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# Every Believer as a Witness in Acts? - in Dialogue with John Michael Penney[1]

by Max Turner*

The general thrust of John Penney's concise and lucid contribution is well captured by the publisher's 'blurb' on the back cover:

> This book argues that Spirit-baptism in Luke-Acts is essentially a unique event at Pentecost, signaling the eschatological reconstruction of Israel in Zion for mission to the nations. The Spirit of prophecy is promised universally to everyone who repents; Christians are thus incorporated into faithful Israel and empowered for witness at conversion...

Penny comes from a Pentecostal church (Apostolic Church, Australia), which has traditionally read Acts through the doctrines of 'separability' (i.e. the gift of the Spirit is an empowering for mission, distinct/separate from that grace of the Spirit involved in forgiveness of sins and entry into the life of salvation) and 'subsequence' (the gift of the Spirit is granted subsequent to 'salvation'; perhaps weeks, months or more afterwards).

But Penny's careful analysis has largely been able to avoid the trap of interpreting Acts through his denominational paradigm. In particular, his work offers a sharp criticism of the doctrine of 'subsequence'. He argues instead that Acts 2.38-39 represents a *norm* in which the gift of the Spirit is granted at conversion-initiation.[2] The notorious Samaritan incident is *abnormal* (as the otherwise unnecessary parenthesis in v.16 indicates), the exceptional nature of the suspension of the Spirit from conversion and baptism being bound up with the Samaritan believers being united to the restoring Israel at the hands of the leaders of messianic Israel, the apostles.[3] As for the Ephesian 'disciples', there was a deficiency in their knowledge that required Paul to tell them that the 'coming one' was Jesus (19.4), and on hearing this they were baptized 'into the name of the Lord Jesus', and received the Spirit without further sign of delay. So in what sense were they 'Christians' at all, when Paul first encountered them? In any case, Paul's question in 19.2 "implies an expectation by Paul that Christian believers were [normally] endowed with the missionary Spirit at

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conversion, and his immediate response to their surprising lack is to inquire into the nature of their 'conversion'."[4] With the mainstream of Lucan interpreters, therefore, Penny roundly denies 'subsequence' (except in the sense that the Spirit may 'subsequently' repeatedly fill the disciple for particular occasions of witness and empowering) .[5]

But what of 'separability'? On this issue he is slightly less clear. His regular references to converts receiving the '*missionary* Spirit' might sound like a fresh bid in favor of the traditional Pentecostal doctrine, and this understanding of Penney's position could draw on those places where he argues that the Spirit brings forgiveness of sins to the hearer through the Spirit inspired preaching of believers.[6] In so far as such statements suggest that we can distinguish soteriological functions, performed through the Spirit-imbued word of the preacher, from the believers' own 'reception of the (missionary) Spirit', it might appear that he is arguing for 'separability'. At other points, however, he appears merely to be saying that while Luke shares with Paul and John the soteriological functions of the gift of the Spirit, his *primary emphasis* is on the Spirit is missiological. Hence he can affirm:

> That salvation and faith are not directly attributed to the Spirit is not really evidence of Luke's exclusively prophetic pneumatology [*contra* Menzies], but simply arises from his presentation of the exalted Jesus as Lord of salvation. While Lukan pneumatology has a primarily missionary emphasis, . . . Marshall is right to protest the driving of a wedge between Luke and Paul. Luke's distinctive emphasis on the Spirit as initiating, empowering and directing mission cannot be held to exclude any knowledge of the Spirit's saving and sanctifying work. Indications of these may be sparse because they lie outside of his emphasis, but they are not absent. That Stephen is described as 'full of faith and the Holy Spirit' points to the relation between the two. Similarly, it is hard to avoid the impression that the ethical focus of the community life descriptions at the ends of chs. 2 and 4 is associated with the prominence of the Spirit in these chapters.[7]

All this raises the interesting question why Luke might expect all believers to receive the Spirit of prophecy precisely *qua 'missionary'* Spirit, right at the beginning of their Christian lives. Would one not rather expect such a gift to be given later, as to Jesus (at Jordan), and as to the disciples at

Pentecost, as an empowering granted to mature believers for a somewhat specialized ministry . Here the doctrine of 'subsequence' at least at first sight made some sense, even if Penney and others are right in their claim that it is not *Luke's* position. Luke's insistence that reception of the Spirit should normally accompany conversion-initiation might rather suggest that he saw the Spirit of prophecy as *both* soteriological and empowering, with the emphasis as much on the former as on the latter. It suggests that he may have conceived the Spirit of prophecy bringing disclosure of God and of his will, spiritual wisdom and its associated fruit, and various types of invasive speech, that bear as much or more on the believer's own 'life' of salvation and worship as on his or her 'witness'.[8]

