
by

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Duke Divinity School
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Date: 5/4/2020

Approved:

Jeff Conklin-Miller, Supervisor

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Thesis Submitted in partial fulfillment of
The requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry
In the Divinity School of Duke University
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There continues to be strong interest in the arena of Christian formation, which is primarily concerned with developing mature Christians in light of shifts in contemporary views on religion and its relationship to ethics. The field of Christian formation has many facets one of which is the field of Christian practices. Those who work in this field are primarily concerned with relating Christian beliefs to the every day lives of Christians in the interest of providing a stronger witness to the faith. Also, Christian practices are a means to provide a response to other forms of identity formation provided by a hyper individualistic consumer driven culture.

This thesis is concerned with the question of how the work of the Holy Spirit is understood to function in Christian practices? In short, “Does Pentecost have anything to do with how Christians live their daily lives?” To answer these questions a brief investigation of present work in Christian practices will be provided to ascertain how the work of the Holy Spirit is present. Thereafter, an example of how the focus on the Holy Spirit in the work of Christian practices may be enhanced indebted to Eugene Rogers’ work on the Holy Spirit and James K. A. Smith’s work on the formation of Christian desire will be proposed.
Dedication

To Derrick Jackson and Wayne Simpson…gone too soon

To all boys and men of African descent

To all who are defined as having special needs and those who care for them

Who struggle…

Who survive and even thrive…

May you never be separated from your bodies

May you never be separated from the Holy Spirit

For in one you possess the other…

It is this hope to which this work is dedicated!
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Introduction

During the months of October and November of 2018, I interviewed eight people who had been long standing and well-respected members in my congregation on how they understood their Christian faith to operate on a daily basis. Only one member of the congregation made reference to the Holy Spirit. Even more interesting was her desire to experience the Spirit’s presence exclusively through speaking in tongues. This limited recognition of the Holy Spirit’s work in people’s lives points to a larger problem in Christian discipleship, particularly in our media driven age that offers powerful sources of counter-formations.

Books on Christian formation usually place emphasis on either the minutiae of Christian practices and their benefits or attempt to establish why such practices are vital. Regardless of how these books and essays consider the relationship between Christian practices, formation, and witness, all of them attempt to answer the basic question, “What does theology have to do with ‘real’ life?” Some writers draw on the social sciences to answer this question, while others define the term “practice” in light of social ethics, the ascetic life, psychology, or Alasdair MacIntyre’s concept of “social practices.” However, the theology that drives much of the discourse around Christian practices is often limited.

In much of the work associated with Christian formation, a theology of the Holy Spirit may be assumed, but it never serves as the explicit theological ground for answering the question of how doctrine relates to daily living. This fact points to why much of the work regarding Christian practices and witness provides a deficient
understanding of the body because the absence of Spirit-talk in the work of Christian practices may lead to a form of Docetism. Since Christian practices are by nature embodied, then an inadequate account, however unintentional, of the Holy Spirit’s agency within the work of Christian practices can lead to an unconscious bias which in practice coheres to how a theological understanding of the body means separating flesh from Spirit. Moreover, since embodied Christian practices witness, as in Eucharist and baptism, to not only how the Spirit befriends the body; but, also how bodies are unified with other bodies as the body of Christ in such a way where sinful understandings of the body (i.e. race, commodity) are transformed, then a lack of pneumatology in such practices contribute to the propagation of such damaged understandings of the body. An inadequate connection between Christian practices and pneumatology translates into other ways bodies are disconnected from other bodies which compromises the Christian claim of unity of bodies through the Spirit expressed in scripture as the fulfillment of prophecy when the “Spirit was poured out on all flesh.” For example, much of the literature on Christian formation ignores the fact that most churches, regardless of programs that attend to the development of Christian practices, are segregated by race and place.

Such an oversight directly proceeds from an inadequate understanding of the Spirit’s role in discipleship, one that under appreciates how the body functions in Christian formation. Without a well-developed understanding of the Holy Spirit’s role in

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1 My definition of the body in this thesis is indebted to Christopher West’s commentary on John Paul II’s “Theology of the Body.” West writes in *Theology of the Body Explained*, “the body, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world, the mystery hidden since time immemorial in God, and thus to be a sign of it.” Pg. 5.
forming disciples, based on a Trinitarian framework, Christian attempts at formation will prove to be insufficient in the face of the demands of hyper-individualism and a consumer-orientated society, a society in which the body is evaluated primarily by its work and consumption. Embracing the Spirit’s presence in our daily practices is an essential component of discipleship, as it helps Christians discern dominant cultural narratives’ that draw them away from a life with the Triune God.

My project will employ a theology of the Holy Spirit indebted to the works of Eugene F. Rogers, Jr. and the work of James K.A. Smith with an appeal to an increased use of performance criticism in the practice of Christian formation as a means to show how the Holy Spirit shapes capacities for perception and discernment that, in turn, empower congregations and their leaders to attend more carefully to their embodied contexts. This study should be considered as a part of a larger conversation about how Christian leaders may increase the domain of ideas from which the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit can be understood in day to day life. This thesis is more than a practice in academic discourse but a ‘roadmap’ meant to serve congregational leaders in the work of Christian formation. This ‘roadmap’ should translate into not only material for a richer pneumatological conversation; but, also a resource from which a reimagining of Christian practices of formation may bring the activity and identity of the Holy Spirit closer to the surface of public discourse and curriculum planning within the local church. This thesis intends a formula for Christian practice attuned to the work of the Holy Spirit that will enable Christians in their local context to resist the marketing and propaganda provided by state and capitalist media that seek to form bodies for their own self-serving and often destructive ends.
Since Christian practices are the focus of this thesis and can assume many different meanings predicated upon many different methodologies, a unifying definition will be provided after which an explanation of the basic structure of this thesis will serve as the conclusion to this introduction. To this end, the definition to be referenced in what is to follow proceeds from the work of Miroslav Volf and Dorthy Bass. Their definition accounts for the complexity inherent within the field of Christian practices.² Volf and Bass’ “distinctive understanding of Christian practices” is made up of four parts:

1) Christian practices address fundamental human needs and conditions.

2) Christian practices thus involve a profound awareness, a deep knowing; they are activities imbued with the knowledge of God and creation.

3) Christian practices are social and historical. They are activities people engage in together over time.

4) Christian practices share in the mysterious dynamic of fall and redemption, sin and grace.³

In addition to this dynamic definition of practices another embedded assumption living within this project is when I mention John Calvin’s work on the Holy Spirit Barth should be kept in mind and vise versa because not only are they both within the Reformed tradition, their work, although differently, contribute to a dearth of Spirit-talk in Christian practices. Secondly, while no Christian leader or educator would claim that the formational practices they teach in their churches do not involve the work of the Holy Spirit, the scholarly work which undergirds these programs, inadvertently perhaps, makes


³ Volf and Bass, Practicing, 20-32.
the work of the Holy Spirit in Christian practices vague and esoteric. This claim translates into practical unawareness and understanding of how the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit functions in the everyday lives of Christians. Furthermore, is it assumed, that there may also be a trend in the local church where Christians primarily understand the embodied work of the Holy Spirit in subjective (e.g. speaking in tongues, personal talents, etc.) and perhaps elitist ways which does not favor, in practice, being aware of how the work of the Holy Spirit operates in the quotidian existence of believers. I will explain the basic structure of this thesis next.

The first chapter, *Eugene Rogers and the Spirit in Academic Discourse*, explains the rationale behind Rogers critique of pneumatological discourse in the academy and his development of the idea of “resting” as a first step in addressing what he believes is a lack of substantive Spirit-talk in academic discourse. This chapter will serve as the foundation for chapter two entitled, *Extending the Work of Eugene Rogers into the Work on Christian Practices*, in which I will analyze how Rogers’ pneumalogical critique of academic discourse is valid for the work on Christian practices. Specifically, in this chapter I will explain and apply a model of analysis based upon Rogers’ observations. I will show that Serene Jones’ development of Graced Practices, Sarah Coakley’s development of Deepening Practices and James K.A. Smith’s development of how the body teaches the heart or our desires through Christian practices of formation relate the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit to Christian practices of formation in what Rogers would call unsubstantive ways. The work done in chapter two will set the stage for applying Rogers’ idea of “the Holy Spirit resting on the Body of Christ” serves, like in his critique of academic discourse, as a way forward in making the work on Christian
practices more pneumatologically robust. In chapter three, *The Spirit Resting on Christian Practices and Scripture as Performance*, two goals will be achieved:

1) I will synthesize Rogers’ idea of “rest” with Smith’s idea of embodied Christian practices in order to show what an enhanced account of the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit in the work on Christian Practices may look like.

2) I will also incorporate aspects of performance criticism into Rogers’ and Smith’s collective vision in order to deepen the implications their work has for making the agency and identity of God’s Spirit easier to grasp in practical terms for the formational work that happens within the local church. In short, we claim that an attention to performance criticism will result in making Smith’s work not only a more practical expression of Rogers’ theological discourse but would also and more importantly strengthen how the relationship between God the Spirit and the body functions to liberate people from ways other socially constructed practices make the gospel and politics of Jesus Christ unintelligable.

I turn now to constructing our argument that, in vary simple terms, is founded upon the notion that if Pentacost means anything for our time, then the work on Christian practices of formation needs to give the Spirit more to do.
1. Eugene Rogers and the Spirit in Academic Discourse

Any discussion regarding the Holy Spirit in the work on Christian practices of formation, oddly enough does not begin with the work on Christian practices itself. Rather it begins with the question Rogers’ poses in After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources outside the Modern West, “Is There Nothing the Spirit Can Do That the Son Can not Do Better?”1 This question is also an affirmation of what Rogers observes regarding the academic discourse surrounding pneumatology. According to Rogers, contrary to modern ways of understanding the work of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit in previous centuries “seemed, to a non-specialist at least, always strictly tied to talk of holy places, holy people, and holy things.”2 God the Spirit, “did not float free of bodily existence as it does in modern North Atlantic Christian discourse and worship.”3 This trend Rogers further describes as giving “lip service” to the importance of the Holy Spirit while denying the need for and the having of prolonged substanitive pneumatological discourse.4 In this section I will show three ways Rogers’ supports his observation regarding the double standard he observes within academic discourse surrounding the Spirit. Furthermore, I will explain Rogers’ idea of “rest” or “resting” of the Holy Spirit that he submits as a viable way forward in encouraging more robust Spirit-talk in theological discourse. I will also show not only that Rogers’ indirectly relates Chrstitan practices to his work but I will also argue that how and why he mentions Chrstitian

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2 Ibid., 1.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.
practices requires that more work in connecting his work to Christian practices needs to be done and why.

The first reason the Holy Spirit is obscured in academic discourse is predicated upon a technique defined by Luther as the *modus loquendi theologorum* or, in more contemporary terms, the theological language game that Christian theologians of antiquity, particularly in addressing Pelagius, deployed. The theological language game why and how grace-talk developed as a more theologically secure option in explaining how God influences the actions of human beings versus Spirit-talk. In focusing more intently upon historical influences regarding the use of grace language Rogers provides rationale for why its favored use is inversely proportional to the use of Spirit-filled language. Rogers observes that the use of ‘grace’ has become a word in Christian discourse that has no memory. Rogers understands that the concept or language of grace has a history, which brings meaning to how it functions in theological discourse. Unfortunately, “grace” and the history which made it a viable “*modus loquendi theologorum* or rules of the theological language game” has been taken for granted.  

Grace speech and its varied theological derivatives have become “things exterior to the discourse that enacted [them].” Rogers brings to our attention that grace speech “took on a life of its own as its function of helping in controversy…was forgotten.” For example, Augustine’s use of “grace” was to counteract Pelagius who denied that the free will of

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6 Ibid., 217.
7 Ibid.
human beings was not effected by sin and could achieve good works without God.\(^8\) The fallout of this debate was that grace and liberty became “mutually exclusive concepts which then have to be reconciled.”\(^9\) One of the ways this tension was resolved was to change the rules of the theological language-game and hence an alternative was developed.

Rogers explains that rather than using the theological language of “grace or liberty” theologians like Thomas Aquinas used “grace or the Spirit” instead, perferring to use grace language rather than Spirit language.\(^10\) After the Pelagian controversy and perhaps in the interest of practicing fidelity to how Augustine used the language of grace rather than Spirit language to resolve it, other later theologians, like Calvin, who definitely had knowledge of this history continued the tradition. Therefore, the Holy Spirit becoming “interior [‘the knowledge of which cannot reach our senses’ to use Calvin’s phrase] to the bodily habits that enact it” is a linguistic iteration of Augustine’s choice.\(^11\) But Calvin’s use of other language rather than Spirit language also serves as an example of how uncritically enshrining Christian tradition can have prolonged detrimental effects, especially where the need for connecting God’s Spirit more securely to embodied Christian practices is concerned. More on how this tradition relates to Christian practices will be discussed later. Suffice it to say that Rogers uses the historical development of grace language as one reason the pneumatological development has stalled in academic discourse.

\(^8\) Ibid., in this sentence I am interpreting Rogers’ reference to Pelagius to be an indirect historical reference to Augustine and how Augustine chose to respond to Pelagius in order to further the claims I am making regarding how the favoring of grace language came about and why.


\(^11\) Ibid., 218.
Rogers second reason for why Spirit language has remained superfluous in theological discourse is because of how, like a jazz musician, Calvin improvised upon Augustine’s grace-filled response to Pelagius. The pattern used by Calvin to describe how the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit functions in relation to human agency is defined by Rogers as apophatic. As such Calvin’s direct use of other language that obscures the agency and identity of Holy Spirit is a continuation of the tradition of how the effects of the theological application of grace language to reduce the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit in academic discourse in the interest of thwarting Pelagian anthropology operates. It is important to make clear that Calvin does not use grace language as such. He uses the language of “secrecy” and “hideness” which has the same effect of grace language because it affirms the Holy Spirit’s activity as wholly unconscious, by-passing conscious human agency altogether. Calvin’s language of hiddenness and secrecy insures that Christian theology is inoculated from giving too much credit to human agency within the economy of God. Rogers is noting the failure of the success of this technique which resulted in quieting the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit in theological discourse for years to come.

Indexing the Spirit, Calvin asserts, that the “true causes of events are hidden to us.” Furthermore, Calvin claims, that “since the order, reason, end and necessity of those things which happen for the most part lie hidden in God’s purposes, [they] are not apprehended by human opinion.” By making the Person of the Holy Spirit and her work hidden to the human affirms that God is different from the human while assuming an 12 By making the Person of the Holy Spirit and her work hidden to the human affirms that God is different from the human while assuming an expansion of God’s agency in the Spirit. The Spirit in Calvin’s theology does not amplify

human agency but the Spirit, as a first cause, may decide to “retire behind the secondary agency of human beings.”\textsuperscript{13} This penchant for the Spirit to “retire” undetected by our conscious senses in Calvin’s pneumatology is supported in his commentary on Hebrews. He writes:

The Spirit of God shows us hidden things, the knowledge of which cannot reach our senses: promised to us is eternal life, but it is promised to the dead; we are assured of a happy resurrection, but we are as yet involved in corruption; we are pronounced just, yet sin dwells in us; we hear that we are happy, but we are as yet in the midst of many miseries; an abundance of all good things is promised to us, but still we often hunger and thirst; God proclaims that he will come quickly, but he seems deaf when we cry to him. What would become of us were we not supported by hope and did our minds not emerge out of the midst of the darkness above the world through light of God’s word and of his Spirit?\textsuperscript{14}

Calvin’s theology promotes an unconscious or reserved pneumatology, which is also present in a different way in the Westminster Confession:

The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.\textsuperscript{15}

Here we witness the Holy Spirit’s work only as it relates to Christ, which is yet another linguistic technique used that equates to the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit becoming subtly reduced in the minds of believers through an appeal to Christ language. Moreover, this quote relays that we are to take the work of the Holy Spirit as a

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 248.
\textsuperscript{15} The Westminster Confession of Faith, (The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 2010), iv.
given presence “in our hearts...,” giving us new life and gifts, which should be understood as furthering Calvin’s language of hiddeness because it relays an unawareness of the agency of Holy Spirit acting upon us. Because the Holy Spirit operates in our hearts we are not conscious of its work. Apart from the quote above which is part of the “Essentials of Our Faith” section of the Confession, the work of the Holy Spirit is never again mentioned apart from Christ, if at all, in sections entitled “The Church”, “The Sacraments”, and “Baptism.” At the risk of breaking my train of thought in this paragraph the reader should note for future reference the fact that all of these sections are named for and have to do with Christian practices. Even more, the work of the Holy Spirit is not even understood apart from the work of Christ even in the section entitled “The Holy Spirit.” I mention the Westminster Confession to show that the effect of Calvin’s language of hiding and secrecy in making the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit vague and unaware to human beings has been codified which only furthers its nominalization because the The Westminster Confession is an systematic exposition of Calvin’s theology.

The Westminster Confession mirrors the apophatic design observed in Calvin’s work and marks in another register a tendency to interiority when speaking of the identity and agency of the Holy Spirit. Calvin, as quoted above, keeps the work of the Holy Spirit internal to the bodily routines that enact it. Contrary to Aquinas, Calvin does not try to redefine “grace or Holy Spirit” as “grace or the law” but adds yet another iteration of viable theological language which operates in the same way. What this means is rather than redefining “grace or Holy Spirit” as “grace or the law” Calvin uses “grace or

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16 Westminster, 54.
“secret/hidden” which also serves the same function. Using secret/hidden language is another means through which the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit remains unconscious to the human being and thus side stepping any attempt to collapse the Spirit’s agency into a form of human agency.\textsuperscript{17}

In his article, “The Mystery of the Spirit in Three Traditions: Calvin, Rahner, Florensky: Or, You Keep Wondering Where the Spirit Went,”\textsuperscript{18} Rogers renders an analysis of Calvin which increases our understanding of how Calvin contributes to an underdeveloped pneumatology within academic discourse. In his consideration of Calvin, Rogers is not trying to enter into a debate of whether or not one should or should not be cautious in talking about the Spirit for fear of “saying too little, and saying too much.”\textsuperscript{19} Rather than accusing Calvin of maximalism or minimalism in pneumatology, Rogers uses Calvin’s pneumatology to “register an apophatic moment.” He writes, “John Calvin is often considered a ‘theologian of the Holy Spirit’\textsuperscript{20} which belies the fact that Calvin’s pneumatology makes the work of the Spirit secret.

