



ROGER STRONSTAD

SPIRIT
SCRIPTURE
and THEOLOGY
A Pentecostal Perspective

Foreword by

Robert P. Menzies

NEW EXPANDED EDITION

Spirit, Scripture, and Theology (2nd Edition)

A Pentecostal Perspective

by *Roger Stronstad*

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Publisher's Preface to the 2018 Edition

“Back by Popular Demand” would be a good reason to explain the new, expanded edition of this book. In truth, we were not planning to reprint the original edition, despite the fact that it had been well received, until we were requested to do so by Global University of the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri, who indicated they would like to continue to use it in some of their courses. They also provided some financial assistance to help make this edition possible and we would like to express our gratitude for their generosity.

Professor Stronstad himself was quite eager for us to do this. While he opted not to revise the original manuscript, he added a chapter on prophecy at the end that greatly enhances the message of the book. In the years since the book's inception, the Pentecostal Movement has exploded in growth from over two hundred million in the early 1990s to over six hundred million today. Now, more than ever Dr. Stronstad's message, which brings strength and stability to Pentecostal distinctives, needs to be heard.

Also, thanks to digital technology that was not available when the book was originally published in 1995, we are now able to make this work available to a global market.

As always, we appreciate your patronage. Please feel free to let us know what you think by contacting us through our website, www.aptspress.org.

THE PUBLISHER

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Acknowledgments

This book had its genesis in the invitation from Dr. H. Glynn Hall, President of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri, to give the Guest Lectureship at the seminary for Fall, 1987. In cooperation with the Bible and Theology department, who sponsored the lectureship that year, it was agreed that I should develop four lectures relating to the two complementary themes in which I have a particular interest: Lucan and Pentecostal studies. The lectures, delivered October 13-16, 1987, were subsequently published virtually unchanged in *Paraclete*. They appear here by permission in a longer and revised form as chapters One, Two, Six and Seven. Chapter Three, "Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics," was read at the Twentieth Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (1990) and was subsequently published in *Paraclete*. Chapter Four, "'Filled with the Holy Spirit' Terminology in Luke-Acts," was read at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (1984) and was subsequently published in *The Holy Spirit in the Scriptures and the Church: Essays Presented to Dr. Leslie Thomas Holdcraft on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. Chapter Five, "Signs on the Earth Beneath," was read at the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (1991).

I would like to thank the faculty and students of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary for their warm welcome and insightful interaction with the lectures. It is also my pleasant duty to express gratitude to those who helped me in the preparation of this manuscript: to Martha Schneeburger, Kris Potter, Valerie Rathjen, and my wife, Laurel, who typed various chapters at different stages in the history of the manuscript; and to Colleen Daher for proofreading the manuscript.

Roger Stronstad
Clayburn, British Columbia, Canada 1991

Foreword to the 2018 Edition

I am delighted to commend to you this very welcome, new edition of *Spirit, Scripture, and Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective*. This book is important for many reasons, but I shall name two. First, it represents the development of the central, seminal ideas that Roger first, and so powerfully, articulated in his groundbreaking book, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (1984). The articles in *Spirit, Scripture, and Theology* develop, albeit in different ways, the themes that made Roger's first book so compelling: the theological significance of biblical narrative; Luke's theological purpose; the vocational nature of the Spirit's empowering in Luke-Acts; the unity and diversity of the New Testament and, more particularly, the unique way in which Luke, John, and Paul contribute to a holistic biblical theology of the Spirit; and, finally, the distinctive emphases that mark the pneumatologies of Luke (service), John (salvation), and Paul (sanctification). All of these themes are touched upon, and developed, in a new chapter that now graces this updated edition, "The Rebirth of Prophecy: Trajectories from Moses to Jesus and His Followers."

The first edition of this book was published in 1995, just over a decade after *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* burst onto the scene. Now, with the addition of this new chapter, these essays collectively offer the reader an important vantage point from which to understand and assess the thinking of one of the most creative, and influential, Pentecostal scholars of our time. *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* has been described (and with good reason) as the most significant book written by a Pentecostal in the 20th century. With this mind, the value of the light that this new edition of *Spirit, Scripture, and Theology* sheds on the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament and, more specifically, Roger's approach to this crucial topic, can hardly be overestimated.

In addition to all of this, this new edition has special, personal significance for me. This significance is illustrated by the fact that my father wrote the Foreword for the first edition of this book. You see, my

father and I were both friends of Roger and greatly admired his work. It is possible that my father, who was one of the first scholars, and theologians, of the modern Pentecostal Movement, encouraged, and in various ways, influenced Roger's reading of Luke-Acts and his approach to Pentecostal theology. In any event, I know without question that my father was profoundly impacted by Roger's insights into the New Testament and celebrated his writing and teaching ministry.

My father's admiration for Roger, and his creative insights, shaped the context for my first encounter with Roger. I remember with fondness sharing a week of discussion and fellowship with Roger in Fiji, where we were both teaching, just before I embarked on my PhD studies in 1985. Those conversations were a precious gift. Our friendship was rekindled when Roger visited the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (Baguio City, The Philippines) in 1993. It is fitting that Roger delivered the inaugural series of lectures in the annual William Menzies Pentecostal Lectureship, which continues at APTS to this day. Roger's lectures on that occasion were brilliant and featured themes developed in this book. As you read this book you will learn what I have discovered through personal interaction: Roger has a special gift for bringing clarity to complex issues, and for articulating in clear language concepts that most find difficult to comprehend. Pedagogically speaking, he is a master. This book illustrates that fact.

