may be the sacramental aspects of the

\textsuperscript{117}Williams, \textit{RT3}, 272; see also Williams, \textit{RT3}, 265-72.

\textsuperscript{118}Williams, \textit{RT3}, 272-8.

\textsuperscript{119}Williams, \textit{RT3}, 282.

\textsuperscript{120}Williams, \textit{RT3}, 278-85.

\textsuperscript{121}Williams, \textit{RT3}, 221.

\textsuperscript{122}Williams, \textit{RT3}, 222-5.
baptism of the Spirit. In 1972, Williams stated that regeneration/conversion is not necessarily bound to sacramental action, but he does attempt a possible synthesis. However, from the 1980's onward he has noted that water baptism is not connected with the baptism in the Spirit. Thus, Williams has gradually endorsed the classical Pentecostal perspective that there is no connection between the sacraments and Spirit baptism. Although the mode of the baptism is not important (i.e. sprinkling, pouring, and immersion), baptism must be a baptism of believers. Therefore, it is not to be implemented for infants.

The Lord's supper is the "perpetual memorial to the sacrificial death of Christ." The Lord's supper demonstrates divine

---


126 Williams, RT3, 225-37; Williams endorses the "Jesus only" baptism formula from the book of Acts, and not the Matthean Trinitarian formula. He is apparently unaware of the doctrinal problems that this has caused in the "Jesus only" debate in Pentecostalism. Williams, RT3, 139; c.f. Cross, Toward a Theology of Word and Spirit," 125.

127 Williams, RT3, 245.
forgiveness and is itself a "means of receiving and appropriating God's ever-present grace." The Lord's supper is an enhancement to spiritual communion, which supersedes the spiritual communion experienced by prayer and worship. This is due to the physical presence of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper. The Lord's supper is a communion between Christ and His church and within the church community. The participants of the Lord's supper must be believers who have spiritually examined themselves. It is to be a communion open to all believers. There should also be the proper attitude, setting, and presentation for the Lord's supper. Further, the Lord's supper prefigures the messianic supper in the future kingdom with Christ.

The Bible

According to Williams, there is a mutual relationship between the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit provides the dynamism, while the Word provides the form. The interplay between the Holy Spirit and the Word is crucial to understanding both the Spirit and the Word. The Word without the Spirit becomes empty tradition, and the Spirit without the Word becomes enthusiasm without wisdom or direction. This interaction between the Word and the Spirit is needed for the proper Christian life and growth.

Williams strongly contends that the Bible is primary in all theological reflection and must be the source of all Christian doctrine. The Bible takes precedence over experience, the creeds and Christian tradition. The Bible is the primary written or oral source of all Christian theological reflection. This primacy is also felt within the daily life of the Christian, spiritually, morally, and existentially.

128 Williams, *RT3*, 246.

129 Williams, *ES*, 44-5; and idem., *RT3*, 241-63.

130 Williams, interview by author, 21 December 1993, Virginia Beach, VA.

For Williams, the Bible demonstrates the unfolding history of God's involvement with man. Righteous living constitutes obeying the Word, which is the will of God. This obedience is dependent upon the immersion in the Word, and the responsive action. The Bible is also used to edify or build up the church. This is done through the communal study and proclamation of the Word, which can take place in small groups, one-on-one personal interaction, and within the congregational worship service. Further, Williams suggests that the will of God can be followed only if a Christian constantly hears the Word of God in scriptures, through corporate study and through the teaching/hearing of the Word. Within the framework of his work, Williams places a strong emphasis upon the Biblical texts not only for theological reflection, but also for the whole of Christian living. Williams' usage of the Biblical texts in his *Renewal Theology* suggests that he is trying to espouse a Biblical theology, and it has been suggested that this work is not a systematic theology as much as a Biblical theology. 

Although Williams has a very limited discussion on hermeneutical principles, he does emphasize some important points. For Williams, the first step in proper hermeneutics is to have a knowledge of the Biblical languages in order to read the texts in the original languages. It is likewise beneficial to use various translations of the Bible for comparative study. Through Biblical languages and various translations of the Bible the original meaning of the text can be more readily comprehended. Second, the Christian needs an understanding of the background, composition, and literary forms of the Bible in order to properly interpret the Bible. The Biblical texts were written within a historical setting using differing literary styles and forms. A knowledge of these is necessary for properly understanding the Bible.

132 Williams, "Gifts of the Spirit," 28; idem., "The Holy Trinity," 101; idem., *RT1*, 122-5; idem., *RT2*, 109, 415-6; idem., *RT3*, 109-17; and idem., interview by author, 21 December 1993, Virginia Beach, VA.


