

“Spirit Renewed Ecclesiology: The Contribution of Moltmann’s Pneumatology for the Church”

By Luke Geraty

## Jürgen Moltmann: Massive Contribution, Widely Read, and Highly Influential

Of contemporary Protestant theologians, Jürgen Moltmann stands among giants as he is considered one of the most influential and widely read systematicians of his time.<sup>1</sup> Though Moltmann was Professor of Theology at Tübingen from 1967 to 1994, he spent a number of his early years as a pastor at the Evangelical Church of Bremen-Wasserhorst.<sup>2</sup> This is likely why he is both an influential academic theologian and a “man of the church.”

Moltmann has written many popular and influential volumes, including *Theology of Hope* (1964) and *Crucified God* (1972). Due to “the fact that he draws from so many different sources,” Moltmann’s theology is “not only contemporary but also contextually relevant.”<sup>3</sup> As an ecumenical dialogue participant,<sup>4</sup> Moltmann’s engagement with the Eastern Orthodox Church, especially Eastern spirituality, has had tremendous influence upon his pneumatological development.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, Moltmann’s prestigious academic career has included serious interest in the contribution of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.<sup>6</sup> In fact, Moltmann’s

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (London: T&T Clark, 1995), ix-xi; Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz, *The Kingdom and the Power: The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 11-13; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit – In Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 400-411.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, *A Broad Place: An Autobiography*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 53–67.

<sup>3</sup> Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), Kindle Electronic Edition: Kindle Locations 1374-1375.

<sup>4</sup> Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, Kindle Locations 1371-1376; see also Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 11–15; Hans Kung and Jürgen Moltmann, eds., *Fundamentalism as an Ecumenical Challenge* (London: SCM Press, 1996); Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 3–5.

<sup>5</sup> Beck notes this pneumatological development, as admitted in Moltmann’s own writings, as quite significant; see T. D. Beck, *The Holy Spirit and the Renewal of All Things: Pneumatology in Paul and Jürgen Moltmann* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 226-227.

<sup>6</sup> Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, Kindle Locations 1374-1375; cf. Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 3–5; Jürgen Moltmann, “A Response to My Pentecostal Dialogue Partners,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4 (1994), 59-70.

proposed “Messianic ecclesiology”<sup>7</sup> is robustly pneumatological, having common points of interest with current Pentecostal theologies addressing the Spirit and the Church.

### **An Overview of Moltmann’s Pneumatology**

Moltmann’s pneumatology has developed over the course of his academic career, which is well documented in Thiselton<sup>8</sup> and Müller-Fahrenholz.<sup>9</sup> I’ve chosen to focus on five themes in Moltmann’s pneumatology which, I believe, contribute to or raise ecclesiological issues:

*creation, new life, Social (relational) Trinitarianism, experience, and mission.*

*Creation.* Moltmann’s pneumatology focuses upon “the Spirit as the power and life of the whole creation.”<sup>10</sup> He notes that, in affinity with historic orthodoxy, “creation is a trinitarian process: the Father creates through the Son in the Holy Spirit” and “the created world is therefore created ‘by God’, formed ‘through God’ and exists ‘in God’.”<sup>11</sup> Graham Cole notes that Moltmann has a “strong accent on the Spirit’s relation to creation” because he “understands the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of Life.””<sup>12</sup> Creation, in Moltmann’s theology, is rooted in a pneumatological framework. In fact, it’s a significant feature in his ecological doctrine of creation.<sup>13</sup>

*New Life.* This focus on “the Spirit of life” in creation naturally leads to a soteriological aspect of the Spirit’s work. In Moltmann, “new life begins in the Spirit”<sup>14</sup> as it “takes place

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<sup>7</sup> Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*.

<sup>8</sup> Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit*, 400-401.

<sup>9</sup> Müller-Fahrenholz, *The Kingdom and the Power*.

<sup>10</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 17.

<sup>11</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 9.

<sup>12</sup> Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007), Kindle Electronic Edition: Kindle Locations 478-479.

<sup>13</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, especially chapters 1-2; see also Mark I. Wallace, *Fragments of the Spirit: Nature, Violence, and the Renewal of Creation* (London: T & T Clark, 2002); Sigurd Bergmann, *Creation Set Free: The Spirit as Liberator of Nature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 26.

