

RESPONSE TO THE PRESENTATION: IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT: THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Svetlana Khobnya's essay addresses a central theme about the Holy Spirit as an axis of church praxis; and as she explains, she offers *a broad perspective of the Spirit by investigating New Testament texts canonically*, as¹ well as a personal perspective of fellowship in the body of Christ; combined with different aspects that have to do with a church, from my point of view, that develops the theme of otherness with greater intensity.²

How does the Holy Spirit act creatively in the church? It would be a fair question from a document that outlines a practical perspective of awareness of the Spirit's presence in a believer. For this reason, allow me to outline in three points, the suggestion of this document.

I Svetlana Khobnya first addresses the importance of the Spirit's function as a source of fellowship among human beings.

After such a critical event that the world experienced with Covid, a serious reflection about the awareness of God's therapeutic presence in the face of infinite challenges confronting the church is necessary. Here the words of Jesus echo when He said in John 14:16-17, "And I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever..." Did Jesus know we would need a Comforter? The answer is clear when we review chilling statistics regarding loss and lack of empathy. Here I rescue the phrase: "*The call to fellowship is an invitation to restoration, to reparation and to salvation.*" A concept of Christian perfection from the image of repairing fishing nets and an attempt to return to the world with the awareness that the great Comforter is there above us, with us and in us.

II Second, she raises the idea that the Spirit facilitates the experience of fellowship through an understanding of the language of revelation and fulfillment of the NT.

The emphasis in the NT lies in the birth of a community of faith in the power of His Spirit. The fulfillment of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost opened awareness of love in community; serving the other, exhorting the other, loving the other, and dying for the other. In the words of Gustavo Gutiérrez, Latin American theologian, "*God is first practiced and only then reflected upon.*" In short, reflection on a revealed language and its fulfillment is nothing more than returning to the origin of the perennial community through the Spirit, and that is, at the foot of the cross. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "*He who has experienced, even once, the mercy of God in his life, henceforth desires but one thing: to serve others. He is no longer attracted by the pretentious role of the judge, but wants to find himself among the poor and humble, where God has found him.*"³

III And finally she examines the concept of the Spirit as the promoter of fellowship, analyzing the Gospels, the book of Acts, the Pauline texts and other books of the NT.

¹Svetlana Khobnya, In The Power of the Spirit: Holy Spirit, *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 21:1 (Spring 2022) <http://didache.nazarene.org>. Page1

²Alterity arises as the idea of seeing the other, not from one's own perspective, but taking into account beliefs and knowledge of the other, which requires having greater closeness, dialogue and understanding about the other (Tavizón, 2010).

³Dietrich Bonhoeffer (2003), *Life in Community*. Salamanca: Follow me. -PAG 87

In short, situating the third Person of the Trinity in his unique place leads to visualizing the Church and others as a constant challenge, achieving the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3). *Seventy times the word Pneuma (spirit) appears in Acts, almost a fifth of the usage throughout the NT*⁴. The perfect dynamo that produces the power of the quest for restoration. It is to create awareness in the Christian community of the need for the other, those companions on the way who give hope, who produce lives that become an appealing testimony to replicate, or as Villafañe wrote (1996), “In the Economy of the Trinity, the Spirit completes the process of making order out of chaos.”⁵

Some guidelines to keep in mind in ecclesiastical practice

In the light of the different subtopics detached from a pneumatological concept, expounded by the author, and without demeriting the common line of bringing the theme of the Spirit only to *Christological or soteriological* themes as she explains, I would like to draw a guide, to be taken into account in our theological reflection on the suggested theme:

1 Regarding the spirit of companionship.

The search for companionship is a cry of anguish from a church that tears itself apart daily falling into the maelstrom of individualism. It is to arrive at a simple alienation, with the power of the Spirit, where what the author expresses with fear is not reproduced: “a separation between 'us' and 'the others'”.

