



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 20:22; Acts 2:33

?Bible Reading: “When the Paraclete comes, the one I will send to you from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father— he will testify about me.” (John 15:26)

?Background: “A sea change in the religious landscape of Canada is underway. Led by millennials, Canada is increasingly ...a secular culture. “Spiritual but not religious” has become our new normal. A 2015 Angus Reid poll found 39 per cent of Canadians identify as “spiritual but not religious.” Another 27% identify as “neither religious nor spiritual;” 24% as “religious & spiritual;” & 10% as “religious but not spiritual.”

“One of the permanent dangers of...spirituality...especially...charismatic or Pentecostal spirituality, is to view the Spirit as...existing by himself, next to the Father & the Son, & operating in a fully autonomous way. This is incompatible with the biblical revelation of the Trinity.” –Nicholas Fogliacco

“Most people who identify...as Christians...no longer... accept Jesus’ word when He said “I am the way, & the truth, & the life” (Jn. 14:6). It’s increasingly common...[for] self-avowed Christians say... ‘In my mind, there’s only one god, no matter what you call him. Muslims pray to the same God I do. They call him Allah..., but it’s the same entity for all world religions... They’re talking... about the same One’.” – Dr. Christian Smith

?SUMMARY: In John’s Gospel, Jesus’ profound claims about himself, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father set the stage for the Trinity and Christian Creeds. The Son and Spirit are closely linked, with the Spirit sent by both the Father and the Son. The Nicene Creed states that the Spirit “proceeds from the Father,” who also begets the Son. Hence the sole source of the Son and Spirit is the Father, matching Irenaeus’ “two hands of God” metaphor. Despite its successes, the Nicene Creed overlooks John’s crucial Spirit-Son relationship –a decisive oversight– allowing claims of direct spiritual access to God. The Western Church’s addition, “and (proceeds) from the Son” (Latin: ‘filioque’), was rejected by the East, leading to the East-West Schism. This impacts current issues like the validity of world religions. A growing chorus of postmodern scholars, rejecting ‘filioque,’ and appealing to Irenaeus, argue for an autonomous Holy Spirit operation, providing direct access to God the Father apart from

Jesus Christ via non-Christian religions. These dangerous developments undermine Christian mission and contradict essential truths in John's Gospel.

I. Which Spirit? – the Holy Spirit or Other Spirits?

A. The Holy Spirit

- “The Counselor [Gk. Paraclete], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name...” (Jn. 14:26)
- “After saying this, [the Risen Jesus] breathed on [the disciples] & said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (Jn. 20:22)
- “Go...make disciples... baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19)

B. Other Spirits

1. ‘Spirit of God,’ Spirit of truth’ vs. ‘spirit(s) not from God,’ ‘spirit of the antichrist,’ ‘spirit of error’ (1 Jn. 4)
- “...don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits... if they are from God... 2 This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist... 6 This is how we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception [‘error’].” (1 Jn. 4:1-3, 6 CSB)
2. ‘Spirit... from God,’ vs. ‘spirit of the world’ (1 Cor. 2:12)
- “Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God...” (1 Cor. 2:12)
- In the New Age movement, “there are many roads that lead to God because the World Spirit is ever-present, directing all people on spiritual pathways...” [Donald G. Bloesch, Spirituality Old & New, p. 110]
3. Demonic) spirits: “I saw three unclean spirits... they are demonic spirits performing signs” (Rev. 16:13-14)

II. Who sends & Breathes/Pours out the Spirit? How close is the Spirit-Son Link?

A. Who Sends the Spirit? 4 passages: Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7

- The Father sent the Son (Jesus Christ): “The Father who/has sent me” 10+ times in Jn.; Who sent the Spirit?
- “I will ask the Father, and he [the Father] will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.” (14:16)
- “But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things...” (14:26)
- “When the Paraclete comes, the one I will send to you from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father— he will testify about me.” (15:26)
- “...if I don't go away the Paraclete will not come to you. If I go, I [the Son] will send him to you.” (16:7b)

B. Who Breathes/Pours out the Spirit? 2 passages: Jn. 20:22; Acts 2:33

- “After saying this, [the Risen Jesus] breathed on [the disciples] & said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (20:22)
- Pentecost: “Since [Jesus] has been exalted to the right hand of God & has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he [Jesus] has poured out what you both see & hear.” (Acts 2:33)
- “The Pentecost sending of the Spirit was by the Son from the right hand of the Father.” — Amos Yong

C. The Holy Spirit is closely linked to Jesus, God's Son

- “During... Jesus' absence from the world, the Spirit is the mode of Christ's coming to his own [people] lest they be orphans (14:18) ... of their dwelling in Christ & Christ in them (14:20), of Christ's self-manifestation (14:21-22), & of the Father & the Son coming... & making their home in him (14:23). Could the mode of Christ's presence be impersonal? [No!] Again & again the Spirit is the... subject of verbs of communication: he ‘teaches’ & reminds (14:26), ‘bears witness’ (15:26), ‘hears,’

'takes,' 'declared,' 'guides,' 'glorifies'..." [Paul A. Rainbow, *Johannine Theology*, p. 240]

- "The Spirit who comes to humans... represents Jesus [the Spirit 'sent in my name'] & is the means by which Jesus also 'remains with' & is 'in them' (Jn. 14:26)." –Luke Timothy Johnson
- "The Son is the exegete of the invisible Father... & the Spirit as Paraclete is the exegete of the Son. It is the Spirit who 'will teach you [disciples] all things & bring to your remembrance all that I [Jesus] have said to you' (14:26). He is the supreme witness to Christ, his glorifier." [G. A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, p. 262]

