

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

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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

¹ An earlier version of this essay is found in Paul W. Lewis, "Value Formation and the Holy Spirit in the Theologies of Thomas C. Oden, Jürgen Moltmann and J. Rodman Williams" (Ph.D. diss: Baylor Univeristy, 1995); see also Paul W. Lewis, "Value Formation and the Holy Spirit in the Pneumatologies of Thomas C. Oden, Jürgen Moltmann and J. Rodman Williams," Paper of the Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (Nov. 1994).

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.² 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.³ Ten years

²Stanley Burgess, "J. Rodman Williams," in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), 307; Kilian McDonnell, *Charismatic Renewal and the Churches* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 52; Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1976), 122; idem., *The New Charismatics II* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 93-4; Robeck, Jr., Cecil M., "Williams, John Rodman," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley Burgess and Gary McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 887-8, hereafter *DPCM*; and J. Rodman Williams, *Spirit of Glory*, Third International Presbyterian Conference of the Holy Spirit, Feb. 1974 in St. Louis, MO., Presbyterian Charismatic Communion Tape Ministry, SI74JRW.

³On Melodyland see Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics*, 122-3; J. Rodman Williams, "Melodyland Christian Center," In *DPCM*, 600; and idem., "Wilkerson, Ralph A. (1927-)," in *DPCM*, 885-6.

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*.⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁶

⁴Stanley Burgess, "J. Rodman Williams," in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), 307-20; J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology 1: God, the World and Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988); idem., *Renewal Theology 2: Salvation, the Holy Spirit and the Christian Living* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990); and idem., *Renewal Theology 3: The Church, The Kingdom and Last Things* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992); on J. Rodman Williams biography see Burgess, "J. Rodman Williams," 307, Robeck, Jr., "Williams, John Rodman," 887-8; and "Williams, John Rodman," in *Who's Who in American Religion*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, 1985), 425.

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

⁶Burgess, "J. Rodman Williams," 308; J. Rodman Williams, "A Fellowship of Confessors," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 4 (1949): 40-3; idem., "Can Protestants and Catholics get Together?" *Presbyterian Survey* 52 (Oct. 1962): 10-3; idem., "Christian Faith and Contemporary Existentialism," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 77 (Sept. 1961): 1-25; idem., "The Concerns of Frankfurt," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 80 (Nov. 1964): 5-15; idem., "The Covenant in Reformed Theology," *Austin Seminary*

Williams' most important work of this period, *Contemporary Existentialism and Christian Faith*, was strongly influenced by Williams' background under the teaching of Paul Tillich of 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.⁷ 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.⁸

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

Bulletin: Faculty Edition 78 (March 1963): 24-38; and idem., "A Theological Critique of Some Contemporary Trends in Worship," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 75 (June 1960): 48-57; idem., "What is Your Vocation?" *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 77 (May 1962): 9-19; see also J. Rodman Williams, "The Holy Spirit," *Thy Will, My Will*, Board of Christian Education, Presbyterian Church in the United States (April-June 1956): 61-74; and idem., "The Messiah," *Thy Will, My Will*, Board of Christian Education, Presbyterian Church in the United States (Jan.-March 1961): 88-95; both are cited in Burgess, "J. Rodman Williams," 308; and Mark Wilson, "A Select Bibliography of J. Rodman Williams," in *Spirit and Renewal: Essays in Honor of J. Rodman Williams*, ed. Mark Wilson, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplemental 5 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 205-8.

⁷J. Rodman Williams, *Contemporary Existentialism and Christian Faith* (Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965); see also J. Rodman Williams, "Christian Faith and Contemporary Existentialism," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 77 (Sept. 1961): 1-25.

⁸J. Rodman Williams, "The Doctrine of the *'Imago Dei'* in Contemporary Theology: A Study in Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Reinhard Niebuhr, and Paul Tillich," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1954); and idem., *Contemporary Existentialism and Christian Faith*; see also J. Rodman Williams, "A New Theological Era," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 82 (Nov. 1966): 37-47; and idem., "Theology in Transition and the 'Death of God'," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 82 (April 1966): 22-46.

