

THE SPIRIT,  
THE AFFECTIONS,  
AND THE CHRISTIAN  
TRADITION

*Edited by*

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## PREFACE

This collection derives from ongoing discussions between the editors about how to develop the theoretical underpinnings of renewal Christianity for the study of Christian history and the history of Christian theology. Each of us has either taught in (Amos) or continues to teach in (Dale) the relatively new and emerging field of renewal studies, uniquely situated at Regent University School of Divinity. Regent University itself is deeply shaped by neo-pentecostal and charismatic renewal, leading in 2003 to the establishment of a PhD program in the School of Divinity with a methodological focus on renewal and renewal movements in the history of Christianity.

Because of the history of the institution in which this program is situated, its central focus has always been the global pentecostal and charismatic renewal. Yet the seminary is also explicitly transdenominational, broadly evangelical, and even ecumenical in its ethos, including faculty and students from Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions. What binds together faculty and students is a shared commitment to promoting the renewing work of the Holy Spirit.

Hence, while renewal studies surely includes the pentecostal and charismatic movements derived from the Azusa Street revivals at the beginning of the twentieth century, it is also much more than that. The faculty has adopted an explicitly methodological definition of renewal for its programmatic self-understanding.

The Regent University School of Divinity Ph.D. program understands Renewal Studies as a methodological approach to global Christian engagement with discourses in the academy, church, and world as informed by critical reflection derived from charismatic movements and their practices throughout the history of God's people.

Note here that renewal is not reducible to the twentieth-century pentecostal or charismatic revivalist traditions; rather, it is committed to researching, studying, and reflecting on charismatic renewal movements “throughout the history of God’s people”—which means not only going “behind” the twentieth century to the broader history of Christianity, but also behind the first century into the history of ancient Israel. As one Old Testament faculty member pointed out, the main plot lines of the Hebrew Bible are also uniquely shaped by themes of renewal, restoration, and revitalization.

How then to theorize renewal in the history of Christianity and the field of historical theology? More precisely, how does foregrounding the renewing work of the Holy Spirit shape scholarship in these arenas? What kinds of research projects and questions emerge when such a renewalist and pneumatological lens is focused historiographically in these areas? One such area was the intersection between the divine and human in the Christian notion of salvation. To put it in Gerhart Ladner’s terms, it meant a return and deeper exploration of the idea of reform within the human person through a specific focus on the affections. The benefit of this area was that it opened up a broader exploration of moral psychology, the erotic and ecstatic dimensions of the divine-human encounter, and the development of notions of affectivity in the history of Christianity. The chapters in this book offer some preliminary analyses of these topics in the context of an “ecumenical” exchange of ideas about the Christian tradition that draw on a range of discourses in the academy.

Many of the chapters in this book were first presented as special lectures at Regent University in 2011–12 or as plenary presentations at our conference “The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life,” held March 1–2, 2013. We are grateful to former School of Divinity deans Michael Palmer and Tammie Wade for supporting the lectureships and the conference and to Wolfgang Vondey, former director of the Regent University Center for Renewal Studies, for hosting them. Thanks also are due to the School of Divinity staff and graduate assistants who helped with the events: Katie Lohmann, Robert Smith, and Vince Le. Enoch Charles, Paul Palma, and Donald Bufford, other graduate assistants, also worked hard on the formatting of the book. Hoon Jung, Amos’ graduate assistant at Fuller Theological Seminary, helped with the indexing of the volume.

Last but not least, the staff at the University of Notre Dame Press also deserve kudos: Charles Van Hof, Robyn Karkiewicz, and Stephen Little and their team have been great to work with. Two anonymous reviewers for the Press helped strengthen the chapters and connect the dots. Needless to say, we as editors are indebted to our authors for their contributions in the following pages.

The editors dedicate this volume to our former colleague, Dr. Stanley M. Burgess, recently retired from the School of Divinity. Stan, an encyclopedist extraordinaire of contemporary renewal movements, has long been at the forefront of asking what we call renewalist and pneumatological questions regarding Christian historiography, and he was instrumental in helping establish the PhD program at the School of Divinity. His ongoing scholarly output remains a staple for students in the history of Christianity doctoral track. Stan has been a mentor and exemplary renewal scholar and scholar of renewal. We trust that this volume, only a small token of our appreciation for his work, will be received as the meager complement to his oeuvre that it is intended to be.

