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The Mission of the Holy Spirit

An analysis of the influence of Orthodox Pneumatology in Together
Towards Life

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Abstract:

This paper is about the Pneumatological influence the Orthodox theology has had on the mission affirmation of the World Council of Churches: *Together Towards Life*. It does so by presenting the World Council of Churches, Orthodox theology, the Pneumatology in TTL and the final chapter is a comparison of the theologies. By using the theory gathered this paper show us that the Pneumatology of the Orthodox Church has had an influence of TTL. This paper is written as a missiological study on the theology surrounding the Holy Spirit in a certain document, and it uses a hermeneutic approach I compare and analyze how the one has influenced the other.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Thirty years after their first mission affirmation was published, the World Council of Churches (WCC) decided that it was time to create a new official mission statement. The previous mission statement, *Mission and Evangelism, an Ecumenical Affirmation* was published in 1982 and was until 2013 the official mission affirmation of the WCC. However, from 1982 till 2013 there have been many changes in our world. Technology has evolved, and the welfare of the people in the global north has increased and has to a much bigger degree lost their 'need' of God. The global south has taken over as the missional center, and with this shift there has also been a change in the theological language used in mission studies. When the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) started working on the new mission affirmation of the WCC they knew that the big changes had to be addressed to make it available for every member church. The result of the work of the CWME is *Together Towards Life (TTL)*, the current mission affirmation of the WCC, which was approved by the Central Committee of the WCC in 2012 and released at the General Assembly in Busan, Korea in 2013.

TTL as a mission document is in many ways different from the mission affirmation of 1982. The new mission statement is not created to replace the previous mission affirmation, it is rather meant to supersede it. One of the moments that are impossible to overlook in TTL is the centrality of the Holy Spirit. Several important people within missiology wrote about the new mission document when it was first released, and the importance of the Holy Spirit was underlined by most of them. In much of what we call the global north, which usually includes much of Europe and Northern America, there has been a pattern for many years where the focus within the Holy Trinity has been Jesus Christ. What Jesus did for us and all of His work here on earth has been the important focus in the global north, and previous documents, both mission documents and other official documents of the WCC had, and to some degree still has this Christological focus. By Christology I mean the field of study that is mainly focused on the theology and the life of Jesus Christ. Today, however, we see a change emerging in where the different churches put their focus. Many of the churches in the global north are facing the fact that Jesus Christ is not working alone; the divine work that lives amongst the people of the earth today is the work of the whole Trinity. When looking at this there is one question that comes to mind; what has caused this change of focus, from a mainly Christological focus to a theology of the whole Trinity, and especially a Pneumatological focus? By Pneumatology

I mean the branch of theology that concerns the Holy Spirit. What has made the focus shift from Jesus and church centered mission to mission of the Holy Spirit?

The WCC consists of member churches like the Orthodox Churches, Protestant Churches, the Anglican Church, Pentecostal Churches, and they also cooperate with the Roman Catholic Church. With so many different Christian churches cooperating to make one common, ecumenical document it seems like there are bound to be some conflicts. With this in mind the CWME has been able to create a document that seems to be applicable for all of the involved parties. What made me choose to look closer on the theology of the Orthodox Church has much to do with how the missiology professor, and the vice-moderator of the CWME during the period of time that TTL was created, Kirsteen Kim stated that this change in mission focus has much to do with the theology of the Orthodox Church¹. The moderator of the CWME during the time that TTL was created was Bishop Dr. Geevarghese Mor Coorilos. He is a bishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church, and has had several inputs on the Pneumatology of TTL as a member of the Working Group on Mission and Spirituality during the creation of the mission affirmation. Even though I will focus mainly on the Pneumatology and theology of the Trinity of the Orthodox Church, it is worth mentioning that there are many who believe that the emerging Pentecostal movement had just as much influence on the new mission affirmation as Orthodoxy. Because of the limited space I have within this thesis I have chosen to leave out the Pentecostal movement and focus on the theology of the Orthodox Church.

1.1 Research question and aim

My research question for this thesis will be:

In what way has the theology of the Orthodox Church influenced the understanding of Pneumatology in Together Towards Life?

I believe that when researching the theology of the Orthodox Church and comparing it with the theology of the Holy Spirit in TTL I will find many similarities. My aim with this paper is to enlighten the fact that the Holy Spirit is a central part of mission, and that this is quite clear throughout TTL. It is also to prove that churches that are not from the global north, like the Orthodox Church and Pentecostal churches of the global south has an important influence of the relevance of the Holy Spirit in mission theology today.

¹ Kim, 2009, p. 28

In the process of researching how and if the theology of the Holy Spirit within the Orthodox Church has influenced how the theology of the Holy Spirit in TTL is written, I will keep in mind that TTL is written with a missiological purpose. The information about the theology of the Orthodox Church is not written with the same purpose. This is important to remember because when comparing the two, the work of TTL will most likely have a constant focus on the Holy Spirit and mission, while the Orthodox theology will have a different and more general approach to the same themes. It is also worth mentioning that time and context also has an influence both on Orthodox theology, TTL and on my interpretation of the document and its similarities with Orthodox theology. TTL is written in our modern times where technology has escalated to a high point, and the focus on the individual human being is very important, at least in much of the global north. Orthodox theology, especially the literature I will use in this thesis, has a long tradition dating back to the beginning of the church.

1.2 Literature

The literature used in this paper will be gathered from two disciplines, Orthodox theology and missiology. Since TTL is a fairly new document, most of the information involving the mission affirmation I have found in the *International Review of Mission (IRM)*. Within IRM there are of course several contributors, but one of the most significant is Kirsteen Kim who was one of the central contributors, and the vice-moderator of the CWME during the period of time that TTL was written. From Orthodox theology I have mainly used the book *The Orthodox Way* by Bishop Kallistos Ware from 1979, which gives a brief account of the fundamental teachings of the Orthodox Church, approaching the faith as a way of life and a way of prayer². It gives a good overview of the role of the Holy Trinity and the Holy Spirit within the life of an everyday Orthodox Christian.

1.3 Hermeneutics

When writing this thesis, my method will mainly be document analysis with a special focus on hermeneutics. Since this thesis is an analysis of TTL, a published official document of the WCC, this goes under the description of documents as materials that can be read that have not been produced specifically for the purpose of social research. It is preserved so that it

² Ware, 1979, p. 10

becomes available for analysis, and it is relevant to the concerns of the social researcher³. When analyzing a document in a hermeneutical way it becomes a part of qualitative research. TTL is an official document deriving from a private source, namely the WCC. Hermeneutics is often the approach used when it comes to understanding or interpreting a text, especially theological texts. As this is a thesis within theology, with a main focus on document analysis, it is logical to use a hermeneutic method when interpreting the text of TTL. The idea behind hermeneutics is for the analyst to try to bring out the meaning in a text from the perspective of the author⁴. When doing this we will bring attention to the social and historical context of the text. In Alan Bryman's book, *Social Research Methods*, the way of analyzing within hermeneutics can be divided into three 'moments'. I will mainly use the social-historical moment, which involves an examination of the text, its intentional recipient, its referent in the world and the context in which the text is produced, transmitted and received⁵.

1.4 Clarifications and Refinement

In the Bible the words for Spirit, *Ru'ach* in Hebrew and *Pneuma* in Greek, have the same translation. Both words can translate into Spirit, wind or breath. These words are similar in the way that they have the same characteristics. They are an obvious presence that can be felt, but it cannot be seen or touched. These words are used throughout the theology of the Orthodox Church and TTL, and I will use both the terms wind and breath when describing the Spirit in some parts of this thesis.

When talking about the Holy Spirit, TTL and the Orthodox theology uses different gender forms. In TTL they use the female gender form and in Orthodox theology they use male. In this thesis I have decided to use He as the gender term of the Holy Spirit. I have chosen to do this because in the Orthodox theology, it is specified that the gender form does not have any significance, because we cannot limit God to a specific gender, He is so much bigger than that. The tradition has been to use the male gender form, it is in more recent times that people have started to use the female term, explained in feminist theology. Since this is a thesis with a specialization in Orthodox theology I have chosen to use He when describing the Holy Spirit.

³ Bryman, 2012, p. 543

⁴ Bryman, 2012, p. 560

⁵ Bryman, 2012, p. 561

In this thesis I have chosen to arrange the chapters a certain and similar way. I will start with their descriptions of the Trinity before I will look at how the Trinity is described in the Bible. Then I will continue to look at the love of the Trinity, the creation of the earth, the church and the unity of the church before I will describe the Holy Spirit and its role in mission. The reason for organizing the chapters this way is that it will become clearer for each point how the whole Trinity and especially the Holy Spirit work together.

1.5 Outline

In chapter 2 I will give an explanation of the WCC. Here I will first look at the history of the WCC, before I continue to the CWME. Then I will look at the previous mission affirmation; *Mission and Evangelism – An Ecumenical Affirmation* before I give an introduction to the mission document I will be analyzing in this thesis, namely TTL. Chapter 3 will be a section about the Orthodox theology evolving around the Holy Trinity with special focus on the Holy Spirit. Here I will look at different elements that might highlight the importance of the Holy Trinity and the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Church. In chapter 4 I will discuss the role of the Holy Trinity, especially the Holy Spirit in TTL by studying the text and trying to find the most significant areas surrounding the Holy Spirit within the mission affirmation. Chapter 5 will be a comparison of the Pneumatology in Orthodox theology and TTL, trying to find both similarities and differences of the texts.

Chapter 2: The World Council of Churches

In this chapter I will explain what the World Council of Churches (WCC) is and how the mission document *Together Towards Life* came to be the official mission affirmation of the WCC. To do this I will first go through the history of the WCC, before I look at the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). Then I will briefly present the history of the mission affirmation *Mission and Evangelism – an Ecumenical Affirmation*, before I finally will explain TTL, the process of its creation and content.

2.1 History of the WCC

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is an ecumenical council working together to find common ground between those who believe in the one Christian God. Ecumenism has the aim to promote unity in the Christian churches. The purpose of the WCC is to have a forum where there can be discussions and dialogue that leads to cooperation between the member churches, but also between the member churches and their partners in other churches, faiths and agencies. The first article of the Constitution of the WCC tells us that

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁶

The WCC consists of mostly Protestant, Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches⁷. Even though the Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, there have been positive to cooperation since the 2nd Vatican council of the early 1960s. They might not be members of the WCC, but they have contributed in many of the theological processes of the WCC throughout the years. When the WCC first was established, most of the churches were western, but today many of the members are from the global south. There has been a shift in the global Christian churches, and the global south is just as representative in the WCC as the churches of the global north.

⁶ WCC, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us>

⁷ WCC, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us>

The thought of getting together an ecumenical council started already before World War 1, rooted in the 1910 World Mission Conference in Edinburgh⁸. In 1920, the Orthodox Church Council sent out a letter ‘to all the churches’, suggesting that they should create a ‘fellowship of churches’. At the Oxford ‘Life and Work’ Conference, it was approved to merge with ‘Faith & Order’ which would again form the WCC. Even though it was voted for founding of the WCC already in 1937-38, but because of the 2nd World War the first assembly of the WCC was not held until 1948 in Amsterdam⁹. At the first council there was representatives from 147 churches present and together they constituted the WCC¹⁰. Since then the WCC has arranged assemblies every six to eight years, the last one in Busan, Korea in 2013¹¹. The largest controlling body of the WCC is the assembly. At the assembly there is both a central committee and an executive committee that is elected. Both of these have regular meetings to guide the work of the WCC between the assemblies. The main orders of the Council are church relations, ecumenical study and promotion, and interchurch aid and service to refugees¹², however, there are several committees working within the WCC on other matters as well, for example the CWME.