There would be room for this within Penney's construction, but he actually pursues a quite different line of argument. He argues instead that the 'missionary Spirit' is given at conversion-initiation, because for Luke the very essence of Christian life is participation in mission. He arrives at that conclusion chiefly through four arguments.[9] First, that the messianic restored Israel (= the church) is called paradigmatically to the role of the Isaianic servant - that is, to be a witness to God's salvation 'to the end of the earth' (Acts 1.8 = Isa 43.12 + 49.6; cf. Lk 2.32 and Acts 13.37) - of which Jesus is exemplary. [10] Second, the majority of the terms used for Spirit-endowment pertain to 'empowering' for such witness.[11] Third, the Spirit is clearly portrayed first and foremost as the director of missions.[12] Fourth, the Spirit of prophecy makes all prophets, when the latter are understood in the Isaianic sense (Isa 40-66) as bearers of good news. [13] Accordingly, Penney asserts: "nothing. . . supports the argument by Turner that the Spirit of prophecy is simply the 'nexus of Christian life'."[14] And he especially objects to the suggestions that "Even when prophecy is extended in meaning to missionary preaching the sum total of people exercising it in the church must have been relatively small" and that "such a gift seems more appropriately received in spiritual maturity than at conversion."[15] He responds: "It seems Turner's world is exactly where Luke's message needs to be heard. New Christians may not be the best theologians, but they are the best witnesses until taught the barrenness of Sunday church, the interior life, and the holy remnant."[16] Elsewhere he suggests that Turner's position "reads back the moribund state of the Western church into a situation which Luke portrays as just the opposite, where even persecution results in ordinary people 'proclaiming the word' (Acts 8.4; 11.19-21)."[17]

Unfortunately, on these points Penney has simply misrepresented me. In the article concerned I actually opposed the view that the Spirit is simply the

'matrix of Christian life',[18] and I did not say that those involved in prophecy and 'sharing the gospel' would have been few; what I said was that those involved in prophecy and *missionary preaching* would have been relatively few. Neither Schweizer nor I meant by the latter term the sort of informal conversational 'witness' that may (or may not) have been much more widespread, especially amongst recent converts.[19] Penney perhaps also needs to recognize that my 'world' was the same sort of Pentecostal/Charismatic church he belongs to, with the same fiery priority for evangelism, and that my initial assumptions were that Acts teaches that the Spirit is given to all as an empowering to witness (if not as that alone). It is my reading of Acts that has surprised me, and challenged my initial assumptions. We all too often think we 'know' Luke, only to discover, on closer examination, we are a stranger to him. So let us return to the real arguments, and to perhaps what is the main issue between us. For Penney 'the bottom line' is this: "All God's people are 'to prophesy'... .are called to proclaim the story of God's love".[20] I would suggest that is an 'idealistic' position which goes well beyond the evidence Acts presents. As we shall see, Luke gives encouragement enough to believers to be involved in the spread of the word, but he does not imply that *all* are expected to proclaim it, nor that the essence of the gift of the Spirit is to empower such mission. I venture the following eight (closely related) theses by way of response:

1. *The identification of the people of God as the messianic restored Israel does not imply that all become prophetic proclaimers of the good news.* While we may affirm that Luke considers the apostles and Paul to fulfil the role of the servant to Isaiah 43.10-12 and 49.6, Luke does not specifically extend this role to the whole church. It is only predicated of those to be witnesses (in the special Lucan sense: see below), the twelve (Lk 24.47-48; Acts 1.8) and Paul (13.47). Within the original Isaianic context, the point is not that all Israel become prophetic preachers, but that God's restoration of Israel will maker her (in her corporate life, worship, and service) a light to the nations. Nor did any Jewish tradition of which I am aware reinterpret this to mean each would individually be involved in prophetic proclamation. Nor may we proceed from the premise that all are given Joel's 'Spirit of prophecy' to the conclusion that all become 'prophets', at least in the sense that they give inspired 'prophetic witness'. To say 'all God's people are to prophesy' means all 'are called to proclaim the story of God's love' is to jump the gun. It greatly oversimplifies what it means to receive Joel's promise of 'Spirit of prophecy' (which not just about prophesying) and wrongly identifies prophesying with proclamation.[21]