Third, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, interpretation of the Bible must be done with a continuous awareness of the whole counsel of God as noted in scripture. There is an awareness that the whole interpretation process is dependent upon the Holy Spirit, and thereby, will not contradict the known revelation of God (i.e. the whole Bible). \(^{135}\) However, in his actual hermeneutical approach to scripture Williams uses a non-technical approach, often allowing the Biblical text to speak for itself. He frequently does some exegesis of the text, but with little attention to textual Biblical exegesis. His usage of the Bible is precritical. The advantage is that he has organized the Biblical texts systematically, and has let the Bible speak for itself. However, within his Renewal Theology, there is little theological reflection or interpretation of the Biblical texts which demonstrates an in-depth and ongoing interaction with modern exegetes and theologians. \(^{136}\)

God's call to salvation comes through the proclamation of the gospel. Preaching is the proclamation of the gospel, but it is different from teaching or prophecy. Preaching can include elements of the teaching or prophetic ministries, but preaching focuses upon the proclamation of Jesus Christ to the world. \(^{137}\) Salvation can only take place through the proclamation by a person hearing the Word. The means of the proclamation is most frequently the sermon monologue, but can also take the forms of story, dialogues, and dramatic presentations. No matter what form, this proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ must take place within the context of the worship of God. The proclamation should be accompanied by signs and wonders to confirm the gospel which is proclaimed. Thus, the proclamation is set within the context of worshipping, and is accompanied by the

\(^{135}\)Williams, "Interpreting Prophetic Timing," 47-8, 51; and idem., RT1, 23-4.

\(^{136}\)Culpepper, review of Renewal Theology 1: God, the World, and Redemption, 105-6; Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 298-9, 301; and Spittler, "Theological Style among Pentecostals and Charismatics," 306-7; Cross suggests that Williams' Renewal Theology is not a systematic theology, but a biblical theology, Cross, "Toward a Theology of Word and Spirit," 118; While Macchia does not feel that Renewal Theology could be adequately called a biblical theology either, Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 302.

\(^{137}\)Williams, ES, 28-9.
manifestation of God's presence.\textsuperscript{138} The proclaimer of the gospel can be anyone, not just the professional or gifted (\textit{charismata}). The proclamation should be from the laity as much as from the professional clergy, for all are called as believers to proclaim the gospel. The proclaimer must be sent as a witness with the focus on Jesus Christ. Williams emphasizes that "everyone is sent. However, this does not necessarily mean that a person is sent to everyone."\textsuperscript{139} There is also a special calling to a ministry of the Word. This is a unique calling accompanied by God's sending, yet it is not a superior calling.\textsuperscript{140} The effective application of the proclamation must be anointed from above for no salvation is attained through proclamation without the powerful and efficacious work of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{141}

Analysis and Conclusion

In his \textit{Renewal Theology} Williams has articulated the first comprehensive Charismatic or Pentecostal systematic theology. He has written a very involved work, which has opened many doors for future Charismatic and Pentecostal scholars to use as a starting point for their own theological proposals. He has also greatly enhanced the analysis of the vastly neglected field of pneumatology. As the first attempt at such an endeavor it is noteworthy, yet there are also some apparent shortcomings.

One of the greatest strengths of Williams is his strong adherence to the authority of the Bible. He makes it clear that the Bible is foundational for theological reflection. This is especially important in light of the common criticism made against Charismatic and Pentecostal movements that the Bible is secondary to experience and/or the gifts of the Spirit. Williams obviously is very adamant on this point

\textsuperscript{138}Williams, \textit{RT2}, 23-4.

\textsuperscript{139}Williams, \textit{RT2}, 26.

\textsuperscript{140}Williams, "A Theological Critique of Some Contemporary Trends in Worship," 53, 56; idem., \textit{RT2}, 23-6; and idem., \textit{RT3}, 159-64; see also Williams, "What is Your Vocation?" 9-19.