2.2 The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism

The 1910 Conference in Edinburgh was the first of many World Mission Conferences. During the conference there was made a decision to form a council that was meant to work towards cooperation between Protestant mission councils, and as a result the International Mission Council (IMC) was formed. After the formation of the WCC, the IMC was positive to cooperate with them. In 1958 the IMC met in Ghana and decided to merge with the WCC with a majority of votes. There were some critical voices, which meant that merging with the WCC would mean that the importance of the role of mission would no longer be a main focus as it had been in the IMC. There were also some who meant that church and mission did not go together and therefore the IMC should keep being an organization of its own. The majority of votes, however, were in favor of the merger, and in 1961 at the WCC assembly in New Delhi, India, the IMC integrated into the CWME¹³. One of the Councils that did not want the IMC to integrate with the WCC is the Norwegian Council of Mission and Evangelism

⁸ WCC, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us/wcc-history>

⁹ WCC, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us/wcc-history>

¹⁰ WCC, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us/wcc-history>

¹¹ Roof, 2012, p. 1380

¹² Roof, 2012, p. 1381

¹³ WCC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfOsZBCE5no> (March 22nd, 2012)

(NORME), which still are not affiliated with the WCC. The CWME continued to arrange World Mission Conferences every seven to eight years, in between the assemblies of the WCC¹⁴. The CWME consists of around 25 members and most of them are participants from the WCC, but there are also Roman Catholics, Evangelists and Pentecostals are a part of the committee. The main concern of the CWME is to inspire common mission to all the churches and mission bodies of the world¹⁵. They move to engage people in mission and share reflections and experiences with other mission bodies and churches. The CWME has since the merger of the WCC and the IMC created and published two documents on mission and evangelism. The first mission document was approved in 1982; *Mission and Evangelism – an Ecumenical Affirmation*. The second mission affirmation, TTL came in 2013. They are both the official mission affirmations of the WCC.

2.3 Mission and Evangelism – an Ecumenical Affirmation

After the fifth assembly of the WCC held in Nairobi in 1976, the Central Committee asked the CWME to create a document, which would state the basic mission and evangelism convictions of the WCC. This work started in 1976, when the CWME sent out a letter to the member churches of the WCC, asking them to bring awareness to their confessing character¹⁶. The CWME used a lot of time in the preparation of the World Mission Conference held in Melbourne in 1980 to ask the different member churches on their thoughts and priorities on mission at that time. The goal was to produce this document during the World Mission Conference in Melbourne in 1980, but it failed to do so. The current moderator of the CWME at the time, Emilio Castro, wrote the first draft of the mission affirmation of 1982, and it was revised and discussed at the Central Committee meeting in 1981 before it was approved in 1982. The affirmation has a Trinitarian base, with a Christological focus¹⁷. When looking at the mission affirmation of 1982, one can see that the Christology is a central part of the affirmation and even though they failed to create the document at the World Mission Conference in Melbourne 1980, the theme of the conference ‘Your Kingdom Come’, has clearly influenced the affirmation. Even though member churches from all over the world had a say in the creation of the document, it has an especially strong influence from the global north.

¹⁴ WCC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfOsZBCE5no> (March 22nd, 2012)

¹⁵ WCC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfOsZBCE5no> (March 22nd, 2012)

¹⁶ Castro, 1982, p. v

¹⁷ WCC, 2005, p. 2

2.4 Together Towards Life

The CWME started the work on the new mission affirmation after the 9th assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre in 2006¹⁸. Having a new mission statement is an important thing and a clear expression of what the WCC and the CWME mean by mission today, which has changed significantly in the 30 years since the last statement. What is important to remember is that the CWME does not want the new statement to replace the old affirmation in its full. TTL is meant to complement the affirmation from 1982. However, the global landscape has changed immensely during the last 30 years, and the need for a new statement was clear. The new mission statement was approved unanimously by the Central Committee in Greece in 2012, and was presented at the mission plenary of the 2013 WCC assembly in Busan by Bishop Dr. Mor Coorilos¹⁹, the moderator of the CWME in the period between the assemblies. During the formation of TTL there has been several working groups on different matters within the CWME. Amongst the working groups, one group focused on the Pneumatology of mission, another on the mission from the margins, yet another on the church and mission and other themes were discussed in other groups. All the working groups drafted their own study report, which was gathered by the CWME and was fed into the new affirmation.

The new statement has influence from the WCC member churches, which includes the Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican and Pentecostal churches. Other churches that are not members of the WCC, such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Lausanne Movement and other churches of the south has played a part in the creation of TTL²⁰. The new mission document is meant to stimulate reflection about mission and how the churches of the world today fulfill the mission of God. In TTL, *Missio Dei* (mission of God) is understood as the importance of the Holy Spirit in mission theology. Pneumatology has a central part in this document, describing how the Holy Spirit works in and through the mission activities we are involved in. The affirmation of 2013 has four main chapters; *Spirit of Mission: Breath of Life* is the first main chapter and focuses mainly on the mission of the Holy Spirit, and the Trinity as the source of mission. The next chapter has the topic *Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins*. The landscapes of mission are changing, and have changed a lot, from mission to the margins to mission from the margins. *Spirit of Community: Church on the Move*, is the

¹⁸ Keum, Jooseop, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFAN-PdzYaQ> (April 1st, 2015)

¹⁹ WCC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3SXaQFXAjk> (November 5th, 2013)

²⁰ Kim, 2012, p. 316

next chapter, describing the importance of mission in the church, the church in changing landscapes and the shift in the center of Christianity. The last chapter is the *Spirit of Pentecost: Good news for all*, describing the call to evangelize to all people of the earth.

As one can see in the titles of the different chapters, the Spirit has a central role all the way through the document. TTL is all about how the Spirit works through us in mission and how we can participate in the mission of the Spirit. As stated above, in the mission affirmation of 1982, even though there was involvement from the global south, the main focus and thinking about mission was from the global north, and the protestant churches. TTL has a much stronger influence from the Orthodox Church, the Pentecostals and the Roman Catholic understanding of mission, much because of the changing landscapes of the Christian church. It is important to remember that TTL is an ecumenical document, and it is so not only because it was created by the CWME, which is a part of the WCC, but also because it is a life-giving mission that brings humans together as living beings and with the whole creation as its base. The document states that the Christian church is sent by Jesus Christ to bring out the living gospel to all people. Even though TTL gives the WCC a new affirmation on mission and evangelism, it also has to be taken into consideration that this is not the end of the journey when it comes to mission. It is a continuing processes, which evolves and changes as the landscape of Christian churches continue to change²¹.

As Bishop Dr. Mor Coorilos expressed in the Mission Plenary at the 2013 WCC assembly in Busan, *Mission from the Margins* has a central part, if not the most important part, of the new mission statement. Even though it might be significant, it has also been discussed what mission from the margins actually mean. Is it mission that comes from the global south, or is it understood as mission from poor to rich? One understanding of this is that in the 30 years since the last affirmation, the whole center of mission has shifted. It is a fact that the global south is no longer just the receiver of mission, as many still think is the case. Missionaries are sent from the global south to the global north to witness about the gospel. In the affirmation of 1982 there is a small section that tells us about how they might discern a shift of the missionary center, of what they thought would happen with mission in the future. The secularized global north no longer has the need of God, but the global south wants to bring back the gospel to the west. This is why TTL now has a larger focus on mission from the

²¹ WCC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3SXaQFXAjk>

margins. It is no longer a glimpse of things to come; it is the reality of the world today. Mission from the Margins plays a central part in the new document, even though it might be difficult to understand exactly how we are meant to understand it.

TTL is the current mission affirmation of the WCC. No one is forcing the churches of the world to use it and follow it, but it is a common, ecumenical mission document stating what the member churches of the WCC and also other churches, can agree on. The understanding of mission expressed in this document is for the benefit of the churches and they can use it however they want. It states that the mission of God is the mission of the Trinity, and that we as Christians can take part in this mission.

Chapter 3: Orthodox Pneumatology

In this chapter I will gather information about the Holy Trinity, and especially the Holy Spirit in Orthodoxy. To organize this I will first look at the general description of the Holy Trinity and the Holy Spirit before I start to look at the Spirit in the tradition. Then I will look at the relationship within the Trinity, before I will describe the Orthodox way of observing the Trinity in the Bible. Then I will look at the love of the Trinity, the Spirit and Creation, the incomprehensible God, the importance of the church and Spiritual gifts before I finally will describe the mission of the Spirit in the Orthodox Church.

The understanding of the Trinity and the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Church might somewhat differ from the understanding in the Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican Churches. In the Orthodox Church, the Trinity has a central role in both their liturgy and in the everyday life of the believer. Through this chapter I will take a closer look at the understanding of the Holy Trinity in Orthodox theology before I look closer at the Holy Spirit and how he is believed to act in the world today, in the church and in the believer. According to Bishop Kallistos Ware, in his book *The Orthodox Way*, the whole aim of the Christian life is to be a Spirit-bearer, to live in the Spirit of God and to breathe the Spirit of God. The Holy Trinity and the Holy Spirit are intertwined, as I will look at throughout this chapter, and the everyday life of an Orthodox believer should focus on this.

As stated in the introduction, one of the central people in the writing of *Together Towards Life* is Bishop Dr. Geevarghese Mor Coorilos. Bishop Mor Coorilos is from the Syrian Orthodox Church in India, and was the moderator of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) during the writing of the mission affirmation of 2013. He was also a part of the working group on Mission and Spirituality from 2008 to 2011, and according to a study article on the mission affirmation; *Companions in the Spirit – Companions in Mission*, Mor Coorilos states the Trinitarian basis of the study done on Pneumatology and mission in TTL²². It is because of his centrality in these Committees and his knowledge and theology of the Holy Trinity that I have chosen to focus on the influence Orthodox Pneumatology has had on TTL.

²² CWME Working Group on Mission and Spirituality, (April 2012), p. 44

3.1 The Triune God

The most central part of Orthodox teaching is the understanding of the theology of the Triune God. In Orthodox theology, liturgy and prayer, the Holy Trinity plays a central role, both in the Service and in their day-to-day life. In prayer, or whenever calling upon God, they call upon the Holy Trinity. There is a difference in focus between the churches in the west and the churches in the east when it comes to understanding the Triune God. In the west the focus is often on the relations between God, Jesus and The Holy Spirit, on their communion. The churches in the east, however, focus more on the persons of the Trinity and their characteristics.

There are two Greek words commonly used in Orthodox theology to describe the relationship of the Trinity and these words are the word *ousia*, which means essence and *hypostasis*, which means person. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are the same *ousia*, but at the same time they are three different *hypostases*²³. They are all one and the same essence, not three separate Gods. When trying to understand the Triune God, it is important to remember that it is not a matter of polytheism. The three persons of the Trinity are all the one essence, the one God. At the same time there is a distinction between them. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one essence, but they have their own personal characteristics. One analogy that might be used to describe the Holy Trinity in Orthodox theology, which is described in *The Orthodox Way* by Bishop Kallistos Ware, is the thought of three torches burning with the same flame.²⁴ They share the same essence, but their characteristics may differ. The Trinity is three equal persons, but it is still just one God. The Orthodox understanding of the Triune God is that they always work together. They are three persons and there is a distinction between them, but at the same time they are one and the same²⁵. You cannot separate them because they work together at all times, but within us we might experience that they act in different ways.