III. The Spirit's Procession – in Scripture & the Creeds

A. The Spirit 'proceeds' (Jn. 15:26 cf. Rev. 21:1)

- "When the [Paraclete] comes, the one I'll send to you from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father— he'll testify about me." (15:26 CSB) ['proceeds': Gk. *ekporeuomai*: present, middle]
- "The clauses..., 'the one I'll send to you from the Father,' and 'who proceeds from the Father' are set in synonymous parallelism, & so express the same idea in variation... most modern writers [concur]. This means that the latter clause ['who proceeds from the Father'] must be interpreted of the sending of the Spirit on mission to humankind & not the so-called 'procession' of the Spirit from the Father, as many Greek Fathers maintained, & as... represented in the historic creeds. The sending of the Spirit in many respects corresponds to the sending of the Son (8:42 [etc.])." [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 276]
- "It is almost certain that the words 'who goes out ['proceeds'] from the Father,' set in synonymous parallelism with 'whom I will send you from the Father,' refer not to some ontological 'procession' [in eternity], but to the mission of the Spirit [in time]." [D. A. Carson, *John*, p.]

B. "Proceeding" (Jn. 15:26) refers to the Spirit's Mission in time

1. Jesus, the Son— 'sent by'/'came forth from' God the Father

- "The Word became flesh & dwelt among us... the one & only Son from the Father, full of grace & truth" (1:14)
 - Jesus told the Jews, "...I came from God & I'm here... I didn't come on my own, but he sent me." (8:42)
 - You disciples, "have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father & have come into the world. Again, I am leaving the world & going to the Father." (16:27-28)
2. The Son "came forth." The Spirit "proceeds" from the Father
- "John's Gospel in Greek speaks of the Son 'coming forth' [Gk. *exerchomai*] from the Father, but of the Spirit as 'proceeding' [Gk. *ekporeuomai*] from the Father. In this context, 'procession' refers specifically to the ... temporal mission of the Spirit: the Spirit is sent into the world by the Father. One cannot automatically infer from this what the character is of the eternal procession of the Spirit." [Thomas J. White, *Trinity*, p. 106]

3. The Spirit's "proceeding" in John & in the Creeds

- "Although Gregory Nazianzus & others later attach a specific theological significance to ['proceeds'] (i.e., ... the unique manner of the Spirit's coming-to-be from the Father) there's little reason to believe that John conveys that meaning in 15:26, or that he's trying to differentiate [the Spirit's 'proceeding'] from the Father from his 'sending' from the Son... ['Proceeding'] in a... Trinitarian sense... did not come within [John's] vision'... He's not speculating about the interior life of [the triune] God'." [A. Edward Siecienski, *Filioque*, p. 23]

IV. East Vs. West: the Spirit's Procession in the Creeds

A. East vs. West: Views of the Trinity

1. East: "In the East... Irenaeus' '2 hands of God' theology prevailed. Father is the fount of Deity & the Son & the Spirit are likened to his 2 hands. The Son is distinguished from the Spirit as the one [Son] eternally begotten of the Father, while the Spirit is the one eternally breathed out by the Father [alone]. With regard to the Spirit these is a single, timeless breathing." –Graham Cole

2. West: "In the West... the Father indeed eternally begets the Son but the Spirit is jointly and eternally breathed out by them [both]. With regard to the Spirit... there's a double breathing." –Graham Cole

B. The Spirit's 'Procession' in the Creeds — Background

- "The Council Fathers mistakenly thought that Jn. 15:26 ('who proceeds from the Father') was a statement about the eternal procession of the 3rd Person of the Trinity from the Father, & quoted the verse in that sense, i.e., it was about the inner life of God [in eternity], not God manifested in history. Most modern exegetes... would agree with R. Brown: 'The writer (of the 4th Gospel) is not speculating about the interior life of God; he is concerned with disciples in the world.'" [Kilian McDonnell, *Other Hand of God*, p. 156]

- "The procession of the Spirit was understood (by the Creed of Nicene-Constantinople) in metaphysical terms, i.e., this clause was understood to refer to the Spirit's ontological relationship [in being] with the Father, not to the mission on which he was sent [in time]. (But) it is almost certain that the words 'who goes out ['proceeds'] from the Father,' set in synonymous parallelism with 'whom I will send you from the Father,' refer not to some ontological 'procession' [in eternity], but to the mission of the Spirit [in time]." [DA. Carson, John, p. quote: RL. Reymond, *New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (2nd ed.) p.]

C. The Holy Spirit in the Historical Creeds:

1. **The Nicene Creed (325 AD)** "I believe in the Holy Spirit."

2. **The 'Apostles' Creed** (baptismal creed of church in Rome 3rd /4th centuries)

- I believe "in the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete."

3. **The Nicene-Constantinople Creed (381 AD)**

- "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life. Who proceeds from the Father. Who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and Son, and Who spoke through the Prophets."

? Depicted in Irenaeus' 'Two Hands of God'

- "Irenaeus frequently says that God creates by means of his 2 hands, the Son & the Spirit. This enables him to give a clear account of how God... the Creator interacts with his creation." [C. Gunton, *Triune Creator*, p. 54]

- "The NT conviction that... the Holy Spirit... comes from Christ... the Nicene Creed in its original form does not adequately recognize." — Thomas Snail

4. **The Nicene-Constantinople Creed as later taught/recited in the West** (Not the East)

- "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and Son, and Who spoke through the Prophets"

5. **The (Western) 'Athanasian Creed' (origin 5th century? Official 4th council of Toledo, Spain 633 AD)**

- "The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son, not made nor created nor begotten but proceeding."