2. *We cannot appeal to Luke 24.48 and Acts 1.8 to justify the belief that every individual believer is called to be a witness, and so empowered for it.* This would be to misunderstand Luke's use of witness terminology.[22] Luke largely restricts the noun 'witness' to the specially appointed teachers/rulers of 'Israel' - the reconstituted 'twelve' who have been with Jesus from John's baptism to the ascension (1.22) and the 'thirteenth witness',[23] appointed by the resurrected Lord himself, Paul (22.15). These are all 'witnesses' in the strong forensic sense that they are qualified to bear reliable testimony, and are divinely appointed so to do.[24] Similarly, Luke uses the verbs *martyrein* (bear testimony/witness) and *diamartyrein* (testify/bear witness) for (quasi-) legal testimony, and, when speaking of witness to the Christ events, *only in connection with the thirteen.* Stephen is the exception, when Paul refers to him as 'your witness' (22.20) in connection with his indictment of the Sanhedrin and Jewish leaders at what was supposed to be his own trial.[25] Otherwise, Christians are called 'believers', 'the way', etc., but never 'witnesses'; nor is it said of them that they 'witness' to Christ. While this certainly does not mean others lacked involvement in expressing their convictions about Christ in a way *we* might much more loosely call 'witnessing', we must recognize that our use of language is not the same as Luke's. And we must resist the temptation to expand the circle of 'witnesses' in Lk 24.48 and Acts 1.8 to include the whole church.[26]

The function of the key transitional passages (Lk 24.44-49 and Acts 1.1-8) is to assure the reader that the 'eyewitnesses' - the very people who can 'bear witness' - will indeed give 'reliable' testimony to 'the things fulfilled amongst us' (cf. Lk 1.1-4). The passages also make two other significant points bearing on our inquiry: (1) Luke is at pains to clarify that now at last the disciples also fully *understand* all they need to know about what they have seen and heard. That is the purpose of the all-important lesson in OT hermeneutics in Lk 24.44-46, and of the forty days of teaching on the kingdom of God, etc., in Acts 1.3. (2) These 'eleven' (Lk 24.33), i.e., 'the apostles' (Acts 1.2), are the ones addressed as the deutero-Isaianic 'servant-witnesses', and assured they will be empowered by the Spirit to continue and extend the Isaianic mission Jesus has begun.[27] Other suitably chosen and qualified 'witnesses' will be added (Matthias, to reconstitute 'the twelve' [Acts 1 .15-26]; Paul to be a witness to the things he 'sees and hears' in the Damascus event; 22.15). But new converts are not 'witnesses' in the Lucan sense; nor could they approximate that role until they have been well brought up in the apostles' teaching. So it is misleading to talk of them immediately receiving the Spirit *qua* 'empowerment for witness',[28] or even as 'missionary Spirit'. That *may* be the Spirit's ultimate

purpose with some or many of them, but initially they need the Spirit if they are to know God's presence with them, if they are to be led in discipleship by the 'Spirit of Jesus', if they are to receive spiritual wisdom and insight into scripture and gospel, and if they are to join in the charismatic worship and prayer of the church. In that sense the Spirit brings them the 'life' of salvation, which will spill out in mission, so it would be truer to Luke's vision to say converts receive the Spirit of prophecy, first and foremost as the 'soteriological Spirit', not so much as the 'missionary Spirit'. We shall come back to that.

3. *The narrative of Acts does **not** suggest that converts were usually immediately involved in mission.*[29] Luke does not think all (or even most) new converts were immediately impelled to witness and mission: the only one he records as doing so is the one who least surprises us; Paul, in Acts 9.20. When Luke summarizes the life of the earliest church he tells us that the converts devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, broke bread together, prayed and worshiped joyfully together, and had all things in common. Their corporate life and worship was admired by the people (Acts 2.42-47): in that sense all were indeed involved in some sort of 'witness' (though not in the Lucan sense). But the one thing we are *not* told is that they 'bore (verbal) witness', or 'spoke the word' or 'spread the good news', or whatever. Rather Luke gives the impression within the 'summaries' that it was almost exclusively the *apostles* who did so (cf. 4.32-37; 5.12-16)[30]; it is they who preach, work signs, and have 'the ministry of the word of God' (6.2: cf 4.33). During the opening 'Jerusalem' phase (Acts 1-8), they are joined in this by some specially endowed people like Stephen (cf. 6.8,10) and Philip (8.5-40, cf. 'the evangelist' (21.8)), or, on one unusual occasion, by a household of 'friends' of Peter and John (4.23 (NRSV), 31). And a similar pattern emerges in the rest of Acts. Of course, Luke does not mean the apostles and they alone evangelized, but at the same time Luke certainly does not attempt to give the impression each believer receives the Spirit primarily as empowering to evangelize. There is no suggestion that the Samaritans, or Cornelius' household, or the Ephesian twelve were all driven out by the Spirit to argue and convince people of the gospel - indeed there is no evidence any of them were involved in mission (though that some were may be surmised).[31] By and large, it is the twelve, and Paul, and other especially gifted workers like Barnabas, John Mark, Silas, Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila, Timothy and Erastus (etc.), that do the verbal evangelism.[32] Luke knows of some others too (cf. 8.4; 11. 19-20)[33] - probably of far more than he indicates - but of *congregational* evangelism, or verbal communication of the gospel by the rank and file of the church, there is

virtually no mention (similarly, of that by immediate converts). Such is surely odd if Luke considered the Spirit of prophecy essentially to be 'empowering for mission'.