3.2 Gods Pneuma

As explained in the introduction, there are several words that are commonly used to describe the Holy Spirit. The very word in Greek, *pneuma*, which is used when referring to the Holy Spirit, can also be translated into breath and wind. A wind is something that is hard to seize,

²³ Ware, 1979, p. 37

²⁴ Ware, 1979, p. 35

²⁵ Ware, 1979, p. 37

but it exists all around us²⁶. We can feel the wind, we can hear it as it blows, but we cannot try to touch it. If we do it will disappear between our fingers. It is not possible to capture, neither the wind, nor the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is there, present in our life at all times, like a wind. We cannot imagine what it looks like, but we can feel the Spirit and His power working in us. In the Orthodox tradition it is the Holy Spirit that keeps our hearts pumping with love for the Lord. Ware says that the whole aim of the Christian life is to be a Spirit-bearer, to live in the Spirit of God, to breathe the Spirit of God.²⁷

Even though we cannot capture the Holy Spirit, the Orthodox tradition has two descriptions, two notions they teach about the Spirit. First of all they teach that the Spirit is a person. He is one of the three persons of the Trinity. He is not just a wind passing by; He has His distinct characteristics, just like the other two persons of the Trinity. The Orthodox Pneumatology teaches that we can have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. The second thing they teach is that the Holy Spirit is the third member of the Holy Trinity; it is equal to the other two²⁸. Not just equal when it comes to being a part of the Trinity, but it is also coeternal with the Father and the Son. Even though the Orthodox theology teaches that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, He is coeternal with the Father and the Son, and just as much a part of the Trinity. The Orthodox Church confesses the Spirit as “the Lord and Giver of life”²⁹.

3.3 The Spirit within the Tradition

In the Orthodox Church it is clear that tradition plays an important part. It is also the first characteristics that non-Orthodox notice when encountering Orthodoxy. Tradition, in the Orthodox Church includes several elements, and some of the most important of these are Scripture, Councils, Church Fathers, Liturgy, Canons and Icons³⁰. Though it might seem quite static for an outsider, they believe that the tradition is living and moving through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit lives in the tradition and is visible through the different elements, for example through the icons. These are not just meant to bring out certain feelings in the believer, but through the icons the believer gets a glimpse of the spiritual world. It is important to remember that the different elements that have a central role here is not to be separated from the tradition, which sometimes might be the case. Scripture might sometimes

²⁶ Ware, 1979, p. 120

²⁷ Ware, 1979, p. 118

²⁸ Ware, 1979, p. 122

²⁹ McGuckin, 2008, p. 126

³⁰ Ware, 1993, p. 206

be separated from the tradition, but we must always remember that scripture exists within the tradition, not the other way around. Tradition in the Orthodox Church is not just to follow a static system or a doctrine; it is a personal relationship with Christ through the Spirit. The Spirit works through the tradition and the tradition becomes the witness of the Spirit.

3.4 The Relationship Within the Trinity

Orthodox theology describes the Father as the origin. “He is the bond and unity between the three: there is one God because there is one Father”³¹. The Father is the source of the Trinity. The Son is described in His relation to the Father as begotten, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. The original Nicene Creed stated that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, however, in 589 the word *Filioque*, which translates to ‘and the Son’ was added to the Latin text of the Creed³². The reason for adding this word was to prevent hierarchy in the Trinity, which Arianism might bring to the understanding of the original sentence. In the Orthodox Church it is not a matter of the Holy Spirit proceeding both from the Father and the Son as the Latin word that was added to the Nicene Creed states. The understanding of the word proceeds and whom the Holy Spirit proceeds from is different in Orthodox theology and much of western theology. Orthodoxy states that the Father is the source and the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him. It is not a matter of understanding how the Holy Spirit works in the world among people, but more an understanding of the eternal relations within the Godhead. If we carefully try to categorize the three persons of the Trinity one might say that the Spirit is God within us, the Son is God with us, and the Father is God above and beyond us³³. The Orthodox tradition looks to the gospel of John when explaining the theology of the Spirit proceeding only from the Father, where it says; “When the Comforter has come, whom I will send to you from the Father – *the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father* – He will bear witness to Me” (John 15,26).

The relation between the Holy Spirit, The Father and The Son is, as stated previously, that they are three different persons and at the same time they are a unity and cannot be divided. In the Nicene Creed it is stated very baldly what the Orthodox Church pronounces when it comes to the Holy Spirit. It says; “and we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of

³¹ Ware, 1979, p. 39

³² McGuckin, 2008, p. 169

³³ Ware, 1979, p. 41

Life, who proceeds from the Father. Together with the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets". The relationships in the Holy Trinity are stated quite distinctly here. When looking at the gospels, it is clearly said that Jesus is the one who sends the Holy Spirit. At the same time, it is the Holy Spirit who sends Christ to the earth through the Virgin Mary³⁴. Before Pentecost it is the Holy Spirit who sends the Son. At Pentecost and after, it is the Son who sends the Holy Spirit. Orthodox Pneumatology teaches that the Spirit has been working through the prophets of the Old Testament, which again teaches that the Holy Spirit existed before the Son was sent to the world. The Spirit is coeternal with the Father and the Son.

It is important to remember that the Orthodox Church is not a polytheistic church, it believes in one God and one God alone. The Christian God is one, but three. The distinction between the three is hard to explain, they have a relationship that we cannot understand. The Holy Spirit is a part of this relationship. Even though the Orthodox Church have some ways of describing the Spirit, it is still hard to understand the very essence of the Spirit. It never acts alone; it is a part of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is sent to the church to complete the incarnation of Christ. Through the believers of the church the Holy Spirit works to spread the good news to the ends of the earth.

3.5 The Holy Trinity within the Bible

The Bible is the source of which we can learn about the Holy Trinity. Throughout the Holy Scripture there are several signs of the work of the Triune God in the world. According to Ware there are especially five Triadic patterns that are revealed throughout the Scripture³⁵. In the Bible we find that it starts with the creation, that this is the first place we can observe the Trinity working together. The Word and the Breath was present from the beginning, taking part in the creation of the earth and of the human being. Second, Ware states that there is a Triadic pattern in the incarnation³⁶. The Father sends the Holy Spirit to the Virgin Mary and through them Jesus Christ is conceived. When one looks a little further into the New Testament, the baptism of Jesus is a clear communion of the Trinity³⁷. When Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit, in the shape of a dove comes over Him, and the voice of the Father

³⁴ Ware, 1979, p. 123

³⁵ Ware, 1979, p. 44-46

³⁶ Ware, 1979, p. 44

³⁷ Ware, 1979, p. 45

is heard, saying: “this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3, 16-17). The transfiguration of Jesus at the mountain is a fourth, clear revelation of the Trinity. At the mountain the Father speaks the same words that were spoken in the baptism, saying that Jesus is his Son. At the baptism the Holy Spirit takes the form of a dove, while at the top of the mountain it is a cloud of light³⁸. Last, the Eucharistic Epiclesis is evidence of the Trinity working together. When praying the liturgical prayer of the Eucharist we call upon the Holy Spirit to be present in the bread and wine that we share as a communion.

3.6 The Love of the Trinity

The love that exists within the Trinity has a central role in the understanding of Orthodox theology. Within the Trinity there is a mutual love that exists and is shared amongst them. One might also say that the Trinity exists because of love, or at least that love serves as some sort of motto of the Trinity³⁹. Human beings also exist because of and within this communion of love. We are taken up into the love of the Trinity, we live and breathe because of it and it is in the love of the Trinity that we are united. When trying to explain why we believe that God is three, Kallistos Ware brings forward the fact that love cannot exist in isolation; it has to be shared and included in unity with others⁴⁰. Even though the Trinity is truly diverse, it exists in unity. God is not one single person, loving himself alone; He is Trinity, three equal persons dwelling in a mutual love⁴¹. For many it can be difficult to accept that we cannot understand everything about the Trinity or have the possibility to explain the Triune God and its relationship, but one way to try to take on these questions is if we believe that God is a personal God and that God is love. This includes sharing and reciprocity⁴². Love has to be shared it cannot exist in isolation. The love that we share with our Father in heaven is a love that is far bigger than we can comprehend with our knowledge of love between humans.

3.7 Trinity and Creation

In the beginning God created earth and the creation was not a forced act. If we take a look at the psalms, we find a good description of how the whole Trinity was involved in the creation. “By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the Breath of

³⁸ Ware, 1979, p. 45

³⁹ Ware, 1979, p. 33

⁴⁰ Ware, 1979, p. 35

⁴¹ Ware, 1979, p. 33

⁴² Ware, 1979, p. 34

His mouth” (Psalm 33,6). The Word, the Lord and the Breath were all a part of the creation of the heavens, which came before the creation of the earth. Creation was an act of love. God made the heavens, the earth and everything in it out of His own free will. What is important to remember is that creation is not only something that happened back then, many years ago. Creation is continual, it happens every day, and the Creator creates every day⁴³. The world depends on God and His ability to create continuously. God is the creator, and He is the heart of everything. The human being was created in the beginning, in the image of God, and more specifically the image of the Trinity. As the Trinity shares and lives in unity, we are meant to live in unity with one another. In Genesis 1,26 we are told that God said: “Let Us make man according to our image and likeness”. From the beginning, God created us in unity, in Trinity. He created the earth because He is a God of love. The human being was set to ‘rule’ over the plants and animals. In Orthodox theology, the world itself is holy and blessed, and should not be tampered with. We were set to take care of the creation, but many have misinterpreted this and instead of conserving the earth, it is used as an excuse to destroy it⁴⁴. The earth is first and foremost a picture of the glory of God in Orthodox tradition.

The Orthodox understanding of the created human being is that we are created in the image of God. Deification explains how they understand it even further. We are created in His image and can therefore interact and have communion with Him, and we can become like God. Deification is the ultimate destiny for humanity and creation⁴⁵. According to John Damascene, we can be “assimilated to God through virtue.” If we use our communion with God in the right way, we can get His divine likeness. It is by the incarnation of God that He opened up the way to the deification of the human being; so to be deified is to be like Christ, to attain the likeness of Christ⁴⁶. It is the Spirit of God that deifies us, that transforms us and makes us God-like⁴⁷.

3.8 The Incomprehensible God

For the Orthodox Church, it is not a matter of always having to ‘prove’ the existence of God through theories. In fact, Orthodoxy is a bit skeptical to all the Christian apologetics that want to prove that God exists. God is not a theory that we can prove. “The Trinity cannot be

⁴³ Ware, 1979, p. 57

⁴⁴ McGuckin, 2008, p. 205

⁴⁵ Keshishian, 1992, p. 47

⁴⁶ Ware, 1979, p. 98

⁴⁷ Keshishian, 1992, p. 47

grasped by humans. It is rather the Trinity that seizes us and provokes us to praise to Him”⁴⁸. The Christian God is incomprehensible. We as humans cannot understand Him completely; we cannot grasp who He is. In the Orthodox Church it is important to remember that the Trinity is not something that always should be analyzed, it is rather a part of the daily life of the Christian in prayer, and has been since Pentecost. “The Trinity is not a philosophical theory but the living God whom we worship⁴⁹”. The Orthodox Church understands the need to demonstrate our belief in a rational way, but it is not about all the theories and trying to make the Trinity logical. God is incomprehensible. He should be worshiped, not analyzed. If God were completely comprehensible then He would no longer be God⁵⁰.