D. Irenaeus' 'Two Hands' Metaphor Inadequate

- "The insertion of the filioque ['& the Son'] ...upsets the nice symmetry whereby both the Son & Spirit come from the Father along the lines of Irenaeus' two hands of God." [CP. Arand, *Lutheran Confessions*, p. #12]

- "It's not enough to say that...one of these 'hands' would be incomplete without the collaboration of the other: one hand cannot operate, no matter how minimally, without the other." [Louis Bouyer, *Church of God*, p. 330]

E. The filioque ['& the Son'] clause inserted into the Nicene Creed

- "Without the living appreciation of the filioque clause ...in the context of personal... theology, evangelical faith becomes incomprehensible." — Gerald Bray

1. Historical Events

• At “the Council of Constantinople (381 CE) ... the equal divinity of the Father, the Son, & the Holy Spirit were emphasized... [&] the Holy Spirit’s proceeding from the Father (rooted in Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26) was asserted: ‘[the Holy Spirit] who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped & glorified...’ Given the Gospel of John describes the Holy Spirit being sent from the Son as well as the Father ...the Western Church added ‘& the Son’ ([Latin:] filioque – rooted...in Jn. 15:26; 16:7) at the Council of Toledo (589 CE) and this move [was] one of several issues contributing to the separation of Eastern Orthodoxy & Roman Catholicism in 1054 CE.” [Paul Anderson, “Johannine Riddles,” in CA. Beeley (ed.) Bible & Early Trinitarian Theology, p. 87]

2. Filioque—the View from the East — ‘Aggressive Resistance’

• “The monarchy of the Father, the distinctive Eastern comprehension of the Trinity... has resulted in the stiff and aggressive resistance of the Orthodox Church to the... ‘double procession’ of the Spirit from both ‘the Father & the Son’ (Latin filioque), to quote the Western... Creed.” [Daniel A. Siedell, Art & Theology, p.]

• “According to the Eastern Church, the Spirit proceeds ‘from the Father alone’ (Gk.: ek mono tou Patros): the Father is the sole source of the Godhead, the one principle of origin & unity in the Trinity.” — Rob Yule

3. Filioque—the View from the West

• “The positive challenge of the Filioque [clause posed to the Orthodox East] ...was to define how the Son & the Spirit were related. If the Spirit does not proceed from the Son, what is the nature of the connection between them? They must be related somehow...” [Gerald Bray, God Has Spoken, p. 669]

• “For the West... [other] theological points were at stake. Western theologians... appeal[ed] to the 1st half of Jn. 15:26, which speaks of Jesus sending the Spirit from the Father, citing other texts ...such as Jn. 20:22, which describes Jesus breathing the Spirit into the disciples.” [R.J. Plantinga, Intro. to Christian Theology, p. 506]

• “The insertion of the filioque (‘& the Son’) clause... follows a Johannine description of the coming of the Spirit or Paraclete, where the Son gives the Spirit when the Son leaves this earth [Jn. 20:22], so that the Paraclete is...the presence... of the Son... in the [physical] absence of the Son.” (Schwobel) —Rupert Shortt

4. The “Great Schism” between East (Orthodox) and West (Catholic) 1054 AD

• “The Eastern Orthodox churches... never accepted papal jurisdiction over them... To them, Rome... claimed a power that Jesus had never given to Peter... [&] it had corrupted the church’s teaching ... This was the significance of adding the word filioque (‘& the Son’) to the Nicene Creed’s statement that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (Jn. 15:26). Did the pope have the power to authorize such an addition... without ... a universal (‘ecumenical’) church council? Rome said... he did... [This] split church apart. In 1054 papal legates excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople.” [Gerald Bray, God Has Spoken, p. 13]

• “Whether we like it or not, ... the procession of the Holy Spirit has been the sole dogmatic [theological] grounds for the separation of East [Orthodox] & West [R. Catholic, etc., churches] (Lossky).” —Rob Yule

F. Consequences of the filioque Clause (inclusion/exclusion)

1. Benefits of including the Filioque Clause

• “The term ‘proceeding from [Father & Son]’ stresses the full deity of the Son...It... protect[s] us against the vogue of numerous ‘spiritualities’ that are not Christ-centered, nor expressive of the deity of Christ, but which detach the Spirit from the Sonship of Jesus Christ... ‘If it is the work of the Holy Spirit to remake us in the image of Christ, adopted as children of God, then the Holy Spirit must share in the hypostasis [‘essence’ ‘substance,’] of the Son’ (Bray) ... ‘The Filioque clause is an invaluable reminder that the Holy Spirit is not an undefined divine creative force, but is...the Spirit of Christ. It closes the door on... the excesses of the charismatic movement [&] ...on the syncretism of much that

passes for 'spirituality' (Osborn)." [JM. Houston, "Personal Spirit...& Truth," in PL. Metzger (ed.) Trinitarian Soundings, p. 142]

- The "filioque ties the Holy Spirit closely to the resurrected Christ. It's the Easter [risen] Christ who is present to us in faith, and It's the Spirit that is responsible for this... In applying...the historical event of Jesus to our personal lives, we must think of the Spirit as proceeding from Jesus Christ." [Ted Peters, God as Trinity, p. 66]

2.Dangers of omitting the filioque Clause:

- "If pneumatology is divorced from Christology ... there can – so some argue –be access to God through the Spirit apart from the Son..." –Graham Cole

- "Defenders of the filioque clause often invoke potential dangers [of its omission]: "If the Spirit proceeds from the Father & not from the Son... can other religions receive the Spirit [& salvation, independent of Christ]?" [M. Habets (ed.) ...Filioque for the 21st Century, p. 136]