4. *Luke's portrait of the apostles' relationship to the Spirit is not entirely paradigmatic for that of immediate converts from Judaism (far less for converts from outside it).* If he highlights the gift of the Spirit to the apostles as an empowering to witness, that is because the expansion of the gospel is a major plot in Acts, and the twelve (especially Peter) are the leaders in this (at least as far as Acts 15). Similarly, the immediate co-text of 9.17 perhaps focuses the gift of the Spirit to Paul as empowering for mission, but if this is so (and it is not explicit) it should not surprise us. It is Paul's witness and mission that will dominate Luke's account from chapter 13 onwards. But it would be a great mistake to conclude that Luke thought the gift was granted these leaders as missionary empowering *alone*. Neither Judaism nor early Christianity prepared for such an idea. While Luke does not pay narrative attention to the 'inner life' of his characters, he leaves hints enough he thinks the gift of the Spirit of prophecy essential to it. John the Baptist is filled with the Spirit from birth (1.15, 80) long before he will experience the Spirit as the power of Elijah to restore Israel (1.17). For Jesus, Luke 1.35 precedes and lays the ground for Luke 3.22. For their part, the disciples of Jesus have certainly experienced something of the kingdom of God through the Jesus, empowered by the Spirit. But with Jesus' death and return to the Father, they may have precious knowledge and vibrant expectation, but that is all. Without receiving Joel's promise of the Spirit of prophecy as the author of revelation/disclosure how will they continue to know and be led by the Father and the risen Lord? Without the Spirit of prophecy as the author of charismatic wisdom and spiritual understanding, how will they grow in their understanding of the gospel, and of how it relates to the life of the congregation, including their own? And how will they be motivated to the new congregational life of service, love, and worship that was so evidently lacking before? Without the Spirit of prophecy they receive in Acts 2, and left once again with nothing but their own human resources, one can only imagine the apostles rapidly grinding to a disappointing halt, and living with nostalgic memories of the past, tinged with a glimmer of hope for the future. As we have argued in detail elsewhere, *they need to receive the Spirit of prophecy in order to enter into the 'life' of salvation promised, but not yet realized, within the ministry of Jesus.*[34] But this is to say the Spirit is the 'soteriological Spirit', as much as it is the 'missionary Spirit', even for the apostles. Far more so, I suggest, for immediate converts.

5. *For Luke, the Spirit of prophecy, which converts first receive as the*

*'soteriological Spirit', may* ***become*** *'missionary Spirit' in them.* This is certainly not to say they need some special second-blessing. It must be obvious such is quite unnecessary. The Spirit of prophecy who reveals/discloses the Lord and gives charismatic wisdom/understanding to enable the life of salvation, can - by the *very same gifts* - lead and empower the disciples' attempt to spread the word to others. Similarly, the Spirit of prophecy who inspires charismatic speech as praise to God and as prophecy directed to the congregation, can use the same gifts to evangelize. Disciples may have repeated experiences of being 'filled with the Spirit' (2.4; 4.8, 31, etc.), or of watershed experiences that lead to new phases of ministry (e.g., Acts 22.17-21; cf. Lk 3.21-22), but these are transparently further experiences of the one Spirit of prophecy. In saying the 'soteriological' Spirit may become the 'missionary Spirit', then, the point is simply that the Spirit of prophecy who commences their experience of God's salvation, and leads them deeper into it, can also be expected to lead the disciple outwards to others.[35]

6. *Luke can anticipate some or many of his readers will be drawn by the Spirit into spreading the good news for the following reasons* (of increasing import): (a) As already intimated, Luke knows of others involved in the spread of the word (8.4; 11.19-20). The many added to the church in Antioch may have been the result of Barnabas own ministry, but equally may have included people evangelized by the strengthened church (11.31; though as to how many may have been involved, we have no clue); similarly 16.5, etc. Likewise, the multiplication of the churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria 'in the comfort/exhortation of the Holy Spirit' (9.31) suggests something more corporate than the work of single evangelists. The co-text implies the quality of commitment to the Lord, and the evidence of God's blessing on the church was a significant factor. Here soteriology naturally spills over into missiology. We may probably infer that some were actively involved in mission (though this is not said; and there is no hint that 'all' were). Again, we might point to Luke's mentions of the phenomenal growth of the word of the Lord: cf. 6.7; 12.24; 19.20.[36] The last of these concerns the Ephesus period of Paul's mission, and in 19.10 Luke states that in the two years Paul was there, 'all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord'. It is probable that the word went out from Ephesus largely through Paul's co-workers, through gossip about spectacular incidences (such as 19.11-19), and through the reports of Paul's dialogical teaching in the hall of Tyrannus (19.9). It is not unlikely that converts made by him there participated in this spread of the word, whether incidentally, deliberately, or even by joining him as a coworker (as was perhaps the case

with Epaphroditus). We need, however, to be cautious where Luke is silent.