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.⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ During this

⁹Burgess, "J. Rodman Williams," 308; J. Rodman Williams, "He Studies the Creator of the Stars," *Ministries Today* (Jan.-Feb. 1990), 80, *idem.*, "Have You Received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?" Open Letter in *Newsletter of the Charismatic Communion of Presbyterian Ministers* (Jan. 1972); and *idem.*, "The Language of Heaven," in *The Acts of the Holy Spirit among the Presbyterian Today* (Los Angeles: Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, 1972), 7-11; Note that one year earlier in 1964, Williams was advocating a "deeper and fuller realization of the place and work of the Holy Spirit." J. Rodman Williams, "The Concerns of Frankfurt," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 80 (Nov. 1964): 5; see also Williams, "The Language of Heaven," 8-9; and *idem.*, *Spirit of Glory*.

¹⁰Burgess, "J. Rodman Williams," 308-9; J. Rodman Williams, "The Language of Heaven," 9; *idem.*, *Renewal Theology* 2, 11-2; *idem.*, "Why Speak in Tongues?" *New Covenant* 7 (Jan. 1978): 14; and *idem.*, *Spirit of Glory*.

¹¹General: J. Rodman Williams, *The Gift of the Holy Spirit Today* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1980); and *idem.*, *10 Teachings* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1974): 64-75; On the historical aspects: J. Rodman, Williams, "The Holy Spirit in the Early Church and in Calvin's Theology," Paper written

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.¹²

His major books of this period all related to the Holy Spirit. The first, *The Era of the Spirit*, was published in 1971. It discussed the contemporary activity of the Holy Spirit, while also delineating the pneumatological positions of some major theologians, namely, Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Paul Tillich and Rudolf Bultmann.¹³ His second

for the Permanent Theological Committee of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1969; and idem., "A New Era in History," in *The Pentecostal Reality* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1972), 29-55; On the Baptism of the Holy Spirit: J. Rodman Williams, "The Event of the Holy Spirit," in *Pentecostal Reality*, 11-27; idem., *The Gift of the Holy Spirit Today* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1980), hereafter *Gift*, 11-26; and idem., "Pentecostal Spirituality," in *Pentecostal Reality*, 57-84; On Speaking in Tongues: J. Rodman Williams, *Era of the Spirit*, 30-3; idem., *Gift*, 27-42; idem., "The Language of Heaven," 7-11; and idem., "Why Speak in Tongues?" 14-6; On the gifts of the Spirit: J. Rodman Williams, *Era of the Spirit* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971), 21-35; and idem., *Gift*, 50-72.

¹²To the non-Charismatic audience see J. Rodman Williams, "Door Interview," *Wittenburg Door* 57 (Oct.-Nov. 1980): 11-4, 19-20, 22; idem., "A Profile of the Charismatic Movement," *Christianity Today* 19 (Feb. 28, 1975): 9-13; idem., "A New Theological Era," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 82 (Nov. 1966): 37-47; idem., "The Plan of Union," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 86 (April 1970): 20-37; idem., "Theology in Transition and the 'Death of God'," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 82 (April 1966): 22-46; and idem., "The Upsurge of Pentecostalism: Some Presbyterian/Reformed Comment," *The Reformed World* 31 (1971): 339-48; To the Charismatic audience see J. Rodman Williams, "The Authority of Scripture and the Charismatic Movement," *Logos Journal* 7 (May-June 1977): 35; idem., "Brief Reply to Professor Mühlen's Paper," *One in Christ* 12 (1976): 351-3; idem., "The Coming of the Holy Spirit," *Theology, News and Notes* [Fuller Theological Seminary] (March 1974): 14-6; idem., "Filled with New Wine," *New Catholic World* 217 (Nov.-Dec. 1974): 281-3; idem., "The God Encounter," *Logos Journal* 4 (Jan.-Feb. 1974): 6-8; idem., "The Holy Spirit and Eschatology," *Pneuma* 3 (Fall 1981): 54-8; idem., "Pentecostal Spirituality," *One in Christ* 10 (1974): 180-92; idem., "Prayer and Worship in Eucharistic and Charismatic Mode," *One in Christ* 13 (1977): 39-42; and idem., "Why Speak in Tongues," *New Covenant* 8 (Jan. 1978): 14-6.