- "Our mandate is to combat the universalist strand of modern Christian thought that postulates the Spirit of God working redemptively in all cultures & religions." –Donald Bloesch

3.Irenaeus' '2 Hands of God'—Severing the Spirit & Son –Inadequate & Vulnerable to Misuse
?Interrelations: The Spirit is involved in the Son's incarnation; the Son is involved in the Spirit's sending

- Some Western theologians view Irenaeus' "Two Hands" model as inadequate; Colin Gunton detects a "Western tendency to subordinate the Spirit to the Son...But Gunton does neither want to make the Son dependent on the Spirit. [So, he asserts,] we need to say about the Spirit that 'he proceeds from the Father through the Son'; but...also... 'the Son is 'eternally begotten through the Spirit'. In that way...the relationships of Father, Son, & Spirit in God would more faithfully reflect...the New Testament." (Colin Gunton, Promise of Trinitarian Theology, p. 200)." [Gert-Jan Roest, Gospel in the Western Context, p. 271]

- "The Son [is] the divine Person from the Father... [who] assumes humanity in the person of Jesus Christ [Jn. 1:1, 14] ... Matthew & Luke describe the incarnation as the result of the Spirit's activity. Matthew attributes the conception of Jesus to the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:18-21) [In] Luke...the identity of Jesus as the Son of God is the product of...the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:35)." [Steven M. Studebaker, "Integrating Pneumatology & Christology," Pneuma, Vol. 28, #1 (2006) p. 13]

V.Severing the Spirit & Son to accommodate World Religions

- "Proposals...that separate...the works of the Son & the Spirit don't have biblical or theological warrant"–Todd Miles

A.Abandoning Filioque –Severing Son & Spirit

?“Abandon[ing] filioque... opens the door to...other world religions, providing... a basis... in them [for] a valid spiritual relationship to God that bypasses Jesus'.” –Thomas Snail

?“Increasingly...voices are advocating ...dropping...filioque... If the Spirit of God proceeds from the Father only, then...this same Spirit may relate adherents of other faiths [Hindu, Buddhist, Islam] to the Father without the need of Christ..." –Graham Cole

B.Misuse of Irenaeus' 'Two Hands' Metaphor

?“Irenaeus' 'two hands' metaphor has become a playground of free interpretation...[by] pneumatological inclusivists ... Appeals to Irenaeus... claim... support... that's simply not there.” — Todd Miles

?“There's...a marked tendency.... to view the Spirit as working universally ...apart from the parameters of Christian faith. When the Spirit is no longer tied to Christ, inter-religious dialogue takes on a new and disturbing significance.” –Donald Bloesch

C.Five Examples:

1.Georg Khodr (1923-) Eastern Orthodox

?“Christ...is received as light when grace visits...a Buddhist or a Muslim reading their Scriptures.” –G. Khodr

?“It is the Christ, the Risen Lord, alone who is received as light when grace visits a Brahmin, a

Buddhist or a Muslim reading their Scriptures or performing their prayers.” –Georg Khodr
 ?“The Spirit is present everywhere & fills everything by virtue of an economy distinct from that of the Son’. [Moreover,] ‘all who are visited by the Spirit are the people of God.” –Georg Khodr

2. Peter C. Phan (1943-) Roman Catholic, Georgetown U., Washington DC., USA

o“‘The Holy Spirit has been... saving the peoples of Asia... before Christianity appeared on the scene.” – Peter Phan

3. Jacques Dupuis (1923(1923–2004) 2004) Catholic/JCatholic/Jesuit esuit

?“Does God’s self-revelation necessarily pass for all through the person of Jesus Christ?” — Jacques Dupuis

?“Could it...not be that...while Christians secure salvation through... God’s Son incarnate in Jesus Christ, others receive it through the immediate autonomous action of the Spirit of God?” — Jacques Dupuis

?“The ‘two hands’ of God –the [Son] & the Spirit—are universally present & active in other religions... [and there are] other saviors who somehow participate in the mediation of Christ.” — Jacques Dupuis

4. Clark Pinnock (1937-2010); “Post-conservative Christian;” Prof. McMaster Divinity College.

?“God’s breath [Spirit] flows in the world at large, not just within the confines of Christian movements ...We see his activity in human culture & even in the religions of humanity.” –Clark Pinnock

?“The Spirit...overcome[s] the historical particularity of the Son & becomes the Savior of all people” – C Pinnock

5. Amos Yong (1965-) Pentecostal; Dean of Theology, Fuller Seminary, Ca., USA

?“God’s Spirit is the life-breath of [God’s image] in every human being & the presupposition of all human relationships & communities.” –Amos Yong

?“Everything that exists, including all religions, are ‘providentially sustained by the Spirit of God for divine purposes.’” –Amos Yong

?We, Christians, should “ask if there are others, those outside the pale of who we... think are... the elect, whom God may nevertheless count as his own.” –Amos Yong

?A. “Yong’s framework, while...derived from...Pentecost, ignores its... Christological basis. It seems untenable to apply the benefits of the Spirit of Christ in a universal fashion without Christ himself.” – Carolyn EL. Tan

D. Consequences of Severing the Spirit & the Son

1. Abandon the filioque; bypass the Son; Religions directly access God (cf. Jn. 14:6)

•“Some... theologians & bishops ... ‘abandon filioque because it opens the door to...other world religions, providing... a basis... in them a valid spiritual relationship to God that bypasses Jesus’.” – Thomas Snail

