THE SPIRIT IN CREATION: A UNIFIED THEOLOGY OF GRACE AND CREATION CARE

by Steven M. Studebaker

Abstract. This essay identifies one of the deeper theological sources of the tendency toward environmental neglect in evangelical and Pentecostal theology and proposes a theological vision that facilitates a vision of creation care as a dimension of Christian formation. The first section identifies, describes, and evaluates the traditional distinction between common and special grace or the natural and the supernatural orders as a theological foundation for environmental neglect in Pentecostal theology. The second and third sections propose that a pneumatological vision of grace based on a fundamental trinitarianism provides Pentecostals and other Christians with a way to overcome these stark dualisms and to attain a more unified and comprehensive vision of God's grace that is more conducive to creation care. The fourth section presents a case for seeing creation care as a pneumatological and proleptic participation in the eschaton and, as such, as a dimension of Christian formation and sanctification.

Keywords: common grace; creation care; general revelation; the Holy Spirit; Pentecostalism; pneumatology; special grace; special revelation; the Trinity

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I remember changing the oil in my car and pouring the old oil on the weeds that grew along the back side of my parents' garage. Of course I knew that doing such was illegal and harmful to the environment, but at the time I did not give it much thought; after all, I won't get caught and Jesus will return soon and ultimately destroy the earth and its evil inhabitants. What is important to note is that I dumped that oil as a Christian and did not sense that it was in any way at odds with my faith in Christ.

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[*Zygon*, vol. 43, no. 4 (December 2008)]
 ISSN 0591-2385

I cannot imagine doing something like that now (thankfully, "the old is gone and the new has come" [2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV]), but undoubtedly I continue to participate in environmental harm unawares. Moreover, my indifference toward the earth had a direct theological foundation in dispensational premillennial eschatology and the traditional evangelical and Pentecostal concern for spiritual matters over worldly ones. Presupposed in premillennial eschatology and the focus on spirituality is a deeper understanding of the relationship between creation and grace.

In this essay I identify one of the deeper theological sources of the tendency toward environmental neglect in evangelical and Pentecostal theology and then propose a theological vision that facilitates creation care. The first section identifies, describes, and evaluates the traditional distinction between common and special grace as a theological foundation for environmental neglect in evangelical and Pentecostal theology. The second and third sections propose a pneumatological vision of grace based on a fundamental trinitarianism that can provide Pentecostals and other Christians with a way to (1) overcome the stark dualisms of secular and sacred and common and special grace and (2) attain a more unified and comprehensive vision of God's grace that is in turn more conducive to creation care.[1] The fourth section presents a case for seeing creation care as a pneumatological and proleptic participation in the eschaton and, as such, as a dimension of Christian formation and sanctification.

Common and Special Grace—Overview and Questions

Traditional Pentecostal theology for the most part mirrors traditional evangelical theology with respect to its assumption and understanding of common grace and general revelation and special grace and revelation (Hart [1999] 2005, 42–49; Higgins [1994] 1995, 69–81; Menzies and Horton 1993, 20–26).[2] The distinction between common and special grace parallels the distinction between the doctrines of general and special revelation. Common grace refers to the various ways God influences the lives of people in a nonsalvific way. Common grace restrains sin, provides the moral sense that keeps human societies more or less civil, and funds human cultural production. General revelation provides a general knowledge of God's existence, character, and moral expectations that is available through the natural world, history, and dimensions of human experience (Erickson 1985, 153–54). Special revelation (in evangelical and Pentecostal theology) gives the knowledge of God necessary for salvation, which usually has a specific and detailed christological content (Demarest 1982, 13–14, 228, 233, 250; 1992, 199, 205).[3] Because special revelation occurs through specific supernatural acts, such as the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the inspiration of scripture, it is not universal but limited, at least initially, to the target community of faith—for example, Israel and the Christian church.

Although evangelicals and Pentecostals recognize a distinction between common grace and general revelation, they tend to understand the former in terms of the latter. The reason for this is their content-rich view of faith; to have faith is to believe certain things about the person and work of Jesus Christ (Carson 1996, 296–97, 505–8; Geivett and Phillips 1996, 235). Consequently, the notions of revelation and grace are closely related to each other. The result is that common grace often is understood largely, but not exclusively, in terms of general revelation and special grace in terms of special revelation.

Important for the present discussion is that common grace/general revelation and special grace/revelation, although not opposed, are distinct divine programs.[4] The key to the distinction is that none of the affects of common grace discussed above has anything to do with the order of saving grace and special revelation. A person can participate fully in common grace and revelation but never touch special revelation and grace. Common grace and general revelation are not for the purpose of salvation; salvation derives from the second order of grace—special grace and revelation (Demarest 1982, 247–53; Erickson 1985, 153–54; Grudem 1994, 663; Higgins [1994] 1995, 75–76; Menzies and Horton 1993, 20–21).