In Calvin’s commentary of Romans Rogers finds an appeal to secrecy where Calvin states, “God gains ‘admission to our souls by the secret impulse of His Spirit.”\textsuperscript{21} According to Rogers, this theme of the Spirit working in secret is also defended in Calvin’s Institutes where Calvin wrote, “The Things Spoken Concerning Christ Profit Us by the Secret Working of the Spirit.”\textsuperscript{22} Moreover, Rogers elsewhere observes Calvin stating that the “Spirit is secret because it manifests Christ in preference to itself; because

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{17}{Rogers, \textit{After the Spirit}, 220.}
\footnotetext{18}{Rogers, \textit{Mystery}, 243-60.}
\footnotetext{19}{Rogers, \textit{The Mystery}, 244.}
\footnotetext{20}{Ibid., 245.}
\footnotetext{21}{Ibid.}
\footnotetext{22}{Ibid., 247.}
\end{footnotes}
we cannot usually observe its workings in human hearts; because we cannot often understand its answers to prayer.”

The reason why Calvin keeps the work of the Holy Spirit secret is because his work is governed by pastoral concerns. What is meant by pastoral is that, contrary to how Augustine used grace language within the theological language game to combat Palagianism, Calvin’s theology of the Holy Spirit deploys the language of secrecy in calibrating the tension between human agency and divine agency so that the believer would favor God’s word as the animator of everything they do. Of import is the fact that the hiddenness of the work of the Holy Spirit, as Calvin relays it, still remains, which is why Rogers’ work references it to support his claim that Spirit discourse is frozen in time and suspended in what seems to be virtual insanity because of a love affair with the Filioque controversy.

The third and final fact that Rogers’ uses to explain why, in academic discourse, there is a dearth or reticence toward a more robust engagement with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is because of the influence that Karl Barth’s version of a trinitarian revival has had within contemporary theological developments. Rogers, expounding upon Robert Jenson’s article “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went,” writes “[a]n intratrinitarian problem looms: the Spirit has no gift to give the creature, which is not Christ, because the Spirit has no gift to give Christ.” Smith learns from Jenson that Barth makes the Holy Spirit “at every step not the Spirit, as advertised, but Christ; the Spirit is denoted invariably by impersonal terms, chiefly the “power’ of Jesus Christ.” Understood in light

23Ibid.
24Ibid.
25Rogers, After the Spirit, 3-4.
26Rogers, After the Spirit, 23.
of this thesis, Jenson’s observation becomes the reason why work on Christian practices slight the Holy Spirit.

A derivative of the influence of Barth’s theology upon the heuristics of today’s theological discourse is that Rogers “intratrinitarian problem” is transferred in how the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit has been conceived of in relation to Christian practice. Considering what Rogers has noticed regarding how Barth eclipses the Holy Spirit with Christ and his present work under consideration it can be said that Barth and Calvin are two sides of the same coin. The apophaticism of Calvin’s pneumatology in academic theology has operated for theologians, according to Rogers, in the same way Barth’s theology of the Holy Spirit has. Barth covers the Spirit under “the power of Jesus Christ’s being” while Calvin reveals the Spirit only to keep its work a secret.

According to Rogers, the historical tradition of the theological language game, specifically how it was played during the Pelagian contraversy that was siezed upon and continued through Calvin’s apohatic theology, constitutes how the weight of history has played a roll in mutting pneumatological discourse in the academy. Although these aspects of Christian intellectual history have contributed in significant ways to how “Spirit-talk in the last hundred years has been ever more evoked, and ever more [lacking substance].”

This trend of evoking the importance of the Holy Spirit while at the same time relegating pneumatological development within theological discourse to second class status was extremely amplified and further codified because of the ideas of Karl Barth. Rogers’ indexes all three of these elements to show why there has been, contrary

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27 Rogers, After the Spirit, 1.
to Spirit-talk in earlier centuries of the Christian era, a “continual lack of substance accorded the Holy Spirit in modern discourse.”

Rogers wants to change this trend of the inconsequential nature of pneumatology in theological discourse by providing a constructive pneumatology based upon the concept of “resting.” Rogers offers “resting” as more than a metaphorical construct that those in the academy may deploy at will. The idea of “the Holy Spirit resting” he believes will contribute to the further development of pneumatological discourse. The concept of “rest” or “resting” is indebted to an understanding of the Spirit as a “Person with an affinity for material things” and “characteristically befriends the body.” Rogers connecting the agency and identity of God the Spirit to the body not only is a recapitulation of how the Holy Spirit was understood to operate in the past but also aims to make Spirit-talk more engaging for the future.

In arguing that the Spirit is a “Person with an affinity for material things” Rogers’ proposal of what should be done to increase the pneumatological substance of theological discourse deploy’s the scriptural hermeneutic of Hans Frei which makes central the interaction between the Spirit and the Son. Reflection on the relationship between the Son and the Spirit, according to Frei, is based in narrative. Hence, Rogers states, “the logic of Christian intellectual practice favored the depiction of character in narrative, so that the character of Jesus could be identified by what he undertook and underwent.” Narrative as the hermeneutical basis for grasping the identity and character of Christ centralizes the

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28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 60.
30 Ibid., 3
importance of plot and circumstance. The difference this makes is not obvious but is made clearer through the following quote:

according to Frei, the logic of Christian doctrine was that Christ’s identity brought his presence with it…the narratives…brought what they proclaimed. Talk of Christ’s presence [only], might not bring his true identity, but all manner of idols. The important thing, therefore, was to attend to the narrative description in the Gospels…in which action conveys identity.32

The heuristic of story, some may argue, is implausible because a person is first in your presence before you are able to ascertain their identity through their action and character. According to Rogers’ understanding of Frei referenced in the quote above Frei sought the identity of Christ in scripture. Moreover, because scripture does not make a distinction between identity and person, Frei too did not make a distinction between Christ’s identity and the person of Christ. By contrast, Rogers believes that presence before identity or vise versa should be understood as a by-product of how narratives give glimpses of the Spirit’s interaction with the Son. The identity of Christ and the person of Christ is indistinguishable based upon the gift given by the Spirit when it interacts with or rests on Jesus’ body. This is to say that, Rogers, employing Frei’s narrative heuristic, makes an important and insightful distinction that Frei does not. Rogers realizes that,

[the] Spirit rests on the body of the Son and by so doing manifests the love that constitutes the relation of the Father and the Son. That relation is itself the expression of the Oneness of God. What is crucial, therefore, for rightly understanding the relation between the persons of the Trinity is the recognition that they do not need the gifts they give one another, but the gifts they give to one another constitute their unity.33

32 Ibid.
This quote not only communicates how Rogers recognizes the importance of Hans Frei’s narrative approach to interpreting scripture in the interest of affirmation that the Holy Spirit is a Person it also prepares the way for another important theological point he believes is vital for his project. In the quote above Rogers’ compliments Hans Frei narrative hermeneutic with the premise of opera Trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt.\textsuperscript{34} This is a theological principle which claims that the “works of the Trinity toward creation are indivisible…not only is the Father the Creator, but so is the Spirit; not only is the Son the Redeemer, but the Spirit also…The Persons are differentiated by their actions among themselves, not their actions toward us.”\textsuperscript{35} Combining the ideas of Hans Frei with this theological concept allows Rogers to affirm the unity of the Son and the Spirit in a way that legitimates them as Persons who give gifts to each other while at the same time not making the gifts they give only for them. The Spirit is free to bestow its gifts not only upon the body of Christ but also upon the bodies of human beings because of Christ without compromising the Spirit’s identity and agency as solely different and separate from the identity and agency of human creation. Combining the heristic insights of Frei with the theological premise opera Trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt provides theological rational for his proposal that the Spirit is a Person with a preference for material things, specifically the body.\textsuperscript{36}

Rogers deepens the legitimacy of his proposal for more substantive theological discourse regarding the Holy Spirit by incorporating Hans Urs von Balthasar’s idea of “trinitarian inversion,” which means that in economic activity, where the Spirit and the

\textsuperscript{34} Rogers, After the Spirit, 11.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
Son interact in the New Testament the Spirit precedes the Son. All three of these ideas work together to support what Rogers believes is needed to invigorate academic discourse surrounding the Holy Spirit.

Rogers uses these ideas as the foundation from which he begins to construct his pneumatology defined primarily by the term “resting.” The term “resting” derives its content from Rogers interpreting scripture as narrative. He does not focus on all of scripture just certain places in scripture where he believes the interaction between Jesus and the Holy Spirit is most pronounced. These places are the Annunciation, Jesus’ baptism, Transfiguration and Paul’s version of the Resurrection. These are sites that reveal “[n]arratively, the Spirit is identified in her interactions with Jesus, and is so neither identical with him, nor apart from him: doctrinally, the Spirit alights, abides, or comes to rest on the Son.” Rogers observes that reading scripture as a story where the Holy Spirit is a person or character that interacts with the Son extends the lexicon of how one describes the agency of the Holy Spirit to include the language of the Holy Spirit resting upon the body of Jesus. Of import is that Rogers teaches us that the Spirit rests on the Son, which is something the Son cannot do but which makes the son real to us, he writes the “Spirit does what the Trinity does in a particular way by incorporating the particular…the Spirit comes to rest on the body of Jesus, so the Spirit comes to rest on us.” This quote not only shows how resting language does not only refer to how the Holy Spirit relates to the Son but also indicates Rogers’ desire to include that there is a

37 Hauerwas, The Work, 11.  
39 Ibid., 42.
relationship, based in Christian wisdom, between how the Holy Spirit rests on Jesus’ body and how it rest on actual bodies in a real way.

Rogers describes what he means by the Holy Spirit resting upon the body of Jesus and on us in the following quote:

In the world, the Spirit is not Person or thing, because the Spirit is Person on thing. And the Spirit is Person on thing because the Spirit is Person on Person. The Spirit rests on material bodies in the economy, because she rests on the Son in the Trinity. Because (at the undivided act of all three Persons) the Son takes a body, so too (at the undivided act of all three Persons) the Spirit rests on a body. It’s the Son’s own gift tht the Spirit crowns the economy, because it is God’s other Person tha the Spirit celebrates in the Trinity. The Spirit’s befriending of material bodies is her continual elaboration and crowning and consummation of the Incarnation, which is not the work of the Son only but of the Father and the Spirit as well.\(^\text{40}\)

It should be clear from the above quote that “resting” is an active thing and is a term Rogers deploys to communicate that there is no separation between how the Persons of the Trinity operates between themselves and how the Godhead operates with the world. We must understand, however, the Spirit’s activity in the world has a particular shape which arises from and reflects the intratrinitarian relations. This is what Rogers use of “resting” is also meant to convey. In short, to “rest” is an expression of the theological claim that what “God does in the world manifests the way God is, as Barth would put it, ‘antecedently in Himself.’”\(^\text{41}\) Rogers’ description of what he means by the Holy Spirit “resting” on the body of Jesus, so it may rest on us constitutes his contribution to theological discourse in hopes that talk of the importance of the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit will be reflected in more substantive ways in academic circles.

\(^{40}\) Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 62.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 61.
As Rogers in the quote above suggests, “resting” implies that for theological discourse to render a more robust pneumatological account it must emphasize the importance of the body. In short, intratrinitarian relations are communicated to and involve the world via the gifts it gives the world individually and collectively. The agency and identity of the Holy Spirit cannot be fully understood without an appeal to embodiment.

But what does this have to do with a stronger appropriation of the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit in the work of Christian practices? Rogers indirectly suggests that an embodied understanding of the identity and agency of the Holy Spirit contained in the term “resting” is related to Christian practices of formation:

That the Spirit shows an affinity for material things, and befriends the body, does not itself distinguish the Spirit from the Father and the Son; rather it shows again that the Trinity’s activity in the world is of a piece; as Barth puts it, God is the one who loves in freedom also for us, who “so loved the world.” But the Spirit does do that triune thing in a particular way; it has its own tropos hyparxeos, its own place in the trinitarian taxis. To specify that particular way…I take language from the sacraments, the ecclesial practices that best imitate with concrete human persons and concrete material things the giving of thanks that the Spirit witnesses, celebrates, enjoys and keeps faith within the trinitarian life. The Spirit characteristically incorporates the particular (as in gathering the community, for baptism and Eucharist) and distributes the corporate (as the elements and the gifts). 42

Rogers reference to baptism and Eucharist in the above quote shows that Rogers does consider Christian practices of formation to be fertile ground for an understanding how the Holy Spirit resting functions. It must not be lost that Rogers’ idea of “resting” recognizes the importance of Christian practices but only in service to his theological claims:

If it is characteristic of the Spirit in the world that what she distributes particularly she also builds up corporately, that is because it is characteristic of the Spirit in the Trinity, that the One she rests on particularly, she also nourishes with gifts. One sign of this relation is the Annunciation, in which the Spirit gives the Son a corporeal body in order that she might alight upon it. Resting upon the corporeal body of the Son is not the end of the Spirit’s distribution of gifts, but she rests there that she might rest also on the body of the Son in the Church, and on the body of the Son in the baptized, and on the body of the Son in the bread and the wine, and on the body of the Son in whatever other place she conceives it.\textsuperscript{43}

As the quote shows, Christian practices are subject to Rogers attempt to show how his theological idea of “resting” offers hope of ending the “lip service” paid to Spirit-talk in theological discourse.

Rogers also includes the practice of reading scripture as a viable site to understanding how “resting” operates. Rogers claims that “[i]nteractions among the Persons recorded in the New Testament give glimpses of the intratrinitarian life as it dilates – delays and opens up – to include human beings within it.”\textsuperscript{44} Furthermore, Balthasar taught Rogers that the “New Testament gives occasional glimpses into the intratrinitarian activity in the various theophanies.”\textsuperscript{45} For example, by reading the narrative of Jesus’ baptism the reader understands that through baptism “human beings are in the process of moving into the trinitarian life.”\textsuperscript{46} However, unlike Jesus who is part of the trinity at his baptism, the Christian in the practice of baptism is moved into the trinitarian life but incompletely. At baptism the initiate is “on their way, by anagogy, and

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 62.
\textsuperscript{44} Rogers, After the Spirit, 11.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
even when they arrive they will be comprehended rather than comprehending.” Rogers reference to baptism, Eucharist and the effects reading of scripture has on the reader shows that his proposal with its definition of “resting” can and does have implications for how Christian practices can benefit from more Spirit-talk.

Rogers indirect consideration of Christian practices assumes that the work of Christian practices itself appropriates the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit in substantive ways. However, Rogers’ serpentine reference to Christian practices is not enough to make the implications his work has for the work of Christian practices compelling. The reason why it does not is because Rogers work is primarily written for the academy in order move pneumatological discourse forward in strickly theological circles. This is not to say his work is not practical. It is practical but only to meet what Rogers himself observes as a pressing desire in the hearts and minds of today’s seminary students. As he writes:

Some contemporary students of Christianity want for the Spirit to “have more to do.” Although that way of putting the matter crosses the line that because the activity of the Persons toward the world is indivisible, it’s not possible for one Person to do (toward the world) any more than the others, it does get across the point that they want Spirit-language to be more robust, and the person-making characteristics of the Person more apparent. These students of Christianity complain that otherwise the Spirit is reduced to a “power,” a thing, gets reified.

My question is not whether his work is practical or not, it is. But unless Rogers’ idea of “resting” informs those who are doing the work on Christian practices his ideas will take longer to effect the everyday lives of those who actually participate in reading scripture,

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47 Ibid., Rogers uses the term “anagogy” to mean an unexplainable occurrence acquired through mystical or spiritual means or process, a spiritual ascent that points to something beyond oneself and may be accompanied by a new understanding or revelation which may or may not be able to be articulated in any way beyond mere declaration or bearing witness in a general mode.

48 Rogers, After the Spirit, 60.
baptism, Eucharist and a host of other Christian practices as meaning making mechanisms for their lives.

The fact that Rogers’ work is written for the academic setting does not constitute the strongest barrier to his work being a benefit to lay formation. Those who are doing the work on Christian practices of formation may be doing their work in such a way that perpetuates the strange theological proclivity to, according to Rogers, “speak of the importance of the… Spirit… but hardly give a clear and precise explanation of anything” in a different register and therefore can benefit from Rogers’ critique and “resting” language. Since the work on Christian practices has as its focus the “real life” of Christians there is a greater probability that if their work suffers from a lack of pneumatological substance an infusion of “resting” talk into their work would inject into the mundane lives of the audience to which their work is addressed an increased attention upon the Holy Spirit in more substantive ways. More to the point, in order to “give the Holy Spirit more to do” will have to include the idea that if it ain’t happening at the local church and thereby the “real lives” of Christians then it ain’t happening which is a domain the work of Christian practices aims to influence.

To this end, in the next section we want to extend Roger’s observations and conclusions into the field of Christian practices more directly. By using Rogers’ pneumatology as a lens, I will consider Serene Jones’ work on “Graced Practices,” Sarah Coakley’s development of “Deepening Practices,” and James K. A. Smith’s work on embodied formation through Christian practice. The work of these scholars will be considered and analyzed to show how Rogers’ pneumatological critique of academic discourse and his suggested solution functions within the work on Christian Practices.
2. Extending the Work of Eugene Rogers into the Work on Christian Practices

In this chapter an analysis of the nature of the Holy Spirit’s agency and identity within work on Christian practices of formation will be provided. I will study the work of various exemplars with a focus on where and how, if at all, they make mention of the Holy Spirit, in order to provide the reader with a frame of reference from which one can determine that there is a dearth of Spirit-talk in the work on Christian practices. We are using this second chapter to establish that the work in Christian practices needs a more robust account of the agency or identity of the Holy Spirit. To that end, I will consider the work of Serene Jones and her concept of Graced Practices. Thereafter, a review of Sarah Coakley’s ascetical and mystical approach to Christian practices will be provided. Last, James K. A. Smith’s ideas on the relationship between how the body learns and Christian practices of formation will be considered.