(b) Luke has clearly portrayed the universal scope of the gospel, and of the salvation it announces.[37] The progress of the gospel within the single generation covered by Acts has by any account been remarkable.[38] At the time of writing, however, readers will be aware that a new generation must learn and proclaim the witness the apostles have given (and which Luke has been at pains to set down, in a semi-apologetic form that itself constitutes something approaching 'witness').[39] The mission to 'the end of the earth' remains incomplete[40], and as it is *God's* plan, it must not be frustrated.[41]

(c) Luke's narrative in Acts has also undoubtedly provided his readers with heroic models in Peter and John, Stephen and Philip, Barnabas and Silas, and above all Paul. While the first two and the last had unique roles, Stephen and Philip, Paul's co-evangelists, and others like Prisca and Aquila, Appolos, *inter alios*, provide something of a bridge between the apostolic ministry of the witnesses and the readers. Then, of course, there are all Paul's other co-travelers (e.g. 20.4). While Luke is astonishingly reticent about them, the reader may assume they have not joined Paul's band purely for the sake of tourism. They are undoubtedly supporters and workers of different kinds, and esteemed names in the communities of Luke's readers. The author himself is implicitly one of them (so the 'we' passages), and his commitment to mission cannot be doubted! So perhaps even these rather sketchy characters beckon the reader to join in whatever way practicable in the support of mission. The history of the reading of Acts shows how effectively it has stimulated interest in mission, not least in the Pentecostal movements for which Acts serves very much a canon within the canon.

(d) In the final analysis, Luke's confidence would rest in what he regarded as the revealed character of the Holy Spirit. God's plan will not fail, because God's Spirit will be the 'driving force of salvation-history' in the future, just as he has been throughout the events described by Luke-Acts. The different aspects of this were most perceptively analyzed by Hans von Baer.[42] No one has more clearly or richly expressed the Spirit's role within the Lucan narrative as the initiator and driving force of mission. Over against the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, who regarded the Spirit in Acts as little more than a material and manistic power of miracle, von Baer was able to show that for Luke-Acts the Spirit was first and foremost the author, sustainer and power of the gospel and of the salvation it declares. The Spirit prepares for the period of salvation by filling the Baptist from birth (1.15,17, 80), bringing to conception the messianic Son (1.35), sparking his recognition by prophetic people (1.41; 67; 2.25-27), and filling him with wisdom (2.40-52). Then in the 'period of

Jesus' he comes to Jesus partly as the experience of divine sonship (3.22) and holiness (1.35; 4.1), but more especially as empowering to 'preach the good news' of salvation, and thereby to effect it (3.21-22; 4.14,18-21). This, for von Baer, is the great ideé fixe that unites the period of Jesus with the period of the church. In the church too, the Spirit brings the sonship and salvation which is the content of the gospel, but also grasps the church with joy and power, and leads it headlong into mission that brings the benefits to others. In this way, as the gateway texts (Luke 24.46-49 and Acts 1.1-8) indicate, the Spirit becomes the means to continue the ministry of Jesus. The Spirit both initiates and confirms each new (and to the participants often surprising) phase of the mission (Acts 2.1-39; 4.31; 8.17, 29, 39; 9.17; 10.19, 44-47; 11.12, 15-18; 13.2-4, 9; 15.8, 28; 19.21; 20.22-23), and even provides detailed guidance on the directions the mission is to take (16.6-10). In all this, the Lucan reader understands that the gift of the Spirit of prophecy is not simply for the benefit of the recipient - though the gift is certainly that. Nor is he given merely to bless and strengthen the church too - though he does that as well. But the Spirit will always also encounter individuals and the church as the driving force of the mission. Those 'full of the Spirit' can thus be expected to be bent to serve the mission. In that sense, Penney is absolutely right. For Luke, the Spirit is always the 'missionary Spirit', and no-one since von Baer has seriously doubted it. For that reason the Spirit can be expected to raise up new 'Stephens' and new 'Philips' . And spreading the 'good news' by declaration, argument, and other verbal means is obviously important to Luke. So he may expect many to be involved in that. But the crunch is this: there is no evidence that 'many' means anything like 'all'.