In what has been perhaps the most widely used theology textbook in evangelical seminaries and colleges (maybe Pentecostal ones, too), Wayne Grudem defines common grace as "the grace of God by which he gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation" (1994, 657). He delineates the benefits of common grace as the fecundity and natural beauty of the earth, the scientific achievements of humankind, the human capacity for moral thought, action, and restraint, human artistic achievements, the political, educational, and governmental production of human society, and the religious systems of the world that provide meaning, all of which tend to promote human livelihood (pp. 658–63). At the same time, he insists that acts of virtue that arise from common grace are not acts of faith and love toward God but rather are ultimately selfish acts (p. 663).[5] Although common grace and general revelation are categorically distinct from special grace and revelation, they have a relationship to special grace; they render people guilty before God and subject to divine wrath.

The traditional set of beliefs about the relationship between natural revelation, special revelation, accountability, and faith that tend to characterize evangelical and Pentecostal theology is problematic for four reasons.

1. The Questionable Morality of the Two Orders of Grace. The relationship between common and special grace is questionable from a moral standpoint. In an essay treating the relationship between general and special revelation in respect to the issue of soteriological inclusivism, Carl F. Henry (1991, 247–52) maintains that all people stand guilty before God for not believing in God in light of the natural revelation available to them, but at the same time he insists that natural revelation does not reveal the

content necessary for saving faith.[6] How this theology does not invoke God in gross immorality is difficult to comprehend because it violates a basic maxim of ethics.[7] As John and Paul Feinberg point out (1993, 31–32), persons cannot be held morally culpable for failing to do what was impossible for them to do.[8] The situation envisioned by Henry is similar to a parent who punishes a child for improperly baking a cake without having provided the child with the instructions and ingredients sufficient to carry out the task. Undeterred by such considerations, Henry complains that modern theology's penchant toward inclusivism derives from its misguided assumption that love is the essence of God and from its commensurate loss of awareness of divine righteousness (1991, 254).

Perhaps a preferable alternative is to see God's righteousness revealed in God's loving acts of redemption, rather than seeing these two dimensions of the divine nature at odds with each other. Moreover, God created the heavens *to declare* the glory of God (Psalm 19:1), not to render human beings without excuse so as thereby to condemn them.

Finally, a shift to pneumatology opens up a way to see all of creation, human and nonhuman, as caught up in the redemptive work of the Spirit and, thus, as always graced with an eschatological *telos* (end/ultimate goal).[9]

2. The Problem of the Extrinsic and Intrinsic Modalities of Common and Special Grace. The traditional common/special grace distinction assumes an extrinsic/intrinsic notion of the work of the Spirit in the human person. Prior to conversion, the Spirit's work in a human person is extrinsic. The Spirit episodically acts upon the person in the mode of common grace. In conversion, the Spirit regenerates the person from within and thus becomes an intrinsic work of grace.[10] Daniel Strange (2002, 259) assumes extrinsic/intrinsic modalities of the Spirit when he contrasts the impartation of the Spirit in regeneration and sanctification with the universal presence of the Spirit in creation—that is, common grace.

But scripture indicates that the Spirit is the intrinsic principle at the inception of human life and is the divine presence that enables them to participate in fellowship with God (Genesis 2:4–7, 6:3, 7:15, 22). The coalescence of the human becoming a living being and a being that stands in relationship to God with the gift of the Spirit is never retracted, but reiterated and affirmed (Job 33:4, Psalm 104:29–30). Consequently, the Spirit remains interior to human existence even in the post-fall condition. Thus, the Spirit is never an extrinsic agent to the human person; the Spirit calls and works not from the outside (*extra nos*) but from within the depths of human life and consciousness.

3. The Problem of the Discontinuity between Common and Special Grace. The traditional discussion of common and special grace sunders what the vision of redemption in scripture takes as united. For example, in an effort to retain the interrelationship between common and special grace, Grudem

maintains that common and special grace are not distinct in respect to God, but nonetheless the result of common grace is not salvation, because it is not a benefit of Christ's atoning work even if the forbearance of judgment assumed in common grace derives from the divine purpose to save some through the cross of Christ (1994, 657–58). The relation he posits between them derives from a prior commitment to the simplicity of the divine essence and acts rather than to a genuine sense of unity between the two forms of grace (pp. 177–80). Indeed, if the one cannot lead to salvation and the other can, they are not one in God or in the economy.

Creation and redemption are distinct in the sense that God redeems creation. But they are not distinct as to their economic program and end. The economic order is one—the redemption of creation.[11] Thus, in scripture creation and redemption are not two separate orders, spheres, or modalities of divine activity but rather are one program, in that God's acts of redemption redeem creation.[12] The unity of creation and redemption does not deny a conceptual distinction between creation and redemption, but it does set aside a dichotomy that implies that creation and redemption are completely separate economic orders. For example, at the moment that God creates a new human life, God does so for no other purpose than to nurture in that person loving patterns of life and relationship with creation, other human persons, and the Triune Godhead. Moreover, whatever that person does in his or her life either contributes to or detracts from the actualization of God's creative purpose for his or her life. Conceptually, a distinction can be drawn between God's act of creating a human person and the purpose for that creation, but the distinction is more logical and abstract than illuminative of separate divine programs.