I thank the Lord for Roger's writings, ministry, and friendship. They have significantly shaped my own theological convictions, and those of countless other Pentecostals around the world. I pray that this new edition of *Spirit, Scripture, and Theology* will make Roger's insights accessible to an even larger audience, and that it will encourage each reader to "fan into flame" the gift that God has given them.

Robert P. Menzies
Palm Sunday, 2017

Foreword to the 1995 Edition

The modern Pentecostal Movement began in humble surroundings nearly a century ago. The great revivals of those early days were marked by earnest meditation on the teachings of the Bible—frequently requiring the discarding of time-worn traditions as the Bible was read through new lenses by people who had been baptized in the Spirit. The early Pentecostals experienced something quite similar to what they read occurred in the early church. For many years, the Pentecostals, isolated from the main currents of Christianity, quietly continued their perceived mission of reaching the lost world for Christ. Pentecostals insisted that what they had experienced was the “Bible pattern.” However, their argumentation was not very persuasive to evangelical Christians. But the unchurched flocked to these humble assemblies—especially on the frontiers of Christianity. By mid-century, many evangelicals acknowledged that their Pentecostal brothers were really quite sound, except for their insistence on the special features of Pentecostal theology. Then, about a generation ago, a veritable explosion of interest in the person and work of the Holy Spirit occurred. It became known as the “charismatic renewal.” Spiritual phenomena, such as divine healing, speaking in tongues, and a whole panoply of gifts of the Spirit—once largely the province alone of Pentecostals—now became more widely practiced. Religious presses cranked out an avalanche of books on the work of the Holy Spirit. Still, although large numbers of people were experiencing Pentecostal realities, earnest evangelicals still struggled with the biblical theology underlying such practices. Following traditional hermeneutical guidelines, evangelicals frequently shook their heads, saying, “We admire the enthusiasm of you Pentecostals, but we fail to see the biblical warrant.” The simple testimony of earnest Pentecostals, such as “This is the pattern we see in the Book of Acts,” was simply not very convincing. But that is changing.

It was while I was serving as editor of *Pneuma, The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* that I first became aware of the work of

Roger Stronstad. That was more than fifteen years ago. I saw to it that several of his articles appeared in that periodical. His insights, I felt, were worth sharing with those interested in Pentecostal theology. Later, I met Roger on his home turf at Western Pentecostal Bible College, Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada, where he was serving on the faculty. I learned then of his M.A. thesis which he had submitted at Regent College, Vancouver. In time that thesis was edited for publication. It appeared in 1984 as *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers). I think it is not an exaggeration to claim that that book became the forerunner of a new generation of Pentecostal literature.

Professor Stronstad provided in that volume a persuasive argument for the biblical validity of Pentecostal theology. He demonstrated that Luke's theological methodology is in harmony with Jewish theological practice. He further demonstrated that Luke discloses, not only in Acts, but in the Gospel as well, intentional themes regarding the work of the Holy Spirit that have strong Old Testament roots. Of special significance is his insistence that Luke must be seen as a theologian in his own right, requiring his emphases to be considered as a distinct complement to the pneumatology of Paul.

Stronstad's provocative ideas were an important inspiration in the subsequent doctoral work of Robert P. Menzies, who studied with I. Howard Marshall at Aberdeen University. His, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology*, published in 1991 by the Sheffield Academic Press, England, is another important step forward in Pentecostal scholarship, yet another contribution from a new generation of scholars.

To draw together his thinking on the theme of Pentecostal methodology, Professor Stronstad called upon some previously-published articles. These include the four papers delivered in a lectureship series at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri, September, 1987, and subsequently published in *Paraclete*. The manuscript also contains a paper read at the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Wenham, Massachusetts, in 1984, and later published as a chapter in a Festschrift in honor of Dr. Leslie Thomas Holdcroft. Professor Stronstad seized the opportunity, while gathering the above-mentioned previously-published materials together for publication in book form to include some of his more recent reflections on Pentecostal hermeneutics.

Of fresh interest is Chapter Three, “Pentecostalism, Experiential Presuppositions and Hermeneutics.” Stronstad makes a persuasive case for the validity of Pentecostal experience as a matrix for good biblical theology, or at least a clearer understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. He challenges the assumptions of evangelical hermeneutics that disdain the role of experience. Stronstad confronts the inherently rationalistic tendencies found in much current evangelical theology. Although it is likely that all will not be equally impressed with his argumentation, it is equally likely that future Pentecostal and evangelical theologians will feel the need to respond to the provocative and challenging concepts Stronstad has so clearly articulated.

At Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, when an annual lectureship was instituted in February 1993, the faculty had little hesitation in extending to Professor Stronstad the honor of serving as the featured speaker at the initial lecture series. Only occasionally do truly creative minds appear, and even less frequently do they appear within the evangelical and Pentecostal sphere. It is even more rare to find fresh thinking matched by spiritual fervor. Schools do well to model before students the mix of scholarship and piety exhibited by men such as Roger Stronstad. It is with great pleasure that I commend to you the pages that follow.

William W. Menzies
Asia Pacific Theological Seminary
Baguio City, Philippines
September, 1993