¹³J. Rodman Williams, *The Era of the Spirit* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971), hereafter *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

¹⁴J. Rodman Williams, *The Pentecostal Reality* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1972), hereafter *PR*.

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

¹⁶J. Rodman Williams, *The Gift of the Holy Spirit Today* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1980).

¹⁷J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology 1: God, the World and Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), hereafter *RT1*; idem., *Renewal Theology 2: Salvation, the Holy Spirit and the Christian Living* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), hereafter *RT2*; idem., *Renewal Theology 3: The Church, The Kingdom and Last Things* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), hereafter *RT3*.

comprehension of eschatology is impossible.¹⁸ 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*.¹⁹ 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.²⁰

¹⁸J. Rodman Williams, "Interpreting Prophetic Timing," *Charisma and Christian Life* 17 (Aug. 1991): 46-8, 51; and idem., *RT III*, 289-508; see also a year prior to this period, J. Rodman Williams, "The Holy Spirit and Eschatology," *Pneuma* 3 (Fall 1981): 54-8.

¹⁹Society for Pentecostal Studies: J. Rodman Williams, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," in *Toward a Pentecostal/Charismatic Theology*, Paper of the 14th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (Nov. 1984), hereafter *SPS14*; idem., "The Greater Gifts," in *Charismatic Experiences in History*, ed. C. M. Robeck, Jr. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 1985), 44-65 [Paper of the 12th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies]; and idem., "A Pentecostal Theology," in *The Distinctiveness of Pentecostal/Charismatic Theology*, Paper of the 15th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (Nov. 1985); Charismatic Periodicals: J. Rodman Williams, "Biblical Truth and Experience: A Reply to *Charismatic Chaos* by John F. MacArthur, Jr.," *Paraclete* 27 (Summer 1993): 15-30; idem., "The Gifts of the Holy Spirit," *Charisma* 18 (Nov. 1992): 25-9; and idem., "Interpreting Prophetic Timing," *Charisma* 17 (Aug. 1991): 46-8, 51; For Williams' essays in Stanley Burgess and Gary McGee, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988): J. Rodman Williams, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," 40-8; idem., "James H. Brown," 99; idem., "Laying on of Hands," 535-7; idem., "Melodyland Christian Center," 600; idem., "Marion Gordan Robertson ("Pat")," 761-2; and idem., "Ralph A. Wilkerson," 885-6; For Williams essays in W. A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984): J. Rodman Williams, "Charismatic Movement," 205-9; and idem., "Holiness," 514-6.

²⁰General: Williams, "Interpreting Prophetic Timing," 46-8, 51; idem., "Laying on of Hands," in *DPCM*, 535-7; idem., "A Pentecostal Theology"; and idem., *RT2*, 137-80, 237-322; On the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Williams, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," in *DPCM*, 40-8; idem., "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," in *SPS14*; and idem., *RT2*, 181-209; On speaking in tongues: Williams, *RT2*, 209-36; On the gifts of the Spirit: Williams, "The Gifts of the Holy Spirit," 25-9; idem., "The Greater Gifts," 44-65; and idem., *RT2*, 323-40.

There are three general features which have been present in Williams' works throughout all three periods. First, Williams is a self-proclaimed Reformed theologian.²¹ From his earliest writings, Williams was strongly bound to Reformed subjects and sources, especially John Calvin.²² 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.²³ 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 ecumenism.²⁴ 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

²¹J. 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.

²²J. Rodman Williams, "The Covenant in Reformed Theology," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 78 (March 1963): 24-38; idem., "Can Protestants and Roman Catholics get Together?" *Presbyterian Survey* 52 (Oct. 1962): 10-13; and idem., "The Holy Spirit in the Early Church and in Calvin's Theology."