The discontinuity between common and special grace also results in a hierarchical way of understanding their interrelationship (Tiessen 2004, 396).[13] Bruce Demarest (1982, 251) seeks to relate general to special revelation, but he subordinates the former to the latter. He portrays the relationship hierarchically in a pyramid diagram, in which general revelation forms the base and special revelation forms the pinnacle. The order of special grace is more important than and ultimately discontinuous with common grace, for it has to do with salvation and the eventual everlasting kingdom of God.

The problem of the hierarchical relationship between special and common grace is that the latter is disconnected from the redemptive purpose of the former. Common grace has little to do with God's ultimate redemptive purposes. The hierarchy suggests that common grace is unrelated to God's redemptive work in the world (other than to provide sufficient knowledge to condemn people, as discussed above).

4. The Ecological Problem of the Hierarchy between Common and Special Grace. The traditional hierarchy of common and special grace also presents a problem for an ecological orientation. The earth and human

activities that are earthbound fall within the horizon of common grace and, if not properly subordinated to the arena of special grace, can be a distraction to the activities pursued under the category of special grace. For instance, the traditional evangelical understanding of evangelism is an activity of special grace, whereas the more mundane effort to preserve a wetland is within the sphere of common grace.

An example of the way the assumption of two orders of grace plays out in environmental matters is the hierarchical sacred/secular worldview adopted by evangelical leader James Dobson. Although Dobson is not a Pentecostal, many Pentecostals share his Christian social conservative platform. In a letter to Dr. L. Roy Taylor, Chairman of the Board of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) regarding Richard Cizik, Vice President of Governmental Affairs in the Washington office of the NAE, Dobson assumes a dichotomy between sacred and secular social issues with his notion that climate concerns are matters of science and not theology and that global warming is not one of the "great moral issues of our time."[14] The problem is that one can marginalize and classify global warming and other environmental issues as nonmoral and nontheological issues only if one first places earth issues in a nonspiritual or secular category; that is, issues related to the earth are not the concerns of special grace, Christian ministry, and the kingdom of God. The affairs of creation and efforts to save the earth are not the context for the saving work of Christ and therefore should not be the place where Christians seek to "work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12 NIV). Saving trees and wetlands is a distraction from saving souls, building the church, and shoring up the approved moral issues.

A hierarchy of concerns is not problematic per se. For example, humanitarian relief takes precedence over preserving wetlands (although the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina suggests that the two efforts can be interrelated). Thus, a hierarchy can distinguish between relative levels of value, embrace all activities within its strata as participating in a unified redemptive program, and see all redemptive activities, whether directed specifically toward human or environmental welfare, as proleptic participations in the everlasting kingdom of God.

The following segments of this paper provide the theological rationale for a perspective that enfolds all of creation in a cosmic vision of redemption and thereby provides a theological basis for creation care.

A Trinitarian Foundation for a Unified Theology of Grace

Contemporary ecological theologies often draw on the theology of panentheism and the biblical image of the Spirit as breath of life.[15] The following proposal shares these two strategies but does so in a unique way. Based on

a fundamental trinitarianism and pneumatology, it provides the theological rationale for the continuity between the Spirit of creation and of redemption. This section treats the question, Why is the work of the Spirit in creation and redemption one work and not parallel works? The answer lies in pneumatology proper. Pneumatology proper refers to the theological identity of the Holy Spirit; it addresses the divine personal identity of the Spirit and the work that flows out of the Spirit's identity. The yield is the point that the Spirit's work of breathing life and redemption into creation is one because it flows from the Spirit's personal identity.

A unified theology of grace, or the unity of the Spirit's work in creation and redemption, ultimately derives from Karl Rahner's principle "the 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity'" ([1970] 1998, 22).[16] Rahner's principle means that what God is in the economy is what God is from eternity.[17] The personal identities of the divine persons inform their economic works. Applied to pneumatology, creation, and redemption, the reciprocity between identity and work means that the Spirit's work in all of its economic dimensions always bears the characteristic of the Spirit's personal identity.

With this, the discussion reaches pneumatology proper and the question, What is the Spirit's identity that informs the Spirit's work?

The identity of the Holy Spirit that serves as the basis of the pneumatological concept of grace derives from a version of the Augustinian mutual-love model influenced by the insights of the Reformed Puritan Jonathan Edwards and the Roman Catholic David Coffey.[18] A social vision of love is central to the mutual-love model. The interpersonal movements involved in the concept of self-communication capture the social nature of love. Love, understood as self-communication, involves two elements: transcendent objectification and assimilation. Love, as a transcendent act, goes forth beyond the self to another person(s) in a concrete way (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9). The act of going forth is to draw or assimilate the other(s) into the ambit of the personal existence of the one who initially goes forth in love (John 17:20–26).

The trinitarian God reflects the self-communicative structure of love. God the Father eternally brings forth the divine person of the Son. The Son, therefore, subsists as the transcendent objectification of the Father's eternal act of self-communication (although the subsistence of the Son is immanent to the divine nature). The self-communication of God in the Son is necessary for the possibility of love in God because love requires an object of affection. The Son subsists by the Father's act of self-communication because of the unity of being and act in God. Because being and act are inseparable in God, the Son is a subsistence of the fullness (Greek *homoousios*) of the divine being and therefore a distinct divine person. The assimilation of the Father and the Son occurs in the subsistence of the Holy Spirit as their mutual love. The subsistence of the Holy Spirit as the

person who facilitates the communion between the Father and the Son completes the immanent sharing of love, or self-communication.