‘through the Holy Spirit’ or ‘through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead’; for the renewing Holy Spirit is ‘the power of the resurrection from the dead’ (cf. Rom. 8:11).”<sup>15</sup> Salvation and renewal are explicitly pneumatological experiences with God himself. Or perhaps “she,” for the theme of “new birth” influences Moltmann’s use of feminine language to describe the Spirit. He writes, “If believers are ‘born’ of the Holy Spirit, then we have to think of the Spirit as the ‘mother’ of believers, and in this sense as a feminine Spirit.”<sup>16</sup> Though considered controversial by some,<sup>17</sup> Moltmann’s ‘feminine leaning’ pneumatology has support<sup>18</sup> and appears to shape his Social Trinitarianism. Yet regardless of whether one agrees with Moltmann’s approach to gender language and the Spirit or Social Trinitarianism, few will reject his emphasis upon the Spirit’s work in bringing *true* and *eternal* life.

*Social (relational) Trinitarianism.* Moltmann’s doctrine of God is shaped by the Perichoresis,<sup>19</sup> which he believes “manifests that highest intensity of living which we call divine life and eternal love.” Conversely, Moltmann states that “God’s infinite intensity of life is manifested in the eternal perichoresis of the divine Persons.”<sup>20</sup> Over and against theologians holding to Subordinationism, Moltmann states that “in God there is no one-sided relationship of superiority and subordination, command and obedience, master and servant.”<sup>21</sup> Moltmann holds

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>16</sup> Moltmann, *The Source of Life*, 35.

<sup>17</sup> Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, Kindle Locations 1604-1692.

<sup>18</sup> Clark H. Pinnock provides a helpful and balanced approach to this controversial issue in *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 15-17.

<sup>19</sup> Perichoresis is the view “that the divine essence is shared by each of the three persons of the Trinity in a manner that avoids blurring the distinctions among them,” Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 26.

<sup>20</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 16.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

to a relational (social) economic Trinitarianism<sup>22</sup> that, as we shall see, has much to offer ecclesiology.

*Experience.* Moltmann's pneumatology is formed by an epistemology that sees no reason to avoid the role of experience in Christian faith, a view likely celebrated by those in the Pentecostal and Eastern Orthodox traditions (among others). This experiential pneumatology begins with an awareness of the historical experience, "an experience of God which happens to people in the medium of history throughout historical events."<sup>23</sup> These historical experiences are recorded in Scripture and demonstrate that experience has had a role among God's people throughout both the Old and New Testaments. These encounters with God are experienced via the agency of the Spirit. Furthermore, these pneumatological experiences are still occurring in human history among God's creation.

While acknowledging that the "theology of experience is pre-eminently lay theology,"<sup>24</sup> Moltmann notes that his own "Christian faith began with a despairing search for God and a personal struggle with the dark sides of 'the hidden face' of God."<sup>25</sup> Personal experience has had a tremendous influence upon Moltmann's theology; after all, these experiences are to be collectively considered an "experience of the Spirit," which has brought "an awareness of God in, with and beneath the experience of life, which gives us assurance of God's fellowship, friendship and love."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Müller-Fahrenholz, *The Kingdom and the Power*, 137-152. Another significant point regarding Moltmann's Trinitarianism is his "Spirit Christology," which is meant to complement "Logos Christology," cf. Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 17.

<sup>23</sup> Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 39.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 3.

<sup>26</sup> Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 17.

It would appear reasonable to assume that this experiential pneumatology is an outworking of Moltmann's Social Trinitarianism in that the *koinonia* of the Spirit moves from the Perichoresis of the divine Persons to those whom enter into relationship with God.<sup>27</sup> This "fellowship of the Spirit" is a relational experience, as Moltmann notes:

In his 'fellowship' the Spirit evidently gives himself. He himself enters into the fellowship with believers, and draws them into his fellowship. His inner being is evidently capable of fellowship—of community—of sociality... If we look at the word fellowship itself, we can say that fellowship does not take by force and possess. It liberates, and draws others into the relationships that are essentially its own. Fellowship means opening ourselves for one another, giving one another a share in ourselves. It creates respect for one another. Fellowship lives in reciprocal participation and from mutual recognition.<sup>28</sup>

Relational experience is, for Moltmann, foundational to Christian theology and a feature to celebrate rather than ignore.