²³Terry Cross, "Toward a Theology of the Word and Spirit: A Review of J. Rodman Williams' *Renewal Theology*," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3 (1993): 116; and Frank Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories: A Classical Pentecostal Response to J. Rodman Williams' *Renewal Theology*," *Pneuma* 16 (1994): 293-304; see also J. Rodman Williams, "Theological Implications," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 84 (Nov. 1968): 5-27; One notable statement of disagreement is found where Williams argues that Calvin's interpretation that it is impossible for a Christian to subsequently become apostate is "eisegesis, not exegesis . . ." Williams, *RT2*, 134 n. 58.

²⁴J. Rodman Williams, "The Concerns of Frankfurt," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 80 (Nov. 1964): 5-15; idem., "Can Protestants and Roman Catholics Get Together?" *Presbyterian Survey* 52 (Oct. 1962): 10-3; idem., *ES*, 14-5; and idem., "A Theological Critique of Some Contemporary Trends in Worship," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 75 (June 1960): 48-57.

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.

²⁵ J. Rodman Williams, "Charismatic Movement," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 206; idem., "The Cost of Unity: From a Protestant," *Catholic Charismatic* (June-July 1979): 8; idem., "Door Interview," 19; idem., *ES*, 14, 58; idem., "In the Holy Spirit: A Theological Brief," in *Christian Theology: A Case Method Approach* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976), 186; idem., "A Profile of the Charismatic Movement," *Christianity Today* 19 (Feb. 28, 1975): 9-13, and idem., *RT3*, 43-8; Ecumenism is based upon the unity of the *source*, not of the *expression* (e.g. a common sacrament, a common doctrine). see Williams, "The Cost of Unity," 8; see also Williams' journeys in Europe for the Charismatic Communion of Presbyterian Ministers to meet with leaders of other denominational groups both Charismatic and non-Charismatic, J. Rodman Williams, "Charismatic Journey I," *Newsletter of the Charismatic Communion of Presbyterian Ministers*, supplement, 14 (Sept. 1971); idem., "Charismatic Journey II," *Newsletter of the Charismatic Communion of Presbyterian Ministers*, supplement, 15 (Nov. 1971); idem., "Charismatic Journey III," *Newsletter of the Charismatic Communion of Presbyterian Ministers* 18 (Sept. 1972); and idem., "European Charismatic Leaders Conference at Craheim, June 26-30," *Newsletter of the Charismatic Communion of Presbyterian Ministers* 17 (May 1972).

²⁶ Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 294-5, 298-9; see also J. Rodman Williams, "Barriers to Evangelism: A Theological Reflection," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 76 (1960): 38-44; idem., *RT1*, 11; and idem., *10 Teachings*, 7.

²⁷ J. 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.²⁸ 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.²⁹

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."³⁰ 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.³¹ In

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

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

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

³¹John 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.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."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."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."³⁵

³²J. Rodman Williams, "The Authority of Scripture and the Charismatic Movement," 35; idem., "Biblical Truth and Experience: A Reply to *Charismatic Chaos* by John F. MacArthur, Jr.," *Paraclete* 27 (1993): 16-30; idem., *Gift*, xi; idem., "The Plan of Union," 31-2, 34; idem., "Theological Implications," 17-8; and idem., "Door Interview," 11-2; Unfortunately, MacArthur, to promote his attack against Williams and Charismatics as a whole, has grossly misinterpreted and in some cases blatantly misquoted Williams. MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, 18, 45-6, 50-6; and Williams, "Biblical Truth and Experience," 16-30, especially 27-9; It is interesting to note that where MacArthur proposes that Williams suggests that experience takes priority over the Bible, other authors see that Williams clearly gives the Bible primacy over experience. Arden Aurty, review of *Renewal Theology 2: Salvation, The Holy Spirit and the Christian Living*, by J. Rodman Williams, In *Themelios* 17 (1992): 30; Cross, "Toward a Theology of the Word and the Spirit," 115, 118; and Robert Culpepper, review of *Renewal Theology 1: God, the World and Redemption*, by J. Rodman Williams, In *Faith and Mission* 7 (1989): 105.