\textsuperscript{141}Williams, \textit{RT2}, 26-8.
that the Bible must be primary as the locus of authority. His style also reflects a strong advocacy of the Biblical texts. His *Renewal Theology* is so full of Biblical examples and exegesis that one writer saw it as a dramatic example of his Biblical linguistic expertise.\(^{142}\) In spite of this strong emphasis upon the Bible, Williams does not articulate clearly his locus of authority. The first real weakness is that he does not discuss the creeds and traditions as they relate to the church or Christian theology. He suggests that a Christian should be aware of the them for theological reflection, but he does not discuss their usage. The creeds, for Williams, have little importance in actual formulation of systematic theology.\(^{143}\) The second weakness, related to this, is that Williams does not adequately interact with the contemporary figures of theology from Protestant or Catholic traditions. Williams rarely engages with theologians, such as Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jürgen Moltmann, and spends more time on the Greek and a few exegetes (e.g. F. F. Bruce, Robert Mounce) than on those theologians.\(^{144}\) For instance, it would have been helpful to have a more detailed discussion of John Wesley and the Wesleyan tradition in the chapters on regeneration and sanctification.\(^{145}\) Further, Williams does not discuss some of the related philosophical problems of systematic theology. Instead, he speaks somewhat disparagingly of

\(^{142}\) Cross, "Toward a Theology of the Word and Spirit," 118, 122; c.f. Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 301; Cross suggests that Williams' linguistic expertise is very rare for a systematic theologian. Karl Barth was the only noted superior. Cross, "Toward a Theology of the Word and Spirit," 118 n. 18.


\(^{144}\) Cross, "Toward a Theology of the Word and Spirit," 118-20; and Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 299-300; In the *Renewal Theology*, Williams only cites Moltmann once, and Pannenberg once.

\(^{145}\) Cross, "Toward a Theology of the Word and Spirit," 116 n.9; and Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 297-8.
Philosophical and theological issues are difficult to pinpoint within Williams' works, since he does not use the nomenclature of many of the modern theologians or philosophers, preferring the Biblical terminology and a conversationalist approach. Thus, it is hard to verify many of his positions, due to his neglect of contemporary theologians and philosophers, and the lacunae of modern theological and philosophical nomenclature.

Williams has demonstrated a strongly Biblical view of the self. In this he has emphasized the role of the person as a responsible, free moral agent who is influenced by the community but is free to make her own decisions. The major problem is that the role of the self in Williams' work is mainly discussed in Biblical terms. There is little engagement about other insights or discussions as they relate to his model of the self. For Williams, psychological, philosophical, sociological and other models of the self are overlooked and only discussed cursorily, since they are not Biblically based. For example, Williams adheres to the three parts of the self perspective (i.e. body, soul, and spirit) because of Biblical terminology. Neither does Williams give an adequate discussion of sanctification as God producing character within the believer. He emphasizes the dynamic role of the Holy Spirit, but he overlooks the informative and practical aspects of sanctification.

Another strength of Williams is his view of community and the role of worship within the church. The church, its functions, and its gifts are described as being a formative agent for the persons within the church. The church is the Christian community by which God's presence is felt through worship, edification and outreach. The main weakness is that Williams does not fully describe the need or method of the formation within the members in the church. In Williams' description of the Church he mainly deals with the "what" of communal activities which foster formation, and not the "how" of that formation.

146 Cross, "Toward a Theology of the Word and Spirit," 120; and Williams, RT1, 247.

147 Williams, RT1, 215-9; and idem., RT2, 416.


149 Williams, RT3, 87-158.
A main strength of Williams' work is his focus on the Biblical text. Within his work he notes that the Bible is formative for theological reflection, but it is also a guide for righteous living, a proof against false teaching, and a tool for the edification of the church. So, for Williams, the Bible is not only theologically authoritative, but it is also existentially authoritative.\footnote{Williams, \textit{RT1}, 22-5; idem., \textit{RT2}, 109, 415-6; and idem., \textit{RT3}, 109-17; see also Williams, "The Holy Trinity," 101.} As noted above, one weakness is that he tends to use the Bible precritically, without the technical Biblical exegesis used by other Biblical scholars. The problem of this approach is that it can miss the complexities of the Biblical text and of our modern world.\footnote{Culpepper, review of \textit{Renewal Theology 1: God, the World and Redemption}, 105-6; Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Catagories," 301-2; and Spittler, "Theological Style among Pentecostal and Charismatic," 304-7.} A second problem is that he seems to promote a canon within a canon, where he gives preference to descriptive narrative over didactic exposition. In other words, Williams gives preference to the Luke-Acts material over the epistolary accounts found in scripture.\footnote{Cross, "Toward a Theology of the Word and Spirit," 115 n. 7.}

As a whole, there are several contributions by Williams to this discussion. One contribution is his strong adherence to the Bible in theological reflection and existentially in a person's life. Williams is also instructive in his emphasis upon the dynamism and operational aspects of the Spirit. A third contribution is his discussions on worship and its role in the church community. A final contribution is his discussion on the state as morally formative for the person. These contributions are all helpful in delineating the role of the Holy Spirit in value formation.