•In contrast, “Those...who share the NT conviction that... Christ is the one way to salvation ... continue to insist that the Holy Spirit... comes from Christ & [his] chief work is to bring us to the confession of Christ. In that case the relationship of the Spirit to the Son...[which] the Gospel affirms... the Nicene Creed in its original form does not adequately recognize [without the filioque].” [Thomas Snail, Giving Gift, p. 126]

•“Increasingly...voices are advocating ...dropping...filioque theology with the world of religion in mind. The issue becomes: If the Spirit of God proceeds from the Father only, then...this same Spirit may relate adherents of other faiths [Hindu, Buddhist, Islam, etc.] to the Father without the need of Christ... How needful is the mediatorship of Christ?” [Graham A Cole, He Who Gives Life, p. 78]

2. Divorce the Spirit & Son; direct access to God via the Spirit, bypassing Christ (cf. Jn. 14:6)

•“What’s of great importance is that... pneumatology must not be divorced from Christology [The Spirit must not be severed from the Son.] ... However, an increasing number of theologians want to do ... [exactly that!]. [In]...this view, if pneumatology is divorced from Christology ...a new understanding of Christianity’s relationship to the world religions might emerge. There can –so some argue –be access to God through the Spirit apart from the Son...” [Graham A Cole, He Who Gives Life, pp. 199]

3. Spirit promoted from Trinity's 3rd Person to 1st (cf. Matt. 28:19)

•“For a growing number of scholars, the Spirit is no longer the 3rd person of the Trinity, but the first person, in some cases the only person. The Spirit is no longer subordinate to Christ as a messenger carrying out his commands ... The point of departure is no longer the preexistent Trinity... but the impact of the Spirit of God on... justice & peace... There's also a marked tendency... to view the Spirit as working universally in history ... even apart from the parameters of Christian faith. When the Spirit is no longer tied to Christ, inter-religious dialogue takes on a new & disturbing significance.” [Donald G. Bloesch, *Holy Spirit*, pp. 265-6]

•“Some now argue... its time ... for starting neither with the first article of the Apostles' Creed ([‘I believe in God] the Father Almighty...) nor from the 2nd ([‘& in] his only Son our Lord’) but from the 3rd ([‘I believe in the Holy Spirit’). Starting with the [Spirit] freed from the filioque [severed from the Son] opens further possibilities of a way to God without the mediation of Christ ... [It's a] crucial issue... [not] an arcane theological debate...” [Graham A Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, p. 78]

4. Allegedly, the Holy Spirit saves people apart from Faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 4:12)

?“There's salvation in no one else [besides Jesus Christ], for there's no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

•“It is the Christ, the Risen Lord, alone who is received as light when grace visits a Brahmin, a Buddhist or a Muslim reading their Scriptures or performing their prayers.” [Georg Khodr, *Orthodox Perspective*, p. 27]

•In an Asian context, Peter Phan asserts that “the Holy Spirit has been ‘accompanying, comforting, liberating, transforming, sanctifying & saving the peoples of Asia... before Christianity appeared on the scene’ (Peter Phan, *Being Religious Inter-religiously*, p. 66, #19): the Spirit works before & outside the Asian Christian Church, & [Phan] urges that other religions be seen as creations of the Logos [Word] & the Holy Spirit.” [Jenny Daggars, *Postcolonial Theology of Religions*, p. 207]

•In contrast, “Scripture never acknowledges [saving] potential in other religions, i.e., none of the other religions [e.g., Paul met in Athens, Ephesus (Artemis)] is described as being able to lead an individual to a ‘from-sin-liberating’ knowledge of the one true God.” [Edward Rommen, *Christianity & the Religions*, p. 250]

5. The ‘Universal Spirit’ vs. the ‘Spirit of Jesus Christ’ (Jn. 8:39)

•“Problematic accounts of the Spirit's universal work arise, ... from a failure to consider how the Spirit relates to Christ: ‘How can we discern God's Spirit, if it is indeed everywhere? Does not the [biblical] narrative... present the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ –not simply [the Spirit of] the Logos, but the [Spirit of] the crucified & raised Christ? (Jn. 8:39) ... [There's an] emphasis on the inseparability of Word [Christ the Son,] & Spirit ... [&] the testimony of the Spirit [to the Son].’ (Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Trinity in a Pluralistic Age*: p. 63) [Keith E. Johnson, *Rethinking the Trinity...*, p. 44]

6. The Divine Spirit Or demonic spirits? (1 Jn. 4:1-6)

•“Pluralistic trinitarian theologies of religion [view] the role of the Spirit as a ‘universalizer.’ ... [However, the] question must be asked [about]... the extent to which, the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ... [Moreover,] if the Spirit's activity is literally universal [everywhere in everything] we wouldn't be able to distinguish the divine [Spirit/activity] from the demonic [Spirit/activity].” [K. Vanhoozer, *Trinity in a Pluralistic Age*: p. 63]

• APPENDIX

• Georg Khodr (1923-) Eastern Orthodox

•“The Spirit is present everywhere & fills everything... [via] an economy distinct from that of the Son” - G. Khodr

•“The Spirit can be received by people who do not know the historical Jesus.” –Georg Khodr

•“Christ... is received as light when grace visits... a Buddhist or a Muslim reading their Scriptures.” –G. Khodr

1. Distancing the Spirit & Sin via ‘hypostatic independence’

•Some scholars “have shown a problematic tendency to create a distance between Christ and the

Spirit... According to these critics, [the filioque] clause...makes the Spirit too dependent on Christ. In his desire to make more space for the Spirit in the world of religions...G. Khodr argues for the 'hypostatic independence' of Son & Spirit. However...[this] cannot mean that these 2 [Son & Spirit] are working on different projects." [B. van den Toren, K-S. Tan, Humble Confidence... Interfaith Apologetics, p.]