*Mission.* "God's mission is nothing less than the sending of the Holy Spirit from the Father through the Son into this world, so that this world should not perish but live,"<sup>29</sup> writes Moltmann. The Holy Spirit's primary role, it would seem, is to renew God's creation.<sup>30</sup> Though Moltmann makes room for evangelistic proclamation,<sup>31</sup> his primary emphasis is upon pneumatological renewal in what might be referred to as a 'sovereign' work. This renewal includes God's people, all living creatures, and the earth itself.<sup>32</sup>

### **Evaluating Moltmann's Pneumatology**

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Moltmann, *The Source of Life*, 89–102.

<sup>28</sup> Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 217.

<sup>29</sup> Moltmann, *The Source of Life*, 19.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 18–25.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 206–226.

<sup>32</sup> Moltmann, *The Source of Life*, 22–25.

As Thiselton notes, Moltmann's work invites "a very large measure of agreement."<sup>33</sup> There is good reason for Moltmann's popularity and influence, for few modern theologians are as comprehensive or as contemporarily relevant.

Moltmann's pneumatological approach to creation is one to both celebrate and engage. We should certainly envision "creation together with its future—the future for which it was made and in which it will be perfected."<sup>34</sup> This eschatological *telos* for creation is one of eternal "newness."<sup>35</sup> Therefore, creation should be "reaffirmed, not abandoned"<sup>36</sup> because "creation is to be redeemed."<sup>37</sup>

When we turn to evaluate Moltmann's "new life" theme within his broader pneumatological work, questions arise. Those with any sense of an Evangelical concept of "conversion"<sup>38</sup> will find much to be desired in relation to the nature of *how* "new life" is both *given* and *received*.<sup>39</sup> Moltmann, in line with the Protestant tradition, highlights the divine grace motif of the Reformation, yet is not as clear on the merits of such grace.<sup>40</sup> In fact, in much of Moltmann's work it would seem that questions concerning receptivity are almost entirely ignored! Though he states that "the medium of regeneration is the Holy Spirit, which is 'richly' poured out,"<sup>41</sup> one is still left wondering how this "regeneration" is received and/or experienced.

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<sup>33</sup> Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit*, 411.

<sup>34</sup> Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 158; see also relevant portions of Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), esp. "Part IV: The Arena of Mission."

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>38</sup> David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 5-10.

<sup>39</sup> I.e., how is "new life" initiated and on what basis?

<sup>40</sup> This is not to suggest that Moltmann does not address this, for he does; see Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 123-160. The issue is whether this is as clear and explicit in all of his works.

<sup>41</sup> Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 146.

Given that Moltmann has a leaning toward Universalism,<sup>42</sup> it is no surprise that we are left with more questions than answers. As David Höhne notes, entering into theological dialogue with Moltmann causes one to go from “wandering, at times galloping, and at other times stumbling at forks along Moltmann’s “open, inviting path.””<sup>43</sup> Additionally, these questions become more complex when one considers that Moltmann has written much on the controversial subject of human freedom.<sup>44</sup>

Moltmann’s Social Trinitarianism is equally difficult to evaluate and beyond the scope of this paper. Perhaps it is best to simply note that those who hold to any form of Subordination will take issue with Moltmann’s economic and relational understanding of God.<sup>45</sup> In my opinion, however, Moltmann’s vision of the “relational and perichoretic *form* which the Holy Spirit takes on in his relationship to the Son,”<sup>46</sup> has ecclesiological implications, as we shall see. Thus, a relational approach to the Trinity appears to offer helpful insights toward approaching the Spirit and the Church, for, as Moltmann writes, “we have to recognise that in some respects traditional pneumatology is too abbreviated — too narrow.”<sup>47</sup> Moltmann’s Social Trinitarianism thickens pneumatological reflection.

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<sup>42</sup> It is difficult to pin Moltmann down as a strict Universalist due to both the development in his writings as well as the difficulty in comprehending his diversity of thought; see Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 235-255; Cf. relevant chapters in Müller-Fahrenholz, *The Kingdom and the Power*. Perhaps it is best to view Moltmann’s understanding of Universalism in relation to the Barthian concept of “elect in Christ” with an articulated view of “actualized in the Spirit,” but that is beyond the scope of this essay.

<sup>43</sup> David Höhne, “Moltmann on Salvation,” in *Jürgen Moltmann and Evangelical Theology: A Critical Engagement* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2012), ed. Sung Wook Chung. The Moltmann quote is from Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, xv.

<sup>44</sup> E.g., Moltmann, *Trinity and the Kingdom*, esp. chapter six, “The Kingdom and Freedom.”