7. *Luke is no egalitarian in the realm of the Spirit. He is not attempting to establish that all have the Spirit of prophecy primarily as empowerment for mission, far less that all are empowered as witnesses.* In Luke, as in Paul, the Spirit brings diverse gifts and roles. The roles of the twelve and Paul differ from that of James, from that of the pastors appointed by the Spirit (20.28), from prophets like Agabas (11.28; 21.11), let alone from that of individuals like Tabbitha (9.36). The people of God as a *whole*, through the plurality of congregations indwelt by the Spirit, continues the powerful saving ministry of Jesus, but that does not mean each individual has the same 'shape' of service as was his.

8. *Though Acts has more to say about the spread of the gospel than other subjects, that does not mean Luke gives mission a higher place in his pneumatology than the relational soteriology the mission serves.* After all,

what is the mission about? It is about bringing men and women back into a communion of love with the Father and with the Lord Jesus. And it is about bringing them into a righteous and worshiping people of God, where the alienations that have plagued the world since the fall are overcome. Mission naturally flows from this soteriology, and serves it. The gifts of the Spirit of prophecy serve the mission, but they are also at the very heart of the soteriology. For all the great points his work makes, I think Robert Menzies got it profoundly wrong when he tells us, "The disciples receive the Spirit. . . not. . . as the essential bond by which they (each individual) are linked to God; indeed, not primarily for themselves. Rather, as the driving force behind their witness to Christ, the disciples receive the Spirit for others."[43]

The Spirit of prophecy is indeed the uniting bond of love between the believer and God (there is no other uniting bond), and it is from the experience of salvation he brings that mission flows. If the Spirit does not bring the self-revealing and transforming presence of Father and the risen Lord to the disciple and to his community, but only empowers and directs the spread of the gospel, then there is little good news to tell. If mission becomes the dominant element in pneumatology, it will inevitably diminish soteriology. If it is true that Luke does not expand at length on this relational soteriology in the pages of Acts, that is because he has done so throughout the Gospel - and Luke sees what remains mainly as 'promise' there fulfilled in the community of the Spirit in Acts (cf. esp. 2.42-47; 4.32-37, etc.).[44]

As we noted earlier, Penney does not follow Menzies in entirely eliminating soteriology from the gift of the Spirit. And we may readily agree with the proposition enshrined in the title of Penney's work. There is certainly a 'missiological emphasis' within Luke's pneumatology. But the weighting and spin Penney puts on this is misleading. Luke does not suggest the Spirit is given to every convert primarily as 'empowering for mission'; far less does he think all become 'witnesses' from conversion-initiation. However true it may be that 'most church growth occurs around the newly converted',[45] that is not *Luke's* message, nor even plainly visible on his horizon. In conclusion, I agree we need to find ways of helping the church today to face the radical challenge of the missionary emphasis in Luke's pneumatology. But we need to do this without suggesting his pneumatology makes it the immediate and prime responsibility of *all* verbally to proclaim the gospel. That looks more like a guilt trip than an authentic journey into the Lucan world.

**Endnotes**

[1]John Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*, JPTS 12; Sheffield: SAP, 1997. The work began as an Mth thesis at Moore Theological College

(and as such it is outstanding in quality). Though it is quite short (another virtue!), it raises serious questions of ecumenical significance. Hence this response and invitation to dialogue.

[2] *Missionary Emphasis*, 105.

[3] *Missionary Emphasis*, 106-107.

[4] *Missionary Emphasis*, 108. Perhaps the word 'baptism' would be more accurate than 'conversion'; but Penney is right that the baptism in question is the means, expression and focus of conversion. See esp. J.D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (London: SCM, 1970), chs. 4-9; Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: SAP, 1991), ch. 11; Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: SAP, 1996), chs. 12-14.

[5]He also challenges traditional Pentecostal views of 'initial evidence'. See *Missionary Emphasis*, 104, 124.

[6]*Missionary Emphasis*, 67-69, 77, 88-89, 105.

[7]*Missionary Emphasis*, 90: cf. 15. 110, 112, 120, 123.

[8]See Turner, *Power, passim; idem*, 'The Spirit in Luke-Acts: A Support or a Challenge to Classical Pentecostal Paradigms?' *VoxEx* 27 (1997), 75-101.

[9]A fifth argument concerns what he regards as the centrality of the 'promise to Abraham' (i.e. God's promise to bless the nations through him [Acts 3.25]) for an understanding of Lucan pneumatology: *Missionary Emphasis*, 83, 89, 91-94. Penney identifies the promise to Abraham with the 'promise of the Father' (Lk 24.49; *Missionary Emphasis*, 80), and sees the words 'to you and to your children and to all those afar off as 'the strongest allusion to the terms of the Abrahamic covenant so far in Acts' (91). But these words are actually a pesher of Joel 2.28-32, partly using the language of Joel 3.8 and of Isa 57.19 (where, of course, 'those afar' are diaspora Jews, not Gentiles): see *Power*, 349 (and, on 'the promise of the Father', 341-42, note 66).