Stated in more personal terms, the Spirit is the divine person who constitutes the loving fellowship of the trinitarian God.[19] The Spirit is not an impersonal unifying power but the divine person (a subsistence of the fullness of the divine nature) whose personal identity and action assimilates the Father and the Son in interpersonal communion. The Spirit's personal identity is the basic ontological datum that grounds all statements regarding the personal work of the Spirit in Christology, grace, and creation. Rahner's principle means that the Spirit's work reflects the Spirit's immanent identity. More specifically, it means that all dimensions of the Spirit's work reflect the Spirit's immanent identity. In other words, all work of the Spirit ultimately has an orientation to draw creation into its particular mode of fellowship with the Father and the Son.[20]

The coordination of the Holy Spirit's identity and work provides the theological principle for the integration of the traditional categories of the Spirit as breath of life and Spirit as agent of redemption in a unified and pneumatological concept of grace. Symmetry characterizes the identity and work of the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity and the economy of redemption. The Spirit who facilitates the fellowship of the Son and the Father (immanent Trinity), of believers with the Son and the Father (soteriology), and of believers with each other (ecclesiology) is also the Spirit who draws all creation to its eschatological consummation of participation in the fellowship of the trinitarian God.[21] Once the principle of reciprocity between the Spirit's identity and work is granted, two-tier orders of grace—such as common and special grace, natural and supernatural revelation, sacred and secular, and extrinsic/nonredemptive and intrinsic/redemptive modalities of the Spirit's work—are untenable.[22]

Unifying Grace: A Pneumatological Concept of Graced Creation

A unified theology of grace depends on the integration of the traditional distinctions between creation and redemption or common and special grace. The coordination of the Holy Spirit's identity and work outlined in the previous section serves as the principle to integrate the traditional categories of the Spirit as breath of life (the traditional work of common grace) and Spirit as agent of redemption (the traditional work of special grace) in a unified and pneumatological concept of grace. The following details a unified theology of grace in place of the traditional tendency to divide and prioritize grace into common and special categories and to assume distinct modes of the Spirit's operation in them.

Overcoming the Hierarchical and Extrinsic/Intrinsic Modalities of the Spirit's Work. The pneumatological and unified theology of grace resolves the

hierarchical and extrinsic/intrinsic modalities of the Spirit's work in the traditional paradigm in several respects. First, the Spirit's work in grace is no longer conceived according to extrinsic and intrinsic categories. The Spirit cannot be both the intrinsic principle of life for all creation and the episodic extrinsic agent of common grace. If the Spirit is present with all living creatures as their source of life, the Spirit's work always comes from within the very depths of their life. Thus, the Spirit's work is never only from the outside.

Second, because the Spirit is the intrinsic principle of life and because the Spirit's work always reflects the Spirit's identity as the person who constitutes loving fellowship, the Spirit's work always has a redemptive orientation. The Spirit never works in contradistinction to the Spirit's identity. Consequently, the Spirit does not have a common operation vis-à-vis a special operation with the latter taking precedence over the former. The Holy Spirit, who is ever and everywhere the Spirit of life, is at the same time ever and everywhere the Spirit of redemption. The Spirit's work as breath of life is inseparable from the Spirit's work of redemption. The Spirit breathes life into creation for no other purpose than to draw creation into relationship with the Son and the Father. The Spirit always seeks the particular eschatological end of all created life forms.

The Unity of Creation and Grace in Scripture. Scripture provides several illustrations of the unity between creation and grace.

1. The Bible uses a corresponding pattern of activities and images to describe the Spirit's work in creation and redemption. The Spirit of God is the foundation for the horizon of the days of creation in Genesis 1:1–2. The same Spirit is the life-breath that animates the dirt person so that it can live in fellowship with its Creator and earth in Genesis 2:4–9.[23] The work of the Spirit, in what is traditionally referred to as grace, parallels the creative work of the Spirit in Genesis 1 and 2. The Spirit who is the breath of life is the Spirit-wind unleashed at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4) who creates and sustains the early Christian communities. The Spirit who was the divine presence hovering over the primordial cosmos and the vivifying energy that created an earth teeming with life is the Spirit who is the living waters and source of rebirth in the Gospel of John (chapters 3, 4, 7). The above images suggest the coordination of the traditional categories of the Spirit as breath of life and Spirit as agent of redemption in a unified theology of grace that overcomes the dialectical and hierarchical structure of common and special grace.