<sup>45</sup> E.g., see Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006), 207-214. In response to Grudem and in support of Social Trinitarianism, see Kevin Giles, *The Trinity & Subordinationism: the Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002); Millard J. Erickson, *Who’s Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2009).

<sup>46</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 183.

<sup>47</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, “The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit: Trinitarian Pneumatology,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37:3 (1984), 287-300.



In considering the role experience plays in Moltmann, one must start by acknowledging the *honesty* found in his work. Moltmann's theology integrates experience methodologically and does not shy away from boldly proclaiming so. Therefore, assessing his use of experience largely depends upon one's own epistemological commitments.<sup>48</sup> In that Moltmann's pneumatology is *relational*, experience appears a natural positive consequence to his theological construction and dialogue. Those from Charismatic traditions will welcome his experiential theology, though questions may develop when one wonders how reason, tradition, Scripture, and experience relate, to use the Wesleyan Quadrilateral as a starting point.

Finally we must assess Moltmann's work on mission. While one can hardly disagree that pneumatology must carry a missional thrust, Moltmann's work leaves much to be desired. While Moltmann shares "a desire for mission to be holistic in nature and for experience of God to be central to mission," his primary focus is on "the work of the Spirit in creation."<sup>49</sup> Influenced by Moltmann's Pentecostal dialogue partners, Christopher Wright, and N. T. Wright, I would argue that mission is ultimately "our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation."<sup>50</sup> This leads N. T. Wright to compel Christians to "build *for* the kingdom."<sup>51</sup> While Moltmann would hardly disagree with these ideas, there's a focus found in both of the Wright's works that is not articulated as clearly in Moltmann – the missional focus of *proclamation*, "of

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<sup>48</sup> For a good defensive of the role of experience in Christian theology, See Peter D. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2012), esp. 21-99.

<sup>49</sup> Andrew Lord, "The Pentecostal–Moltmann Dialogue: Implications for Missions," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11:2 (2003), 284.

<sup>50</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, Kindle Locations 189-191.

<sup>51</sup> Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 208, emphasis his.

the announcement of God's kingdom, of Jesus' lordship and of the consequent new creation."<sup>52</sup>  
Moltmann takes mission only so far.<sup>53</sup>

### **Toward an Ecclesiology Shaped by Moltmann's Pneumatology**

Having surveyed Moltmann's pneumatology, we now turn to suggest how these ideas contribute to ecclesiology. Moltmann's own ecclesiology is found throughout his works, though articulated most fully in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*. As Timothy Bradshaw notes, "There is a prophetic, and in terms of the kingdom, apocalyptic, imperative sounding through his ecclesiology."<sup>54</sup> Moltmann sees the Church in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. In Moltmann's "revived interest in the Holy Spirit," he has "come to highlight the importance of pneumatology to messianic eschatological ecclesiology."<sup>55</sup>

What is so important about pneumatology for "messianic eschatological ecclesiology"? In Moltmann's own words, "The Spirit of the last days and the eschatological community of the saved belong together."<sup>56</sup> To be an ecclesiological community is to be a pneumatological community. This is why Moltmann has no issue with referring to the Church as a "charismatic fellowship"<sup>57</sup> because "pneumatological christology leads to a charismatic ecclesiology."<sup>58</sup>

In considering the five pneumatological themes extrapolated from Moltmann's work, there are a variety of ways in which we can discuss how his pneumatology contributes to

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>53</sup> Lord suggests that Moltmann approaches the issue of mission by stressing "transcendence through immanence" whereas Pentecostal (and Evangelical) scholars tend to stress "immanence through transcendence," see Lord, "The Pentecostal-Moltmann Dialogue: Implications for Missions," 284.

<sup>54</sup> Timothy Bradshaw, "Moltmann's Ecclesiology in Evangelical Perspective," in *Jürgen Moltmann and Evangelical Theology*, 185.

<sup>55</sup> Karkkainen. *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, Kindle Locations 1418-1419.

<sup>56</sup> Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 294.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 36.

ecclesiology. First, his creation focused pneumatology would compel the Church to recognize both its *place* and related *role* within creation. All contemporary ecclesiological reflection *must* take into consideration ecological concerns. If “God has a church for his mission in the world,”<sup>59</sup> the Church needs to properly identify how to best build toward that mission.