[10] *Missionary Emphasis*, chs. 2, 4, 5 and *passim*.

[11] *Missionary Emphasis*, ch. 6. Here he relies quite heavily upon M.M.B. Turner, 'Spirit Endowment in Luke-Acts: Some Linguistic Considerations', *Vox Evangelica* 12 (1981), 45-63, but not on the corrections provided by Turner, *Power*, of which he was unaware. But the 'universalizing' direction of his argument is not confirmed. The terms which most clearly denote the Spirit as 'empowering for mission' are applied to Jesus, the apostles, and occasional figures like Stephen and Philip, not to *all* who 'receive' the Spirit.

[12] *Missionary Emphasis*, 116-118.

[13] *Missionary Emphasis*, 30-31, 119.

[14] *Missionary Emphasis*, 119. He purports to be quoting M.M.B. Turner, 'The Significance of Receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts: A Survey of Modern Scholarship', *TrinJ* 2 (1981), 131-58, p. 149; but nothing on that page corresponds. Nor do I hold the position: it is rather the one I attribute to Dunn (though the term I then use is 'matrix', rather than 'nexus'), and the concluding paragraph of my article says Gunkel, Schweizer

and Haya-Prats were *right* to point out that the gift of the Spirit of prophecy 'is *not* the matrix of Christian "life"'; 'Significance', 149.

[15] *Missionary Emphasis*, 120; quoting Turner, 'Significance', 149.

[16] *Missionary Emphasis*, 120. The same charge against Turner is made in John Penney, 'The Testing of New Testament Prophecy', *JPT* 10 (1997), 35-84, (56 n.110).

[17]'Testing', n. 110.

[18]See footnote 14 above. Similarly, I would disagree with his charge that I have read Luke-Acts through Johannine spectacles (*Missionary Emphasis*, 120). Rather, I read Luke, John and Paul in the light of their different developments of Jewish ideas of the 'Spirit of prophecy': see Turner, *Holy Spirit*, chs. 1-8.

[19]Penney criticism is a little surprising as he had evidently read my article entitled, 'The Spirit of Prophecy and the Power of Authoritative Preaching in Luke-Acts: A Question of Origins' (*NTS* 38 [1991] 66-88), where I define preaching in terms of expository discourse/address.

[20]Coming right at the end of chapter 7 (and followed only by a few brief pages of conclusions) this is quite literally 'the bottom line': see *Missionary Emphasis*, 121, (where he is quoting Vandervelde and Barr). He sets the quotation after one by Menzies which repudiates the view that 'while all experience the soteriological dimension of the Pentecostal gift...only a few receive gifts of missiological power'.

[21]Penny's dependence on Sandnes here involves two overlapping confusions: (a) prophets may be leaders, proclaimers of good news, etc., without their doing so through 'prophecy'; (b) many may 'prophesy' (and experience other gifts of the 'Spirit of prophecy') who are not prophets. For the NT writers as a whole, 'prophecy' was stereotypical a form of oracular speech, quite distinct from spiritual teaching, preaching, etc.: see Turner, *Holy Spirit*, ch. 12 and *idem*, 'Authoritative Preaching', *passim*. Luke does not equate prophecy with evangelistic proclamation.

[22]See the summary by Peter G. Bolt, 'Mission and Witness', in I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (eds.) *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 191-214 (esp. 192-95). On the unique role of the apostles, see also Andrew Clark, 'The Role of the Apostles' in the same volume (169-90).

[23]Cf. C. Burchard, *Der dreizehnte Zeuge: Traditions- und kompositionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Lukas' Darstellung der Frühzeit des Paulus*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970; Bolt, 'Mission', 203-210.

[24]In Acts 2.32, Peter speaks of the resurrection of Jesus, of which 'we are all witnesses'. But the 'we' here is not the 120, but identified at 2.14 as 'Peter, standing with the eleven'.

[25]See Bolt, 'Mission', 202-203.

[26]Penney shows awareness of Luke's restricted sense (see *Missionary Emphasis*, 58-59), but then argues (1) that others are involved in witness because others too preach and (2) participation in the Israel which has the role of the Isaianic servant 'makes every Christian a witness' (60). This is to confuse issues. Witnesses may preach, but in Luke's view that does not make all who preach 'witnesses'. That some, other than the apostles, 'proclaim the word/good news' does not mean that *all* are expected to. That the church (more especially the apostles) has the role of the Isaianic servant, does not

mean each and every Christian has a prophetic task to declare the good news. The role is corporate not individualistic. Warning about the wrong way to build bridges between the apostles as witnesses and the readers, see Bolt, 'Mission', 210-12.