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## INTRODUCTION

*The Language of Affectivity and the Christian Life*

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DALE M. COULTER

Over the past several decades there has been a virtual renaissance in the study of emotion and desire occurring in different disciplines and for diverse purposes.<sup>1</sup> Part of the challenge of this resurgence is that many of these scholarly trajectories remain confined to particular traditions of inquiry or religious traditions without significant interaction.<sup>2</sup> There is a need to bring together investigative analyses that span historical periods, Christian traditions, and scholarly agendas, which this current volume attempts to do. The chapters in this volume offer a more or less chronological exploration of affectivity within Christian tradition by scholars who inhabit different parts of that tradition. It is the most straightforward way to follow various developments within the tradition. In this sense, as a whole, this volume represents an initial effort at a kind of ecumenical and interdisciplinary conversation through *ressourcement*.

What results from this endeavor is not only a closer inspection of affectivity in relationship to inward change and the work of the Spirit but also what may be termed a renewal historiographical lens. As a burgeoning approach, renewal historiography underscores the methodological

import of sensitivity or orientation to the charismatic dimension of Christian existence that informs the critical reading and interpretation of texts and ideas. This basic understanding branches out into three general areas of concern for those engaged in “renewal studies”: (1) the historical phenomena surrounding and giving rise to social and ecclesial reform and renewal, including a focus on religious populism and popular modes of communication; (2) the role of the charismatic in relation to internal renewal that facilitates ongoing conversion; and (3) theological reflection upon the Holy Spirit as the central factor in such an encounter. While not all the writers in this volume consciously operate by means of this method, as Amos Yong’s conclusion attempts to demonstrate, their contributions collectively exemplify the interpretive sensibilities and modalities embodied in it.

All religious traditions experience periods of decline in which the foundational ideas become blurred or the growth of the religion stagnates. On the social level, “renewal” refers to the way in which movements within religions recover central concerns that revive the commitment of individuals and propel the tradition into further phases of growth. Such renewal movements more often than not derive from the forms and concerns of populist religiosity, which subsequently gives rise to deeper theological reflection. This reflection can remain at the level of “folk theology” or spirituality, such as the advice of John Climacus, the visions of Hade-wijch of Brabant, or the sermons of John Wesley. It can also exist in the tradition’s basic religious or liturgical practices. Several of the chapters in this volume thus explore affectivity in the folk theologies and spiritualities of important writers, thereby underscoring the importance of sensitivity to religious populism as part of a renewal approach. Moreover, with chapters directed to the nonspecialist, this volume also embodies popular modes of communication that a renewal method attempts to exemplify. Some chapters are more general, and others dive deeply into affectivity; nevertheless, all retain the nonspecialist approach. Thus this volume seeks to contribute to the renewal of the study of affectivity, as well as retain a sensitivity to forms of populist religiosity that have given rise to movements of renewal and folk theologies.

Christian existence has as its central concern the salvation of the human person through an inward renewal that both heals and elevates the

soul. While this *conversio* to God as the final end occurs in the cognitive and affective dimensions, it is the latter that became the focus of Christian writers. Personal renewal was associated with practices that integrated the reorientation of human love, the therapy of desire, and the encounter with God through the Spirit in its sanctifying and charismatic dimensions. With its goals of ecstatic embrace and union, the mystical life attested to the fusion of the charismatic, internal transformation and affectivity. Ecstasy, in particular, referred to modes of charismatic encounters as well as sanctifying moments. Many of the chapters in this volume explore how particular writers in the tradition understood this relationship, revealing how a sensitivity to the charismatic can provide a new window onto the development of Christian ideas about the affective life.

By retrieving the complex discussion about affectivity in Christian tradition and bringing its diverse voices into dialogue in a contemporary ecumenical context, these chapters also point toward a number of research trajectories that fill out the picture of a renewal method and need further exploration. One particularly important theme that emerges from the whole is the need to get back behind the shift in the analysis of emotion and desire that occurred in the late eighteenth century. From the emergence of a “sentimental culture” that McClymond highlights to Clapper’s desire to tame the dominance of a “feeling” theory of the emotions, several chapters address the conceptual challenges that arose at the turn of the nineteenth century. In addition, they illuminate the diachronic shifts in the language of affectivity, which remains an important area of further investigation. They point to the need for additional work on the psychology of conversion as a feature of charismatic existence, especially with respect to analyses of sin and salvation as a therapeutic enterprise in which the Spirit heals and empowers the soul. Finally, several chapters underscore how probing the role of affectivity in relation to union with God, ecstasy, and the erotic remains important throughout Christian tradition.