³³Williams, "Theological Implications," 19.

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

³⁵Williams, "The Authority of Scripture and the Charismatic Movement," 35; see also idem., "Charismatic Movement," 206; and idem., *RT2*, 242.

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

³⁶Williams, "Biblical Truth and Experience," 26; see also Williams, "He Studies the Creator of the Stars," 81.

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

³⁸Williams, "Biblical Truth and Experience," 28; see also Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics II*, 133.

³⁹Williams, *RTI*, 43-4.

⁴⁰Williams, "The Authority of Scripture and the Charismatic Movement," 35; idem., "Biblical Truth and Experience," 28-9; idem., *RTI*, 42-4; and idem., *RT2*, 332-9.

Westminster Confession.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.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.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.⁴⁴ This is not to say that theology in general, and

⁴¹Williams, *RTI*, 25; and idem., "Theological Implications," 6.

⁴²Williams, "The Plan of Union," 32-4; idem., *Spirit of Glory*; and idem., "Theological Implications," 7, 11.

⁴³Williams, *RTI*, 26-7.

⁴⁴J. Rodman Williams, "A New Theological Era," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 82 (Nov. 1966): 37-47; idem., *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*.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶

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.⁴⁷ When the Spirit came at Pentecost, it was the divine mode of the Spirit, which persists today. The Triune God now is relating to

"Theology in Transition--and the 'Death of God'," *Austin Seminary Bulletin: Faculty Edition* 81 (April 1966): 22-45.

⁴⁵Williams, "Coming of the Spirit," 15; idem., *ES*, 51-4; idem., "The Event of the Spirit," 14-5; idem., *Gift*, 4-9; idem., "Gifts of the Spirit," 25; idem., "A New Era in History," in *PR*, 34-5; and idem., *RT1*, 83-94; Williams quotes Hendrikus Berkhof to substantiate the instrumental view of the Holy Spirit, Hendrikus Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), 23; see Williams, *Gift*, 80-2; and idem., *RT2*, 206-7; Williams rejects the *filioque* because John 15:26 states that the Spirit "proceeds" for the Father only. Williams, *RT2*, 135 n. 76; c.f. Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 299.

⁴⁶J. Rodman Williams, "Theological Perspective of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit" Paper given at Conference on Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, Princeton Theological Seminary, April 3-5, 1974; and idem., *10 Teachings*, 71.

⁴⁷Williams, "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.

⁴⁹J. Rodman Williams, "The Holy Trinity," in *PR*, 108.

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.⁵³ 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.⁵⁴

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.⁵⁵

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."⁵⁶ 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

⁵³Williams, *RT2*, 416.

⁵⁴Williams, "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.

⁵⁵Williams, *ES*, 39-40; and idem., *RT2*, 50-9.

⁵⁶Williams, *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."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.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.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.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

⁵⁷Williams, *RT*₂, 89; see also Williams, *RT*₂, 86-93; see also Williams, "Holiness," 515-6.

⁵⁸Williams, *ES*, 43; idem., *RT*₂, 90-3; and idem., *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, *RT*₂, 91-2; c.f. Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 297-8.

⁵⁹Williams, *RT*₂, 83-117; note that Williams emphasizes a trichotomy view of the self--body, soul and spirit, Williams, *RT*₁, 213-4; c.f. Bruce Demarest, review of *Renewal Theology 1: God, the World and Redemption*, by J. Rodman Williams, In *Themelios* 16 (1991): 31.

⁶⁰Williams, *RT*₂, 101; see also Williams, *ES*, 40-3; and idem., "The Event of the Holy Spirit," 21-6.

Spirit.⁶¹ 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."⁶²

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."⁶³ 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.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵

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.⁶⁶ The baptism in the Holy Spirit

⁶¹Williams, *RT2*, 100-17; see also Williams, *10 Teachings*, 81-2.