These thinkers represent a cross section of religious traditions and theological commitments within the spectrum of Christian thought and form the bases from which one can conclude that the work on Christian practices in general possesses a vague if not wholly absent account of the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit. To this end I will look at the work of Jones, Coakley and Smith in light of Eugene Rogers’ argument that there is a need for more Spirit-talk in academic discourse. I will analyze each scholars work by asking the following four questions which Rogers’ work engenders to ascertain if and to what degree his pneumatological critique of academic discourse is applicable to the work of Jones, Coakley and Smith: 1) Do they reference the Holy Spirit in their work and to what degree?; 2) Do they apply grace language or some iteration thereof in their
work; 3) Do they use Calvin’s apophatic theology as defined by Rogers or reference the Reformed tradition in which Calvin’s thought is deeply embedded?; 4) Do they recapitulate in any way Barth’s or the Westminster Confession’s penchant for eclipsing the Holy Spirit with Christological language? With minor adjustments in approach predicated upon the nature of each scholar’s work (i.e. how often to they mention the Holy Spirit, etc.), through this process it will be shown that Rogers’ critique of academic discourse is applicable to work on Christian practices of formation. We begin with an application of this method of analysis to Serene Jones’ concept of Graced Practices.

**Serene Jones and the Spirit in “Graced Practices”**

Evaluating the interconnectedness between forming grace and freeing grace within the context of a Rogerian analysis of Graced Practices is the task of this section. Jones’ Graced Practices is her attempt to connect God’s grace to practical every day life of Christians. In so doing she claims that our lives trace a certain pattern of “grace filled” living in which, “[a]ccording to Calvin, both the *form* of that living (its basic pattern) and the *power to enact* it are gifts of the Spirit.”¹ Not only is this quote the only mention of the Holy Spirit in Jones’ construction of Graced Practices it also shows how she does use grace language and the theology of Calvin. So our question regarding whether or not she mentions the Holy Spirit is answered in the affirmative. The other questions regarding her use of grace language and Calvin’s apophatic theology will be explored later. In terms of our focus on her use of Spirit language it must be noted that in Jones’ understanding of

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how salvation is achieved in real life, the agency of the Holy Spirit is subject to the grace of God and is manifested not as Spirit but as a power. Her single reference to the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit is an example of how grace language serves to make the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit vague. In describing sanctification as *forming grace* “in more contemporary accounts of how selves are formed and identities constructed” Jones deploys ideas and terms from other fields which deepens the disapperance of the Holy Spirit that her single use of the Holy Spirit ingenders.2

This is to say that, like the effect of Calvin’s use of “hidden” and “secrecy” on the ways in which the Holy Spirit was reduced in academic discourse, Jones deployment of linguistics, gender theory and feminism produces the same outcome. Drawing from the fields of linguistics, gender theory, and feminist thought Jones argues that sanctification or forming grace can also be understood as “performance” and “adornment.” 3 Sanctification is performed because Christians become certain types of people through enacting “often unconscious but socially constructed scripts of personhood.” 4 These “scripts” are innate to constellations of language and culture upon which our identities are contingent. Therefore, these “scripts” are not only “performed by us [but] also have constitutive power to perform us.” 5 Theologically speaking, sanctification is a conscious and unconscious endeavor where “one performs and is performed by the script of divine love that comes to us in Jesus Christ” mediated by the body of Christ – the church

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3 Jones’ definition of performance is different than the one I employ later in this project because it is to be understood cognitively as an enactment of grace. Furthermore, Jones’ definition of the script that is to be performed is also associated with grace and not scripture.
5 Ibid.
universal. This sanctifying script is an invasion of the human personality enacted by human will but is a confirming part of the condition of humanity as God’s creation where we become who we are.

Forming grace is the “script of our most fundamental selves…when we perform and are performed by grace, our lives take on the form that we are.” This taking on the form that we are is not only a result of performing a script it also is a skin that we adorn which presents Christians to the world as who we are in relation to it. Drawing on the work of French philosopher Luce Irigaray, Jones states that this “skin…is not just a superficial covering…rather, the adorning material that sheathes us is the very materiality of who we are…[it’s a] grace that adorns us.” Understood through the lens of scripture, adorning is to “put on Christ…[and thereby] that person wears forms of behavior, beliefs, actions, attitudes, and specific practices that conform that person to Christ.” Jones’ use of ‘adornment’ and ‘performance’ serves to emphasize the active nature of grace in the social lives of Christians especially within the context of the inevitable judgments made by those who disciples of Christ may encounter on a daily bases.

Jones’ utilization of philosophy and linguistics within her construction of the practical content of salvation in addition to her single reference to the Holy Spirit adds to the process of how her work marks a muting of the work of the Holy Spirit in Christian practices. An example from the sport of fishing will serve to further clarify my point. Like a fisherman who casts his line away from the boat in order to catch a fish, Jones adding philosophical and linguistic ideas in addition to her minimal use of Spirit language

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6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Jones, Graced Practices, 61.
9 Ibid.
casts the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit further away from the connection she makes between salvation and Christian practices. What I am describing is how Jones’ limited and vague use of the Holy Spirit followed by her use of philosophic and linguistic ideas to explain the nature of Graced Practices echoes how grace language functioned in older Christian theological discourse to make the Holy Spirit superfluous.

Jones further dwarfs the importance of the Holy Spirit buy using grace language in her work through interpreting Calvin as one who also would support the manifestation of grace in Christian practices as analysis so that excellence in disciple making may occur. This observation regarding Jones’ use of grace-talk brings us to the second question in our analysis. Recall that the second question through which I will enact a Rogerian analysis upon Christian practices was regarding whether or not the scholar uses grace language or some iteration thereof. As mentioned above, Jones uses “performance” and “adornment” language are iterations of grace language in that their use perpetuates the inverse effect grace language has in drawing attention away form the operations of God the Spirit in daily life. Before now my focus on grace language has been indirect in order to emphasize how its effect upon making pneumatology, according to Rogers, less substantive is present in Jones’ work through other means. Next I will focus more directly upon grace language and how it functions in obfuscating the work of the Holy Spirit within disciplship practices of formation.

In addition to entitling her essay “Graced Practices” Jones furthers her use of grace language in reimagining the relationship between sanctification and justification as a relationship between forming grace (i.e. sanctification) and freeing grace (i.e. justification). I believe this move serves as a case study in how the the language of grace
is used with the unintended consequence of reducing an appeal to the Holy Spirit’s activity in Christian’s understanding of how salvation functions. As I showed earlier, Jones mentioning of the Holy Spirit is vague in her construction of Graced Practices. Even so, such vague language is not the only indicator of an insufficient pneumatology at work in Jones’ writing. Ironically, the use of grace language shows a pattern that dilutes any importance of the Holy Spirit’s connection to Graced Practices she may have wanted to affirm.

Showing how Jones robust use of grace language in her construction of Graced Practices has a design that tones down the importance of the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit within discipleship requires a brief explanation the context which gave rise to Jones’ construction of Graced Practices. Contextualizing Jones’ construction of Graced Practices serves to not only show the practical nature of her work but more importantly to relay that, like how grace talk was deployed in the Pelagian controversy, her use of grace language serves to support Christians in keeping divine agency central within their meaning making process.

Jones’ was made a part of her church’s attempt to reimagine itself in the midst of their changing ministerial context. She was part of a committee whose task it was to determine a strategic plan for how the church was to operate for the future. In the midst of their work the committee experienced a crisis, which resulted in them seeing the relationship between who they were to become with the necessity to answer, “What is the relationship between our salvation and the concrete way we structure our lives?” Jones saw the crisis as an opportunity to consider questions regarding how justification and

10 Jones, Graced Practices, 53.
sanctification functioned within salvation and redemption are paramount to the committee’s understanding of how the church should move forward for the future. This ends my explanation of the context that gave rise to Graced Practices. I will now give and account of how justification and sanctification form the content of Graced Practices for the purpose of establishing the nature of how grace talk operates within Jones’ work.

Justification and sanctification were not only themes that gave life to the “committee’s call to restructure our church’s life” but also they adequately answered, “What does it mean to say that we are saved by ‘grace’ through faith?” and “What are the “grace-filled” benefits of faith that we receive as people who confess the saving power of Christ?” These questions provided the foundation for Jones’ rendering of theology in practical terms in the interest of Christian growth based upon a theology of grace.

To further articulate what is meant by justification and sanctification Jones’ did not argue that both are ways that the Holy Spirit can form the disciple. Instead she references her churches connection to the Reformed tradition as the foundation of how justification and sanctification work. Therefore, Jones begins to articulate the content of justification and sanctification as that which is rooted in the narrative of the Reformed faith tradition, whose primary theologian is John Calvin. According to Jones, setting Christian practices within the Reformed story requires an account of that story, a story rooted in “the Word.”

A Reformed understanding of Christian practices requires an appreciation of what the tradition understands as “the Word.” The “Word” or the “Word event” is the Christ event, which should be understood as a continuation of “the story of God’s gracious

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11 Ibid.
relating to creation [mediated by Christ] – the story of grace.” It is important, within the scope of our analysis, to note that her reference to Christ is only mentioned in service to establishing the content of the story of grace and thereby cannot be defined as proof that her use of Christ talk performs like, according to Rogers, Christological language does in the work of Barth or the Westminster Confession. What is most important is that Jones wants us to understand that the story of grace makes sanctification and justification intelligible.

This means that within the Reformed tradition, there is a story operating that explicitly states what constitutes one’s core beliefs. Understanding this story makes it easier for the believer to make sense of the practices they enact. The disciple is free to act according to doctrine because doctrine is an expression of this story in a different mode, rather than being paralyzed by the confusion of never knowing whether one is being faithful or acting faithfully. The process of acting out one’s faith because of the story of grace is a conscious effort which does not come easily. One has to be taught the story of grace and how God’s covenant with creation came about until it is memorized which in turn can be used to guide one’s actions. This act of rationalizing one’s actions by consciously referring, in various ways, to the story of grace becomes a habit of thought.

Jones divides the content of this “habit of thought” into two parts. The first part is that God’s work from creation up until now and into the not yet is an expression of God’s grace. This means that the story of grace is entirely God’s perogative. There is nothing that creation can do or has done to earn it or keep it. The second part, which is an extension of the first, shows that God’s grace is also “a free gift which forms and

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empowers us” and thereby suggests a way of life.13 This narrative of grace is repeated in sermons, scripture and hymns. More importantly, this grace, despite the various ways we wish to reject it, is resilient. Despite our sin, “God continues to seek relationship with us for our own sake” and this divine seeking, made possible through God’s own prerogative to establish a covenant with us, is witnessed to through the story of Israel and the church.14 This story of grace is embodied in Jesus, “[h]e is both the freeing gift and the form of grace,” which we already have while simultaneously also succeed and fail in receiving.15

Having articulated the Reformed “story of grace,” Jones continues with explaining how justification and sanctification constitutes the character of grace. She asks, in the development of her idea of Graced Practices, “How are we concretely ‘saved by grace’ and what does this say about the shape of our daily patterns of living, our collective and individual practices?”16 Jones begins to answer this question by emphasizing the love of God. She begins with God’s love because justification and sanctification are not to be understood as merited. God’s love enacts justification that frees us. Sanctification forms us because God loves us. Both are dynamically interrelated according Jones’ reading of John Calvin.17

Again, Jones explains this “story of grace” to establish its role as the foundation for understanding how sanctification and justification functions. Since sanctification and justification begin from the same story then it follows that they do overlap and compliment each other but also need to be distinguished if their connection to how grace

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13 Jones, Graced Practices, 55-57.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., 57.
17 Ibid., 59.
operates within real life is to be understood. After establishing the dynamic together but separate nature of justification and sanctification Jones turns here attention to explaining how sanctification is different from justification. To follow is her definition of how sanctification makes God’s grace practical and something in which the believer participates and can practice.

Since sanctification forms us as a move of grace, then, according to Jones, sanctification can be called *forming* grace. Within the context of the Reformed tradition’s understanding of the doctrine of sanctification, according to Jones, sanctification allows practices to be evaluated for not only relevance but also excellence. This act of analysis in the interest of maintaining excellence within Graced Practices is how grace operates within sanctification so that formation can occur in ways that are not flat footed but are capable of being adapted to present times. What this means for our analysis is that there is no escaping the fact that Jones’ use of the Reformed tradition and grace language is not only pronounced but is a part of a system from which one can practically apply a theology of grace to improve specific practices which the Christian can mentally connect to the activity of grace in their lives with a name, forming grace. Beginning from her explanation of the Reformed story as a habit of thought; to how a person is saved by grace via the dual nature of sanctification and justification; to how sanctification functions as forming grace that includes evaluation of practices in the interest of promoting excellence in those practices Jones’ work is a dynamic recurrence of how grace language and Reformed inheritance have operated since the Augustine.

Up until now we have shown how significantly Jones’ Graced Practices is heavily indebted to grace language. Therefore, keeping Jones vague and minor use of Spirit talk
in mind, Rogers’ rationale that the use of grace language has contributed to an underdevelopment of Spirit language in academic discourse applies also to Jones’ work on Christian practices of formation. As we continue, grace language will remain prominent throughout this section of our analysis of Jones which only deepens the relivancy of Rogers argument for work on Christian practices. However, at this point we want to turn our attention to whether or not Jones deploys what Rogers defines as Calvin’s apophatic theology.

Jones appeals to the Reformed tradition in the way she articulates how the story of grace functions as a foundation for understanding forming grace and freeing grace. However, her use of Calvin is stronger in her construction of sanctification as forming grace. For example, to further define what she means by forming grace she references certain metaphors that Calvin used to explain how a believer is sanctified through grace. According to Jones Calvin believed, through faith, the believer comes to know, in Christ, not only a way of life but also the will of God for their lives. In other words, “sanctification occurs when our eyes are opened to the grace-filled covenant God has made with creation and we seek to live according to its order, the Law.”\(^\text{18}\) Moreover, she writes, by God’s grace – the form of the holy life – the believer experiences “regeneration,” an agricultural metaphor used by Calvin to describe the “forming power of grace.”\(^\text{19}\) Like a plant whose health and growth are inextricable manifestations of the nutrients it receives from uncontaminated water, soil and sunlight the believer’s life is evidence of the nutrients provided by the grace of God. To know Christ is to be a “plant” whose organic make up is characterized by a reflection on the Law, which by nature

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\(^{19}\) Ibid.
produces a reflection of the Law. In the Reformed tradition, “the Law refers not only to the Ten Commandments but more broadly to those rules of living that make for ‘shalom,’ the flourishing of God’s creation.”

Jones claims that Calvin, in developing “this concept of sanctifying grace rightly saw the implicit notion of ‘forming’ grace is the concept of excellence.” According to Jones, Calvin insisted that we are constantly called to grow and develop our capacity to live according the God’s will. This means that “one needs to make constant judgments about the appropriateness of given performances or adornments to particular contexts.” How can this constant striving toward excellence within the already active work of forming grace resist the temptation toward a form of works righteousness? Recalling how Jones affirms how santification and justification work together within the story of grace, forming grace (i.e. sanctification) is not works righteousness because of its relation to justification (i.e. freeing grace).

In order to avoid any claim that Graced Practices coheres to a form of works righteousness Jones compliments her notion of sanctification as forming grace with justification as freeing grace. Jones’ description of justification as freeing grace only exacerbates the perhaps unentended consequence of Jones’ work on Christian practices being less pneumatologically viable than intended. Her defining justification as freeing grace is the final stitch within the quilt whose over all pattern renders the agency of the Holy Spirit unrecognizable if not insignificant to Christian practices. Without eliminating its connection to santification Jones describes justification as freeing grace in order to

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Jones, Graced Practices, 59.
23 Ibid., 63.
establish its distinction of how disciples are formed within the fulcrum of Graced Practices. I turn now to describing in detail what it means for grace to function as freeing the believer as they participate in their own salvation and witness.

Justification as freeing grace is Jones’ attempt to employ a Reformed doctrine of justification in the daily lives of Christians through Christian practices. She provides the following features of the doctrine of justification, which are important for understanding Christian practices:

1) God decides to love us freely, therefore, justification is always unearned which means the telos of Christian practices, regardless of how excellent their implementation, is never to obligate God in any way – we are saved by grace alone and not through a “bondage of practices.”

2) Because of this freely given divine love which reaches us as justifying grace Christians are not required to prove ourselves only to express ourselves. We are “freed to engage life with greater vigor” and Christian practices are practiced boldly as “joyous celebratory gestures not as meritorious, salvation earning duties.”

3) Since Christian practices are not meritorious in any way they can be done with a posture of thanksgiving [which is made possible because of the justifying grace which makes such thanksgiving that which is freely given by the believer in response to God’s loving gift of grace] and thereafter allows sanctification or forming grace to take hold.

4) Christian practices, performances or adornments [because we are justified by God’s grace] are not to substantiate our worth [or operate as means of justifying ourselves] in the presence of God; therefore, we are freed to subject them to evaluation predicated upon “their function as witness” according to how the people for whom these practices, performances, adornments receive or read them. The criteria for evaluating these practices are not privately owned by the Church. Christian practices are always done with people for the glory of God even if the
people are not Christians.\textsuperscript{24} It is evident in these references to how justifying/freeing grace works as a dynamic and nuanced yet linear connection between justification and sanctification.\textsuperscript{25} Not only does Jones concieve of justification and sanctification as distinct and sequential but also she wishes to describe how they cooperate and connect. Jones describes their cooperation or synthesis in relation to Christian practices by emphasizing that “knowledge of our justification leads to a celebratory posture that manifests itself in practices” that conversely establishes justification’s need of sanctification.\textsuperscript{26} Although in Reformed doctrine justification should be understood as preceding sanctification it would be incorrect to assume, according to Jones, that freeing grace can come to be fully expressed without the substance forming grace provides. Jones also contends that since freeing grace precedes forming grace then forming grace makes this realization possible. She states, “when one ’puts on Christ’ (when one is sanctified), one is adorned in the freedom that Christ gives us (the reality of justification).”\textsuperscript{27}

Recall the quesitons that we established as constituting our Rogerian analysis of the work on Christian practices of formaiton:

1) Do they reference the Holy Spirit in their work and to what degree?