2. The Bible indicates that the grace that reconciles humans with God also includes a restoration of the human relationship to creation. Grace transforms the way human beings live in the world; therefore, grace has an earthy orientation. Jesus prays to the Father "not that you take them out of the world" and clarifies that his disciples "are not of the world, even as I am not of it" (John 17:15–16 NIV). Being "not of the world" cannot mean

being heavenly or some other worldly minded; it must mean a different way of living *in* this world, for at least two reasons: First, Jesus Christ was the incarnate Son of God (John 1:1, 14). The incarnation affirms that God redeems humanity in its totality and not merely the human "soul." Samuel Powell points out that the resurrection of Jesus shows that eschatological participation in the new creation promotes not a "world-denying ethics" but a "world-participatory" ethics that sees creation being transformed rather than destroyed and replaced (2003, 209). Second, Jesus Christ displays what it means to be *in* but not *of* the world. Jesus was in the world in the sense that he was flesh and blood, enjoyed friendship with his disciples and others, and lived a life full of love of God and neighbor. Even his most "spiritual" acts were more related to this world than an immortal celestial state. For example, the forgiveness he offered to the woman caught in adultery staved off the invective of uptight religious fanatics more so than eternal punishment from an irrepressible God of justice and law (John 8:2–11). With this in mind, "world" in John 17 (NIV) cannot refer to the earth and embodied existence as such but refers to the evil ways of living on this earth and with its inhabitants. To forsake being of the world then has nothing to do with minimizing engagement with the world as such. The prayer indicates that grace does not transport Christians to a celestial realm but transforms the way they live *in* this world. Christians are to embody the love of Christ in this world and thereby not be of the world.

3. Scripture extends redemption to all of creation and does not restrict it to the "spiritual" dimension of the human (Barbour 2002, 126). Romans 8:21 (NIV) promises "that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay." Moreover, the passage correlates the suffering of creation with the human yearning for eschatological renewal: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8:22–23 NIV).[24]

The groaning of creation parallels the groaning of the Christian community for final redemption. Dale Moody notes that this text links the groaning of creation and the children of God with the sighs of the Spirit (1981, 135). The Spirit who cries out from the breast of every forlorn human also groans within creation and yearns for the same eschatological redemption. Moreover, the physical creation and human bodies are the objects of the hoped-for redemption. The Spirit groans in and with all living creatures and, just as the Spirit raised Christ from the dead, the Spirit promises to redeem creation.[25]

The reciprocal groaning of the Spirit in human persons and the rest of creation derives from the biblical affirmation that the Spirit who is the breath of life and who vivifies and redeems humans is the Spirit who breathes life into all living creatures (Genesis 6:17; 7:15, 22). In this respect, hu-

mans share an earthy and pneumatic union with all of creation because they come from the dust; that is, they are created from the stuff of creation and, like all other creatures, ultimately receive life from the same Spirit of life (Montague 1976, 5–9).[26] The Spirit who is the breath of life of all of creation is at the same time "the Spirit of Christ" (1 Peter 1:11 NIV) who leads all of creation to participation in the everlasting life, love, and kingdom of the trinitarian God.[27] To be sure, pine trees will not participate in the eschaton in the same way that human beings will; nonetheless, in some way God promises to redeem creation, and it will share in the eschaton in a way appropriate to its life form.

In summary, the Bible uses similar imagery to portray the work of the Holy Spirit in the traditional categories of creation and redemption.[28] This symmetry allows Pentecostal (and evangelical) theology to transcend these traditional categories (and the distinction of the Spirit's work in them assumed by the categories) and to conceive the work of the Spirit in terms of one order of grace, or a unified theology of the salvific-economic mission of God. The Spirit's work does not have two orders, creation and redemption, but one order, the redemption *of* creation.[29] The redemption of creation encompasses all of creation and is therefore not limited to the human soul. Creation and redemption are distinct in the sense that creation is the sphere of divine redemptive activity, but not in the sense that there are dimensions of creation that are purely "natural" or pure nature. Pure nature does not exist. Paul recognized the sacredness of creation when he quoted Epimenides the Cretan's poetic phrase, "for in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28 NIV; see Bruce 1988, 338–39). The rejection of creation and redemption as discrete spheres and modes of divine activity renders untenable the notions of common and special grace.

Having detailed the theological rationale for a unified pneumatological theology of grace, the discussion turns to the application of this theology to creation care.

Creation Care as Christian Formation/Sanctification

My sister and I were in college and graduate school at roughly the same time. She earned degrees in environmental science and management and I in ministry and theology. Her work concentrated on tending the earth and mine on the church and "souls." I thought I had pursued a higher calling than hers and frankly thought her somewhat crazy for trying to "save" the spotted owls and old-growth forests. However, now I believe she was hearing the groans of the Spirit within creation and "keep[ing] in step with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25 NIV).

Many Christians will have little trouble considering their religious and moral activities of prayer, Bible study, and fasting as empowered by the Spirit and acts of Christian formation. However, few evangelical and Pentecostal Christians consider creation care as an arena of the Spirit's work,

much less as a form of sanctification. But creation care, no less than the traditional disciplines of Christian formation, is a way the Christian can "keep in step with the Spirit." Buying organic fair trade coffee and turning the heat down may be just as much ways "to work out your salvation with fear and trembling" as praying, attending church, and fasting (Philippians 2:12 NIV). I propose that creation care is a pneumatological participation in the eschaton. Just as the activities that Christians typically classify as religious and moral are participations and foretastes of the eschatological kingdom through the Spirit, so also are efforts in creation care.