⁶²Williams, *ES*, 42.

⁶³Williams, *ES*, 42-3.

⁶⁴Williams, *ES*, 40-3; see also some aspects of Williams attempt at an 'operational' theology, Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 293-304.

⁶⁵Williams, *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,";

⁶⁶Williams, "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."⁶⁷ 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.⁶⁸ 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."⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰

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).⁷¹ Inasmuch as Williams emphasizes the need for the Spirit

good discussion on Williams' view of subsequence see Henry Lederle, *Treasures Old and New* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 1988), 90-4.

⁶⁷J. Rodman Williams, *ES*, 18-21; idem., "The Event of the Holy Spirit," 11-5; idem., *Gift*, 72; idem., "The Holy Spirit and Evangelism," in *PR*, 85-97; idem., "The Pentecostal Reality," 1-9; and idem., "A Pentecostal Theology."

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

⁶⁹Williams, "A Pentecostal Theology."

⁷⁰Burgess, "J. Rodman Williams," 316; Williams, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," 44-5; idem., *Gift*, 36-41; and idem., *RT2*, 211-2.

⁷¹Burgess "J. Rodman Williams," 311-6; Williams, *Gift*, 29-72; idem., "Gifts of the Spirit," 28-9; and idem., *RT2*, 347-410.

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.⁷²

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.⁷³ 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."⁷⁴ 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."⁷⁵ The bearing of fruit also implies the need for the maturation process--time to grow and develop.⁷⁶ Through the Spirit's enablement the law is fulfilled, since the virtues are the heart of the law. The epitome of walking in the

⁷²Williams, "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.

⁷³The 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.

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

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

⁷⁶Williams, *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.⁷⁷ 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."⁷⁸ 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."⁷⁹ 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.⁸⁰ 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."⁸¹ 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.⁸² The

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

⁷⁸Williams, *RT2*, 411-45.

⁷⁹Williams, *RT2*, 417.

⁸⁰Williams, *RT2*, 420-3.

⁸¹Williams, *RT2*, 424.

⁸²Williams, *RT2*, 424-7.

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.

⁸⁶Williams, *RT3*, 25-38.

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

⁸⁸Williams, *RT3*, 41-3, 77-83.

⁸⁹Williams, "In the Holy Spirit," 184.

⁹⁰Williams, *RT3*, 49-58.

⁹¹Williams, *RT3*, 59-71.

⁹²Williams, *RT3*, 79.

⁹³Williams, *RT3*, 80.

⁹⁴Williams, *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.⁹⁵

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.⁹⁶ 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.⁹⁷ 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.⁹⁸

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.⁹⁹ The worship of God should take place in three

⁹⁵Williams, *RT3*, 289-95.

⁹⁶Williams, *RT2*, 416; see also Williams, *RT1*, 215-9.

⁹⁷Williams, *RT3*, 19-23, 80.

⁹⁸Williams, "The Event of the Holy Spirit," 16-7; idem., *Gift*, 34-5; idem., "Gifts of the Spirit," 27-8; idem., "Pentecostal Spirituality," 60; and idem., "A Profile of the Charismatic Movement," 10.

⁹⁹Williams, *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."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."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.¹⁰² Third, worship must be participatory, because the true worship of God must include the whole person and the whole assembly.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.¹⁰⁴ The church also edifies the body of Christ by its deeds, which maintains unity, shows love, exercises

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

¹⁰¹Williams, *RT3*, 103; see also Williams, *RT3*, 101-4.

¹⁰²Williams, "A Theological Critique of Some Contemporary Trends in Worship," 53; and idem., *RT3*, 104-7.

¹⁰³Williams, *RT3*, 107-109; and idem., "A Theological Critique of Some Contemporary Trends in Worship," 53; This participation can also be with singing in tongues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Williams, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," in *DPCM*, 44-5; idem., "The Coming of the Holy Spirit," 16; idem., *ES*, 12-3, 30-5; idem., *Gift*, 27-42; idem., "Gifts of the Spirit," 26; idem., "A Profile of the Charismatic Movement," 10-1; and idem., "Why Speak in Tongues?" 16.