[27]That there are others 'with the eleven' at Lk 24.33 does not mean they too are addressed as 'witnesses': Acts 1.2 reduces the group to 'the apostles' , as does Luke's narration.

[28]Cf. the title of Menzies' semi-popular edition of his earlier *Development* (Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, Sheffield: SAP, 1994), but also regular language in Penney.

[29]The paragraph below is similar too, but expands, an earlier one found at *Holy Spirit*, 47.

[30]Penney wishes to argue that the Ananias and Sapphira incident brings the godly 'fear' (5.11) that swells the numbers of the church mentioned in 5.14, and that this is an incidence of the Spirit acting through the missionary community (*Missionary Emphasis*, 118). But the 'fear' in v.11 more readily explains the hesitation of others to join the group (5.13), and what Penney omits to mention is that between 5.11 and 5.14 we are again directed to the signs and wonders performed by the *apostles* (5.12). Indeed, within the incident in question, the dramatic work of the Spirit is through *Peter*, not through the congregation. So I do not see how this incident advances Penney's argument.

[31]Stronstad, Shelton and Menzies have variously argued that (1) the laying on of hands that bestows the gift (8.17 and 19.6) is an ordination for mission, (2) the gift to Cornelius' household is accompanied by the same prophetic outburst of witness to God's great deeds that served the evangelism of Acts 2, and so marks the Spirit as endowment for evangelism, and (3) the later summaries speak of the growth of the church in Samaria, Ceasarea and Ephesus, and so identify the Spirit given to the groups concerned as empowerment for mission. But each of these arguments appears to be special pleading: see M. Turner, "Empowerment for Mission"? The Pneumatology of Luke-Acts: An Appreciation and Critique of James B. Shelton's *Mighty in Word and Deed*, *VoxEd* 24 (1994), 103-22, esp. 114-17; *idem*, *Power*, ch. 12.

[32]Luke knew of others who accompanied Paul, but gives no clear picture of the nature of their involvement (cf. especially 20.4): we learn much more of them from Paul's comments in the epistles (see W.F. Ollrog, *Paulus und Seine Mitarbeiter*, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Vlg., 1979; more briefly, E.E. Ellis, 'Coworkers, Paul and his' in Gerald F. Hawthorne, and Ralph P. Martin (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* [Leicester: IVP, 1993]. 183-89).

[33]Acts 8.1 generalizes that 'all' were scattered, and 8.4 that 'those who were scattered went about preaching the word'. But the latter does not repeat the 'all' of 8.1; and in no way suggests that 'each' preached the word; merely that as a result of their going out, the word was spread (by some). The description of Philip which follows suggests he (rather than others) was chiefly responsible for the evangelization from Azotus to Caesarea (8.40).

[34]See esp. *Power*, chs. 11-14; *idem*, 'The Spirit in Luke-Acts', 88-96.

[35]Turner, *Holy Spirit*, ch. 10.
[36]See also Brian S. Rosser, 'The Progress of the Word', in Marshall and Peterson (eds.), *Witness*, 215-33.
[37]See, most recently, the seven essays in part I (='The salvation of God') of Marshall and Peterson (eds.), *Witness*, and the literature referred to there.
[38]See Rosner, 'Progress', *passim*.
[39]See Bolt, 'Mission', 213-14.
[40]'The end of the earth' could just possibly be Rome, from the Palestinian perspective of 1.8 (so, perhaps, Ps. Sol 8.15); but Luke has a much wider geographical horizon (see J.M. Scott, 'Luke's Geographical Horizon', in David W.G. Gill and Conrad Gempf (eds), *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* [Carlisle: Paternoster, 1994], 483-544). Besides, Acts 13.47 provides the same expression but as part of a citation of Isa 49.6, where co-textually it must mean 'to all peoples' (the whole inhabited world): see Joel B. Green, 'Salvation to the End of the Earth: God as the Savior in the Acts of the Apostles', in Marshal and Peterson (eds.), *Witness*, 83-106 (85 n.5) and Rosner, 'Progress', 217-21.
[41]See, e.g. John T. Squires, 'The Plan of God', in Marshall and Peterson (eds.) *Witness*, 17-39; in more detail, *idem*, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts*, Cambridge: CUP, 1993.
[42]H. von Baer, *Der Heilige Geist in Den Lukasschriften*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1926; or, for a brief summary, see Turner, *Power*, 32-35.
[43]Robert P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology With Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: SAP, 1991), 207. The word 'not' in the first line has curiously been dropped from the quotation in Turner, *Power*, 417.
[44]Turner, *Power*, chs 10, 13 and 14.
[45]Penney, *Missionary Emphasis*, 124.