Creation care is a pneumatological participation in the eschaton because the scope of redemption extends to all of creation, and the Holy Spirit is the intrinsic divine presence that leads all of creation to its redemptive consummation. The Spirit who works in Christians and fosters their participation in the eschatological new creation is the same Spirit at work throughout the cosmos. Denis Edwards aptly remarks that "the story of the Spirit . . . is coextensive with the *total* life of the universe" (2004, 33). A consequence of this pneumatological panentheism is that Christian formation is "keep[ing] in step with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25 NIV). When Christians engage in traditional ministries of preaching the gospel and ministering to the abused or impoverished, they are responding to and being caught up in the work of the Spirit. They do so because the work of the Spirit in their lives corresponds to the work of the Spirit in the lives of others. For example, when a local church reaches out to persons disenfranchised from the consumer culture and seeks ways to empower and to liberate their lives, the ministry correlates with what the Spirit seeks for the lives of those individuals. The correlation is not an abstract one, in the sense that ministry corresponds to the will of God in some generalized sense; rather, the correlation is concrete. The work of the Spirit *in* the lives of Christians meets the work of the Spirit *in* the lives of those to whom they minister.

Similarly, because the Spirit's work extends to the redemption of all of creation and is not limited to the "spiritual" dimension of the human being, when Christians engage in creation care the work of the Spirit in them meets the work of the Spirit in creation.[30] Again, this meeting is not at the level of thematic abstraction but in a concrete and specific sense. The Spirit who is present and working in the Christian is present in and seeking the well-being of every part of creation. Christian formation is the process in which the work of the Spirit in the lives of people meets the presence and work of the Spirit throughout creation, both in its human and nonhuman dimensions.

The connection between human sin and redemption and the suffering and renewal of creation provides an additional basis for seeing creation care as a dimension of Christian formation and sanctification. Carol J. Dempsey highlights the Israelite prophetic tradition as connecting human

sin with environmental degradation and therefore sees their redemption as intrinsically related (1999, 270, 276, 279).[31] The connections between human sin and environmental suffering and between human redemption and environmental deliverance indicate that when human persons experience liberation from sin, it leads to the renewal of the land and its creatures.

The link between sin and ecological problems is obvious in the contemporary world. We see it from the corporate greed that fuels the unbridled pursuit of increased production and consumption in North America to the indifference and/or laziness of individual consumers who are unwilling to make the effort to sort their trash for recycling and the destructive consequences these patterns of behavior have on environmental conditions. Also obvious is the link between redemption and ecological health. The Spirit, who breathes life into all living creatures and who breathes new life into Christians, empowers patterns of behavior that foster the flourishing of all of life.[32] The Spirit who gives life to the creature inhabiting the wetland is the same Spirit who redeems human life.

It seems plausible that the Spirit working redemptively in humans will lead them to behave in ways that are commensurate with the Spirit's life-giving work in other creatures. The Spirit's redemption of Christians from an overconsumptive lifestyle and indifference toward the earth has the potential to reduce environmental destruction. Thus, the Spirit of creation and Pentecost cannot be separated, and the Spirit's work in creation and redemption cannot be construed as unrelated.

Although the case for creation care as a way to fulfill the command to love our neighbor as ourselves is perhaps an easy one to make, the proposal here is to encourage creation care not only for the sake of benefiting human life (although that is certainly part of it) but also for a theological reason. The theological rationale for creation care is the principle that the Triune God's redemptive program extends to all of creation, not just to the human "soul" and to traditional "spiritual" disciplines of the human person. The benefit of an expanded vision of God's redemptive mission means that all of life is taken up in the eschatological redemption and that all redemptive acts, whether directed toward the traditional spiritual dimensions of soul care or more broadly toward creation care, are a participation in the grace of the Spirit of redemption. A vision of the mission of the Triune God that comprehends all of creation enables Christians to see creation care as a dimension of their Christian formation and sanctification.

A comprehensive vision of God's redemptive program supports the notion that creation care is an act of worship. As George S. Hendry notes, worship is an activity "to which we are moved by the presence of the Spirit [and] in which we become engaged in the transcendent purpose of God" (1980, 217). John Polkinghorne makes a similar case for understanding the wonder evoked in scientists who endeavor to unlock the mysteries of the universe as "tacit acts of the worship of its Creator" (2004, 65). He sees

this wonder as a form of praise because it is an appropriate response of awe inspired by the Holy Spirit, who is ever and everywhere at work in the cosmos, including within the community of scientists and their efforts to understand the universe. Transposed to Christian communities, Polkinghorne's point means that the Spirit is at work in Christians calling forth appropriate responses of worship and action in the world. Creation care, therefore, is the convergence of the work of the Spirit in the human person and in the broader arena of creation. In application this means, for example, that the restoration of an anadromous fish passage[33] is just as much a work of Christian formation and worship as prayer, because both activities are concrete manifestations of the Spirit of life and redemption that presage the eschatological renewal of all life.