3.9 Spirit and the Church

The church and its community is a central teaching of the Orthodox theology. On the one hand the Orthodox Church states that they are the one church that was founded by Christ, and that the beginning of the church was when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples at Pentecost. At the other hand Orthodox theology allege that the church is eternal. Even before creation God had the intention to establish a communion through the creation⁵¹. The Orthodox Church states that the world was created for the church, and to have a communion and an alliance God created the earth. The earthly church is the one established at Pentecost and the church I will continue to talk about here. The Orthodox Church pronounces that the church knows itself because it knows the Lord who called it into being as the church, and it knows Him as living in the present moment by the gift of the Spirit, which is the soul of the church⁵². The Orthodox Church claim to know the gospel tradition, because it is the Lord who created it and who taught it to the disciples, and He is still the teacher of the gospel tradition. The Sacraments of the church is important for every member. It is the sacraments that constitute our life in Christ⁵³. When it comes to the church, the Orthodox insists that salvation is received through the church, and this is a natural consequence of the dynamics within the Holy Trinity⁵⁴.

⁴⁸ Lossky, 1978, p. 46

⁴⁹ Ware, 1979, p. 39

⁵⁰ Ware, 1979, p. 13

⁵¹ Limouris, 1990, p. 103

⁵² McGuckin, 2008, p. 239

⁵³ Ware, 1979, p. 145

⁵⁴ Vassiliadis, IRM, 2013, p. 176

The church also has a hierarchical structure, Apostolic Succession, the episcopate and the priesthood.⁵⁵ They will ask the saints for their prayers and intercession for the deceased. However, they also believe that there is a special bond between God and His church. This relation can be described by looking at the church as the image of the Trinity. Every person is created in the image of Trinity, and in the same way the church becomes the picture of the Trinity. In the church, all the members are united as one, but at the same time there is diversity among them making each and every member special. Even though they have a hierarchical structure in the Orthodox Church, they also state that since the church is an icon of the Trinity, there can be no one bishop that can claim absolute power over the church. The Trinity is three equal persons, and their communion is also what the church should embrace. Irenaeus wrote that “where the church is, there is the Spirit, and where the Spirit is, there is the church”⁵⁶. When the Spirit came at Pentecost, it came with gifts. The gifts that the Spirit brings belong to the church; even though it is a personal gift it is also a gift of the communion. The unity of the members of the church has an important part in the Orthodox Church. According to Aleksei Khomiakov, no one is saved alone. He who is saved is saved in the church, as a member of her and in union with all her other members⁵⁷.

3.10 Spiritual Gifts

In Orthodox understanding of the Holy Spirit, it is only those who are Spirit filled who can understand and interpret the Scriptures in the right way. The Spirit is not something that can be grasped by anyone; it comes to those who are open, humble and receptive. The people that receive the Holy Spirit are filled with a joy and a presence that is unexplainable for those who do not receive it. The happening at Pentecost and the reception of the Holy Spirit is a continuation of the incarnation of Christ within the church, and within the people who receives the Holy Spirit. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them” (Matt 18, 20). Christ is present through the Holy Spirit. He is always with us, continuing His work through the Spirit⁵⁸. The Spirit points to Christ at all times, showing what He does for us right now, not just what he once did in the past. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit brought with him gifts to all baptized. Orthodox theology does not state that it is only the clergy and bishops who receive the gifts, the Spirit brought with Him gifts for all Gods

⁵⁵ Ware, 1993, p. 239

⁵⁶ Ware, 1993, p. 242

⁵⁷ Ware, 1979, p. 144

⁵⁸ Ware, 1979, p. 124

people. He also brought with Him the gift of unity. Through the Holy Spirit we are all one body of Christ.

The arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost brought gifts of Spirituality to the apostles. At Pentecost they spoke in languages that everyone present understood and they shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with them all. Even though their gift at that time was the broken language barrier, the gifts of the Spirit can vary. There is not only one gift, there are several gifts of the Spirit, and it is different for every believer. One receives the Holy Spirit in baptism, and as a Spirit-bearer one has also received Spiritual gifts. Even though the gift of speaking in tongues is known as the main gift in some circuits, this is not the understanding of the gifts in Orthodox theology. Speaking in tongues is not a gift that everyone need. In first Corinthians 14, 5, Paul puts it as one of the lesser spiritual gifts. All Christians has spiritual gifts, and they are all important.

The Holy Spirit is the one who fills the believer with love, and who helps us recognize Christ as Lord. It is also the Spirit that makes all believers one in Christ. “The Spirit of God is the unity of the church”⁵⁹. The Orthodox way of understanding the Holy Spirit tells us that the Spirit comes to us with gifts, and is a gift on its own. The gifts is there, ready to be handed out to all Gods people, and those who are open and ready for it will receive it. His gifts also include the gift of unity⁶⁰. The division that happened at Babel was reestablished at Pentecost, uniting the people of God. The Spirit is the one who encourages and equips the church for its mission and outreach, and inspires its people to spread the good news of the gospel, and of the Lord. The believer receives the gift of love from the Father by the Son, through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is working in Gods church today, always pointing towards the Father and the Son. The Orthodox teaching of how the Holy Spirit works in the church today always consists of this movement. It moves from the Father, through the Son in the Holy Spirit⁶¹.

3.11 The Orthodox Church and mission

Most Orthodox theology is focused around the service and the life inside the Orthodox Church. For many people, Orthodoxy and mission is not two concepts that go hand in hand, but evangelization and mission also has a part in the Orthodox way of thinking and being

⁵⁹ McGuckin, 2008, p. 132

⁶⁰ Ware, 1979, p. 136

⁶¹ Lossky, 1978, p. 48

church. The baptized people of the church are Spirit-bearers and according to Ion Bria the sending of the mission is essentially the sending of the Spirit⁶². In the Bible we get the clear indication that Jesus Christ is sent by the Father through the Holy Spirit at the incarnation. Jesus sent the apostles the same way He himself is sent by the Father, through the Holy Spirit to bring the good news to the world. We live in a world that is full of different religions, cultures and countries. With the focus on the individual and the culture that exists in our world today, many of the aspects of a church might be argued away, one should instead find one's own way, belief and understanding of the world and the people in it. Even though it might be a negative focus for many, we have to remember that this is a part of our third world, and instead of fighting these we have to integrate them into our church. For example culture. Instead of the church shutting out anything that has to do with culture, the Orthodox Church should and wants to proclaim the gospel in such a way that it is understandable and transferrable to the life of people ⁶³.

The Orthodox Church states that one of the important factors of the missional church is through the diaconal work. To convey the gospel to all the people of the world, the baptized need to meet them in their needs and use their knowledge and gifts to help people in need. The good news should be spread in an order of love and dialogue, in a way that all people might understand, also non-Christians⁶⁴. It is God through the Holy Spirit that brings forward the gospel. According to Bria, mission belongs to the very nature of the church. Without mission there would be no church. The Orthodox Church states that the permanent Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit is not limited to the church and only the activities and life there, but it overflows to all the baptized that are bearers of the Spirit and has a mission to share it with the world. It is the Holy Spirit that creates union between Christians and Non-Christians and it is the Spirit that opens people up for a faith in the Trinity.

⁶² Bria, 1982, p. 2

⁶³ Bria, 1982, p. 17

⁶⁴ Bria, 1982, p. 19

Chapter 4: Spirit of Mission: Breath of Life

In this chapter I will describe the understanding of the Holy Trinity with a main focus on the Holy Spirit in *Together Towards Life*. To give a good understanding of this I will try to organize it in a way that is similar to the previous chapter. I will start by analyzing the Holy Spirit in TTL before I start with at the Spirit and the Bible. Then I will look at the love of the Trinity, the involvement of the Trinity in Creation, Spiritual gifts, and the church of God, how the Spirit works in the individual before I finally look closer at the Spirit of mission.

TTL was written with the aim to bring a renewed understanding of mission and evangelism in our global context today, with a new way of practicing mission. The affirmation was written with influence from a broad appeal, wider than the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Throughout the document there are four themes that have the majority focus. After introducing the themes of the document, the rest of TTL is divided into four major topics: *Spirit of Mission, Spirit of Liberation, Spirit of Community* and *Spirit of Pentecost*. In this chapter I will first present the Holy Spirit in the document before I will analyze and compare how Orthodox theology, especially Pneumatology, has influenced TTL in the next chapter. The contributors to the document underline the importance of the Biblical foundation of the approach of the Holy Spirit.

4.1 The Holy Spirit in Together Towards Life

When introducing the theme in TTL, they start with a creed, a statement of common belief, which sets the agenda of the document; “We believe in the Triune God who is the creator, redeemer, and sustainer of life”⁶⁵. When stating this at the beginning of the affirmation, it tells us of the importance of the Trinity in this document. It is the basis of our belief, our life and our mission. §1 in TTL introduces the Triune God as the creator of the universe, and the one who invites us to take part in the mission of the Holy Trinity. The paragraph sets the agenda for the rest of the document; it is the Holy Trinity that sends Gods people, is the reason why we spread the gospel and the source of mission today. The next paragraph continues to describe the mission of the Trinity. It starts in the heart of the Triune God and is love that overflows from the Trinity to all humanity and creation⁶⁶. To receive the Holy Spirit and work in His mission is brought forward as an important factor. The three first paragraphs of the

⁶⁵ Keum, 2013, p. 4, §1

⁶⁶ Keum, 2013, p. 4, §2

document tells us how of the Holy Spirit is the source of mission, it introduces and states what the work of the Holy Trinity in mission is, and of how the Trinity, being the source of creation, is the basis of everything we do.

4.2 The Holy Spirit and the Bible

The first major topic of the mission statement is *Spirit of Mission: Breath of life*, divided in to several sub topics. §12 to §15 describe the mission of the Spirit with the Bible as our source. We can read about the Spirit of God, Gods *ru'ach*, moving over the waters at the beginning of creation and the beginning of our Scripture (Gen. 1,2). §12 describes the Spirit in the Old Testament, how the Holy Spirit led the people of God and empowered them with whatever they needed to do the work of God⁶⁷. Continuing to §13, this paragraph binds together the Spirit in the Old and the New Testament by saying that the same Spirit that was present in the beginning of creation was the Spirit that descended onto Mary and conceived Jesus Christ⁶⁸. It describes how it was the Spirit that empowered Jesus at His baptism and started His mission in the world. The Holy Spirit was with Jesus throughout His work on earth, and filled with the Spirit, Jesus died and resurrected. §14 describes the work of the Spirit after Jesus' resurrection, how the Spirit was sent to the disciples and formed a new community of witness. It was the Spirit of unity that brought the early church together in work and life⁶⁹. §15 continues with telling us of biblical descriptions of how the Spirit of God works in mysterious and unknown ways in our world today, in ways we cannot understand. The Spirit of God is not something that we can comprehend at all times, but we are called to discern the Spirit and how He works in our world today⁷⁰.