¹⁰⁴Williams, *RT3*, 109-17.

discipline, and serves each other.¹⁰⁵ The church can also be edified through the combination of the Word and deed which would be by an expression of the *charismata*.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.¹⁰⁷ This outreach is for the whole human condition. There "is *no* human need that should be outside the concern of the church."¹⁰⁸ This outreach must incorporate social action and evangelism. Both are necessary within the Christian message of good news.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."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.¹¹¹ While Williams notes the

¹⁰⁵Williams, *RT3*, 117-25.

¹⁰⁶Williams, *RT3*, 125-33.

¹⁰⁷Williams, *RT3*, 141-51.

¹⁰⁸Williams, *RT3*, 152; see also Williams, *ES*, 56-7; and *idem.*, "A Profile of the Charismatic Movement," 12.

¹⁰⁹Williams, *RT3*, 151-4; see also Williams, "The Plan for Union," 35; and *idem.*, "A Profile of the Charismatic Movements," 12.

¹¹⁰J. Rodman Williams, "A New Era in History," in *PR*, 29; see also Williams, "The Pentecostal Reality," in *PR*, 1-9; and *idem.*, *RT1*, 27; this is a major premise of two of Williams' works, Williams, *The Gift of the Holy Spirit Today*; and *idem.*, *The Era of the Spirit*.

¹¹¹J. Rodman Williams, "A Profile of the Charismatic Movement," 11-2; *idem.*, "Theological Perspectives of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit,"

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

and idem., "The Upsurge of Pentecostalism: Some Presbyterian/Reformed Comment," 339-49.

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.¹¹⁴

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.¹¹⁵ 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.¹¹⁶

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

¹¹⁴Eddie Ensley, *Sounds of Wonder*, Preface by J. Rodman Williams (New York: Paulist Press, 1977); Williams, *Gift*, 43-4; idem., "Preface," in *Sounds of Wonder*, ix-xii; idem., *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.

¹¹⁵John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992); and Benjamin B. Warfield, *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 *Charismatic Chaos* by John F. MacArthur Jr." *Paraclete* 27 (Summer 1993): 16-30; and idem., *RT2*, 162-7.

¹¹⁶Burgess, "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 *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 208; see also Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics II*, 181.

and stimulate its citizens to moral activity."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.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 . . ."¹¹⁹ Ultimately, within all aspects of political life, Christ must be and is the Lord over all.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.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.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

¹¹⁷Williams, *RT3*, 272; see also Williams, *RT3*, 265-72.

¹¹⁸Williams, *RT3*, 272-8.

¹¹⁹Williams, *RT3*, 282.

¹²⁰Williams, *RT3*, 278-85.

¹²¹Williams, *RT3*, 221.

¹²²Williams, *RT3*, 222-5.

baptism of the Spirit.¹²³ In 1972, Williams stated that regeneration/conversion is not necessarily bound to sacramental action, but he does attempt a possible synthesis.¹²⁴ 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.¹²⁵ 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.¹²⁶

The Lord's supper is the "perpetual memorial to the sacrificial death of Christ."¹²⁷ The Lord's supper demonstrates divine

¹²³J. Rodman Williams, "Have You Received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?" Open Letter in *Newsletter of the Charismatic Communion of Presbyterian Ministers* (Jan. 1970) cited in Burgess, "J. Rodman Williams," 308.

¹²⁴1971, Williams, "Pentecostal Spirituality," 74-8; 1972, J. Rodman Williams, "Pentecostal Theology: A Neo-Pentecostal Perspective," in *Perspectives on the New Pentecost*, ed. Russell Spittler (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 77-85; idem., "Prayer and Worship in Eucharistic and Charismatic Mode," *One in Christ* 13 (1977): 39-42; c.f. Lederle, *Treasures Old and New*, 92-4.