•"Christ...is received as light when grace visits...a Buddhist or a Muslim reading their Scriptures." –G. Khodr

•"The Word [Logos] & the Spirit [are] called the 'two hands of the Father.' The economy of Christ...is not understandable without the economy of the Spirit. This doesn't mean... there's no distinction between both economies. Word & Spirit keep their 'hypostatic independence' in relation to each other. 'The Spirit fills everything in an economy distinct from that of the Son.' (G. Khodr, Orthodox Perspective..., p. 25) ... 'It is the Christ, the Risen Lord, 'alone who is received as light when grace visits a Brahmin, a Buddhist or a Muslim reading their Scriptures [Quran, Bhagavad Gita] or performing their prayers. It is the Johannine agape [love] that was experienced ...by the Muslim Sufis' (Ibid., p. 27)... Various economies of salvation exist, before and after Christ." [Jan van Lin, Shaking the Fundamentals, pp. 245-6]

•Georg "Khodr envisions God's [salvation] plan in terms of diverse economies... [even] after the historical appearing of Christ, but all secretly related to him... He stresses ...that the Spirit can be received by people who do not know the historical Jesus ...He stresses the distinct economy of the Spirit...& refers frequently to... Irenaeus' [metaphor of] ... the Son & the Spirit are the 'two hands of the Father.' Khodr emphasizes the hypostatic independence of the 2nd & 3rd persons of the Trinity... In the Pentecost event...the Spirit ... makes Christ present in the world... so non-Christian religions [are arenas] where...the Spirit is at work ... within the 'twofold divine economy'." [Heidi Hirvonen, Christian-Muslim Dialogue, pp. 88-89]

•"Borrowing from the Orthodox prayer...invok[ing] the Holy Spirit, [Georg] Khodr suggest[s] 'the Spirit is present everywhere & fills everything by virtue of an economy distinct from that of the Son'. [Moreover,] 'all who are visited by the Spirit are the people of God,' & further...Christians should... learn from the world religions because of this activity of the Spirit." (G. Khodr, 'Christianity in a Pluralistic World, p. 239). [Eve Tibbs, "Distinct Economy of the Spirit?" in W. Vondey (ed.) Theology of Amos Yong..., p. 230]

•**Jacques Dupuis** **Jacques Dupuis (1923(1923–2004) Roman C2004) Roman Catholic atholic**

•"Does God's self-revelation necessarily pass for all through the person of Jesus Christ?" — Jacques Dupuis

•"Could it...not be that...while Christians secure salvation through the economy of God's Son incarnate in Jesus Christ, others receive it [salvation] through the immediate autonomous action of the Spirit of God?" Theology has spoken of the 'hypostatic independence'... between God's 'two hands,' the Spirit & the Word /Son, as 'two distinct channels through which God's saving presence reaches out to people in distinct economies of salvation'... [In this view] there are divergent paths to one common destiny." [Jacques Dupuis, Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism, pp. 196-7 summary by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Introduction to the Theology of Religions, pp. 212-3]

•"How does one affirm the universality of God's saving will...? Simply by recognizing that the 'two hands' of God –the Word [Son] & the Spirit—are universally present & active in other religions...[& there are] other saviors who somehow participate in the mediation of Christ (Dupuis, Op. cit., pp. 300, 205-6)." [Keith E. Johnson, Rethinking the Trinity & Religious Pluralism, p. 42]

•**Clark Pinnock (1937-2010; McMaster Divinity College.)** —a critic of filioque— raises this possibility:

•"The Spirit...overcome[s] the historical particularity of the Son & becomes the Savior of all people" – C Pinnock

•"God the Spirit... proceeds from the Father & is present in the whole world. God's breath [Spirit] flows in the world at large, not just within the confines of Christian movements ...We see his activity in human culture & even in the religions of humanity." [Clark Pinnock, Wideness of God's Mercy, p. 104]

•Pinnock argues that "the cosmic breadth of Spirit activities... [indicates] the universality of God's

grace. The Creator's love for the world, central to the Christian message, is implemented by the Spirit' (Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, p. 187).' However, Pinnock's positive emphasis on the relationship between the Spirit & the world is perhaps too optimistic. Note Ferguson's comment: ... 'The NT places the Spirit & the world in an antithetical, not conciliatory, relationship. The world cannot see or know the Spirit (Jn. 14:17); the Spirit convicts the world (16:8-11); the spirit of the world & the Spirit of God stand over against each other (1 Cor. 2:12-14; 1 Jn. 4:3)' (Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, p. 246)" [Daniel Strange, *Possibility of Salvation...*, p. 270]

•Pinnock's theology, "sever[s] the quality of relationship between the Son & the Spirit that the Western Church sought to preserve with the procession of the Spirit from the Father & the Son. Predictably, Pinnock is highly critical of the filioque clause & the theology it represents... By denying double procession [from the Father & the Son], Pinnock attempts to establish ...independence for the work of the Spirit from that of the Son... [In this way,] 'the Spirit is able to overcome the historical particularity of the Son and becomes the Savior of all people.'" [Todd Miles, *God of Many Understandings?* pp. 220, 224]

•Dr. Amos Yong, Pentecostal (1965-)

•"The Advocate or Comforter is sent both directly to the world and indirectly to that arena through the messianic followers [of Jesus] as...witnesses" [Amos Yong, *Mission After Pentecost*, p. 257].