When continuing the description of the Holy Spirit and the Bible in TTL, §16 tells us of the companionship of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ. The Son sent the Spirit into the world after Jesus Christ was reunited with the Father. The Spirit is the continuing presence of Christ and is the one sent to fulfill His mission. Jesus Christ is essential to the work of the Holy Spirit. Without the work of Christ, the spirit would not be sent to the world to fulfill His mission. Just as Jesus Christ is the source of the Spirit, the Spirit is the source of Christ and this is emphasized in §13 where it is described how the Spirit of God descended onto Mary and

⁶⁷ Keum, 2013, p. 7, §12

⁶⁸ Keum, 2013, p. 8, §13

⁶⁹ Keum, 2013, p. 8, §14

⁷⁰ Keum, 2013, p. 8, §15

conceived Jesus Christ. TTL then continues to highlight that even though a missional focus might be Pneumatological, it will essentially be Christological because of their linkage⁷¹. The Holy Spirit is sent by the Son and is the continuing presence of Christ, and the work of the Spirit is related to the salvation through Jesus Christ⁷².

4.3 the Love of the Triune God

The whole affirmation has a continuing theme, the love of the Trinity. It starts in §2 by stating that it is the love that consists within the Holy Trinity that is the start of our mission. The love that exists within the Trinity is a love that cannot exist without communion. The love of God overflows to everyone and in everything, in all of creation⁷³. The loving act of the Triune God started at creation, and it is continued in the mission of love that we are invited and called to take part in. To take part in the mission of the Spirit one first has to receive the love that overflows from the Trinity. The entire mission of the church has to take part and have its roots in the love that we receive from the Triune God. This is described in several paragraphs throughout TTL. §29 tells us that the church in mission can only be sustained by spiritualities deeply rooted in the Trinity's communion of love. If we continue to §55 we are told that all life in the church has its starting-point in the love of the Holy Trinity. We carry out mission as a response to the love that we receive from the Triune God⁷⁴. It is the mission of the Christian church to bring forward this message of the love of God to people whom have not yet received the Spirit.

4.4 Creation

As stated previously, the whole mission affirmation of 2013 starts with the statement; “We believe in the Triune God who is the creator, redeemer, and sustainer of all life”⁷⁵. This statement at the start of the affirmation gives us knowledge about whom we believe in, a Triune God that is the creator of all things. §19 to §23 tell us even further about the Triune God and creation. “Mission is the overflow of the infinite love of the Triune God. God's mission begins with the act of creation”⁷⁶. The creation of earth is an act of love, and mission

⁷¹ Keum, 2013, p. 9, §61

⁷² Keum, 2013, p. 9, §16

⁷³ Keum, 2013, p. 9, §19

⁷⁴ Keum, 2013, p. 21, §55

⁷⁵ Keum, 2013, p. 4, §1

⁷⁶ Keum, 2013, p. 9, §19

today should be the overflow of love in every person. This love should not only be directed at our fellow human beings, but also at the rest of creation. It is stated that the earth needs to be saved and that we as Christians have a responsibility to take care of our world. The way of life of every Christian should be a life that focuses on taking care of the earth and on being environmentally friendly. It was the Trinity, not human beings, that created the whole earth, and we should remember this when we neglect it. The human race is exploiting the earth instead of taking care of the creation. The mission of the Trinity is directed at all of creation. In §20 it says that we believe that not only our souls will be saved, but that the whole earth is going to be transformed as well through the grace of the Spirit. Our life lived on earth should reflect our life in the Spirit. There is already an environmentally friendly movement going in the churches today, with a focus on taking care of the creation of God.

With a focus on creation, TTL describes the presence of the Spirit in everything God created. Everything began with the creation of the earth, and it is the created earth that human beings were set to take care of. Mission also starts with creation, and we have to remember that it includes all of Gods creation. The Triune God created humanity, and mission is therefore not something that is given from humans to other human beings. Creation starts in the Trinity, and it are the love of the Spirit that is the source of our missional task, not humans. We take part in the mission of God, as we are His creation. It is not only humanity that is created by the Triune God, the whole earth is created and we therefore have an obligation to take care of it. Today the earth is being polluted, and the climate change that is happening in our world today is influenced by the way of life of humanity. According to TTL, Eco-justice cannot and should not be separated from salvation⁷⁷. Human beings need to respect the created earth and all that is in it to take care of the creation of the Holy Trinity.

4.5 Spiritual Gifts

In TTL §24 to §28 tell us of the spiritual gifts and the gift of discernment we as Christians receive. Spiritual gifts are brought to us by the Holy Spirit, which we receive to share and to build up our fellow human beings and for reconciliation of the earth and all of creation⁷⁸. One gift of the Spirit that we receive through Jesus Christ is the act of unity and the communion we share in the church. Another Spiritual gift that is mentioned in §50 is the gift of the power

⁷⁷ Keum, 2013, p. 11, §23

⁷⁸ Keum, 2013, p. 11, §24

of healing. It is indicated that there are several spiritual gifts, and healing is one of them. There are several ways of healing, in prayer, pastoral care and professional healthcare⁷⁹. This is a way that the Holy Spirit empowers His church for mission, by taking care of His people. The gift of the Spirit is the ‘power from on high’⁸⁰ that Christians receive to complete our mission, to bring the good news to all human beings.

The Holy Spirit brings several gifts, and one of them is discernment of spirits. We can know of the presence of the Spirit of God, but also that there are other spirits that are out there. The Holy Spirit brings with Him peace and liberation, reconciliation and restoration whilst evil spirits brings with them destruction and death. In §25 it says that we as a church are called to discern the Holy Spirit that is good and giver of life, and join Him in His mission⁸¹. When called by the Spirit we have to be open, for He might lead us further than we could imagine. Even though a relationship with the Holy Spirit is individual and personal, He also calls us to work outwards, to take part in His mission in the world. §27 tells us that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom and guides us to the truth⁸². Instead of destroying local wisdom and culture, we should remember that they also are gifts from the Holy Spirit. We should be Spirit-bearers, but it is not for us to say if we have the Spirit or not, but for our neighbors to recognize.

4.6 Spirit of Community: Church on the Move

The Spirit is empowering the Christian church for a productive and careful task of mission. TTL tells us of the forceful and destroying way of mission that missionaries brought in certain cultures in previous times, so by careful we mean in a way that does not necessarily destroy or demean culture and people. §75 in TTL describes a gift of the Spirit, namely cultural differences. This might not be a Spiritual gift in the same way that healing is a spiritual gift, however it is still a gift that we as Christians can and should use to our advantage. Christians might have a more common understanding of healing as a gift of the Holy Spirit than cultural differences. Here in §75 it is described as a new possibility for churches to re-discover themselves⁸³. The gifts we receive from the Spirit are an empowering tool for all Christians to spread the good news and complete the mission of Christ in the world today. The gifts we

⁷⁹ Keum, 2013, p. 19, §50

⁸⁰ Keum, 2013, p. 8, §14

⁸¹ Keum, 2013, p. 11, §25

⁸² Keum, 2013, p. 12, §27

⁸³ Keum, 2013, p. 27, §75

receive, like healing, should be used in a way that the Christian church helps to lift up the marginalized, heal the wounded and fight injustice⁸⁴. Even though we might have different ways of worshiping in the different churches, the Spirit is present in all of the worship and unites us and gathers us under His wings⁸⁵.

As stated previously, the love of the Triune God is a common denominator all through TTL. All life and work in the church has the love of the Holy Trinity as its source. This love is the source of all mission and evangelism. In §55 to §58 we get a description of God's mission and the life of the church. The Holy Spirit is present in the church, and God's love is shared by and through Him. Through Christ in the Holy Spirit, God indwells in the church⁸⁶. It is the same Spirit that gives life to the church and empowers the church in mission. The Spirit does not only provide unity, but also the necessary diversity that is constructive to the church. There is also unity provided in the diversity to make it as constructive and proactive as possible. As we are meant to work in unity within the church, the Spirit has also empowered the church to a life in mission. According to §57, the church exists because of mission and therefore it is not possible to separate the two. The church has to have a missionary basis to fulfill its purpose. It is the Spirit of Christ that leads us both to a life in mission and life in the church, and therefore it is even more intertwined. The church discerns and derives its direction and energy from God's Spirit of love, and because of this, the church is missionary by nature⁸⁷.

When presenting the mission affirmation of 2013 I said that they have divided the document into four main sections. In section three, *Spirit of Community: Church on the Move*, we get a description of the life in the church, and the relationship between the church and mission. It states the fact that we believe that it is the Spirit of Christ who empowers the church in mission⁸⁸. Continuing in §59 the document states that the church is the coming together of the faithful and their going forth in peace⁸⁹. The unity of the faithful is of great significance in this section. It highlights the importance of ecumenism and unity. In the gospel of John we can read the prayer of Jesus that ask, "that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe" (John 17, 2). This unity in the church is an important factor giving us the possibility

⁸⁴ Keum, 2013, p. 21, §50

⁸⁵ CWME Working Group on Mission and Spirituality, 2012, p. 47

⁸⁶ Keum, 2013, p. 21, §56

⁸⁷ Kim, 2012, p. 319

⁸⁸ Keum, 2013, p. 21, §57

⁸⁹ Keum, 2013, p. 22, §59

to do missional work. It is clear that the churches has to be one; to cooperate and to have a common witness so that those who do not believe will be open to faith in the Triune God.

4.7 The Spirit and the Individual

Every Christian has a choice to respond to the love that the Trinity outpours and everyone that responds are welcome to take part in the mission of the Triune God together with the Holy Spirit. When introducing the theme in §2 they start with a statement claiming the importance of receiving the Holy Spirit, with foundation in the gospel of John (John 20, 22). To become a witness is to have a part in the work of the Trinity and to live a life in the Holy Spirit. Even though our personal relationship with the Triune God is inwards and personal, it brings us outwards at the same time, to share the gospel of the Trinity⁹⁰. The Holy Spirit lives and works within us, but this is something that can only be recognized by the people around us and is not something we can claim without their help. The Spirit empowers His people to face the challenges they might meet. He gives courage to those who need it to spread the gospel even if it might be dangerous. He gives strength to those who might not have power. A life in the Spirit is a full life⁹¹. As a witness, being in the Spirit does not mean that we have to live in an excluded way, rather that we should serve creation and our neighbor with joy.

4.8 The Spirit and mission

The Holy Spirit is the continuing presence of Christ. This is stated in several paragraphs of TTL. The first section of the mission affirmation, Spirit of mission, breath of life, wants to establish the link between the Holy Spirit and mission⁹². In §16 we can read; a Pneumatological focus on Christian mission recognizes that mission is essentially Christologically based and relates the work of the Holy Spirit to the salvation through Jesus Christ⁹³. The Holy Spirit is the source of our mission, but Jesus Christ is the sender of the Spirit and the reason of the continuing presence of the Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that we are called to take part in the mission to spread the gospel to the rest of the world, and it is the gospel of Jesus Christ that we get to bring forward. To take part in the mission of the Spirit is not necessarily just the actions we do, mission in the Spirit is a form of spiritual life⁹⁴. By the Spirit we participate in the mission of love that is at the heart of the life of the

⁹⁰ Keum, 2013, p. 11, §26

⁹¹ Keum, 2013, p. 14, §34

⁹² Kim, 2012, p. 318

⁹³ Keum, 2013, p. 9, §16

⁹⁴ Kim, 2012, p. 318

Trinity⁹⁵. It is through the Spirit we take part in mission, but it is because of Jesus Christ that we have this mission, and this gives us the understanding that the Pneumatological focus on mission is essentially Christological. The mission of the Holy Spirit is also described as a continuing mission of Jesus' ministry of liberation. The Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus Christ to all of His people to continue the mission He started. The mission of the Spirit today is still the one of liberation and freedom from oppression and marginalization⁹⁶. TTL is written in a very inclusive way. When writing "we are called by the Spirit to take part in the mission of God"⁹⁷, every reader and all Christians are called to and included in this mission.