2) Do they apply grace language or some iteration thereof in their work

\textsuperscript{24} Jones, \textit{Graced Practices}, 63-67.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Jones, \textit{Graced Practices}, 69-70.
3) Do they use Calvin’s apophatic theology as defined by Rogers or reference the Reformed tradition in which Calvin’s thought is deeply embedded?

4) Do they recapitulate in any way Barth or the Westminster Confessions penchant for eclipsing the Holy Spirit with Christological language?

This concludes our Rogerian analysis of Jones’ concept of “Graced Practices” because restating the questions allows us to recognize that the first three questions in our method of analyzing whether or not Graced Practices is subject to Rogers’ critique have been answered with a “yes.” Jones does mention the Holy Spirit but only once and in a vague manner. Jones does use grace language and some of what we are calling derivatives of grace language which serve to further detach the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit to Graced Practices. Last, Calvin and the Reformed tradition is deployed.

In our analysis we did not find any significant display of how Barth or the Westminster Confession “retires” the Holy Spirit behind Christ. Therefore, Jones’ development of Graced Practices validates Rogers’ critique for the work on discipleship because a negligible reference to how the Holy Spirit in her construction of forming grace and freeing grace has been proven. Of import is that the motif comprised of grace language, Calvin’s apophatic theology, the Reformed tradition, philosophy and linguistics equates Jones’ description of Graced Practices to a pattern that reveals a serious pneumatological lacuna or a vagueness within her construction of what constitutes Graced Practices.

However inadvertent, does her construction of Graced Practices point to a “blind spot” in the work on Christian practices? If so, is this “blind spot” pronounced and made acute through no fault of those, like Jones, who are doing the necessary work on
Christian practices? These questions and their answers may be premature at this point, however, reflection on these questions does inform how I will proceed. To this end, Sarah Coakley’s concept of “Deepening Practices” under the microscope of our Rogerian method of analysis will be considered in the next section to further establish that there is a marking within the work on Christian practices that, regardless of intent, makes it difficult to conclude God the Spirit is vital for discipling.

**Sarah Coakley and the Spirit in “Deepening Practices”**

Like Graced Practices, in this section, it will be shown that Sarah Coakley’s construction of Deepening Practices displays a design that answers our questions of analysis in similar ways. Contrary to Jones’ Graced Practices, Coakley’s idea of Deepening Practices incorporates “traditions of ascetical theology, both East and West” with grace language and the Reformed theological tradition. Although Coakley’s development of Deepening Practices is, in some respects, different than that of Jones’ work on Christian formation the end result is the same. It will be shown that since Deepening Practices is indebted to a design consisting of not only grace language and the Reformed tradition but also ascetical theology, like Jones’ Graced Practices, Coakley’s work contributes to the need of making the practices of Christian formation more attentive to the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit. We move now to explaining how the motif of Coakley’s development of Deepening Practices participates in increasing the distance between the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit and Christian practices of formation.

Coakley does not begin with referencing grace language or the Reformed tradition (i.e. Calvin, etc.). She begins with describing Christian practices in terms of “stages of
ascent.” According to Coakley practices operate on a scale or can be categorized hierarchically as a means to describe how Christian maturity is achieved. This maturity is marked by the individual’s attention to “deepening” practices. These levels of practices correspond to allowing “forms of belief to emerge that could not otherwise be accessed.”

There are of three sorts of practices that when rehearsed by Christians deepen their their likeness to God: purgative, illuminative, and unitive. These levels are descriptive and not determinative, which means that they should not be understood sequentially. This means that one does not have to pass through or finish those practices that exist on the purgative level first to attain the spiritual and moral benefits of the subsequent levels. There is no criteria for gradual progression from one level to the next affirming an ascetic form of “works righteousness.” Although the three levels of practices develop the Christian in different ways all have the same beginning, baptism. The “stages of ascent” begin at baptism, which is the inaugural practice where grace is infused; however, thereafter an organic process of growth occurs. Describing practices as having purgative, illuminative and unitive modes has “heuristic value, as in the messy reality of life, the levels may not clearly supersede one another but blend into a continuous whole.”

Describing practices as an array of actions which mark certain levels of Christian maturity is rooted in the patristic era. Clement of Alexandria in his attempt to provide guidance to new converts proposed certain practices which were necessary to

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29 Ibid., 80.
30 Ibid., 79-80, 84.
31 Ibid., 79.
differentiate and inoculate them from “pagan” habits and the vices they engender. Coakley also mentions the Rules of Benedict as a means to legitimate her claim regarding not only describing practices in terms of levels but also how such a description coheres to how unpredictable Christian maturity is. Indexing how her description of deepening stages relates to the Rules of Benedict, Coakley writes, “...because of its unsystematic nature, provokes reflection on the almost subliminal and unconscious way in which spiritual re-modulation and transformation may occur over a lifetime through repeated practices.”\(^{32}\) The third historical foundation for the demarcation of practices concomitant with certain insights and ways of living comes from Eastern Christian thought in the person of Evagrius of Pontus. Evagrius’ work is highlighted as an exemplar of relating practices (specifically prayer) as that which makes possible incorporation into the life of the Trinity. Evagrius’ work, according to Coakley, represents fertile ground, from which the claim of possible incorporation into the trinitarian life can be “re-minted” or “re-expressed” in a less heterodox mode. The work of St. Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross are examples of how to build upon Evagrius’ ideas while avoiding his “mixed attitude toward the body and material world, his doctrinal eccentricity and his apparently individualistic emphasis...”\(^{33}\) In short, dividing practices up into levels is nothing new in the work on Christian discipling and differences in how is ought to be done is nothing new either. I will describe in more detail the differences between each stage according to Coakley and which one she defined as the most beneficial and why which will set the stage for our analysis.

While Coakley did not mean to suggest a direct correlation, these historical

\(^{32}\) Coakley, *Deepening*, 85-86.  
\(^{33}\) Ibid., 88-89.
examples are descriptive in understanding how purgative, illuminative and unitive practices operate. Clement of Alexandria’s work concerning the development of pagan recruits to the faith exists at the level of purgative practices. Purgative practices are those intended to emphasize ones life as different from the world and may take on a legalistic tone. In present day refraining from using pejorative terms in ones speech after baptism may be considered an act of purgation. The practice of showing hospitality to strangers on the other hand would not be a purgative practice because its aim is the re-shaping of beliefs that may unsettle the externally focused nature of the first stage.

Benedict’s Rule is an example of the illuminative stage of practices because it is not only unsystematic but also, and most importantly, “provokes reflection [so that]…spiritual re-modulation and transformation may occur over a lifetime through repeated practices.”\(^\text{34}\) Closely related to illuminative practices are those described in the Rule of Benedict, suce as welcoming the stranger or hospitality. Illumative practices are different than purgative practices because, if practiced over a period of time, would increase the probability of a “habituating of love, an imitation in more than an extrinsic way of the life of Christ.”\(^\text{35}\)

The writings of Evagrius, St. Teresa and John of the Cross, according to Coakley, provide examples of unitive practices. Unitive practices are those practices that are the only ones that can produce theological insight. Employing the words of John of the Cross, Coakley describes unitive practices as those where, the “soul is actually knit into the life of God…and thus the soul loves God in the Holy Spirit together with the Holy Spirit, not by means of Him…but together with Him, by reason of the

\(^\text{34}\) Coakley, Deepening, 86-87.
\(^\text{35}\) Ibid., 86.
transformation,…and He supplies that which she lacks by her having been transformed in love with Him.”

By referencing John of the Cross in this way, Coakley not only emphasizes the differences between unitive practices and the other two stages, but she also redefines MacIntyre’s definition of social practice. At the previous two stages she accepts MacIntyre’s definition of a practice as a human endeavor only to have them absorbed at the third stage and human activity along with it.

Coakley’s modification of MacIntyre’s definition of social practice within her definition of the unitive stage signals two aspects of her construction of Deepening Practices. First, it indicates that Coakley privileges the unitive mode as most desirable because, once reached by the practitioner, it not only represents a full “taken on and taken for granted” of previous stages, but also develops the believer in ways the other stages do not.

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36 Ibid., 89-90.
37 Alasdair MacIntyre’s understanding of a social practice cannot be understood without an appreciation for his larger project, which takes issue with how moral philosophy and its implications for the flourishing of our moral and social lives has been conceived. MacIntyre believes philosophy has suffered from the failures of the successes of the Enlightenment project. His understanding of practices is part of a larger “critic of the ideologies, shibboleth, fragmented, conflicting beliefs, and practices that shape our everyday lives.” His definition of social practices must not only be understood as part of an attack on the Enlightenment legacy in general. Specifically, his project is a relentless critic of modern liberalism, which he takes to be “a mentality that pervades and corrupts the ways in which we think, act, and feel.” Contrary to the modern liberal prejudice which believes rationality is “a universal, ahistorical, contextless” phenomenon of human autonomy wed to a morality that is subject to reason abstracted from concrete historical practices MacIntyre offers his concept of social practice. He defines a ‘practice’ as: “any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended”

Since MacIntyre understands practice as “socially established cooperative human activity” then a practice must be historically constructed rather than an a priori romantic creation of an autonomous human. In other words for MacIntyre practices have a tradition, have a beginning and are necessary to achieve some end (telos) vital for the continuation of a society. Practices have a story and those who adopt them are part of that story otherwise the practices and the virtues they engender are unintelligible. Moreover, we are able to give an account of its development and assess whether or not it is sufficient to meet the demands placed upon it to develop the virtues necessary in securing, for the practitioner, certain external goods and (most importantly) internal goods for the purpose of actualizing some common good. Richard J. Berstein, “Philosophy and Virtue for Society’s Sake,” Commonweal, May 1988, 306-307. Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 75.
not.\textsuperscript{38} The unitive stage should be the believer’s ultimate goal – the carrot at the end of the stick. As the third level “deepened theological insights (re-minted beliefs) arise” which are the evidence of “no mere intellectual shortcut.”\textsuperscript{39} The second and most important aspect that Coakley’s emphasis upon the unitive stage presents is that by focusing on the unitive stage only we are able to analyze Deepening Practices in light of Rogers critique of academic discourse. The reason why is because it is only within Coakley’s explanation of how the unitive stage functions that grace language and reference to the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit is made.

Like Jones in her construction of Graced Practices, Coakley vaguely deploy’s Spirit language once. Furthermore, Coakley only references the Holy Spirit in relation to the unitive stage. Recall the following quote Coakley used from St. John of the Cross to describe what happens to the believer as they perform unitive practices, she writes that the Christian’s “soul is actually knit into the life of God…and thus the soul loves God in the Holy Spirit together with the Holy Spirit, not by means of Him…but together with Him, by reason of the transformation,…and He supplies that which she lacks by her having been transformed in love with Him.”\textsuperscript{40} Coakley’s single use of the Holy Spirit relays a negligible pneumatological connection to Deepening Practices because it is indefinable in addition to being the only reference.

Grace language is also deployed to relate how a believer becomes like Christ within unitive practices and as such further reflects the purpose for which grace language historically served, the reduction of the Holy Spirit in service to something else, like the

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 80-85.
\textsuperscript{39} Coakley, Deepening, 79.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 89-90.
need to emphasize and make distinct divine agency.\textsuperscript{41} The unitive stage, according to Coakley, because its nature is to produce a likeness to Christ, gives way to “a more explicit and conscious participation in that life…[where] the ostensibly bland term ‘practice’ must give place to an overt theology of grace.”\textsuperscript{42} Coakley deepens her appeal to grace language within her discription of unitive practices because of their contemplative character. Unitive practices, as they are to be understood within the context of Deepening Practices, are not “human practice[s] at all, but the direct infusion of divine grace.”\textsuperscript{43} Coakley makes clear that her concept of Deepening Practices is strongly indebted to a doctrine of grace because of her significant use of Bill Vanstone, an Anglican theologian who was “profoundly influenced by Calvinist and Catholic theologies of grace.”\textsuperscript{44} All this clarifies the doctrine of grace operating within her own project articulating these three stages of Christian practice.\textsuperscript{45}

In different ways Coakley and Jones ideas are founded upon a Reformed theological inheritance and, in various degrees, appeal to a theology of grace and offer a minor and vague reference to the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit within their construction of Deepening Practices and Graced Practices respectively. Within the hub of our analysis both practical theologians represent a design or a pattern which indirectly and unwittingly imparts a reduction in an appeal to a theology of the Spirit to explain how practices contribute to the formation of Christian disciples. Here, we see again the fruit of Rogers’ assessment that there is the need for more hearty pneumatology in

\textsuperscript{41} Rogers, \textit{After the Spirit}, 21.
\textsuperscript{42} Coakley, \textit{Deepening}, 83.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 90.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 93.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 81-83.
academic discourse, but now applied to the realm of work whose aim is to connect God’s Spirit to discipleship practices of daily life more concretely. To extend this claim an analysis of the work of James K.A. Smith will serve as the last place I will apply my method of analysis to determine if his work is also subject to Rogers’ evaluation.

**Eugene Rogers and the Spirit in James K.A. Smith’s *Desiring the Kingdom***

In this section, I will argue that the work of James K.A. Smith is also subject to Rogers’ critique. I will begin with an analysis of Smith’s use of Holy Spirit language in his work, noting at the outset that this analysis will take on a different format than that used in prior sections considering Graced Practices and Deepening Practices. This will be the case because Smith references the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit more overtly and robustly, which requires a different analytical approach. Even so, the analysis will show that Smith’s work, like the work of Jones and Coakley, suffers from the pneumatological gap that Rogers has helped us to see in contemporary theological work. In order for our Rogerian analysis of the nature of Smith’s deployment of God the Spirit in the design of his work to be informative we must first provide a review of some of Smith’s ideas. This primer to Smith’s work as it pertains to this project will serve to contextualize our analysis of how he references the Holy Spirit.

*In *Desiring the Kingdom*, Smith argues that pedagogical approaches founded upon anthropological constructions of the person-as-rationlist or the person-as-believer are problematic because both are expressions of a “reductionist account of the human
person” and fail to “accord a central role to embodiment and practice.”46 Drawing from an Augustinian anthropology, Smith argues for an understanding of Christian practice which attends to the formative place of the body.47 Such formation is built on an anthropological understanding of the human person as lover; rather than the “person-as-rationalist,” or the “person-as-believer.” Smith proposes the nature of the human being is “person-as-lover.”

Smith describes these models in greater depth when he writes:

1) The Human Person as Thinker – The human person is primarily a thinking thing, a cognitive apparatus “allied with a sense of functional disembodiment…only contingently related to a body.” To be human is to be “an essentially immaterial mind or consciousness – occasionally and temporarily embodied, but not essentially,” and thereby is only nourished through a “steady diet of ideas, fed…into the mind through the lines of propositions and information.”48

2) The Human Person as Believer – This anthropology is founded upon the notion that we believe before we think. “Thinking operates on the basis of faith, that thought is not neutral, objective activity but rather a particular way of seeing the world that is itself based on a prior faith or trust.” According to Smith, this anthropology is a derivative of the person as thinker. Rather than trafficking in “ideas,” it traffics in “beliefs,” but like the person as thinker, the person as believer does not escape an appeal to a “very disembodied, individualistic picture of the human being…[my] beliefs that orient me still seem quite disconnected from my body…”49

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47 Smith, Desiring, 47. Note: In contrast to anthropologies which reduce human identity to its cognitive faculties, Smith argues for an anthropology which appreciates the complexities of the human person. He believes the Augustinian model of human persons as “embodied agents of desire or love” resists attempts to reduce the human person to only rational or quasi-rational creations. Furthermore, Smith’s appeal to an Augustinian anthropology shifts “the center of gravity of human identity…down from the heady regions of the mind closer to the central regions of our bodies…[hence emphasizing] that the way we inhabit the world is not primarily as thinkers or even believers, but as more affective, embodied creatures who make our way in the world more by feeling our way around it.”
48 Smith, Desiring, 42.
49 Ibid., 44.
3) Human Person as Lover – Favored by Smith, this model of the human person understands the human being as a desiring creature where the human identity unfolds and develops over time, emphasizing that “the way we inhabit the world is not primarily as thinkers, or even believers, but as more affective, embodied creatures who make our way in the world more by feeling our way around it.” The human person is an “embodied agent of desire or love,” that is always aiming at something. In short, to be human is to love, and it is what we love that defines who we are [and] our ultimate love is constitutive of our identity which is not to be found in the “heady regions of the mind” but rather “closer to the central regions of our bodies…our gut or heart.”

In short, the nature of the human cannot be reduced to cognitive capabilities (i.e. the Human Person as Thinker or Believer) which are articulated as thoughts or beliefs because the non-cognitive, pre-cognitive or affective parts of who we are remain ignored or are seen to be of no effect.  

In order to articulate and unpack how the features of Smith’s alternative model of the human contributes to the Holy Spirit’s work becoming more pronounced within the work on Christian practice, some vital features of Smith’s project must be provided. There are three features which make up Smith’s construction of the human being as fundamentally a desiring or loving creature:

1) The human person is intentional. The person as lover is always aiming at or conscious of something (e.g. target/object, Kingdom). Smith uses the word “intend” to describe this innate quality of the human being to be naturally predisposed to not just think but think about something. The question is what is this something since we can avoid being conscious of it. What is the it? Before we discuss this question a more fundamental question is, “How

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50 Ibid., 47-49.
51 Non-cognitive, pre-cognitive or affective means of formation are terms James K.A. Smith uses in *Desiring the Kingdom* to describe the ways we learn through our bodies that are not readily apparent to our cognitive faculties unless reflected upon in some way.
do we intend?” Since the human being is an intentional creature who, like an arrow, is pointing or aiming at something then the way we intend is through involvement in the world. We intend not through cognitive means but non-cognitive means. For example, we do not go through our days thinking before we act. We just are involved in the world. When was the last time you thought about brushing your teeth or saying good morning to a loved one? However, there are different ways of involvement and thereby different ways of aiming or being conscious about the world. Smith, agreeing with Augustine, claims that the most fundamental way to be or to involve ourselves in the world is through loving. We intend through noncognitive means not because we, “care,” but because we love. Of import is when we reflect we do not cease to be non-cognitive. We remain even in a reflective mode still embodied with its prelinguistic or noncognitive or affective elements which are not outgrown elements of our early lives but remain functional and operative in the midst of our cognitive activities.  