In short, as Bonhoeffer wrote, “... *the community of two believers is the fruit of man's justification by the sola gratia of God, as foretold in the Bible and taught by the reformers. This is the good news that underlies Christians' need for one another.*”⁶

2 The Spirit of fellowship in the NT, through fulfilled prophecies.

Nothing is the church without the Word; it is passing from Logos to Rhema, it is passing from theory to practice. It is to enjoy that the Word is fulfilled day by day whenever the Spirit is exalted by a life of community. It is the Lord's fulfilled promise that He adds to the church every day those who are to be saved. It is what in the words of the prophet Isaiah, quoted by the author, determines that “*The predictions about the anointed servant of the Lord, filled with the Spirit, who would teach not only Israel, but also the other nations, and who would establish righteousness on earth, are now fulfilled in this history of baptism, and can be appreciated throughout the life of Jesus.*”⁷

3 The Holy Spirit in Christ, and in those who belong to Christ.

Today more than ever, humanity requires a consciousness of unity, of honest bonhomie. While it is true, the era of globalization has created mechanisms that facilitate this task, without the Spirit, this will not be possible; so we will see failed tools that imposes individual interests. The author emphasizes the Christ of the gospels, interpreting each scene from the perspective of the recipients and the lives of the apostles who were entrusted with continuing the gospel, while

⁴Juan Pablo Garcia (2012), *Ecclesiology of Pastoral Praxis*. USA.PPC. Page 71

⁵Eldin Villafañe (1996) *El Espíritu Liberador* Buenos Aires. New creation Page 159.

⁶Bonhoeffer, p. 15

⁷Isaiah 42:1-4.

maintaining the essence of the Spirit-filled Christ. An image that the saints celebrate, for the opportunity to imitate and share.

4 The power of the Spirit as the driving force behind the expansion of God's family.

In the author's words: *people are molded together to form a new messianic family: the Church.*

It seems that theological reflection is, from a healthy pluralism, and separate from any pretense of uniformity, to invite each reader to experience a true sense of unity. Consciousness of a Presence, which causes the Church to exhort itself with love, and to encourage itself to the same purpose: to be a holy people. That is, a church that understands itself, as God's people.

5 A call to fellowship with love.

There are two Greek words that are usually translated as church. One is *ecclesia*, and the other is *koinonia*. The first, regularly translated as assembly, and the second, as community. It will depend on the emphasis whether an institution focused on structural mechanisms will be established, or on the life of a church that shares fellowship with love. In the words of Lewis Cattell: *Building the church as an organization is quite easy; but building it as a fellowship community is much more costly.*⁸ Here the concept of love detaches itself from all emotion and mental process, and becomes the third person of the Trinity, who takes possession of the believer, in the mission of giving himself in love.

Conclusion.

Luis Felipe Nunes Borduam wrote in his article “In the Power of the Spirit - The Holy Spirit:”

*We can say that the power of the Holy Spirit also has this first sanctifying mission both in its instantaneous action (purification of the heart) as in its continual process of the transformation of moral and spiritual character; thus, the Holy Spirit grants power to put the flesh to death (Romans 8:13), as well as to positively express the character of Christ (Matthew 5:48; 1 Corinthians 11:1)*⁹.

In short, giving witness of that power to the other, to the companion on the way.

So, this approach to the pneumatological reflection of *koinonia* invites us to rescue the value of unity as mission; to raise a single torch of peace, to sing with one voice, and to live in the midst of a multicultural world, under the premise of God's love in us for others. In the words of the author, “the Spirit calls upon creativity to modify the tactics of the Christian presence in the world, through the development of interrelationships. He teaches and enables us to build fellowship in obedience to Christ, boldly and unhindered.”

⁸Lewis Cattell (1975), *The Spirit of Holiness*. USE CNP. Page 86

⁹ Luis Felipe Nunes Borduam “In the Power of the Spirit: The Holy Spirit” *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 22:1 (Spring 2022) <https://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/filedownload/didache-volumes/vol-22-1/1341-didache-v22n1-03c-poder-do-espirito-borduam-es-revised>