Second, Moltmann’s pneumatological “new life” motif is central to all Christian tradition’s ecclesiologies. After all, Roman Catholic,<sup>60</sup> Orthodox,<sup>61</sup> Evangelical,<sup>62</sup> and Anglican<sup>63</sup> traditions, not to mention the Pentecostal<sup>64</sup> tradition, all feature the Spirit as central to “new life.” One can hardly imagine any disagreement that the Spirit’s work in creating “new life” has significant relationship to ecclesiology.

Third, Moltmann’s work related to Social Trinitarianism challenges ecclesiology to take seriously the *relational* dimension of the Trinity. Moltmann’s *economic* and *ontological* aspects of the Father, Son, and Spirit communion reject individualistic approaches to the Church in powerful ways. In Moltmann’s own words:

This trinitarian hermeneutics leads us to think in terms of relationships and communities; it supersedes the subjective thinking which cannot work without the separation and isolation of its objects... thinking in relationships and communities is developed out of the doctrine of the Trinity, and is brought to bear on the relation of men and women to God, to other people and to mankind as a whole, as well as on their fellowship with the whole of creation.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, Kindle Location 697.

<sup>60</sup> Thomas P. Rausch, *Towards a Truly Catholic Church: An Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005).

<sup>61</sup> John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

<sup>62</sup> Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2012); see also Cole, *He Who Gives Life*.

<sup>63</sup> Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London: T & T Clark, 2008).

<sup>64</sup> Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: An Essay on the Development of Doctrine* (Dorset: Deo Publishing, 2011).

<sup>65</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 19.

This relational approach to the Trinity also speaks toward gender relationships (and, I think, roles), “since man made in the image of God, as male and female, reflects the Trinity, the equality of the sexes has to be the fundamental affirmation.”<sup>66</sup> Moltmann articulates this when he states that “the relationship of the triune God to himself and the relationship of the triune God to his world is not to be understood as a oneway relationship—the relation of image to reflection, idea to appearance, essence to manifestation—but as a mutual one.”<sup>67</sup> Social Trinitarianism impacts ecclesiological *ontology* and *fellowship*.

Fourth, if it is within the ecclesial context that God’s presence is most often encountered, the role of experience in relation to the Church is assumed. For many Christians, “experience is both theologically formative and is itself formed by previous theologies.”<sup>68</sup> It would follow that ecclesiological development, especially for Christian theologians, would be heavily influenced by pneumatological experience, even when those theologians minimize the role of experience!

Fifth, if God has a Church for his mission, and that mission includes both the proclamation and demonstration of the kingdom of God, the Church must root its ecclesial identity in the Spirit. In turn, the Spirit roots the Church in its mission *to* others, for “the church never exists for itself but is always in relation to God and the world” as it becomes “a serving, missionary church.”<sup>69</sup> The Church as a collective community “of equal persons” where “there is no division between the office bearers and the people,”<sup>70</sup> exists for the renewal of the world. As Moltmann writes, “Simply by existing, the Spirit-filled community of old and young, men and

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<sup>66</sup> Derek Morphew, *Different but Equal: Going Beyond the Complementarian/Egalitarian Debate* (Bergliet: Derek Morphew Publications, 2011), Kindle Electronic Edition: Kindle Locations 552-553.

<sup>67</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, 160–161.

<sup>68</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, 93.

<sup>69</sup> Karkkainen. *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, Kindle Location 1398-1399.

<sup>70</sup> Karkkainen. *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, Kindle Location 1422.

women, masters and servants, proclaims and testifies to the world ‘salvation in danger’, the things that endure in a world that passes away, and therefore eternal future in transitory time.”<sup>71</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Moltmann states that “the church is the people of God.”<sup>72</sup> As God’s people, the Church shares “the anointing of Jesus by the Spirit.”<sup>73</sup> If the Church is “christologically founded and eschatologically directed,”<sup>74</sup> pneumatology is what connects the foundation to the direction. It is the Spirit’s presence and empowerment that unites and compels the Church toward renewal and mission. For Moltmann, the sending of the Spirit is a “sacrament of the kingdom,”<sup>75</sup> and that “sacrament” birth’s the “charismatic community.” If this language is appropriate, would it then follow that the Church is a sacrament to the world? Might the Church be the “means of grace” by which creation encounters God? Moltmann’s pneumatology shapes ecclesiology to envision a Church that is powerfully involved in the world, influencing all of creation to experience *now* the coming eschatological renewal.

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<sup>71</sup> Moltmann, *The Source of Life*), 24.

<sup>72</sup> Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit*, 403.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>75</sup> Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 199-206.

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