¹²⁵Russell Spittler, "Theological Style among Pentecostals and Charismatics," in *Doing Theology in Today's World*, ed. John Woodbridge and Thomas McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1991), 305-6; J. Rodman Williams, "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit," in *DPCM*, 47; idem., "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," in *SPS14*; idem., *Gift*, 85-103; and idem., *RT2*, 278-91; nor is there a connection between Spirit baptism and confirmation, J. Rodman Williams, "Brief Reply to Professor Mühlen's Paper," *One in Christ* 12 (1976): 351-3; see also Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics II*, 161; Yet, just a few years earlier he saw a possible connection between Spirit baptism and confirmation, J. Rodman Williams, review of *Pentecostalism: A Theological Viewpoint*, by Donald Gelpi, In *Worship* 46 (1972): 514-6.

¹²⁶Williams, *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.

¹²⁷Williams, *RT3*, 245.

forgiveness and is itself a "means of receiving and appropriating God's ever-present grace."¹²⁸ 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.¹²⁹

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.¹³⁰

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.¹³¹ This primacy is also felt within the daily life of the Christian, spiritually, morally, and existentially.

¹²⁸Williams, *RT3*, 246.

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

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

¹³¹Williams, "The Authority of Scripture and the Charismatic Movement," 35; *idem.*, "Biblical Truth and Experience," 16-30; *idem.*, "Door Interview," 11-2; *idem.*, "The Plan of Union," 31-2, 34; *idem.*, *RT1*, 22; *idem.*, *RT3*, 184; and *idem.*, "Theological Implications," 17-8.

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.¹³² 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.¹³³ 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.¹³⁴

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.

¹³²Williams, "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.

¹³³Williams, *RT2*, 109-10, 415-6.

¹³⁴Cross, "Toward a Theology of Word and Spirit," 118, 122; c.f. Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 301; and Russell Spittler, "Theological Style among Pentecostals and Charismatics," in *Doing Theology in Today's World*, eds. John Woodbridge and Thomas McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 306-7.

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

¹³⁵Williams, "Interpreting Prophetic Timing," 47-8, 51; and *idem.*, *RTI*, 23-4.

¹³⁶Culpepper, 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.

¹³⁷Williams, *ES*, 28-9.

manifestation of God's presence.¹³⁸ The proclaimer of the gospel can be anyone, not just the professional or gifted (*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*."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.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.¹⁴¹

Analysis and Conclusion

In his *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

¹³⁸Williams, *RT2*, 23-4.

¹³⁹Williams, *RT2*, 26.

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

¹⁴¹Williams, *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

¹⁴²Cross, "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.

¹⁴³Williams, *RTI*, 25; c.f. Robert Culpepper, review of *Renewal Theology 1: God, the World and Redemption*, by J. Rodman Williams, In *Faith and Mission* 7 (1989): 105-6; and Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 299, 303; see also Bruce Demarest, review of *Renewal Theology 1: God, the World and Redemption*, by J. Rodman Williams, In *Themelios* 16 (1991): 30-1.

¹⁴⁴Cross, "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.

¹⁴⁵Cross, "Toward a Theology of the Word and Spirit," 116 n.9; and Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 297-8.

philosophy.¹⁴⁶ 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.¹⁴⁷ 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.¹⁴⁸

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.¹⁴⁹ 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.

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

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

¹⁴⁸Cross, "Toward a Theology of the Word and Spirit," 125-6.

¹⁴⁹Williams, *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.¹⁵⁰ 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.¹⁵¹ 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.¹⁵²

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.

¹⁵⁰Williams, *RT1*, 22-5; idem., *RT2*, 109, 415-6; and idem., *RT3*, 109-17; see also Williams, "The Holy Trinity," 101.

¹⁵¹Culpepper, review of *Renewal Theology 1: God, the World and Redemption*, 105-6; Macchia, "Revitalizing Theological Categories," 301-2; and Spittler, "Theological Style among Pentecostal and Charismatic," 304-7.

¹⁵²Cross, "Toward a Theology of the Word and Spirit," 115 n. 7.