In §9 of TTL it is highlighted that the Christian church exist within a multi-religious and multi-cultural context. Migration and the new communication technology makes this point even stronger, because it is easier to gain access to information and meet other people of other religions and culture. This plurality and changing global landscape is a blessing in many ways and as stated previously, culture is a gift that gives the Christian churches the opportunity to re-discover themselves. However, plurality in this way, our multi-religious and multi-cultural context can also be a challenge for the churches. The Christian church believe that the Spirit of God can be found in all cultures that affirm life, and since the Spirit of God works in mysterious ways, we cannot always comprehend how the Spirit works within other cultures and different faith traditions⁹⁸. According to §94, God is within a culture and religious context before we arrive with the gospel. It is not a Christian's job to bring the Spirit into the context, but to witness about the God of life that is already there⁹⁹. Interfaith dialogue is an important part of evangelism. Even though the goal of this dialogue is not necessarily to evangelize, it is a good opportunity to share the good news of the Triune God. It is important to evangelize and to do missional work, but it is also important to maintain and protect the rights of religious freedom. All people have religious freedom, equal rights and responsibilities¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁵ Keum, 2013, p. 9, §18

⁹⁶ Kim, 2012, p. 318

⁹⁷ Keum, 2013, p. 9, §18

⁹⁸ Keum, 2013, p. 34, §93

⁹⁹ Keum, 2013, p. 34, §94

¹⁰⁰ Keum, 2013, p. 35, §96

5 Comparisons of Orthodox Theology and Together Towards Life

In this chapter I will use the theory I have gathered in chapters three and four, and compare the theology surrounding the Trinity and the Holy Spirit in Orthodoxy with the Pneumatology found in *Together Towards Life*. To compare these two I will structure the chapter in mostly the same ways as the previous chapters. When comparing I will start by looking at the similarities before I will look at the differences of the two theologies.

There has been a shift in later times from a Christo-centric to a Trinitarian interpretation of mission. According to Kirsteen Kim in the article *Mission Theology of the Church*, this shift owes a great deal to the Eastern Church Fathers and to the encounter of western with contemporary Orthodox theology¹⁰¹. The mission affirmation from 1982, *Mission and Evangelism*, was a very traditional mission document, which from an Orthodox perspective was mainly Protestant influenced and many Orthodox theologians did not feel comfortable with the mission theology that the document described¹⁰². According to Petros Vassiliadis in the article *An Orthodox Assessment of the New Mission Statement in International Review of Mission*, there are many aspects of the new mission affirmation that are ‘Orthodox’, or have had a contribution of Orthodoxy. Amongst these is the Trinitarian importance of the *Missio Dei* theology, the liturgy after the liturgy that is brought in to the affirmation in §17¹⁰³. There are also many other aspects of TTL has been influenced by Orthodox theology. Vassiliadis underlines the importance of bringing the Trinitarian perspective into TTL, especially from an Orthodox perspective, but also because of the changing landscapes of the world today. There are not only Protestants doing missional work today, there is a much wider spectrum. Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal and other missionaries are also a big part of the spreading of the gospel today. The Trinitarian perspective on mission in TTL is more inclusive of all the missionaries of the world, whatever Christian church they are from.

For many western theologians it seems like Orthodoxy and mission is not something that goes hand in hand, but during the last decades there has been more focus on mission within the Orthodox Church. As stated in chapter 3, Orthodox theology describes the Holy Trinity as the center of everything. TTL has the same basis of understanding of the Triune God where everything, all life and all of creation have its roots. When describing the Trinity, TTL

¹⁰¹ Kim, 2010, p. 40

¹⁰² Vassiliadis, 2013, p. 175

¹⁰³ Keum, 2013, p. 9, §17

especially underlines the Creator God, the incarnated Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, the life-giver who continues Gods work in the world today. Throughout TTL, the Holy Spirit, the life-giving Spirit, the Triune God and the Trinity is mentioned several times, giving a wider dimension of the understanding of mission and life in the Trinity. Bishop Mor Coorilos says that he hopes the new mission statement will bring a new appreciation of the mission of the Holy Spirit, and open the eyes of the reader to the Trinitarian perspective which runs through the whole affirmation¹⁰⁴. In TTL one can speak of *Missio Trinitatis*, The mission of the Trinity. From the act of creation to the sending of the apostles, and the church of God, the Trinity plays a central role in the everyday Christian life, in the church and mission. TTL reflects the mission of the Holy Spirit, which exists within the mission of the Trinity.

The working group on Mission and Spirituality of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), in the process of writing TTL, describes in the article *Companions in the Spirit – Companions in Mission* that there has been some convictions they had with them all the time during their work. “Spirituality is life in the Spirit, and life in the Spirit is experienced in faith, love and hope”¹⁰⁵. They state that Pneumatology plays a significant role in the theology today and that it leads to assuming a Trinitarian theology of mission with emphasis on the Pneumatology of the presence of God. In Christianity today there is a renewed interest in the Holy Spirit, Spiritual life and the Trinity, and this has to be taken into consideration when looking at mission in our context. They underline that the Spirit is not ours to control; we are His servants not the other way around. In *The Orthodox Way* by Kallistos Ware he writes that the whole aim of the Christian life is to be a Spirit-bearer, to live in the Spirit of God, to breathe the Spirit of God. This very statement gives us a good reason to believe that we can find many similarities between the Pneumatology of TTL and the Orthodox theology surrounding the Holy Spirit.

5.1 The relationship within the Trinity

The relationship within the Trinity is highlighted in both TTL and in Orthodox theology with many similarities. In TTL they mention the importance of the relationship and union between two of the *hypostasis*, or persons of the Trinity, namely the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ. The Spirit cannot work without Christ, because the Holy Spirit is the continuing presence of Jesus

¹⁰⁴ Mor Coorilos, 2014, p. 39

¹⁰⁵ CWME Working group on Mission and Spirituality, 2012, p. 43

in our world today. In the Bible we can see that it is the Holy Spirit that sends Jesus Christ through the incarnation, and it is the Son who sends the Spirit to the disciples at Pentecost. Their cooperation and work are intertwined. Because of the incarnation and the work of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit was sent to complete the mission of Christ. In Orthodox theology we also find the same understanding of the presence of Christ through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is sent to the world to continue and complete the incarnation, life and work of Christ. The Orthodox Church states in the same way as TTL that it is the Holy Spirit that sends Jesus Christ to the world through the incarnation, and that it is Christ that sends the Spirit at Pentecost. As both TTL and Orthodoxy agrees upon that the Holy Spirit is a continuation of the work of Jesus Christ today, it is also important to make clear that the Holy Spirit is much more than that. The Holy Spirit is a realization of the work of Christ, He continues the work that Jesus started amongst the people that are willing and open to receive the gospel of Christ.

Even though there lays an understanding of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ in Orthodox theology, the main focus there is the relationship between them and the Father. The Father is the source of both the Son and the Holy Spirit in Orthodox theology and He is the one that sends. There is nothing that excludes the Father in TTL or Jesus Christ in Orthodox theology; they both believe that the Trinity is a mutual relationship that dwells in a mutual love, which is brought forward to all of Gods people. In the Nicene Creed used by the Orthodox Church it is stated that together with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is worshiped and glorified. According to the Orthodox theology surrounding the Holy Spirit, the Spirit is coeternal, He did not just appear at Pentecost, but has dwelled in the world since the beginning. This is also valid in TTL, which points out that the Holy Spirit, Gods *ru'ach*, was present at the creation of the earth and is present throughout the times.

In §16 in TTL we get a sentence telling us that the Pneumatological focus on mission in this document essentially is Christological¹⁰⁶. The relationship between the Son and the Spirit is impossible to divide. The Orthodox understanding of the relationship of the Trinity is that they are the same essence but their characteristics might differ. They are inseparable, they work together at all times but within us they act in different ways, and our understanding of them might be different. This might explain the understanding of the sentence in §16. The mission of the Spirit could not be without the incarnation and the mission that Jesus Christ

¹⁰⁶ Keum, 2013, p. 8-9, §16

started. It is important to remember that we cannot separate the three. They do not work alone, without the two others; they always work in a communion with each other.

5.2 The Spirit and the Bible

The Holy Spirit has His foundation in the Bible, from the beginning of the Scripture. This is clearly stated both in TTL and in the Orthodox theology surrounding the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit of God is present in the creation of the earth, and continues His work all through the Old Testament. However, it becomes even more visible when encountering the New Testament. The Holy Spirit that was present throughout the Old Testament is the same Spirit that Maria received and that incarnated Jesus Christ. Through the New Testament, we can see the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ, starting at the incarnation, and it becomes even clearer at the baptism of Jesus where Christ receives the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost the Spirit is sent to the disciples, bringing gifts and encouraging them in mission. In the book of Acts, it is the Spirit, and the unity in the Trinity that lives in the church and encouraged all the members to share their livings, their lives, the Eucharist and the gospel. The Holy Spirit is the presence of Jesus Christ continued in the world today, and He is sent to complete the mission of God. No matter what understanding one have of the role of the Spirit in mission, it is clear that Christians participate in mission through the love of the Holy Trinity and is set to do so by the Holy Spirit.

As stated in chapter three, Orthodox theology describes five Triadic patterns that are revealed throughout the Scripture. These five patterns are the creation of the world, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the baptism of Christ, the transfiguration of Jesus at the mountain and finally the Eucharist epiclesis. This somewhat corresponds with the description of the Trinity and the Bible found in TTL, which highlights much of the same pattern, at least the first three points. Amongst them is the understanding that the whole Trinity had, and still has a part in the creation. Even though Orthodox teaching about the Trinity and the writing of TTL don't present the same citation in Scripture at all times, they share the common understanding of the presence of the Trinity. The whole Trinity is eternal, present from the beginning of all things. In TTL they start at the beginning with Gods *Ru'ach* floating over the waters at the creation of the world, while in Ware's book, he highlights the importance of Psalm 33, 6, telling us that the Word, the Lord and the Breath was all present at the creation of the world. The whole Trinity was present during the creation and the Word and the Breath a part of the creation of

our world in Gods image. This same understanding of the Breath, or Gods *ru'ach* is found in TTL, presenting that the Breath of God floated over the waters in the beginning of Genesis.

Another common description of the presence of the whole Trinity is the conceiving of Jesus Christ in Virgin Mary. In §13 of TTL this is described by stating that it was the same Spirit that was at the beginning that descended on to Mary and incarnated Jesus Christ¹⁰⁷. Further on, the baptism of Jesus Christ is a clear presence of the whole Trinity, both in Orthodoxy and in TTL. At the baptism of Jesus the Father sent the Spirit over the Son in the shape of a dove and God let His own voice be heard when the Holy Spirit came down upon Jesus. The importance of the Trinity throughout the Bible is reflected in the writing of TTL. The Trinity is working together, creating, blessing and following its people. The biblical proof of the work and the importance of the Trinity stated in the beginning of TTL highlight the importance of the whole Trinity working together and it sets the ground for the Triune God throughout the rest of the mission affirmation. This corresponds with Orthodox theology that also uses the Bible as the Trinitarian source, describing and explaining its work throughout both the Old and the New Testament. The Holy Scripture is in Orthodox theology a part of the tradition; they state that because the Orthodox Church knows its Lord, they also know the right way of the Scripture.