•At Pentecost "argues Yong, the Spirit has been poured out on 'all flesh' (Acts 2:17) including those of other religions, therefore the Spirit is already present & active in, & can speak through other religions—all religions are, in this sense, potentially redeemable. (Yong, *Spirit Poured Out*, p. 240)." [Ex *Auditu*, V. 23, p. 301]

•"Rather than connecting the Spirit first of all to Christology [Christ's Person & work], Yong suggests that 'God's Spirit is the life-breath of the imago Dei [God's image] in every human being & the presupposition of all human relationships & communities.' It is by the Spirit that people receive understanding (wisdom) about life in all its dimensions—rational, volitional, moral, interpersonal, & relational. [So, allegedly, every human being has God's Spirit; Why then is the new birth required (Jn. 3)?]" [Robert K. Johnston, *God's Wider Presence*, p.]

•Dr. Yong "suggest[s] that the Spirit is acting independently from the Son. Unless the Spirit & Son have distinctive realms of activity, it is difficult to include [other] world religions in the conversation of salvation... [For Yong:] 'Recognition of the...mission of the Holy Spirit into the world relative to, yet distinct from that the Son provides the theological space... for reflection on the place of religions in the economy of the Spirit.'" [Eve Tibbs, "Distinct Economy of the Spirit?" in W. Vondey (ed.) *Theology of Amos Yong...*, p. 230]

•Two Divine Missions; Two Economies

•Dr. Amos Yong asserts there is "a distinction between the economy of the Word [the Son] & the Spirit...a relationship-in-autonomy between the two divine missions' ...[Moreover,] if 'the Spirit is from the Father of the Son, then the economy of the Son in no way limits that of the Spirit,' As a result, 'the Spirit's economy is 'larger than that of the Son'... [Again,] 'the two economies (of Word [the Son] & Spirit) are distinct & perhaps autonomous.'" [GR. McDermott, HA. Netland, *Trinitarian Theology of Religions*, Ch. 2) Oxford Academic.]

•Dr. Amos Yong argues against "unnecessarily restricting the economy of the Spirit to that of the Son...New attention is being given to theologian Georg Khodr, who recognized that non-Christian faiths should be conceived 'in pneumatological terms, related but not subordinated to or redefined by the economy of the Word.' [G. Khodr cited by Yong]. Khodr realized that if 'the Spirit is from the Father of the Son, then the economy of the Son in no way limits that of the Spirit'. As a result, the Spirit's economy is "larger than that of the Son." In [Yong's] discussion of Paul Knitter's work, it is suggested that "the two economies [of Word & Spirit] are distinct and perhaps autonomous.'" [Quoting Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, Gerrald R. McDermott, "...Trinity should govern our Approach to Other Religions," *JETS*, Vol. 60/1 (2017) p. 56]

•Misleading Appeals to Irenaeus' 'Two Hands' Metaphor

•"Underpinning Yong's...formulation is Irenaeus' concept of God's...'two hands,' the Son & the Spirit,

by which Yong envisions the 'related yet distinct economies of the Spirit & the Son.' (Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, pp. 103, 169)." [Michael D. O'Neil, *Beyond Four Walls*, p. 218]

•"Amos Yong's one-sided emphasis on the work of the Spirit to the neglect of the work of the Son risks segregating the two 'Hands' of the Father and dividing their saving operation into two separate economies." –Geoffrey Wainwright, Foreword, in Keith E. Johnson, *Rethinking the Trinity...*, p. 9]

•"Perhaps [Dr.] Yong knows that Irenaeus would not have used the [2 hands] figure of speech to assert an 'intra-trinitarian egalitarianism,' but he is happy...to advance his own proposals...But to use... Irenaeus... to authorize an 'intra-trinitarian egalitarianism,' per Amos Yong, is to stretch the metaphor past the point of breaking... Irenaeus' 'two hands' metaphor has become a playground of free interpretation in the hands of pneumatological inclusivists [Yong, C. Pinnock]... Appeals to Irenaeus... attempt to claim... support... that's simply not there." [Todd L. Miles, "Irenaeus in the Hands of Soteriological Inclusivists," *SBJT*, pp. 8, 13-14]

•"Irenaeus consistently united the witness of the Spirit to the building of [Christ's] Body [the Church] ... Any attempt to call on Irenaeus for support of a paradigm that asserts a relative autonomy between the Spirit & the Son is misleading." [Todd L. Miles, "Irenaeus in the Hands of Soteriological Inclusivists," *SBJT*, p. 13]

•One of Dr. Yong's axioms is that "everything that exists, including all religions, are 'providentially sustained by the Spirit of God for divine purposes' (Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, pp. 44-46) ...[This] is problematical." [Carolyn EL. Tan, "Spirit—Beyond Christ?" in M. D. O'Neil, *Beyond Four Walls*, p. 207]

•"Amos Yong argues that the Holy Spirit is present & active among adherents of non-Christian religions & that Christians must learn to discern the Spirit's presence [there]. [His theology] ... builds on a distinction between the economy of the Word [Christ the Son] & the economy of the Spirit. Because the Spirit acts in an economy distinct from that of the Son, Christians should be able to identify... the Spirit's work that [is] not constrained by the work of the Son." [Keith E. Johnson, *Rethinking the Trinity...*, p. 46]

•Amos Yong ...suggests that 'Rejection of the Filioque may free up some room for a...pneumatology of religions... as a...related stream in the history of salvation' [via an alternative route apart from Christ] ... [since allegedly,] 'the religions of the world...are providentially sustained by the Spirit of God for divine purposes' (A. Yong) ...Thus [allegedly] the rejection of filioque [allows] the embrace of religious pluralism." [Graham A Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, pp. 199-200]