2) Human beings not only aim through love or by love, but also we always intend in order to love in a certain direction. We are orientating creatures. Whatever we involve ourselves in we have an end in mind for our involvement – we have a target, an end or teloi. “So as we inhabit the world primarily in a noncognitive, affective mode of intentionality, implicit in that love is an end…what we love is a specific vision of the good life.” The form is fixed, we are intentional through love which is accompanied by an embedded end which seems to us to be the good; however the content is subject to something else. There is a finished picture of the good but the particularities of that picture with its medium (oil, water colors, clay, etc.), brush strokes, etc. are woefully fragile and apt to deformation. These particulars not with standing, the good life Smith calls the kingdom. This kingdom language serves to emphasize that the good is not some static esoteric concept but rather is a story which does not captivate our minds as much as our imaginations the seat of which is our hearts or gut sustained through our embodied, noncognitive, affective regions. To be sure there are different kingdoms which, requires cultural discernment but such discernment happens in noncognitive ways which leads us to Smith’s  

52 Smith, Desiring, 47-53n28.
last construct of the human-as-lover and the most important for my focus on Christian practices and the Holy Spirit. 53

3) The good is a story or a kingdom and there are different visions of the kingdom or story. Since these stories or kingdoms operate and make their claims upon the loving creature at the affective level then are we destined to be divided between kingdoms? Since kingdoms determine how our bodies are orientated in social space is there no end to being fragmented and split by competing visions of the good? To answer these questions requires an appreciation for complexity which is not lost on Smith and is addressed in detail, but for our purposes his simple two fold construction of an answer will suffice for our purposes. First, the kingdom desired by the loving human person is “operative in us (motivating actions, decisions, etc.) by becoming an integral part of the fabric of our dispositions – our preconceptive tendencies to act in certain ways and toward certain ends.” 54 As virtues or vices these good or bad dispositions are good or bad habits respectively, which act as embodied proclamations or bear witness to which kingdoms we envision and those we do not embrace. Even more, they function as tools of analysis, but at the affective precognitive levels that not only makes cognitive reflection possible but exposes the fleeting nature of thinking itself. Secondly, these habits are subject to embodiment, which necessitates an understanding of human identity to be rooted in our heart which functions as a “gut feeling.” Furthermore, the human person as creatures of desire shifts how we understand the world as proceeding from the “imagination [running] off the fuel of images that are channeled by the senses” rather than the intellect channeled by contemplation of ideas. 55

Although Smith shifts one’s capacity to live in accordance with the gospel from head to heart, what I want to emphasize is his claim that the way to our hearts is through our bodies. This point will come in handy in our next section. Suffice it to say Smith contends that “[it] is the bodily practices [not the cognitive or reflective practices] that

53 Smith, Desiring, 52-55.
54 Ibid., 55-63.
55 Ibid., 57.
train the body (including the brain) to develop habits or dispositions to respond automatically in certain situations and environments.”

This embodied model of training includes the training of our desires. This training, Smith calls “liturgies,” and he locates them inside and outside the Christian community. A description of how Smith understands these liturgies and associated practices to operate is the task to which we now turn.

Practices are part of a larger project where Smith wants us to shift our thinking within the context of how desires are directed at the cross-section of culture and what constitutes Christian formation. His hope is that “the shift from ideas to practices, from beliefs to liturgy will function as a methodological jolt” making the Christian witness more compelling in the face of other ways society makes its claims upon human identity. Moreover, he hopes that such a methodological shift will not only assist in exposing, through cultural exegesis, the “religious and idolatrous character of the contemporary institutions” that affect our imaginations, but also raise the stakes as to why the Christian practice of worship is so vital. What is crucial for my project is not worship per se but that Smith’s “methodological jolt” is rooted in embodiment. He is forcing the church and the academy to take what is happening to the body as the primary focus if we are interested in truly making a dent in redirecting human beings’ ultimate concern away from consumerism and state craft and toward a flourishing life with God.

Recalling how Smith deploys Augustinian anthropology, most thought leaders and practitioners would not deny that practices are embodied. As Smith points out, there

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56 Smith, *Desiring*, 60.
57 Ibid., 92-93.
58 Ibid., 92.
is an assumption that in order for Christian formation to do its witnessing work in the world, habits through practices are cognitively established. The embodied nature of practices and its implications for Christian witness is given lip-service but in practice is of no consequence. Contrary to this assumption, according to Smith, “habits [are pre-cognitive dispositions that] are formed by practices: routines and rituals that inscribe particular ongoing habits into our character, such that they become second nature to us.” Since habits are pre-cognitive then they are first established as affective through the body. Moreover, since bodies are in motion traversing the porous boundaries that exist between various social spaces then how can the formation that occurs through the bodies rehearsal of Christian practices be maintained.

In order to address the motion of bodies and the fact that they are always being formed within the spaces they travel Smith widens the domain of what constitutes worship or liturgy. Smith writes, “liturgies or worship practices are rituals of ultimate concern that are formative of our identity” reflecting what matters to us in everything that we do. Worship “[inculcates] particular visions of the good life through affective, precognitive means, and do so in a way that trumps other ritual formations” grabbing hold of our gut (kardia). Our understanding of worship and their embedded practices must include the realization that the space dictates the practices but the space does not “own” the practices. The practices are owned by the body pursuant to deeper factors which exist in every space wherein the body may find itself whether it be Walmart or Cornerstone United Methodist Church. What is crucial is once the body is inhabited by

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59 Smith, Desiring, 80.
60 Ibid., 93.
61 Ibid.
the particular vision of the good life (i.e. telos, kingdom) embedded in the practice that vision is a jealous vision. It will not easily be superseded by other competing visions.

Worship is a formational process that is pervasive in every cultural institution including the church. Smith explains in more detail how this process works:

Because we are embodied, affective, liturgical animals, our love and desire are shaped and directed by rituals and practices that work on our imaginary; this can often be a sort of automation that inscribes in us habits formed without our recognition because they are operative and the level of the adaptive unconscious – particularly if we fail to recognize the practices as formative rituals. Thus the rituals associated with secular liturgies constitute a pedagogy, a training of our hearts and loves; because education is a mode of formation, the formation that results from immersion in secular liturgies is its own education of desire. It is fundamentally [an] educative (i.e. formative) aspect of secular liturgies [Smith’s definition of what he means by the mall should come to mind] that concern us here, precisely because so often the telos [of a false self] implicit in these pedagogies is antithetical to the biblical vision of the kingdom of God. And yet, subtly and covertly, by being immersed in these secular liturgies, we are being trained to be a people who desire the earthly city in all sorts of guises. These are not just neutral and benign “things we do”; they are formative liturgies, pedagogies of desire that function as veritable educations of our imagination. Thus, education is not confined to the classroom, nor is worship confined to the church. It is precisely because worship is a kind of education that secular liturgies function as pedagogies of desire.

This quote provides the reader an easy reference from which to understand Smith’s embodied approach to practices within his larger vision of what constitutes liturgy; but, it also offers a place where his understanding of Christian practices as embodied employs

62 Smith defines pedagogies of desire as a system of practices that teach the heart through the body to desire a certain understanding of the good life.

63 Smith, Desiring, 94-95.
concepts contrary to his theologically based starting point. This point will be developed next.

Two terms define the foundation or the content used by Smith to communicate his understanding of practices. Since practices work on our imaginary and since practices instill, at the pre-cognitive level, habits then more needs to be said about what constitutes an “imaginary.” Smith uses the term “imaginary” to mark a shift in the central operating factor in the development of human identity “from cognitive to affective, from minds to embodied hearts.”  

Smith takes his definition of “imaginary” from the work of the social philosopher Charles Taylor’s notion of the “social imaginary.” Indexing Taylor’s work, Smith argues that when practices transform our imaginary they work on “something else and something more rumbling beneath the cognitive that drives much of our action and behavior.” In addition to stating that this is what Taylor describes as an “imaginary” because it refers to the “way ordinary people ‘imagine’ their social surroundings…not expressed in theoretical terms, but is carried in images, stories, and legends” Smith wants us to hear that practices work on our imaginations. He “thinks it is important to hear [in Taylor’s definition of ‘imaginary’ as a non-cognitive director of our actions and entire comportment to the world] an emphasis on the imagination as an affective faculty of sorts that constitutes the world for us on a level that is bodily.”

So one of the components of Smith’s understanding of practice is Taylor’s idea of “social imaginary.” Referring again to the quote above we not only see a connecting of

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64 Smith, Desiring, 65.  
65 Ibid., 65-71.  
66 Ibid.  
67 Ibid.  
68 Ibid., 66.
practice to “imaginary” but also to the term “adaptive unconscious.” Smith incorporates not only philosophy but also psychology into his construction of practice with his use of “adaptive unconscious.” The idea of an “adaptive unconscious” as Smith employs it is indebted to the work of psychologist Timothy Wilson.

Smith helps us in explaining what is meant by his use of “adaptive unconscious” by quoting Wilson, who in his book, Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious wrote:

> The mind operates most efficiently by relegating a good deal of high level, sophisticated thinking to the unconscious, just as a modern jumbo jetliner is able to fly on automatic pilot with little or no input from the human, “conscious” pilot. The adaptive unconscious does an excellent job of sizing up the world, warning people of danger, setting goals, and initiating action in a sophisticated and efficient manner.69

Of import is that one of the entry points into a believer’s imagination and adaptive unconscious are, in Smith’s account, Christian practices, particularly Worship.70 Allow the following example using the process of sculpting to explain further how the adaptive unconscious functions. Like Michelangelo, Christian practices sculpt the “imaginary” and the “adaptive unconscious” into an internal masterpiece which automatically responds to external situations and circumstances in ways that witness to a “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”71 Since these practices are enacted within the body then there is no separation between our bodies and the formation of our imagination and adaptive unconscious. This partnership between the body, social imaginary and the unconscious establishes, at the pre-cognitive level, the direction of our

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69 Smith, Desiring, 61.
70 Ibid., 57-73.
71 Hebrews 11:10, KJV.
desires towards, according to Smith, a telos or a vision of the good life or a kingdom story, the essence of which are embedded in the practices themselves.

It is at this point that I want to take up the question of how the Holy Spirit is understood to appear and function in Smith’s work. By considering Smith’s work in pneumatologial terms I want to suggest that he recapitulates, however differently, the “hiding” or “retiring” of the Spirit found in the work of Jones and Coakley. Furthermore, by excavating Smith’s work regarding the Holy Spirit I hope to determine if he makes any connection between the Holy Spirit, Christian practices and the body. Correctly, Smith turns toward the body as a sight of how Christian practices are operative within ones everyday existence but what does this mean for the work of the Spirit in Christian practices of formation? After we analyze the nature of Spirit-talk in Smith’s work this question will be answered in the next chapter.

Our analysis of how Spirit language operates in *Desiring the Kingdom* will take on two forms. The first will be an excavation and interpretation of those areas within Smith’s work were he references the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit in order to affirm that Rogers critique is applicable. Then I will interpret how Smith’s use of social imaginary and adaptive unconscious function like grace language to produce the same conclusion about how Smith’s work on Chrstian practices does soften the connection between the Holy Spirit and Christian practices in the same way Rogers claims mutes substantive Spirit-talk in theological discourse.

Here are Smith’s references to the Holy Spirit which will be referred to in the analysis to follow:

1. The practices of Christian worship function as the altar of Christian formation…But the energy and formative
power of gathered worship is extended and amplified…in the different gatherings and practices Christian communities and friends who together intentionally pursue a life formed by the Spirit, engaged in formative practices that are bent on making us the kind of people who desire the kingdom.  

2. …while the amount of time spent in Christian worship…is limited, it is…both dense and charged…worship…that activates the whole body, is packed with formative power [and] will always put us in the way of God’s nourishing grace through the particularly charged practices of the sacraments…Given the Spirit’s unique presence in the sacraments, we ought not to underestimate the power of even a relatively brief encounter with the transforming triune God.

3. When we are called, we were blessed; now as we’re sent, we’re blessed. We are not sent out as orphans, nor are we sent out to prove ourselves. The blessing [found in Numbers 6:24-26] speaks of affirmation and conferral – that we go empowered for this mission, graced recipients of good gifts, filled with the Spirit, our imaginations fueled by the Word to imagine the world otherwise.

4. The heritage of our Sunday offering, and the kingdom economics it points toward, can be seen in the practices of the early church. For instance, the miracle of the Spirit’s descent at Pentecost did not just generate evangelism and conversions; it also spurred discipleship, and part and parcel of that discipleship was an economics…

5. …as we prepare to hear the Word proclaimed, a prayer for illumination positions and challenges our confidence in self-sufficient reason. Such a prayer stems from a consciousness that wisdom is not something simply available, ready at hand, and on the shelf to be picked up at our pleasure. Even if the Word is a gift, it is a gift that we can receive only if we are enabled by the Spirit…

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72 Smith, Desiring, 213.
73 Smith, Desiring, 208.
74 Ibid., 207.
75 Ibid., 204.
76 Ibid., 194.
6. The song seems to have a privileged channel to our imagination, to our kardia [gut], because it involves our body in a unique way...in Ephesians 5:18-20 singing is related to the filling of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps it is by hymns, songs, and choruses that the word of Christ “dwell in us richly” and we are filled with the Holy Spirit.\(^{77}\)

7. When we gather, we are responding to a call to worship; that call is an echo and renewal for the call of creation to be God’s image bearers for the world, and we fulfill the mission of being God’s image bearers by undertaking the work of culture making...we lack the wisdom, discernment, and will to carry out the task. Thus God calls us to himself to find renewal, restoration, and reordering. We are called to an encounter with the life-giving God, who imparts transformative grace through the Spirit’s empowerment, making it possible for us to entertain the vocation given to humanity at creation, but now with more that was given to Adam and Eve: with the perfect exemplar of Jesus, who shows us what it means to be human, and the empowerment of the indwelling Spirit...\(^{78}\)

8. ...our congregation does not look like this kingdom from every tribe and tongue and nation. And yet we sing of it...Our gathering is an act of eschatological hope that amounts to a kind of defiance: while the faces and colors of our gathered congregation might constantly remind us that the kingdom remains to come, the Spirit also invites us to overcome...prompting us to become a people that looks more and more like the “great multitude that no one can count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...God is calling out and constituting a people who will look “peculiar”...to take up and reembrace our creational vocation now empowered by the Spirit...\(^{79}\)

9. ...some of our worship habits are a missed opportunity; that we fail to draw on the formative riches of the tradition and thereby shut down channels for the Spirit’s work...We may have construed worship as a primarily didactic, cognitive affair [and] fails to reach

\(^{77}\) Ibid., 171.
\(^{78}\) Smith, Desiring, 164.
\(^{79}\) Ibid., 162.
our embodied hearts, and thus fails to touch our desire.\textsuperscript{80}

10. ...the enduring and unique significance of the sacraments and the church’s worship life as sites of a special, presence of the Spirit that is both revelatory and formative in a unique way...While the Spirit inhabits all creation, there is also a sense that the Spirit’s presence is intensified in particular places, things, and actions...In short, the centrality of embodiment should not be understood as a “naturalizing” of worship that would deny the dynamic presence of the Spirit; to the contrary, the Spirit meets, nourishes, transforms, and empowers us just through and in such material practices. The church’s worship is a uniquely intense site of the Spirit’s transformative presence. We must never lose sight of the charged nature of these practices.\textsuperscript{81}

11. ...I am suggesting that such a distrust if things [e.g. sacraments, articles, bread, wine, salt, oil, water, ashes] is not inherently Presbyterian and certainly not inherently Christian. It is a bad habit we have picked up at various times and places in the Church’s sojourn, but one that the Scriptures and the Spirit invites us to leave behind...\textsuperscript{82}

12. A better response would be to worship together at the table, eating Jesus bread and drinking Jesus juice together, opening ourselves up to the Spirit’s transformative power.\textsuperscript{83}

13. And when the Scriptures are heard and read in the context of worship, they function differently [than in the private context]. Rather than being approached as a “storehouse of facts”..., the Scriptures are read and encountered as a site of divine action, as a means of grace, as a conduit of the Spirit’s transformative power, as a part of a pedagogy of desire.\textsuperscript{84}

14. If considering cultural practices and institutions as liturgical raises the stakes of cultural participation, we could ratchet up the stakes a bit further by looking at secular liturgies through the related lens of “powers and principalities”...Cultural institutions and practices are

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 153.
\textsuperscript{81} Smith, \textit{Desiring}, 148-150.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 138.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 135.
“charged” not only with an implicit telos, but also by
spirits or the Spirit.85

Now let’s take a closer look at each incident where Smith mentions the Spirit of
God in order to ascertain the nature of each. I will categorize each quote by referencing
its number (1-14) and describing the quote’s relation to the work of Holy Spirit as: 1)
apophatic; 2) hidden/retired; or 3) resting. The term “apophatic” will be used to describe
Smith’s use of Spirit language in a way that suggests not wanting to say too much about
the Spirit or to affirm what God the Spirit is not. These apophatic quotes use general,
vague and esoteric Spirit language. Furthermore, by using “apophatic” to describe the
nature of Smith’s use of Holy Spirit language I wish to also invoke Calvin’s claim that
the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be grasped by the senses. The trope “hidden/retired”
will be employed to emphasize the eclipsing of the Holy Spirit through the use of some
other more palatable theological term like “grace” or “Jesus Christ” – like in the the work
of Jones and Coakley. Furthermore, using “hidden/retired” will convey that the Holy
Spirit is to some degree a secondary cause. Last, I will define as “resting” those quotes
where Smith’s use of Spirit language comports more closely to Rogers’ constructive
pneumatology. Quotes described as “resting” are to be interpreted as relaying a more
robust and direct attempt to connect Christian practices to the body in pneumatological
terms. Some quotes may have elements of more than one characteristic or category, a
property which will be identified as we proceed.