5.3 The Love of the Trinity

The love that exists within the Trinity is a love that binds the Trinity together, and it is one of the main themes that TTL rests upon. Orthodox theology has the same understanding of the existence of love within the Trinity, and it is clearly one of the most central teachings of the gospel. The second paragraph of the mission statement says that “mission begins in the heart of the Triune God and the love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation”¹⁰⁸. The love within the Trinity is a sharing kind of love, a love that they share as a communion. This is a statement that both Orthodox theology and TTL rest upon. Kallistos Ware states that when trying to explain why we believe that God is three in one it is because love cannot exist in isolation. We receive love from the Holy Trinity and this overflowing love is something we as humans cannot and should not keep to ourselves. According to Orthodox theology it is because of love that we exist. The indwelling love of the

¹⁰⁷ Keum, 2013, p. 8, §13

¹⁰⁸ Keum, 2013, p. 4, §2

Trinity is the reason for the loving act of creation. Within the Trinity there is a dwelling love that exists, a love that has to be shared. It is out of love God created human beings and this love gives nurture and reason for human beings to exist. Love is the reason that God created the earth and everything in it. Love is a gift from God to the believers, and is also a necessary means to do mission. Without love we are not called to do mission and share the love of the Trinity with the rest of the world. His continuing creation is the result of God's love to us. This is also clear in TTL. The overflowing love from God is the basis of it all, the reason why we even do mission. Mission is our response to the love we receive from God. When receiving the Holy Spirit, the apostles were told to go out and share the good news with the world, and this is still the mission given to humanity today. Mission is a confirmation of life in the Holy Spirit and gives us the opportunity to live our lives accordingly. It is when we receive the Holy Spirit that our missionary, witnessing lives finds its ground.

5.4 Creation

Another point that Orthodox theology and TTL can agree upon is the involvement of the whole Trinity in the creation of the earth. The act of creation was and still is an act of love that started in the Trinity and overflows to all humans. God created the whole earth, and therefore we are set to take care of it. He created the world out of love and out of love we got the task to take care of the creation. Therefore it is wrong for us to think that only our human needs are worth taking care of. We should therefore join in when there is Eco-justice that is being fronted. In Orthodox theology the earth is first and foremost a picture of the glory of God and that is why we should take part in the work that is being done trying to reduce pollution and global warming. The fact is that Orthodox theology tells us of the importance of creation, especially the creation of human beings. God created us in the image of the Trinity and we were set to rule over the animals and plants. They also focus on the fact that creation is not something static that only happened one time in the creation of the earth. Creation is continual; the Trinity creates every day and will keep on creating. TTL has a larger focus on the planet itself, how we as humans are polluting the earth and how we should join in the work of reducing pollution and trying to be eco-friendly.

In Orthodoxy they tend to focus more on the created human being than on the reduction of global warming, at least this was the tendency before the beginning of the 1990's. The human being was created in the image of the Trinity, and it is in the image and the indwelling love of

the Trinity that the human race exists and do mission in the world today. Their understanding of creation is that we were made in the image of God, and because we are the image of God, deification is lifted up as a part of their teaching. They also believe that as the creation of God we are set to take care of the rest of the created earth. When highlighting the importance of the created human being rather than all of creation, the people of the earth has for many years misinterpreted this in a way that gives human beings power over creation and the possibility to exploit the earth for their own satisfaction. This has happened not only in the Orthodox Church but also in all churches and in the human race throughout. This is a misinterpretation of the role of the human being, we do not own the earth, it is created by God, and because it is a creation made by God we should take care of it, not destroy it. In later days, especially after the conference on *Justice, peace and the Integrity of Creation* of the WCC in Bulgaria in 1987 there has been a larger focus on the fact that it is our responsibility as the communion of Christian churches to take care of Gods creation¹⁰⁹. After this conference, all member churches, including the Orthodox Church was encouraged to increase their focus on environmentalism. TTL brings forward the same point by stating that human beings did not create the earth, God created the earth, and therefore it is our responsibility to take care of the earth and everything in it. We take part in the mission of God because we are His creation, and since we are His creation our life lived on earth should reflect our life in the Spirit.

5.5 Spirit and Church

The importance of the church is truly significant in the Orthodox faith, but both in TTL and in Orthodox theology one can find that the communion within the church has an important role. One of the moments about the Orthodox Church that is common knowledge for most people is that they have a hierarchical structure in the church, which might seem quite strict and rigid. At the same time they believe in a special bond between God and His church. In Orthodoxy they believe that the church is an image of the Trinity. As every Christian is created in the image of God, every person becomes an image of the Trinity, and the church will reflect this, as the church is the communion of the believers. The Trinity dwells within the church and the Holy Spirit plays a central role in the work and life of the church. According to Orthodox Theology it is the Holy Spirit that is the soul of the church, and through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, God indwells in the church. When it comes to the church in TTL, it is mostly described as missional. This is of course logical as TTL is a

¹⁰⁹ Limouris, 1990, p. 1

mission statement, but it still makes a clear point about the church essentially being a missional church. In TTL they point out that all life and work in the church has the love of the Holy Trinity as its source, and with the Holy Spirit present in the church the people is empowered to its mission. It is the Spirit that empowers the church to mission, and it is the Spiritual gifts that are the tools we use to do missional work.

When comparing the concept of church in TTL and in Orthodox theology one can find some similarities. With the belief that the beginning of the physical earthly church was the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they have the same starting point. The church has the love of the Triune God as its source, brought to the Christian church through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Both Orthodox theology and TTL talks about the importance of unity, but also diversity within the church. For the church to function and to be a constructive church we are equipped with different gifts. Each and every person in a congregation is unique, with their own special qualities. This is what makes the church diverse and constructive. The Spirit provides unity within the necessary diversity so that we can have a constructive church according both TTL and Orthodox Pneumatology. The diversity is important to signify that each member of the church is unique, but at the same time united with each other, as one. Together, the church of God is one in unity. The Holy Spirit is present in the church, and it is in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit that God indwells in the church of Christ. Even though we might have different ways of worshipping the Triune God in the different churches, it is the same Holy Spirit that brings us together as one church of God. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the church is the source of our courage and gift of unity, and the reason we should share the gospel with the rest of the world.

5.6 Spiritual gifts

Orthodox theology highlights in some areas the significance of Spiritual gifts, or gifts brought by the Spirit to the people of God. Putting this understanding up to compare with the thought of Spiritual gifts in TTL, we can find quite a similar approach to the theology of the Spirit. Both TTL and Orthodox theology tells of the apostles receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and how the Spirit brought with Him the different Spiritual gifts. At Pentecost the apostles received the gifts of speaking in tongues, as we might know it today. According to Orthodox theology the gifts of the Spirit are not only for the clergy, it is for everyone. This is not highlighted in TTL, but it seems clear through the mission statement in the use of ‘we’ and

‘us’ when receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We can also discern a similarity in the thinking that the Holy Spirit continued His work throughout the ages, and continues His work today. The Spirit is a gift in itself and was not only a gift for the disciples at Pentecost but is the continuing presence in the people that are open and willing to receive Him today. The Holy Spirit is the continuing presence of Jesus Christ.

The first Spiritual gift that was given was when the apostles spoke after receiving the Holy Spirit; everyone present could hear them speak in their own native tongue, everyone could understand what was said. That might have been an important gift at that time, but what might seem to be one of the more important Spiritual gifts that we can find within both Orthodox theology and within TTL both previously and today is the gift of unity. It is through the Holy Spirit that the people of the church are united. According to Orthodox theology the Spiritual gifts are given to all those who are baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit and who are open to bear the Spiritual gifts provided for them. This is what brings the unity in the church. The unity brought by the Holy Spirit to the people of God is an opportunity that the churches should grasp. The unity and cooperation of churches is given by the Holy Spirit, and is something we as Christians should have as a common goal.

The Orthodox theology also highlights the importance of the gift of unity. However they also state that there are several gifts of the Spirit that are given to different people of the church. Tongues have for many been the ideal Spiritual gift, especially in the Pentecostal Churches, but there are other Spiritual gifts as well, all of equal importance, at least in TTL and in Orthodox theology. An example of this is the gift of healing that is a gift that also is mentioned in TTL. Not only can the Spirit heal through prayer, but also through pastoral care and professional healthcare. According to both TTL and Orthodox theology, as mentioned previously, love is another of the gifts of the Spirit that brings unity to the church. It is within the love of the Trinity that we can work and be one.

5.7 The Spirit as the Source of Mission

The whole mission document from 2013 tells us that the work of mission is done through and in the Holy Spirit. Mission is not such a wide term when it comes to Orthodox theology. The tradition of Orthodoxy and mission is not very long, at least as a researched field, but there have been some research done in later years. The theology of Orthodox mission might not be

a very central teaching, but the importance of mission is still there. In Orthodox theology they highlight that it is Jesus Christ who sends the Spirit, because it is the Father who sends Jesus Christ to bring the good news to the world. TTL states that it is because of Christ that we have our missional task. At the same time it is through the Holy Spirit that we do mission. The Spirit is the continuing presence of Christ. Jesus sends the disciples, but it is when they receive the Holy Spirit that they have the power to perform the missional task they are given. In Orthodox theology they teach that it is God who works through the Spirit and brings forward the gospel. Even though they highlight different aspects of who might send the Spirit, both the Orthodox theology and TTL teach that it is the Spirit that is the mission bearer. It is through the Holy Spirit that we are sent to preach the gospel to all the people of the earth. It is the Spirit that prepares the people we meet and opens them up to receive the faith in the Trinity. The arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was not only a gift to the disciples, but it is also a gift to all the people of the earth at all times, and this is continued today. We receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and our mission as Christians is to bring this out to the rest of the world. In Orthodox theology they highlight the diaconal aspect of missional work. In TTL it is stated that the mission of the Spirit today is still the one of liberation and freedom from oppression and marginalization.

It is stated several times both in the literature of Orthodox theology and in TTL that our world is under constant development. With our evolving technology, we are now living in a multi-religious and multi-cultural context in most parts of the world today. This is a blessing in many ways, at least according to TTL, but at the same time it is a challenge for our Christian church. In our modern world it seems like less and less people have the ‘need’ to believe in something bigger than what they see. To evangelize in these contexts are even more important now, because when people don’t have the same need for God anymore, there is also less knowledge about the Trinity especially in much of the western world today. In Orthodox theology there is today a bigger understanding of the fact that culture has to be included into the Orthodox church, at least if they want to proclaim the gospel in a way that is comprehensible for the people of the world today. Cultures are a central part of our world, and the Christian church should also embrace this. The gospel should be spread to all parts of the world with its roots in the Holy Spirit. It is when we do missional work in the Holy Spirit that we can spread the gospel in the right way, with love and in dialogue with people that are not Christian.