•Amos Yong recognizes that "If...the Filioque is reasserted... [this supports] the notion that other [religious] faiths, including Judaism, are valid only as anticipations of the Christian revelation & therefore are fulfilled in Christ." [Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, p. 186]

•Dr. Yong "rejects the...Western view that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son [filioque] (in order to maintain... an independent 'economy' of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, evidence against the twofold procession of the Spirit ad intra does not count as evidence for a distinct economy of the Spirit ad extra." [Keith E. Johnson, "Trinity...the Key...?" in D. J. Treier (ed.) *Trinitarian Theology*, pp. 149-50]

•Dr. Yong's [theology] is deficient because it affirms two distinct economies –one associated with the Son & the other with the Spirit. From the two 'sendings' ([missions] Latin: *missiones*) one should not infer two distinct 'economies.' Yong makes the mistake of equating 'mission' & 'economy.'...Although the sendings of the Son & Spirit are distinct...[so] that one can speak of two 'sendings' (Gal. 4:4-6), these two 'sendings' have one ultimate goal—bringing human beings into communion with the triune God. From two 'sendings' one should not infer two distinct 'economies'. By positing two 'economies' Yong implicitly severs the two hands [of the Son & the Spirit] & undermines the [unique]... economy of salvation." [Keith E. Johnson, "...Trinity...the Key..?" D. J. Treier (ed.) *Trinitarian Theology* p. 150]

•Reviewer M. Burgos writes: "Yong is so bold to suppose even the salvation of those who have not bent their knee to the crucified & risen Lord of glory. Yong wrote, 'I wonder if those of us who now consider our membership among the people of God as secure might be challenged to ask if there are others, those outside the pale of who we might think are among the elect, whom God may nevertheless count as his own.' (Yong, *Who is the Holy Spirit?* p. 121). For Yong, those who reside

'outside the pale' include adherents to religions other than biblical Christianity." [Michael Burgos, "Review of Amos Yong's 'Who is the Holy Spirit?'" p. 6]

- The fundamental problem is "that pneumatology ha[s] been severed from Christology [the Spirit divorced from the Son]... the nexus [link] between Christ & the Spirit is broken... [Karl Barth] maintained [that] the filioque ties the Spirit irrevocably to Christ, since from eternity the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son." [Graham A Cole, He Who Gives Life, pp. 201-2]
- "Someone might object, 'What of the Spirit's [wider] work in creation & [its] preservation...?' ... [Answer:] 'Not all divine activity is saving activity' (Ferguson). Or put more sharply, not all Spirit activity is saving activity..." [Graham A Cole, He Who Gives Life, p. 202]
- "Our mandate is to combat the universalist strand of modern Christian thought that postulates the Spirit of God working redemptively in all cultures & religions." [Donald Bloesch, Jesus Christ: Savior & Lord, p. 13]
- Can we truly discern the Spirit's work in other religions/societies—a cautionary tale: "In the 1930s... many intelligent Americans & Europeans were fooled when they visited Berlin & Moscow; the same thing happened in China in the 1960s. These naive visitors experienced a spirit of renewal & returned home enthusiastic for regimes that later proved to be oppressive, even murderous. They thought they'd glimpsed new possibilities for human life, but they were sadly & dangerously duped & deluded." [Clark Pinnock, Flame of Love, p. 209]

•Counter to the Spirit's Autonomous Economy

- We may recognize the "universal presence & operation of the Spirit... However, the NT refers to an ongoing alienation between the Spirit & humanity: 'He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn't see him or know him.' (Jn. 14:17a). Through the work of Christ, this alienation has come to an end. The divine-human reconciliation is located in Jesus Christ & as...the terms 'Spirit of Jesus/Christ/Son' indicate, Christian pneumatology cannot be separated from Christology. [Spirit is inseparable from Christ]. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ (Jn. 16:14) ... The essence of Christian belief is that only in Christ, through his death & resurrection, is there rebirth into life controlled & transformed by the Holy Spirit." [Carolyn EL. Tan, "Spirit—Beyond Christ?" in M. D. O'Neil, Beyond Four Walls, p. 219]
- Dr. "Yong's framework, while being derived from the [Spirit-focused] event at Pentecost, ignores its [Christ-centered] & [its] basis [in Christ's Person & work]. It seems untenable to apply the benefits of the Spirit of Christ in a universal fashion without Christ himself." [Carolyn EL. Tan, "Spirit—Beyond Christ?" in M. D. O'Neil, Beyond Four Walls, p. 220]

?Shift from Missio Dei (Mission of God) to Missio Spiritus (Mission of the Spirit)

? Policy document accepted by the World Council of Churches [WCC]...in October 2013: "Together Towards Life – mission and evangelism in changing landscapes"— "TTL"

? "We affirm that mission begins with God's act of creation & continues in re-creation, by the enlivening power of the Holy Spirit." ...This 'new ecumenical affirmation focuses on the mission of the Holy Spirit (missio Spiritus) as its theological framework within the Trinitarian understanding of mission (missio Dei)... TTL celebrates how the Spirit empowers & acts with, & through all people, & that the Spirit gathers up all of creation, all life, into God's mission. This shift in [mission theology] is part of a larger theological turn towards pneumatology, especially due to the influence of the... Pentecostal & Charismatic movements ... [It: TTL] can also be understood as a way to reach out to the Orthodox family in the WCC -indeed an ecumenical formulation!" [CJP Niemandt, "Together towards new life for missiology? Mission & missiology in...the World Council of Churches 2013 policy statement," Acta theol. V.35 #2 (2015)]