Conclusion

Pentecostals, following traditional evangelicals, often distinguish between common/general and special grace and revelation. These distinctions effectively divide reality into natural and supernatural orders. The former provide rudimentary knowledge of God and moral ability but do not redeem, so they are looked upon as unspiritual domains. Special grace refers to the saving grace of Christ and the spiritual dimension of life in which people encounter the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. These dualistic and hierarchical categories assume a discontinuity between the orders of common and special grace and do not evoke a strong theological basis for creation care. In place of such an understanding, this essay presents a unified theology of grace that funds a theology of creation care. Based on a fundamental trinitarianism, the essay proposes symmetry between the Spirit's immanent identity and economic work that forms the theological basis for seeing continuity between the Spirit of creation and redemption in way that dissolves the orders of common and special grace. A pneumatological and unified theology of grace that takes the Spirit's work in creation and redemption in comprehensive terms provides a way to see creation care as a dimension of Christian formation and sanctification. Creation care is a pneumatological participation in the eschatological redemptive mission of the Triune God and, as such, it is a dimension of Christian formation.

Notes

A version of this essay was presented (by Jeffrey Barbeau in my absence due to illness) at the annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS) jointly held with the Wesleyan Theological Society at Duke University Divinity School, Durham, N.C., 13–15 March 2008.

1. Additional contributions to the relationship between theology, science, and creation by Pentecostal and charismatic scholars include the research initiative Science and the Spirit: Pentecostal Perspectives on the Science/Religion Dialogue (*http://www.calvin.edu/scs/scienceandspirit/*) codirected by Amos Yong and James K. A. Smith; Yong 2005, 267–302; 2006, 183–204; Gabriel 2007, 195–212; Pinnock 1996, 49–77; Dermawan 2003, 199–217.

2. Illustrative of this point is John R. Higgins's chapter "God's Inspired Word" ([1994] 1995) that bases its description of general and special revelation primarily on the work of Bruce Demarest, Millard Erickson, and Carl F. H. Henry.

3. For examples in Pentecostal theology, see Higgins [1994] 1995, 75–76; Menzies and Horton 1993, 21.

4. For example, even though Terrance L. Tiessen sees both common and special grace as benefits of Christ's atoning work, he still maintains that common grace is nonsalvific (2004, 100–101, 396–400, 416, 418, 422–23).

5. Tiessen also suggests that what appear to be the virtuous acts of non-Christians arise from selfishness and not from faith (2004, 418). But if this is the case, it seems improper to describe a selfish and sinful act as the product of grace, whether that grace is construed as common or special. For similar perspectives, see Nash 1995, 111, 163 n5; Strange 2002, 113.

6. David K. Clark also raises the moral objection to the traditional Reformed position in this same volume (1991, 39–40).

7. Dale Moody puts it well when he queries, "what kind of God is he who gives man enough knowledge to damn him but not enough to save him?" (1981, 59)

8. Tiessen sets forth the principle of inculpable and culpable ignorance to overcome the affront to God's loving justice presented by the traditional view (2004, 126). He argues that God judges people based on the revelation available to them and does not condemn people for failing to believe that which was impossible for them to believe because it was inaccessible to them.

9. The notion of the universal presence and grace of the Spirit could be taken to imply universalism. However, I maintain that although the gift of the Spirit may be universally appropriated, this does not lead to universal salvation, because not all accept the communication of the Holy Spirit as divine love and the Spirit's invitation to join in the fellowship of the trinitarian God. At the very least, the possibility remains open that not all will respond favorably to the grace of the Spirit.

10. The extrinsic/intrinsic logic informs Grudem's argument (1994, 699–702) that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit *in* the believer. For Pentecostals, see Gause 1980, 15–24; Pecota [1994] 1995, 364–65; Arrington 2003, 41–43, 55. French Arrington states, "so, from conversion on, the Spirit takes up residence in the believer" (2003, 62), which indicates a transition from an extrinsic to an intrinsic relationship between the Spirit and the believer.

11. George S. Hendry makes the point that "since everything that God has created, including the world of nature, is good, everything is destined to participate in the consummation" (1980, 220).

12. Sallie McFague makes a case for creation as the place of salvation using the metaphor of the universe as the body of God (1993, 179–82).

13. Although he affirms the intrinsic value of common grace, Richard J. Mouw otherwise trades on the traditional distinctions between the orders of common and special grace (2001, 31–51). The critique that Christianity is prone to construe the relationship between God and the world, the human and the world, and the spirit and the body in hierarchical and dualistic terms is common (Barbour 2002, 128–29; Johnson 2007, 181–90; 1993, 10–31, 58–60; McFague 1993, 131–50; 2001, 133–55). Mark I. Wallace advocates a biocentrism that overcomes hierarchical dualism by binding together the life of the universe and God (1996, 133–48).