Taken as a whole quotes 1-6 and 8-14 are apophatic quotes. Each has some vague
reference to the Spirit. For example, in quote 1, Smith states that in worship believers

85 Ibid., 93n5.
intentionally join a “life formed by the Spirit.” Quote 4 on the other hand references Pentecost as the beginning of a certain economic understanding of God’s presence in the world. Quote 6 references Ephesians 5:18-20 as rational for a connection between song and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Each of these quotes hint at not wanting to imply too much as to the Holy Spirit’s agency. Quotes 2, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13 and 14 rest within the “hidden/retired” variety regarding how they reference the Holy Spirit. Quotes 2, 5, 10, 12, and 13 are dual cases which meet the criteria for being both apophatic and hidden/retiring and shall be expounded upon as a conclusion to this analysis. Quotes 7 and 14 are squarely within the hidden/retired domain because Quote 7, like in the work of Jones and Coakley, evidence a “retiring” of the Holy Spirit behind the language of ‘grace’ and unlike Jones’ and Coakley’s work, Quote 7 uses Christological discourse to reduce the identity and agency of the Holy Spirit in relation to human agency so as not to encourage a conflation of the two. Both Quote 7 and 14 “hide” the work of the Holy Spirit within the language of practice and power/empowerment.

There is categorical overlap in Quotes 2, 5, 10, 12 and 13. All are both apophatic and hidden/retire quotes. They are apophatic because each uses inexact terms when Spirit language is used. Quote 2 uses “presence of the Spirit” while quote 5 uses “enabled by the Spirit.” Quote 10, 12 and 13 furthers this trend of using esoteric generalized terms by using “transformative power.” These quotes also “retire” the work of the Spirit behind “grace,” “sacrament,” “Word,” “practices,” and “scripture.” None of the quotes can be defined as “resting” because none make a direct connection between Smith’s notion of practices trafficking in bodily capital and the Holy Spirit.
The reason why none of the references to the Holy Spirit are of the “resting” type is because Smith’s work, as he makes clear, is indebted to the Reformed tradition, which has apophatic tendencies baked in and leaves its finger prints upon how Smith references the Holy Spirit in his work. 86 As it has been shown Smith’s theological discourse either does not say enough regarding the Holy Spirit and practices or eclipses the Holy Spirit in ways reminiscent of Jones’ Graced Practices and Coakley’s Deepening Practices.

Recall in the section on Graced Practices how our analysis revealed a similarity between how Jones used ideas from philosophy and linguistics as content to discribe how sanctification worked as forming grace. Our analysis revealed that these ideas operated in the same way grace language operated which was to replace Spirit language in order to avoid any direct appeal to human agency. Previously we mentioned how Smith’s use of social imaginary and adaptive unconscious helps him fill the gap between Christian practices and the body. Combined with how Spirit language operates to make the Holy Spirit vague or hidden in his work Smith’s use of adaptive unconscious and social imaginary functions in the pattern of his project in the same way grace language does but in a different register. Of import, is that in Smith’s work, the work of the Holy Spirit as it relates to Christian practices is vague and unsubstantive and copies what Rogers oberserves regarding how the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit is reduced in academic discourse for the same reasons (i.e. an appeal to grace language, the Reformed tradition, or the ideas of John Calvin or Karl Barth).

Smith’s Augustinian turn to the body is correct because it privalages an understanding of how desires are formed through the body and changes the question at

86 Smith, Desiring, 14-15.
the heart of Christian practice from “what ideas or beliefs are being [propogated to] what ends [are our practices] seeking to direct our love” towards within a society that does not know God.87 This constitutes a task this project hopes cannot be accomplished without providing a more robust account of the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit within the work on Christian practices of formation.

To this end, in our last chapter I will offer a framework for making the discourse of Christian practices more pneumatological by extending Rogers’ idea of “resting” into the work on Christian practices by synthesizing it with Smith’s understanding of how Christian practices function as embodied pedagogies of desire. In addition to accomplishing this task the next chapter will also provide a critique of both Smith’s and Rogers’ understanding of scripture for the purpose of recommending how the local church may develop a greater pneumatological awareness within their systems of discipleship that attends to the body through an appeal to performance criticism.

87 Smith, Desiring, 73.
3. The Spirit Resting on Christian Practices and Scripture as Performance

Up until now it has been shown that Rogers’ critique of academic discourse is applicable to the work on Christian practices of formation. In this chapter I will show that Rogers’ idea of the Holy Spirit “resting” as a solution to what he observes is a lack of substance in pneumatological development in theological discourse is also meaningful for the work on Christian practices of formation. Rogers idea of “resting” is not a solution in the sense that it solves all the issues that have created a stalling of significant and meaningful Spirit-talk in academic discourse. Rogers aim is that “resting” will shake up the pneumatological status quo so that the damned up river of dialogue surrounding the agency and identity of God the Spirit will flow again for a new generation. This section is in solidarity with Rogers’ intent in introducing the idea of “rest” into academic discourse but for discipleship purposes. By injecting “rest” or “resting” into the field of thought surrounding Christian practices of formation I hope to prompt further dialogue on how the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit is made known to believers in their everyday lives through the rehearsal of Christian practices.

To accomplish this task in this section a recap of and more detail will be provided to explain Rogers’ concept of “rest.” After this, I will show how Smith’s construction of how practices operate to train desire is enhanced by Rogers’ account of how the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit can be understood as “resting” upon the body of Jesus. In combining Smith’s work on Christian practices with Rogers’ work on the Holy Spirit it will be shown how their collective vision serves as an example of how Christian practices will benefit from a more essential connection to pneumatology that attends to the body. It will also be shown how performance criticism serves to deepen attention to the body
within a pneumatological upgrade for Christian practices. I begin with a more indepth explanation of “resting.”

Rogers states that students of Christianity, in various ways, are communicating that they want more Spirit in theological discourse.¹ To address this desire Rogers proposes that one must dispense with any appeal to the notion that the Spirit is not a Person with an affinity for material things because interactions between the Spirit and the Son in scripture affirm otherwise. With regard to this project the material that the Person of the Holy Spirit has an affinity for are Christian practices because such practices are by nature embodied. The question becomes at this point how are we to understand the agency and identity of God the Spirit within the context of this affinity for the material, which we are interpreting as Christian practices, that Rogers claims is the pneumotological state of things. Rogers develops the concept of “resting” to address this concern within his project and will be deployed in our project as well. I will recount what we have previously mentioned about what Rogers means by “resting” after we provide a brief description of who Rogers got the term from.

Speaking of the Holy Spirit in terms of “resting” is already a part of the Christian tradition. John of Damascus, according to Rogers, was the first to use the term “rest” in reference to the Holy Spirit. He was a monk and priest who is best know for his defense of iconography. He is a father of the Eastern Orthodox Church and a saint in the Western tradition of Christianity who, in his work entitled “The Orthodox Faith” coined the term “rest.” According to Rogers, John of Damascus phrase, “The Spirit rests on the Son,” is not only a phrase Rogers recovers and builds upon for his project it also addresses the

¹ Rogers, *After the Spirit*, 60.
question, “How is it that the Spirit shows an affinity for matter and befriends the body already in the trinitarian life?”\textsuperscript{2} Read in terms of Christian practices, the way Rogers recasts John of Demascus’ phrase, serves to provide, in what is to follow, an answer to a particular version of the previous question, which is “How is it that the Spirit shows an affinity for Christian practices of formation that are rehearsed by the body in a way that attends to developing a greater practical awareness of the agency and identity of the Holy Spirit for our time?” Since this question undergirds our discussion of how Rogers deploys “resting” language is related to Smith’s work on Christian practice we must revisit what we have already said about what Rogers means by “The Spirit rests on the Son.”

Recall, in chapter 1 we explained that Rogers resources the narrative hermeneutic of Hans Frei, the theological idea of \textit{Opera trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt} and Hans Urs von Balthasar’s idea of “trinitarian inversion” as soil from which his version of “The Holy Spirit rests upon the Son” can be understood to operate in his proposal. We explained previously that from this theological soil Rogers, like a horticulturalist, develops his idea of “resting” to mean that because the Holy Spirit rest on the Body of Christ she also rests on our bodies individually and collectively.\textsuperscript{3} Furthermore, we explained that because of how the Son and Spirit relate as Persons in scripture, Rogers was able to argue, the “Spirit rests on material bodies in the economy, because she rests on the Son in the Trinity.”\textsuperscript{4} We concluded our explanation of what Rogers argued was the content of “resting” by noting that he appealed to the practices of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 61.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Rogers, \textit{After the Spirit}, 60-62.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid., 61-62.
\end{itemize}
baptism and Eucharist to insure that his definition of “resting” included an appropriation of how the Holy Spirit functions through what the body does.

Through “resting” language Rogers intensifies how the Holy Spirit functions in relation to the body which was an aspect my previous discussion of “resting” did not capture and which I want to expound upon now. Rogers defines “resting” to include a focus on the body in ways that John of Damascus did not. Unlike the saint, Rogers appropriates the body in his pneumatological understanding of how “resting” functions by declaring that “resting” is “an active thing, an alighting.”

For the Holy Spirit to rest on a body requires an emphasis on the fact that as a theological term “resting” cannot be a noun but a verb. Rogers idea of defining “rest” as a theological verb is legitamized by the fact that it operates in scripture as a verb. One example of this is in the Old Testament (i.e. the Hebrew Scriptures), amongst others Rogers refers to, is in the story of Eldad and Medad when the Spirit is said “to make to rest upon” them (Numbers 11:26). Rogers also makes note of how the New Testament affirms “resting” as a pneumatological verb in that God the Spirit “falls upon” and “overshadows” in Acts and the Annunciation/Transfiguration, respectively (Acts 10:44, 11:15; Luke 1:35, Matthew 17:5). To be clear, the Holy Spirit “resting” as a verb may account for the human body because the Holy Spirit “rest” on Christ but, according to Rogers, does not mean that there is something identical between Christ and human beings, Rogers writes:

Since the faithful, unlike Christ, are not divine hypostases, they have only a partial share in the energy of the Spirit. But they are united with Christ through the Spirit who never leaves Christ…The Spirit never leaves this

5 Ibid., 61.
6 Rogers, After the Spirit, 62-63.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
position of resting upon Christ, for his rest as a hypostasis is in Christ as the incarnate Son of God. But the Spirit can cease to rest upon the human being for there is no eternal hypostatic relation between human beings and the Spirit…the Spirit’s work in the economy of gathering the community in to the body of Christ, and distributing gifts to the members are the form that its one resting takes, when it enters the realm of finitude.\(^9\)

In addition to insuring that his attention to the body in defining what “resting” as a verb means does not incorporate something more than an imaging of Christ the qoute also affirms that the Holy Spirit “resting” as a verb includes the gifts the Spirit of God gives.

Rogers’ defintion of “resting” as that which not only communicates by analogy how the Spirit’s activity upon the body has a particular shape which arises from and reflects intratrinitarian relations; but, also in affirming this traditional aspect of the Spirit resting Rogers intensifies is importance to the body by emphasizing “resting” as a verb. As we move on from understanding what Rogers means by “resting” to its implications for making Christian practices more pneumatologically robust we must emphasize that, as a theological verb, Rogers’ definition of “resting” on a body has two parts: 1) it affirms resting as active which is a necessary quality because the body of the faithful is penetrated only by a Spirit who is actively engaged; and 2) it affirms the fact that gifts are given to and through the body.\(^10\)

The reason why we are escalating the importance of Rogers’ two fold meaning in his defintion of “resting” as a verb is because it provides an adequate language for articulating how Rogers’ defintion of “resting” can be deployed within the work on Christian practices. Specifically, using both aspects together (i.e. resting as active and gift giving) I will show how combining Rogers’ defintion of “resting” with Smith’s

\(^9\) Ibid., 64.  
\(^10\) Rogers, After the Spirit, 64-65.
understanding of Christian practices is an example of Christian practices attending to Spirit-talk more concretely.

Resting of the Holy Spirit is active and communicates the giving of gifts to the body must be synthesized with Smith’s claim that the heart or our desires are taught through the body if Rogers’ definition of “resting” is to be joined with Smith’s definition of Christian practices. In order for this to be done we have to remember that Smith uses the philosophical terminology of “social imaginary” and psychological terminology “adaptive unconscious” to bridge the gap between his claim that the heart is educated through the body and how the body through Christian practices should be understood to function in order to instruct the heart. The following relationship between teacher and student will be used as a metaphor may make this distinction clear. The body is the teacher and the heart is the student. Christian practices in our example would be akin to the curriculum. Smith’s use of “social imaginary” and “adaptive unconscious” is his attempt to describe the constellation of techniques and resources the teacher has at his or her disposal (i.e. lesson plans, tests, quizzes, organization of desks, technology, projects, textbooks, etc.) that function together with the objective of insuring the heart learns whatever part of the curriculum is being taught. What I am suggesting is that Smith’s turn to philosophy and psychology can be enhanced by Rogers’ pneumatology thus creating the opportunity to make his work on Christian practices more pneumatically robust. The logics of how this connection would work is what I will talk about next.

The Holy Spirit resting on the body of Christ means it also rests on our bodies in a particular way. That particular way of resting, according to Rogers, includes an understanding of resting as the Holy Spirit actively working upon our bodies and giving
gifts to and through our bodies. These two aspects of the Holy Spirit resting forms the bases from which Rogers argues the point that since we are united with Christ because the same Spirit that rested on his body also rests on our bodies, union with Christ also accentuates our growth as persons. The objective of the resting Spirit’s activity and gift giving is to grow us up. Rogers writes:

Creatures are made to grow; their createdness is a movement from God to God. God might have made creatures static, but that is a different story – a deist story – from the biblical one. The Spirit therefore wants to foster the virtues, or powers, particular to each of us so that we may not be left out of our own destinys

The Spirit rests on our bodies which makes growth in virtue possible. This is what Smith’s turn to philosophy and psychology to explain how the body functions as the teacher of the heart misses. And Rogers needs Smith as well because Rogers’ idea of “resting” needs Smith’s practicality in how teaching the heart through the body helps Christians recognize in their bodies how the world wants to tell them who they are.

Enhancing Smith’s work with that of Rogers’ pneumatology will hopefully begin a conversation. It is hoped their collective vision would create a space for a pneumatological discourse to take place within the work on Christian practices of formation that does not sacrifice the pre-cognitive effect practices have on our identities at the expense of the bodily way such formation operates. The body will not have to disappear under the weight of emphasizing the primacy of the pre-conscious and affective ways desires are orientated. Rather combining Rogers’ definition of resting with Smith’s work places Smith’s definition of how embodied practices operate at the pre-cognitive affective level for the benefit of Christian formation squarely within a pneumatological

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11 Rogers, After the Spirit, 65.
12 Ibid.
domain. Of import is that this added focus on the Spirit in Smith’s work makes Smith’s use of “imaginary” and “adaptive unconscious” to elaborate on how practices are employed at the affective bodily level more powerful, allowing the body to be considered because the Sprit resting upon our bodies makes the work that Christian practices do on our imaginations and “adaptive unconscious” possible. Joining Smith’s and Roger’s projects raises the stakes on what Christians believe regarding the body and why these beliefs are vital for the continued flourishing of God’s good creation. Furthermore, joining Rogers’ pneumatological discourse to the formational framework contributed by Smith’s work would make what occurred at Pentecost resistant to the threat of being forgotten along with the Spirit’s gifts, fruits, politics and power to change our local churches and strengthen our witness to the Triune God.

**Eugene Rogers, James K. A. Smith, the Body and Performance Criticism**

Crucial to the development of this account will be a focus on the ways we approach the practice of reading scripture. Smith and Rogers both emphasize the importance of scripture in their work, albeit in different ways; however, their concepts of how scripture works privileges the printed text and reading text at the expense of their preference for the how the body is operative in their work. Furthermore, in suggesting another direction for how the agency of the Holy Spirit functions in Christian practices by bringing together Smith and Rogers, I am claiming that there are implications for how we engage scripture. If the body is the conduit through which our desires are formed then another

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13 An account of what Christians believe about the body is outside the scope of this project.
heuristic is needed to insure that the connection between the identity of the Holy Spirit and Christian practices is not lost when scripture is engaged.

In *Desiring the Kingdom* Smith claims that “the way to our hearts is through our bodies.”\(^{14}\) Therefore, how the body learns is important for the guiding of our desires. According to Smith, the body learns through aesthetic engagements with what constitutes the good life. This means that in order for the heart to be trained through the body there must be an appeal to the “adaptive unconscious” which traffics in “images, stories, and films (as well as advertisements, commercials, and sitcoms).”\(^{15}\) In short, there must be an appeal to stories in order for habits to anchor themselves through bodily practices that over time become automated. If desiring the kingdom “becomes embedded in our dispositions…by being pictured in concrete, alluring ways that [via embodied practices] attract us at a noncognitive level” then what role does scripture play?\(^{16}\) This question is vital because scripture is ground zero for the stories and images that make Christian practices intelligible.

If teaching the body and hence the heart must include an appeal to stories, then scripture, because it is steeped in stories, becomes central. Smith understands this and describes scripture as that which functions as “the script of the worshipping community, the story that narrates the identity of the people of God…the fuel of the Christian imagination.”\(^{17}\) Worship, according to Smith, is the watershed moment where scripture is

\(^{14}\) Smith, *Desiring*, 59.
\(^{15}\) Ibid.
\(^{16}\) Ibid., 58.
\(^{17}\) Ibid., 195.
“read [and] enacted at the same time” and thereby “inscribes the story of God in Christ into our imaginations.”\textsuperscript{18} Even more, Smith explains:

the moment of Scripture reading and proclamation of the Word in preaching is the most intense or explicit moment for the articulation of this story…Scriptures provide the story of which we find ourselves a part, and thus the narration and absorption of the story is crucial to give us resources for knowing what we ought to do…we begin to absorb the story as a moral or ethical compass – not because it discloses to us abstract, ahistorical moral axioms, but because it narrates…the shape of the kingdom we’re looking for, thus filling in the telos of our own action. We begin to absorb the plot of the story, begin to see ourselves as characters within it; the habits and practices of its heroes function as exemplars, providing guidance as we are trained in virtue…Because we are story-telling animals, imbibing the story of Scripture is the primary way that our desire gets aimed at the kingdom…When we encounter Scripture in worship, we are invited into its performance and thus initiated into a way of reading the world…\textsuperscript{19}

Since worship is, in Smith’s assessment, a counter formational pedagogy of desire reading, listening to or proclaiming scripture is only part of a larger constellation of Christian practices, that constitute worship.