This introduction sets the tone for the chapters that follow by briefly noting research trajectories on affectivity in the past forty years, exploring developments in the terms used to describe the affective life, and identifying the important ideas that flow through the book as a whole.

### Research on Affectivity

The past three decades have witnessed a proliferation of studies reexamining the intellectual history of affectivity. In many respects, Robert Solomon's argument in 1976 that emotions are constituting judgments that shape human identity and supply meaning to life launched a discussion of the philosophy of emotion in Anglo-American circles.<sup>3</sup> Central to Solomon's project has been an effort to overcome the divide between emotion and rationality as though the former has little to do with the latter. Simultaneous with this development and influenced by it, a retrieval of ancient philosophical views on the emotions began in the late 1970s that set the stage for a deeper exploration of emotion in relation to human flourishing and the therapy of desire.<sup>4</sup> The use of historical analysis in constructing philosophical accounts of emotion and their relationship to human action and flourishing has now become a cottage industry with a body of literature so large that it is difficult to keep pace. The resurgence of cognitivist accounts of the emotions has opened the door to studies in diverse historical periods as well as those of an interdisciplinary nature.

Within scholarship specifically devoted to an exploration of the Christian tradition, there are similar trends at work. In the past decade alone a number of studies have appeared that trace out broader trends in Christian writers and their efforts to provide accounts of emotion and desire in light of the Christian doctrines of sin and salvation and the psychology of conversion. Some studies, such as Simo Knuutila's, follow Richard Sorabji by analyzing philosophical accounts of emotion and desire in ancient and medieval thinkers.<sup>5</sup> Representing a second approach, Thomas Dixon has argued that the history of emotion in the West involves a slow separation of theological and philosophical accounts buttressed by the rise of psychology and the "feeling" theory of William James.<sup>6</sup> Thomas Dixon describes this "feeling" theory as involving a turn to more materialist accounts in which emotions are visceral and involuntary movements that begin in parts of the body and are felt passively.<sup>7</sup> Dixon's work affirms Solomon's desire to recover cognitivist accounts of emotion by offering a critique of the historiography supporting that ac-

count. Whereas Solomon had argued that the antagonism between emotion and reason stemmed from antiquity, Dixon counters that it was primarily a result of nineteenth-century developments. What emerges from studies like Knuuttila's and Dixon's is that Christian thinkers had complex discussions of emotion and desire that tracked more with views of emotion as cognition rather than of emotion as feeling.<sup>8</sup>

There have also been studies that focus on a cultural history of emotion and how diverse communities understood the roles that emotions play. Barbara H. Rosenwein's work, for example, examines the early Middle Ages with a focus on how communities describe and shape emotional life.<sup>9</sup> More specifically, she attempts to counter Nussbaum's overly negative assessment of medieval ideas about emotion. As Dreyer's chapter in this volume indicates, analyses like Rosenwein's combine a focus on spirituality, gender, the body, and mysticism.<sup>10</sup> The result of such studies is to reveal a deeply affective piety in the Middle Ages with broad cultural roots that hold together the Occitania culture of the troubadours and *fin'amor*, the rise of courtly love in Anglo-Norman culture, and the spirituality of love characteristic of male and female medieval religious writers. To study this history of emotion scholars must wrestle with notions of ecstasy, the erotic, love, and union with God more than with philosophical accounts of emotion and desire.

Finally, a number of trajectories have emerged in the past several decades that study emotion and desire in the context of a specific tradition of Christianity. His effort to capture John Wesley's focus on experience led Theodore Runyon to coin the term *orthopathy* to describe how right affections fuse right beliefs (orthodoxy) and right practices (orthopraxis) within Wesley's thought.<sup>11</sup> Runyon's suggestion was picked up by a number of Wesleyan and pentecostal historians and theologians to describe the dynamics at work within revivalist settings and the connection between divine encounters and the process of Christian development.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Samuel Solivan's effort to bring the transformation of the affections (*orthopathos*) into dialogue with Latino/a theology has borne fruit among liberation theologians whose interest has been the praxis of Christian faith.<sup>13</sup> These efforts signal a trend across pietist, Wesleyan, and pentecostal traditions of greater attention to the formation of right affections as the center of Christian existence.