5.8 Differences in Understanding

As stated earlier in this chapter, there are many similarities in Orthodox theology and TTL when it comes to the Holy Spirit and His work. Even though there are many similarities there are some areas in each, both the Orthodox theology and in TTL that are not expressed in the other, most likely on purpose. One of these themes is the Father as the Origin. As stated in subsection 5.1, both Orthodox theology and TTL believe that the Spirit is the continuing presence of Christ in the world today, and even though it might seem like they highlight different aspects of the relations of the Trinity, they both believe in the equal and mutual relationship within the Trinity. However, as stated in Chapter three, the Orthodox tradition highlights the Father as the Origin. The problem of *Filioque* is still one of the main concerns and splitting reasons of the Christian church today. In Orthodox theology they underline the importance of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father, not the Son, while in western theology they still use the word *Filioque* in the Creed. The most likely reason that the relationship within the Trinity is not expressed as clearly in TTL as in Orthodox theology is because of the conflict it might cause. The aim of TTL is not to split but to create unity. It is supposed to be a common belief that unites the Christian churches in mission. In Orthodoxy the relationship with the Father is not there to give us an understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, but to make clear what the relations are within the Godhead, while in TTL the goal is to create unity and give us a better understanding of how the Holy Spirit works amongst the people of the world today.

Another part of the theology that is an important part of Orthodoxy and that is not as clear in TTL is the thought of tradition. In Orthodoxy they believe that the Holy Spirit lives and moves through the tradition, and through the traditions one can receive a personal relationship with Christ through the Holy Spirit. In TTL this is not lifted up as an important factor. Our personal relationship with the Trinity and the life of the Spirit are not dependent on the traditions. Mission is moving forward, and our relationship with the Holy Spirit is to discern where it moves and where the Spirit leads us in the world today. It is about being humble and open for the Spirit to do His work in us and bring us where we are needed. Scripture is brought forward as one place where the Christian can have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit in Orthodox theology. The Holy Scripture is, as you can see in chapter 4, an important factor in TTL as well, but it is mostly used to describe the work of the Holy Spirit throughout the times. Even though TTL might not highlight the significance of tradition, it does not mean that it has no part in the document, but the importance lies in the moving

forward, the future of the Christian church and the importance of bringing forward the gospel to all the people of the world today. The Holy Spirit gives us the gifts to bring this forward to all people.

In the Orthodox theology they also highlight the fact that it is not necessary to prove the existence of God through several theories. Our God is incomprehensible. The Holy Trinity is complex and difficult to understand, and there has been, and are several ways to try to explain this complexity. We believe in the one, monotheistic God, but at the same time they are three distinct *hypostasis*, or persons. Even though this relationship is difficult to understand, it is a part of the almighty God. We cannot explain everything about Him, because our God is not something that should be explained, He should be worshiped. In TTL we do not find this same argument about the incomprehensible God. It is underlined that we have an almighty God, but the necessity to point out that we should not have to prove Gods existence we cannot find in TTL.

As stated earlier, The Orthodox theology states that the establishment of the church here at earth was at Pentecost, and compared to TTL they share this common belief. However, the Orthodox Church also states that the church is eternal. Before Pentecost, before the deed of Jesus Christ, the church was wanted and intended. God created the earth and everything in it to have a communion and an alliance with Him. On the one hand Christ founded the church, and on the other hand the church is eternal, intended even before Pentecost. The Orthodox Church also has a much wider and open understanding of their relationship with the Lord. They know the gospel tradition and the church knows itself because it knows its Lord, and it is through Him they are called to be church. This is stated quite clearly in the Orthodox tradition but in TTL it is not expressed this clearly. This is most likely because TTL does not just contain one Christian tradition, but several churches are members and therefore the tradition of one church is not lifted up as the ideal tradition, but TTL tries instead to include all of its member churches in their official documents.

Deification is another occurrence we can find in the Orthodox theology but not in TTL. In the Orthodox Church they teach that because we are created in the image of God we can have communion with Him, and we ourselves can become like God. This is the ultimate destiny for the created human being. If we use our communion with God in the right way we can become like God. Deification as theology is not found in TTL. In the mission affirmation of 2013 they

state that the human beings are created in the image of God, but they do not lift it further than that.

5.9 Missio Dei

When writing about the new mission affirmation, Kirsteen Kim explains that in TTL they wanted to continue the paradigm of God's mission, or *Missio Dei*, which was affirmed in the 1982 mission affirmation¹¹⁰. *Missio Dei*, Gods Mission has been used for several years as an explanation of how mission should be carried out, and to make sure that no one gets the wrong idea of whom the source of mission is, as might have been done in earlier years. In §2 of TTL it is stated that mission begins in the heart of the Triune God. This is what *Missio Dei* wants to express. In her book, *Joining in with the Spirit*, Kim underlines that in the beginning of the 1950s, the general understanding of God as a Trinity in the western world had tended to be about the nature of God as loving communion, but at the International Mission Conference (IMC) in Willingen in 1952, a document was created, stating that the understanding of the Trinity was closer to the Orthodox understanding. The Trinity was engaged in the world through a dual economy of the Son and the Spirit¹¹¹. In TTL they have brought this even further, with the understanding that *Missio Dei* affirms the importance of the Holy Spirit for mission theology¹¹². As stated in the beginning of chapter three, there is much about TTL that the Orthodox Church can identify with, amongst these is the Trinitarian importance of the *Missio Dei* theology. The intention of the Holy Spirit as the main source of mission in TTL is to make sure that it has a dynamic structure and that it includes diversity and transformation as main concepts of mission in changing landscapes today¹¹³.

When analyzing the importance of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox theology, we can see from the start that the whole Trinity has an important place in the Orthodox Church. In their liturgy and in their everyday life, the presence of the Trinity is in the church and the Holy Spirit is the motivation and the part of the Holy Trinity that leads us on the missional path. *Missio Dei* is for the Orthodox Church and TTL the presence of the Holy Trinity within the world is the Father working through His sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

¹¹⁰ Kim, IRM, 2012, p. 316

¹¹¹ Kim, 2009, p. 28-29

¹¹² Kim, IRM, 2012, p. 317

¹¹³ Keum, 2012, p. 2

5.10 The Holy Trinity as a unity of love

When comparing the Holy Trinity in TTL and in Orthodox theology there is one common denominator that they share, and which has become clear throughout this process. It is the unity and the love of the Holy Trinity that is the source of our faith and our mission. It was out of love that the Holy Trinity created the earth and everything in it. This love they talk about both in TTL and in the Orthodox theology is the kind of love that exists within the Trinity itself. The love of the Trinity is the basis of all life, and love is also the basis of the Trinity. It is the Holy Spirit that keeps our hearts pumping with love for God, and the Trinity is the start and the reason for everything. The Holy Spirit is the unity of the church, it creates unity, and this unity creates an overflowing love that we are sent to share with the rest of the world. It is because of the love of the Holy Trinity that we were created, and it is because of the love of the Trinity that we have to share the gospel with the rest of the world. Jesus Christ came to the world to die for the sins of all people. Creation was not a forced act, it was an act of love, and Christ dying for our sins was also an act of the same love. When Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to the world, He brought with Him the gift of an overwhelming love that should be too powerful to keep as a secret within the church. This love gives the Christian people the strength to bring the Good news to all the people of the earth.

6 Conclusions

In this master thesis I have tried to analyze how the Pneumatology of the Orthodox Church has effected the newest mission affirmation of the World Council of Churches, namely *Together Towards Life*.

6.1 Summary

The WCC is an ecumenical council working together to find common ground within the different Christian churches. Throughout this thesis we can see that there is a clear shift from a Christo-centric to a Trinitarian interpretation of mission. According to both Kirsteen Kim and Petros Vassiliadis, TTL is much more compatible for the Orthodox Church than the previous mission affirmation of the WCC.

TTL and Orthodox Pneumatology find common ground in several theological issues. The Holy Trinity has a central part of them both, the involvement of the Triune God in creation, in the work and life of Jesus Christ and at Pentecost. The whole Trinity works together at all times, though we might experience that they act differently within us. Within the Bible there are triadic patterns that give us a glimpse of them working together at all times, for example at creation, at the incarnation and at the baptism of Jesus Christ. God sent His Son to the world; the Son is incarnated by and receives the Holy Spirit. The Spirit sends the Son in the incarnation and the Son sends the Spirit at Pentecost. There is a common thread throughout TTL and in Orthodox theology, especially when it comes to the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity is first and foremost love. It is energy of love that cannot compare to anything, a unity of love that derives from the Father, through the Son in the Holy Spirit. The soul of the church is the gift of the Holy Spirit. There is a special bond between God and His church, and the church is the picture of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit brings gifts to the people of the church for example the gift of unity. God created the earth and everything in it, and as the human beings are set to take care of the earth, we should do exactly that and not exploit it. The church has a joint mission to take part in the work done to reduce pollution. The Holy Spirit is the source of mission in both Orthodoxy and TTL. He sends Gods people and equips them with the necessary gifts to bring the gospel out to the rest of the world.

6.2 The influence Orthodox Pneumatology has had on Together Towards Life

As stated in the introduction, my research question for this thesis has been:

In what way has the theology of the Orthodox Church influenced the understanding of Pneumatology in TTL?

At the start of chapter 5 I refer to Kirsteen Kim stating that the shift from a Christo-centric to a Trinitarian interpretation of mission owes a great deal to the Eastern Church Fathers and the Orthodox Church approaching the west, and according to Petros Vassiliadis there are many aspects of the new mission statement that are ‘Orthodox’. The Trinitarian importance of the *Missio Dei* theology is one of these aspects. As seen throughout this thesis there are many features of Orthodox theology surrounding the Trinity and the Holy Trinity that corresponds with TTL. The cooperation of the whole Trinity is highlighted in both Orthodoxy and in TTL, stating that the whole Trinity has been present in the world since the beginning of creation, that they are three persons but one essence.

When working on TTL the CWME working group on Mission and Spirituality had a conviction as the basis of their work, namely “spirituality is life in the Spirit, and life in the Spirit is experienced in faith, love and hope”¹¹⁴. This basis has been found in the Orthodox Pneumatology, when Ware claims that the whole aim of the Christian life is to be a Spirit-bearer, to live in the Spirit of God, to breathe the Spirit of God¹¹⁵ reflected in TTL, through the descriptions of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has been present in the world from the beginning of the earth, and through love and unity the church has a mission to share the gospel with the rest of the world. In faith, we believe that the Holy Spirit equips the people of God with the necessary gifts needed to take on this mission. It is in faith, hope and love the Orthodox Church and TTL state that a “life in the Holy Spirit is the essence of mission, the core of why we do what we do and how we live our lives”¹¹⁶. With the same basis of living our life in the Spirit and the statements of Kirsteen Kim and Petros Vassiliadis, I believe that Orthodox Pneumatology has influenced the new mission affirmation in a positive direction, giving back the task as the sender of mission to the Holy Spirit.

¹¹⁴ CWME Working group on Mission and Spirituality, 2012, p. 43

¹¹⁵ Ware, 1979, p. 118

¹¹⁶ Keum, 2013, p. 4, §3

6.3 My contribution to the theological conversation

With a background in the Norwegian Lutheran church I believe that my contribution to the theological conversation is mainly ecumenical. As stated in the introduction most of the churches in the global north has until now, and to some degree still has a Christological focus. TTL has contributed to shift the focus onto another member of the Trinity. With this thesis I believe that I have highlighted the importance of ecumenism in our Christian church today that we can learn from each other. There are churches with different focus, and it is easy to go astray looking to find the right way. United the churches can learn from each other and find a common ground that might lead those who might seem a bit lost back on track.

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