However, Smith’s view of how scripture operates could be enhanced in a way that brings even greater focus to the body. The quote above states that when read and preached in worship the congregation is invited into a scriptural performance during worship, which in turn becomes a heuristic by which the world is understood to operate. If scripture is the script, and “the heart is trained through the body” then will reading and listening to scripture adequately affect the body? What is the body doing or how is the body being engaged in Smith’s understanding of how scripture operates in worship or

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} Smith, Desiring, 196-197.
anywhere for that matter? It seems that, in Smith’s estimation, where scripture is concerned the heart is trained through some mystical transmission that takes place when believers’ ears are engaged. He leaves it up to the hearers of scripture to cognitively provide the pictures and images, by which their imaginations are formed.

What more is the body doing, in Smith’s account, when scripture becomes the focus? In asking this question I am claiming that Smith’s account does not go far enough to clarify not only “that” formation is embodied, but “how” in his framework of liturgy the reading of scripture actually works. I want to suggest that he is unable to “go further” because his work is indebted to not only an apophatic Reformed pneumatology but a scriptural hermeneutic that prevents him from exploring other possibilities of how the body may be further engaged when scripture becomes the means through which disciplining occurs.

Moreover, even if the congregation has to mentally provide the aesthetic capital for their imaginations, how should the body being engaged with scripture in worship to shape our desires more effectively? In short, Smith’s understanding of how scripture functions in worship ascribes too much to the cognitive faculties. If the heart is trained through embodied practices, which mold the “adaptive unconscious” and our imaginations which privileges pictures, stories, images and film, then should scripture reading and proclamation be the only privileged modes available when the printed text is used?

Smith claims secular liturgies form our hearts at the non-cognitive level to desire a vision of the good life that is not informed by the Christian story. Smith uses the trope of “the mall” as an example of a contemporary secular liturgy. For him “the mall”
represents “a web of practices and institutions associated with consumerism…the mall is just a particular representative site for the liturgies of consumerism.” 20 The mall is an example of a secular liturgy because it trains the body through identity-forming practices. 21 Furthermore, the mall directs our hearts to desire an alien version of the Christian kingdom. 22 If “the mall” operates in this way and scripture serves as a corrective or a deterrent to such worldly meaning-making, then Smith’s claims regarding the function of scripture for the believer must employ more of the body because “the mall”, as Smith describes it does so using its own script or version of scripture derived from sophisticated marketing strategies. 23 These marketing strategies traffic in stories and images which also shape desire through the body commensurate with a vision which does not comport to the gospel. Moreover, the “script” of the mall is more “bodily” in that the body is in motion moving from one store to another each with their own story experiencing various forms of stimuli for the senses.

The telos of the mall is all encompassing and the gospel is the same but the Christian story has yet to free itself from the printed page and an over reliance on the ear drum. I am not arguing that the secular liturgy of the mall can be stopped by an adequate liturgical worship because that is not what Smith is arguing. He is arguing for a definition of worship which extends beyond the sanctuary and is not only the domain of the church because habits are formed through the body by cultural institutions. This being the case the church must adapt to define its practices as those that first aim to teach the heart

20 Smith, Desiring, 93n6.
21 A creative example of what, for Smith, constitutes identity-forming practices of “the mall” can be found in Desiring the Kingdom, 19-27.
22 Smith, Desiring, 24, 96-101.
23 Smith, Desiring, 19-23.
through the body so that the mall and the market will not have the last say in shaping the
telos to which our desires are orientated. My claim is that Smith’s scriptural heuristics
betray his project because its description does not adequately describe how the body is
taught through scripture unlike his account of other practices like the practice of
singing.24 Smith’s account of scripture is not problematic because his description of the
parts associated with liturgical worship lack embodiment. Rather because his account of
scripture is not embodied enough within the context of his vision of how worship
practices should be understood to operate as a means of countering the ways the mall
forms our desires.

Unlike Smith’s work, Rogers’ project is not about practices and their relation to
liturgies, the body and desire. He argues for a constructive pneumatology indebted to a
narrative reading of scripture which is nothing new within the tradition of Christian
reflection on the Trinity.25 However, he does provide a glimpse into his understanding of
how scripture operates in the life of the believer:

…this glimpsing of the Trinitarian life does not mean,
according to Christian contemplative practice, that human
beings thereby gain certainty concerning divine things
(scientia in divinis) or that they come to comprehend God
in Trinity or in unity. Rather such glimpses occur as part of
a human practice of reflecting upon scripture by which the
Persons may begin to comprehend or embrace human
beings – that is, catch them up into a divine life that
increases in mystery even as it enfolds them…the New
Testament gives occasional glimpses into intratrinitarian
activity in the various theophanies.26

24 Ibid.,170-173.
Rogers contends that scripture reading is a practice that operates on the mystical level enveloping the reader into the life of the Trinity. At this point Rogers’ interpretation of how scripture functions in relationship to the everyday life of the believer reflects Coakley’s engagement with the ascetic tradition, he writes:

When intratrinitarian relations are glimpsed because the Holy Spirit reveals them in Scripture, the Holy Spirit also manifests (1 Cor. 12:7) them in human beings as the conditions for the possibility of human participation in the Trinitarian life…[an] advantage of this approach is that it furthers anagogic practices of contemplation and scriptural interpretation that lead both into the narrative and into the mystery of the Trinity…Christian rational and contemplative practices don not have to float free from stories and ascend into ontological speculation in order to remain robustly Trinitarian…We discipline the contemplation of the narratives in another way…human persons become more rather than less mysterious the better we know [these narratives].

Rogers’ understanding of scripture emphasizes a contemplative engagement with scripture. Therefore, Rogers understates the embodied engagement with scripture his emphasis on the Spirit entails. Rogers’ use of the term “contemplation” reveals that although he argues that the Spirit “rests” on the body, as far as scripture reading is concerned Rogers, like Smith, leaves his focus on the body behind. According to Rogers’ heurmenetic the Spirit’s work is realized mystically or unconsciously which echoes Calvin’s claim about how the Holy Spirit’s agency is ‘hidden’ from our senses. As the above quotes by Rogers attest, the believer’s engagement with scripture is a mysterious operation where the prospect of a divine encounter is highly probable. In Rogers’

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27 Ibid. Note: Sarah Coakley’s use of ascetic theology in Christian practices is related to how Rogers understands scripture to operate that appeals to the Eastern Christian idea of divination through deep contemplation of scripture.
assessment, scripture is engaged cognitively but can create a situation where the mind is transcended.

Regardless of how Smith and Rogers explain how the practice of engaging scripture operates within their projects, both scholars, perhaps inadvertently, favor the printed format of scripture. This unconscious bias needs modification if their combined efforts are to benefit the local church’s understanding of how the Spirit is related to the work of Christian practice. It is at this point I want to ask the question, “Is there a way to understand scripture which does not preference the printed word as primary and thereby provides a hermeneutical framework that is better suited for a more pneumatological approach to Christian practices? The answer to this question will be the topic of the next section.

**Scripture as Performance and the Holy Spirit within Christian Practices**

What is to follow will serve as rationale for the connections I will make between scripture as performance and a more pneumatological focus in the work on Christian practices. The legitimacy of scripture as performance or theater is not to be considered here. I am taking such a claim for granted in order to present information that will make legitimate another claim: performance criticism in its varied expressions provide a helpful scriptural hermeneutic if the synthesis of Rogers’ and Smith’s work is to serve in furthering the work of Christian practices as pneumatologically viable. The reason is because performance criticism starts from the assumption that something can be gained from the fact that scripture developed from an oral culture, which by nature made scripture particularly palatable to the body and thereby more accessible to the masses.
because literacy was scarce. At this point I turn to consider more explicitly the definitions of performance criticism.

Performance criticism draws its insights from the realities of scripture’s historical development.28 Reading the Bible from print has only been in existence for 500 years. One must be reminded “2500 before [Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 1450s], most people experienced the Bible either through oral/aural performance or in the form of unique and rare handwritten manuscripts.”29 This occurred for a number of reasons. One of which was that most people in the Greco-Roman world, with some Jewish exceptions, where illiterate.30

Given that texts where created on scrolls by hand, with varied levels of manuscript quality the printed versions of any texts were expensive, which also contributed to the unfavorability of the printed text. Moreover, those who could afford them rarely read them.31 There was a preference for oral delivery not for qualitative reasons but because the printed word was a function of the oral world, “writing was largely understood as representing oral speech” and a poor one at that.32 Times have changed. Today there is an unconscious bias in countries with high education levels if not a “modern prejudice in favor of literacy…the printed word is so widespread and deeply ingrained in our culture that it is exceedingly hard for us to imagine that vast portions of

31 Ibid., 13.
32 Ibid., 14.
the Bible were once exclusively oral, not written at all, and thus, once upon a time, [scripture] was not a book.\footnote{Fowler, \textit{Why Everything}, 8.}

Could there be a correlation, if not a causation, between this preference for the printed word, literacy, and their appeal to thought and contemplation and how “Spirit-talk…has been evermore evoked, and ever more substance-free?”\footnote{Rogers, \textit{After the Spirit}, 1.} Could one of the largely unnoticed failures of the successes of the movement from oral communication, which was more prone to being embodied, toward written communication be that the “Spirit, who in classical Christian discourse ‘pours out on all flesh,’ had, in modern Christian discourse, floated free of bodies altogether”?\footnote{Ibid.} Perhaps the mode of how scripture is communicated contributes to how the Holy Spirit is understood to operate in the lives of Christians. Perhaps the absence of the Holy Spirit in Christian practices follows an over reliance on and favoring of literate engagement of scripture. What effect would performing scripture especially in those parts where the Holy Spirit is a character that acts (i.e. pours, descends, etc.) have on our awareness of how the Holy Spirit works on/in the body through Christian practices?\footnote{In these questions and comments I am suggesting a connection between historical or social shifts in preferred mediums of communication and the level of attention, awareness and even importance of certain Christian claims for everyday life, especially the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.}

In “What is Performance Criticism?” David Rhoads states that “performance criticism is...a paradigm shift from print medium to oral medium that has implications for the entire enterprise of New Testament studies.”\footnote{Rhoads, David, “What Is Performance Criticism?,” \textit{The Bible in Ancient and Modern Media: Story and Performance}, eds. Holly E. Hearon and Philip Ruge-Jones (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), 88.} Others note that performance criticism
may be a powerful tool for Old Testament scholarship as well.\textsuperscript{38} There are three approaches that define performance criticism:

1) One approach is to construct in [the] imagination one or more performative events [i.e. a biblical story happening] for each particular writing and then study the writing with those scenarios in mind.

2) The second approach is to reorient the methods by which we study…in light of the oral dimensions of the writings.

3) The third approach is to do performances of these texts in our primary languages as a means to get in touch with the performative dimensions of these writings in their original contexts [i.e. perform the scripture].\textsuperscript{39}

In order to substantiate my previous statements regarding how scripture as performance serves as a hermeneutical compliment to a more pneumatological approach to the work of Christian practices, of these three approaches, the first and third are most promising for developing Smith’s and Roger’s work.\textsuperscript{40} My purpose is to get the conversation started on how a more robust consideration of the Holy Spirit in Christian practices compels the local church to consider the work done in performance criticism as an expression of keeping the Holy Spirit’s agency and identity central to our everyday lives.

The first approach requires the imagination of a performative event comprised of five factors: 1) the act of performing; 2) the performer(s); 3) the audience; 4) the socio-historical circumstances; 5) the rhetorical effect/impact.\textsuperscript{41} Not only does my focus on these factors enhance Smith’s sense of scriptural practice in ways that draws even more


\textsuperscript{39} Rhoads, \textit{Performance}, 88-89.

\textsuperscript{40} A consideration of the second approach’s focus on how performance criticism relates to more well-known forms of criticism in terms of Smith’s and Rogers’ work is unnecessary because the relationship between scripture and the believer’s body is diminished due to its more academic aims.

\textsuperscript{41} Rhoads, \textit{Performance}, 88-89.
focus to the Spirit’s formation of the body than Smith’s focus on liturgy does; but also, I want to suggest that performance criticism may enrich the account of the Spirit’s work in Christian formation that we gain through reading Rogers and Smith.

I want to do more than suggest a joining of Smith’s and Rogers’ work for the benefit of realizing how the Holy Spirit is active within Christian practices. For their combined vision to be serviceable to the local church a shift from a primacy of the printed word toward a focus on orality, not literacy, is needed. I desire to couple Smith’s pedagogical shift from cognition to embodiment and Rogers’ shift from conceiving of the Holy Spirit as floating free of bodily existence to one that sees the Holy Spirit as not merely transcendent but immanent in bodily things with a shift of my own. Both Smith and Rogers provide an account of scripture. However, in the previous section, I have shown that both scholars views of scripture alludes to or is indebted to a primacy of the printed word while at the same time advocating the storied or narrative nature of the biblical text. Smith’s focus on the liturgical setting as a whole suggests that reading of scripture is more than just reading text, however, his explanation of how could attend to the body more deeply. Smith’s emphasis on the difference between reading scripture versus reading text only furthers my critique because regardless of the distinctions he makes “reading” is central, a fact that flows from a hegemony of words on a page. Performance criticism serves as a corrective to the favoring of words on a page because of its focus on orality.

Orality means to show a preference for or a stronger recognition of the fact that scripture, as we have it today, came out of a culture which valued oral expression more than we do today, and the written word was subject to this fondness for oral
presentation.\footnote{Oral is used here to denote more than just speech or strong effective rhetoric but any and all expression (e.g. gestures, pitch, memorization, setting, etc.) that is brought to bare in making the printed word come alive in the imaginations of not only the presenter but all present. Oral in this sense is more like theater and story telling than forensics.} The reason for this shift to the oral rootedness of scripture is because it creates fallow ground for exploring ways the aesthetic tendencies of how the body functions in the forming of identity. Oral presentation is a largely untapped means through which the “saga” of scripture may come alive in ways that are more attuned to how the Holy Spirit may be understood to function within the process of how the body teaches the adaptive unconscious overtime. \footnote{I am referencing Karl Barth’s definition of saga. Barth defines “saga” in the following quote: “I am using saga in the sense of an intuitive and poetic picture of a pre-historical reality of history which is enacted once and for all within the confines of time and space. Legend and anecdote are to be regarded as a degenerate form of saga: legend as the depiction in saga form of a concrete individual personality; and anecdote as the sudden illumination in saga form either of a personality of this kind or of a concretely historical situation. If the concept of myth proves inadequate—as is still to be shown—it is obvious that the only concept to describe the biblical history of creation is that of saga.” Barth, Karl. “Church Dogmatics Study Edition 21” Ed. T. F. Torrance and G.W. Bromiley. III.1 The Doctrine of Creation. Trans. G. W. Bromiley. London: T & T Clark, 2010. 81. Print.} Since performance criticism appeals to oral culture, as a hermeneutic, performance criticism not only provides a framework for how the body may be taught through the story of God but also should be recognized as a particular way to explicitly remember what the Holy Spirit resting on a body engenders.

To insure that the Holy Spirit is not “retired” within Christian practices requires an appreciation for the fact that scripture did not begin as words on a page for personal consumption or contemplation. Rather the Bible did not begin as a book but as stories which were performed as part of an oral culture. This realization necessitates an appreciation of the way the body is involved and trained through the practice of engaging scripture. Because when not only scriptural interpretation but presentation accounts for proper body gestures, whether or not more than one person was involved, and a host of
other ways of involving the body in scriptural engagement, believers are inclined to be changed beyond what their minds are able to capture.

Recall that Smith argues that liturgies are formational practices that extend beyond the church which teach “us through affective, bodily means, especially bodily practices, routines, or rituals that grab hold of our hearts through our imagination, which is closely linked to our bodily senses.” An appeal to performance criticism makes possible a greater connection between scripture and Smith’s claim of how the body teaches the heart because it not only increases the presence of the body but it also allows for a discussion on how the body can be understood as a site for biblical interpretation. If the heart is taught through the body then, to this end, the body itself can interpret scripture and receive or contemplate scripture in ways that are different than cognitive modes of interpretation and reception of biblical truth. This is what I mean when I said above that scriptural engagement that accounts for the body can change believers beyond what their minds are conscious of.

Considering scripture from its rootedness in an oral culture illuminates the ways the Holy Spirit might be at work on the body. Such a heuristic increases the domain of ways the body can absorb scripture in affective ways which is consistent with Smith and Rogers collective vision. Performance criticism adds an embodied dimension to how the work of the Holy Spirit may draw the body into the Trinitarian life. For example, if Jesus’ baptism was configured in such a way where the Holy Spirit took on the form of a character played by a person who creatively channeled what was going on in the text in a mode that fit our contemporary context it would effect everyone differently especially at

44 Smith, Desiring, 63.
the embodied level. The scripture’s role via performance in an oral culture comports with
how Rogers’ defines the Spirit’s activity in the world as one which “characteristically
incorporates the particular (as in gathering the community, for baptism and Eucharist)
and distributes the corporate (as in the elements and the gifts).”45 I want to add that
conceiving of scripture as performance enhances Rogers’ understanding of how the Holy
Spirit operates in the world and his explicit embrace of the body. How else does the
community gather for baptism and Eucharist? What is the body doing when the elements
and gifts are distributed? In these instances, a performance is being wrought which did
not begin as a printed word to be read but as an oral and dramatic presentation to be
absorbed by the body. After the body was trained through such a performance then it was
effectively distributed in various ways in the world not because it was read but because
those same bodies were in motion in the world.