The focus on affectivity over a range of studies in Christian scholarship raises the question of pneumatology in a way that challenges prevailing assumptions among constructive theologians about a pneumatological deficit in Western Christianity. These charges began to appear in a series of criticisms by Orthodox émigré theologians such as Vladimir Lossky and Nikos Nissiotis, both of whom referred to a Christomonism in Western theology that stemmed at least in part from the perceived implications of *filioque*.<sup>14</sup> Sweeping claims to a pneumatological deficit first surfaced in ecumenical dialogue, but these tracked with German concerns over Barth's focus on Christology, which centered on what Moltmann described as a "forgetfulness of the Spirit."<sup>15</sup> The Orthodox and German concerns found a receptive home in the work of a number of theologians who became connected with the Research Institute in Systematic Theology at King's College, London, in the early 1990s and who tended to favor a social model of the Trinity. Colin Gunton, Robert Jenson, John Zizioulas, and Christoph Schwöbel, each in his own way, advanced the criticism. Among these thinkers Gunton's claims were the most extreme, laying the entire problem at a depersonalizing of the Spirit in Augustine, while Jenson offered a much more nuanced position that saw the problem more in terms of a failure to emphasize Pentecost as a distinct event coupled with the thirteenth-century shift toward an infused disposition at baptism (created grace).<sup>16</sup> By the early part of the twenty-first century Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen could summarize these streams as leading to the recognition that the Western tradition suffered from a deficient pneumatology.<sup>17</sup> While the criticisms surrounding *filioque* have been subjected to a sustained critique, the question of pneumatology in the Western tradition beyond the patristic period remains outstanding.

This volume underscores the need for an ecumenical and cross-disciplinary exploration of affectivity in relationship to pneumatology and the transformation of the human person. Examining the Western tradition through a renewal lens shows how discourses on the affections became connected to trinitarian discourse because, as Peter Abelard succinctly put it in his Romans commentary, "the gift of God, which [Paul] calls grace, is called the Holy Spirit."<sup>18</sup> Augustine forged a strong connection between grace, love, and the Spirit when he argued that the Spirit formed Christ in the soul by transforming the affective life. For August-

tine, original sin is a hardening of the initial disobedient motion in the first humans, which is how human nature becomes vitiated.<sup>19</sup> The death that occurred when grace forsook the original parents resulted in their being bound by their own delight (*delectatio*) to created realities. As Augustine states elsewhere, “The soul can be changed, not indeed spatially [*localiter*], but nonetheless in time [*temporaliter*] by its affections [*suis affectionibus*].”<sup>20</sup> As a kind of weight in the soul, delight impacts the affective dimension, introducing order or disorder. Thus, Augustine calls the “delight of the carnal senses” (*carnalium sensuum delectatio*) a “habit of the soul made with the flesh by means of carnal affective states” (*animae consuetudo facta cum carne, propter carnalem affectionem*), which occurs through the punishment of mortality.<sup>21</sup> The initial impetus to disobedience through delight engendered by the suggestion of the devil, once consented to, prompted a hardening in the soul from which it can no longer escape. The remedy is the therapy of desire through the Spirit who, as divine charity, draws forth a delight in the law of God. The Spirit serves as the intersection between divine affectivity (Spirit as bond of love) and human affectivity. This places pneumatology front and center in the discussion of affectivity.

### The Language of Affectivity

We aspire in this volume to an ecumenical and interdisciplinary dialogue that draws on a number of research trajectories; however, we recognize that exploring affectivity across the Christian tradition brings into stark relief the problem of terminology. Introductions to English translations usually catalog the difficult choices translators must make in rendering original-language terms into good English. Much of the philosophical discussion about affectivity has occurred under the category of emotion as a concession to current nomenclature, even though scholars recognize that there is no Greek or Latin term that strictly translates into “emotion.” Many of the chapters in this volume echo Boyd’s pronouncement at the outset of his analysis of Aquinas that “what we call ‘emotions’ or ‘affectivity’ is problematic for us.” Moreover, as McDermott’s and Clapper’s chapters make clear, the problem of interpretation is not simply reducible