14. The letter is at *http://www.citizenlink.org/pdfs/NAELetterFinal.pdf.*

15. For an excellent introduction to the rise of panentheism in contemporary theology, see Clayton and Peacocke 2004. For specific examples, see Edwards 2004, 139–42; Johnson 2007, 187–88, 193; McFague 1993, 140–41; Moltmann 1985, 9–16; Wallace 1996, 139–44. My use of the term corresponds closely with Denis Edwards's account that sees "the Spirit [as] the interior divine presence empowering the evolution of the universe from within" and that understands "God as wholly other to creatures and, precisely as such, as radically interior to them" (2004, 140–41). I agree with Wallace's agenda to close the gap between the traditional dualisms of God and creation (1996, 141), but I think he goes too far in his proposal that ecocide can lead to deicide. Although traditional theology trades too much on dualisms (such as God and creation, nature and grace), the transcendence of God inevitably leads to an ontological dualism of God and creation. My use of the term *pneumatological panentheism* affirms that God is present as the animating source of life and redemption *in* creation. Thus, I reject not an ultimate ontological dualism between God and creation but a dualism of sacred and secular

orders in creation, and the rejection of that dualism derives precisely from the notion that the Spirit is present in creation as its source of life and redemption.

For examples of scholars who draw on the image of the Spirit as breath of life, see Barbour 2002, 125; Edwards 2004, 33–49; McFague 1993, 143–44.

16. Although this was not a new insight but a retrieval of the more ancient theology of Augustine, it seemed new to modern theology that had all but marginalized the doctrine of the Trinity to functional irrelevance.

17. David Coffey correctly points out that because the economic Trinity does not exhaust the immanent Trinity, Rahner's formula is valid in only one direction; the economic is the immanent Trinity but not vice versa, as the transcendence of God means that the immanent Trinity surpasses the economic, even though they are harmonious (1999a, 151).

18. For Edwards's trinitarian theology, see Studebaker 2003, 268–85; 2006, 5–20; 2005, 324–39. The key texts for Coffey's theology, in chronological order, are Coffey 1979; 1984, 466–80; 1986, 227–50; 1990, 193–229; 1999a; 1999b, 405–31; 2001, 315–38; 2005.

19. Although understanding the Holy Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and the Son runs the risk of portraying the Spirit as passive, this is not necessary to the model. Augustine treats this concern when he clarifies, "he [the Holy Spirit] is given as God's gift in such a way that as God he also gives himself" (1991, 15.36 [p. 424]).

20. Other writings that draw a connection between the Spirit's role in facilitating relationships in the Godhead and creation include Dabney 2006, 81; Edwards 2004, 46–47, 120, 127; Pinnock 1996, 56–57, 61; Wallace 1996, 145–47.

21. Elizabeth Johnson envisions a similar role of the Spirit when she writes, "fellowship, community, and *koinonia* is the primordial design of existence, as all creatures are connected through the indwelling, renewing, moving Creator Spirit" (1993, 44).

22. Clark Pinnock also rejects the distinction between the sacred and secular on the basis of the universal presence and work of the Spirit in creation (1996, 62). See also Johnson 1993, 60.

23. Although Genesis 1 uses *ruach* (S/spirit, wind, breath) and Genesis 2 employs *neshamah* (breath), the words are functional synonyms and together point to the Spirit of God who is the energizing life of creation (Montague 1976, 6). Although these Genesis passages, and particularly chapter 2, do not have in mind the divine person of the Holy Spirit as the New Testament and later Christian tradition understand the Holy Spirit, they nonetheless point to this later development of biblical and Christian pneumatology. The theology above admittedly interprets the Genesis passages in light of these later canonical and historical developments in pneumatology.

24. Edwards illustrates the Spirit's work in liberating creation from its travail in terms of a midwife who facilitates the new birth of creation (2004, 110–12).

25. Johnson (2007, 189–91) applies the pattern of cross (Spirit abiding in solidarity with the suffering) and resurrection (Spirit ushering in the new creation) on a cosmic level.

26. Dawn M. Nothwehr (2004, 173–84) draws on Edwards's ecological theology to advance an environmental ethics based on the cosmic mutuality of all things through the Spirit.

27. The Spirit as the Breath of God is foundational for Edwards's ecological theology (2004, 43–49).

28. Jürgen Moltmann makes a similar observation that "in both the Old and the New Testaments, the words used for the divine act of *creating* are also used for God's *liberating* and *redeeming* acts" (1992, 8–10, 177–79).

29. Pinnock makes a similar critique of traditional evangelical theology when he writes, "the effect of neglecting these activities ["the cosmic and creational role of the Spirit"] is to break creation and redemption into separate spheres and to draw a line between them" (1996, 54).

30. Carol J. Dempsey (1999, 269–84) articulates the Old Testament prophetic tradition's promise of the eschatological renewal of life that takes in all of creation.

31. Dempsey argues that the prophetic eschatological promise envisages the restoration of "harmonious relationships between God, ourselves, and the natural world" (1999, 270).

32. Note that the above is not an endorsement of a radical biocentric model in which the life of virulent viruses and bacteria receive the same regard as humans and other living creatures. For example, to protect human life from Ebola virus and indigenous trees from invasive and destructive insects would be considered acts of creation care.

33. An example is Portland General and Electric's removal of the Marmot Dam on the Sandy River in Oregon, which again opened the entire river to wild salmon and steelhead migration and facilitated the restoration of its riparian zone to a natural state.

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