As such, and, contrary to Smith’s claim, the script of scripture does not invite the
listener into performance but is a performance.46 Scripture is a performance that makes
not only inviting the listener possible but also enlists the listener in a register that
incorporates more of what the body will absorb. The body is always involved however
scripture is rendered but engagement of the body informed by an appreciation of
performance criticism would provide greater meaning for Christians especially since, as I
am proposing, a greater awareness of the Holy Spirit may be possible. To ignore these
aspects of how performance criticism can serve to raise the stakes of bodily engagement
with scripture is to leave the world’s ways of directing our desires through the body
largely intact because these higher levels of bodily teaching are being used. So, I am

45 Rogers, After the Spirit, 61.
46 Smith, Desiring, 197.
proposing, that in order to have more Spirit-talk in the work on Christian practices and thereby in the local church more attention must be given to performative biblical criticism and whatever may derive from such a focus.

There is a wordless truth that is also part of scripture. It is this unspoken truth which adheres to the fact that most of human communication is non-verbal, and scripture as performance or theater propagates on a frequency heard only by the body (seen through the prism of a Smith-Rogarian construal of Christian practice) is the work of the Holy Sprit resting on the body making a proper orientation of our desires possible. Since scripture is a script that must be performed, then it must be embodied because how else can performance function but through the body? This has implications for how we preach and for the overall engagement with scripture in the public and private spheres.

I am not suggesting that we dispense with more literate modes of engaging scripture. Furthermore, I want to extend Smith’s claim that “the moment of Scripture reading and proclamation of the Word in preaching is the most intense or explicit moment in worship where the gospel is inscribed into our imagination” to include other modes of scriptural expression informed by a hermeneutic of performance.\(^47\) I think Smith is correct when he states that “Christian worship is deeply shaped by an explicit articulation of the story in the Scriptures;” however, I am suggesting that we do not see “explicit articulation” with its appeal to the cognitive aspects of human beings as primary.

At the heart of what I am proposing is an iteration of what Smith observed. Smith suggests that not only do we, as liturgical desiring animals, learn at a non-cognitive or

\(^{47}\) Smith, *Desiring*, 195.
pre-reflective level, but also that this type of learning proceeds and makes possible cognitive or reflective learning.\textsuperscript{48} Furthermore, Smith observes that not all action is intentional: much of our activity happens without our conscious realization and becomes automatic without our knowing.\textsuperscript{49} Smith argues that pre-reflective learning and the automatic unconscious are “acquired and shaped by practices [and it is these] rituals and routines that train our bodies, as it were, to react automatically in certain situations and environments.”\textsuperscript{50} Engagement with scripture from an oral or performative perspective rather than from a literary one increases the possibilities of how the body may participate in and be trained by scriptural story telling which will draw focus to the work of the Holy Spirit’s resting on the body within the context of Christian practices of formation.

Implementation of this idea will further contribute to the directing of desire rooted in pre-reflective learning and the automatic unconscious. This process should be read as how the Holy Spirit “resting” on the body functions because the Spirit’s agency in the life of the believer must give an account of God’s spirit at the most basic levels. How else can the saints be equipped for the work of service in a world that promotes the validity of other spirits in very particular ways?

Scripture as performance or theater deals in the same aesthetic raw material as those used by Smith’s “mall.” For example, “the mall,” as Smith describes it, allows for those who visit to “escape from the mundane ticking and counting of clock time and to inhabit a space governed by a different time, on almost timeless.”\textsuperscript{51} Performing scripture also invites one into a different time, a time that is timeless where participants are so

\textsuperscript{48} Smith, \textit{Desiring}, 56-57n34.  
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 81-85.  
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{51} Smith, \textit{Desiring}, 21.
embraced by the sights, sounds and perhaps smells of the gospel story that no one is asking when is “church” over. Scripture as performance, which may include but not limited to speaking or listening, needs to be added to the lexicon of how Christian practices operate. Scripture performed should undergird a pneumatological understanding of Christian practices influenced by Rogers’ and Smith’s combined vision because engaging the body through ideas which proceed from the work of performance criticism is paramount if the identity of the Holy Spirit is to be practically understood.

If Smith is right in affirming Alasdair MacIntyre’s claim that human beings are “essentially…story-telling animal[s],” and if Rogers’ body-friendly account of the Holy Spirit is correct, then an interpretation of scripture that is also friendly to the body is a great complement. 52 The area of performance criticism offers a hermeneutic that has a penchant for the material and aesthetic offering a framework consistent with how the Spirit befriends the body. In other words, because the Holy Spirit shows a preferential option for the body, understanding Smith’s work in pneumatological terms, formation through Christian practices gets to the heart through the body. The oral foundations of scripture that performance criticism embraces are founded upon one simple fact. This fact is that scripture itself did not begin to form Christians from the assumption that the way to heart is through the head but rather approached the believer at the affective level if their identities where to be formed. Hence scripture as performance or theater is a practical expression of Rogers’ pneumatological aims and enhances Smith’s attempts to preference the body in the formation of our desires.

52 Ibid., 195.
I turn now to correlating these aspects with the ideas expressed in Smith’s and Rogers’ work which will include concrete examples of the five factors previously mentioned. Smith and Rogers privilege the body in their work. An account of how they do so as aspects of their work relate to this thesis has been provided above. Smith provides a practical expression of Rogers’ pneumatological claims that collectively serve as an example of how a doctrine of the Holy Spirit and Christian practices may be configured for the benefit of use in the local church. Their unique focus on the function of the body in their work makes this synthesis possible. Undergirding this synthesis with the scriptural hermeneutic of performance criticism insures that the focus on the body is maintained as a vital part of this process of keeping the awareness of how the Holy Spirit and Christian practices relate. To this end, like Smith’s and Roger’s work, all of the aspects associated with the first approach to performance criticism listed above assumes that the body is involved in the performance of scripture: all can be said to have an affinity for bodily things and traffic in images, stories, and contain, like sitcoms, the visual and auditory stuff of our messy lives.

This point brings into focus the first aspect of performance criticism first approach (i.e. the act of performance). In the act of performing one needs to consider that the “event of a performance is much more than the oral dimensions.” 53 When a performance is rendered it “includes intonation, movements, gestures, pace, facial expressions, postures, the spatial relationships of the imagined characters, the temporal development of the story in progressive events displayed on stage, and much more.” 54 Furthermore, the performance includes the “sheer force of the bodily presence of the

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53 Smith, Desiring, 89.
54 Rhoads, Performance, 89.
performer [or performers] to evoke emotions and commitments." The function of the performer is to influence the congregation. When the stories of scripture were originally transmitted orally, the function of the story-teller, or performer, was to affect those present. The “performer was seeking to have the values and beliefs of the story embodied in turn in the actions and dynamics of the communal life of the audience.” This aim of the performer indicates that the performer was only one side of the equation, for the purpose of the performance was to involve and influence society through the audience.

Smith makes the point that one of the aims of his project is to dispense with the human person as a thinking-thing who deals primarily in ideas. The audience’s presence and activity within the fulcrum of scriptural performance aligns with Smith’s desire to reformulate how the humans intend the world centered upon the affective regions of the body rather than the cerebral regions of the mind. According to David Rhoads,

> The audience participates [in the story’s performance] in more ways than understanding. Words and stories do not just have denotations of meaning. They also have an impact on people. We are not dealing simply with the notion of conveying information about events to an audience. The narrative is not a vehicle for an idea, as if we could get the idea or theology and then no longer need the story. Nor is the story an example to illustrate an idea. The story itself has energy and power. The story affects the whole person – heart, soul, mind and body.

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55 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 42.
58 To “intend the world” according the Smith means that “the human person or consciousness is *intentional*...it is always ‘aimed at’ something; it *intends* something as an object...consciousness is always conscious of.” To “intend the world” means that human beings do not create a world but rather are first conscious of the world and can only envision or imagine what that world means or is. 59 David Rhoads, *Reading Mark, Engaging the Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004).
Not only does scripture as performance map Smith’s ideas regarding how human beings intend the world, but such biblical criticism also accords with Rogers’ use of narrative to evoke an understanding of the Holy Spirit as a character in the text for theological purposes. The construction of Rogers’ pneumatology is founded upon the way scripture was read within an oral culture, which performance criticism affirms. Perhaps the reason why the Holy Spirit has had a muted revival within theological discourse and is largely hidden within Christian practice is based upon the hegemony of the printed word and literacy.

Rogers’ learns from Hans Frei that narratives are vital for understanding that person and story cannot be separated. Therefore, the narratives where the Holy Spirit interacts with the Son (i.e. the Annunciation, Baptism, Transfiguration, and Resurrection), when considered by Rogers, makes explicit that these narratives are crucial for the display of the Holy Spirit as a person. Rogers’ use of Frei is brought to bear upon his pneumatological discourse. However, when he relates scripture with the believer, conveyance or glimpses of the intratrinitarian interaction between the Spirit and the Son, which in turn mark the mystical drawing of the Christian into the relationship between the Godhead, only happens through contemplation of the printed word. According to Rogers, the disciple of Christ can bear witness to the identity of the Spirit through how the Holy Spirit is displayed as a person in her interactions with Jesus made manifest in the narratives of Scripture. But, as I have quoted him above, this mystical
encounter with the Triune God is indebted to not only the personal and private engagement with scripture but also to the cognitive aspects of human nature.\(^6\)

Rogers’ appeal to written language in how scripture operates belies the fact that his constructive pneumatological discourse references St. Basil the Great indicating that his read of scripture owes much to Christian antiquity and more importantly to a time when oral communication and performance of scripture was the norm.\(^6\) Of import is the fact that Rogers prefers/elevates narrative and uses Basil to substantiate his claims toward a more robust engagement with the Holy Spirit in theological discourse but perhaps inadvertently does not make the connection to the oral context that made not only Basil’s read of scripture but also the hermeneutic used at the Council at Nicea possible.\(^6\)

If Rogers’ appeal to Basil and a narrative read of scripture engenders an understanding of the Holy Spirit as resting on bodies because the Holy Spirit is displayed in scripture as a person then performance criticism should be added as a tool to deepen at the practical level Rogers’ profound theological moves. How would an understanding of the Holy Spirit in Christian practices be enhanced if the Holy Spirit as a character in scripture was performed? In his essay entitled, “Taking Place/Taking Up Space”, Richard Swanson provides an important point of reflection:

A text is not a story until it is performed by a storyteller, and only when it is performed can it actually take place. And the only way it can take place is to take up

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\(^6\) I am not suggesting a binary between body and mind but rather more body in addition to mind. The Holy Spirit can and does work with mind/ideas/written scripture; however, the spirit of state-craft and consumerist culture find other more embodied modes more effective. The body of Christ must recognize this and respond as to include God’s Spirit in the process of educating the body against the aims of such manmade systems and stories. Even the recognition of the Holy Spirit operating with more attention to the body may also be an act of the Holy Spirit working with the mind so its work with the body won’t be missed.

\(^6\) Rogers, *After the Spirit*.

space…Seeing and hearing the performance (while sharing the same space) changes everything…Biblical narratives are strong narratives…It is natural that they should find dramatic representation [and when this is done] space happens. Space happens because drama (usually) requires more than one body…Performance in space reveals that this is a matter of ethics and action…once you grant to Jesus [and the Holy Spirit] a human body [and other forms of embodiment] as real as those bodies around him [or her], you must examine each of Jesus’ actions with an eye to ethics, since ethics concerns itself with the interactions of bodies in space…Once you take up space as an aid to interpretation, you cannot simply retreat to the static spiritual answers provided by dogmatic interpretation…63

Complementing Rogers’ contemplative notion of how scripture operates in the life of the Christian with a hermeneutic indebted to performance criticism (especially where the performer(s) and audience is concerned) will add to how his work can contribute to a greater appreciation of a Trinitarian revival in the work of Christian practices.

In imagining a performance consideration of the audience is closely related to the socio-historical circumstances because every person in the audience lives their lives in some context defined as oppressive, war, social unrest, poverty, prosperity, etc. Unlike Smith, Rogers’ work does not provide material to integrate with performance criticism as it relates to the idea of socio-historical circumstance. Smith’s work argues that there must be engagement and analysis of the ways secular liturgies form the believer at the affective pre-reflective level in order to provide an effective Christian counter formation toward desiring the kingdom of God. Performance criticism scholars regard this approach as the

“politics of performance.” By way of example, when the social-historical context of scripture is considered in imagining a performance of a dramatic presentation of Paul’s letter to the church at Corinth, the “politics of performance” involves considering “how might different factions in an audience react to a letter and to each other in the reception of a letter?” Since Paul was concerned about the imbalance of power in the Corinth church between his converts and the “super apostles” then the politics that must be considered in the performance must focus on how Paul’s letter was attempting to bring parity or unity amongst leaders who were at odds regarding who deserves the most influence in the Corinthian congregation and in guiding its future.

Connected to the “politics of performance” is rhetorical impact. Rhetorical impact means “the impact of the entire composition-as-performance on an audience” and centers on “what does the story or a letter lead the audience to become.” Smith is interested in how the printed word cognitively provides mental tools that equip the audience in worship to “read the world.” He does not provide what is meant by “reading the world.” However, by inference, once the Christian leaves worship their hearing of the word read and preached should provide them an interpretive lens through which they will understand how their Christian practices orientate their desires differently than “the world” or “the mall” would.

This is different than what a performance of scripture’s aim would be because the goal of performing the text functions more readily at the precognitive level, such that the

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Ibid.

Ibid., 91-92.

Ibid.

Smith, *Desiring*, 194-197.
audience in worship is transformed into different people in the course of and as a result of experiencing the performance of the text. Something that engaging the text, as Smith indirectly and inadvertently supports, in literate form is ill-equipped to do because by nature it deals in the material of ideas and thereby preferences thinking as the major way identities are formed. Given Rogers’ appeal to the contemplative model of scriptural engagement, he ends up focusing on the individual and risks overlooking the power rhetoric might have on a congregation. Even more, like Smith, Rogers’ construal of how scripture effects the believer favors not only the printed word but also the cognitive, even though, contrary to Smith, appeals to the eastern idea of divination. In Rogers’ work the Christian’s reading of the printed text is transformative, like one who has experienced the text performed. On the contrary, however, Rogers brand of transformation makes no appeal to the world that the body of the transformed believer inhabits but rather is as a result of a “process of moving to the inside of the trinitarian life [a moving that is only a glimpse] and at the same time [a glimpse] that they do not understand.”

In Rogers’ understanding of how scripture is engaged the body disappears.

Not only does Smith’s and Rogers’ work relate to and can be enhanced by the first approach of performance criticism with its focus on the performer(s) and audience but also it can be enriched by the last approach. The last approach is defined by the process of understanding the context of the scripture to be performed with the knowledge that the original event will never be recovered. In this third approach to performance criticism the goal is to “experiment with the twenty-first-century performances as a way to help us understand the meaning and rhetoric of the biblical texts in their historical

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context.” When scripture is performed in our contemporary context serious attention must be given to questions of how someone who grew up in the information age will need visual or other stimuli to help them understand a story that was performed in front of people where agriculture was the major economic engine. Furthermore, this means that within the act of performing, certain questions concerning for example not only socio-historical context along with other elements of imagining the performance but also subtext and non-verbal cues as well must be answered. In so far as Smith and Rogers support in their work a reading of the printed work this approach critiques them because not only does it require the performer to memorize the scripture but more importantly ascribes to personification as a form of interpretation. Moreover, the dynamics of context, subtext, and nonverbal communication “are an integral and indispensable means of conveying [a text’s] meaning and transformative power.” The emotional force that the goal of performing a text necessitates is one aspect of scripture in relation to the private reader or the congregation that may be missed in Smith’s and Rogers’ work and must be made explicit at this point if further construction of a pneumatological approach to Christian practice is to be fruitful.

Combining Smith’s and Rogers’ work is an example of how Christian practices may provide a stronger account of the Holy Spirit. However, this collective vision needed to be given a scriptural heuristic that comported with their focus on the body. To this end, I have offered performance criticism as an option that I believe furthers their work and makes joining Rogers’ and Smith’s work better suited for the local church.

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70 Rhoads, *Performance*, 95.
71 Ibid., 97-98.
72 Ibid.
4. Conclusion

At the heart of this thesis rests on one driving question, “What difference does Pentecost make for the everyday messy and complex lives of Christians in a particular time and place?” Christian practices are the crucible in which we gain an answer to this question because they constitute the embodied ways we understand who we are and even more how others may understand us. Given the important role Christian practices play in cultivating one’s faith, the church must provide an account of the Holy Spirit’s agency and identity in this arena. This thesis explores how the connection between the Spirit of God and the daily lives of Christians has been a focus in Christian practices.

This concludes that there is a need for a more robust account of how the Holy Spirit functions within Christian practices. This thesis is in no way exhaustive and invites more investigation into the matter. However, if Pentecost has anything to do with the daily lives we lead at every level of church and societal life, then I have suggested a definite way forward. Eugene Rogers has provided, in the words of Stanley Hauerwas, “a rich, imaginative, and constructive account of the work of the Holy Spirit...Rogers has helped us see how [the God we worship] makes the realities of [the gospel] living realities through the work of the Spirit.”

Contrary to Hauerwas who employed Rogers’ work to further justify that the church is the “agency” that the Holy Spirit enables to tell the world who it is, this project is aimed at something else related to affirming the church as a social ethic. My goal has been to further a conversation on how the relation between the work of the Holy Spirit and how the existence of Christian practices are to be understood as inseparable because

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1 Hauerwas, The Work, 46-47.
of the individual bodies that make up the body of the church. Therefore, as I have argued above, James K. A. Smith’s work attentive to the need to engage scripture as performance provides a vehicle for the theological work of Rogers to be employed within the world of Christian practices. In short, I am employing Rogers’ work within the field of Christian practices to offer an example of what a greater focus on pneumatology within Christian practices may suggest. I am advocating that performance criticism helps us approach and interpret scripture in a way that involves more of the body.

In Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony, Bishop Will Willimon writes that he wished that the book had a “larger dose of pneumatology.” I share his sentiment but with a different orientation. I believe that, in so far as the church has become too concerned with management and psychology in an effort to prove something to the world, one way to reverse and resist this tendendancy is through a “larger dose of pneumatology” in Christian practices. However, as this thesis attests too, that larger dose requires taking risks and thinking differently about how that dose may be administered not only into the veins or skin of the body of Christ, but also into the veins or skin of the world, one believer’s body at a time. It is my hope that this work contributes to such a task.

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