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And with Your Spirit

Why the Ancient Response Should Be Restored in the Pastoral Greeting

TIMOTHY C. J. QUILL



DURING THE SECOND HALF OF the twentieth century, most churches discarded the traditional response to the pastoral greeting when they embarked upon the revision of English liturgical texts. Historically the pastor said, “The Lord be with you.” The congregation responded, “And with thy spirit.” The new response became, “And also with you.” What are the implications of this seemingly minor alteration in the ancient text? As one examines the origin and development of the greeting and the response in view of its theological freight, and especially as it pertains to the office of the holy ministry, it becomes evident that a return to the ancient response should be seriously considered during the next round of hymnal revisions. The theological implications are of such significance that they outweigh the practical inconvenience associated with its reintroduction.

EARLY CHURCH LITURGICAL DOCUMENTS

The greeting “The Lord be with you” is found in Scripture: Judges 6:12 “The Lord is with you” (יהוה עִמָּךְ, LXX: κύριος μετὰ σοῦ); Ruth 2:4 “The Lord be with you” (יהוה עִמָּכֶם, LXX: κύριος μεθ’ ὑμῶν); Luke 1:28 “The Lord is with you” (ὁ κύριος μετὰ σοῦ). Unlike the response, “And with your spirit,” which remained constant,¹ the greeting is found in a variety of forms, which were redacted from both the Gospels and Pauline Epistles (Jn 19:20; Lk 24:36; 1 Cor 16:23; 2 Tim 4:22; Gal 6:18; Phil 4:23).

What has yet to be explained is how these diverse greetings came to be included in the liturgy. The earliest surviving text of the eucharistic prayer with a full tripartite dialogue is found in the *Apostolic Tradition* attributed to Hippolytus. Extant in Latin, Coptic, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, this liturgy dates from around 215 A.D. and possibly as early as 165 A.D.² The original Greek is largely lost, but the Latin reads:

<i>Dominus vobiscum</i>	The Lord be with you.
<i>Et cum spiritu tuo.</i>	And with your spirit.
<i>Sursum corda.</i>	Up with your hearts.
<i>Habemus ad dominum.</i>	We have (them) to the Lord.
<i>Gratias agamus domino.</i>	Let us give thanks to the Lord.
<i>Dignum et justum est.</i>	It is fitting and right.

With minor variations, the second two parts of the three-part dialogue (*Sursum corda* to the end) are the same in all liturgical

traditions—East and West. The opening greeting and response, however, is divided into “two broad traditions:”

1. the single-member Roman-Egyptian greeting;
2. the trinitarian greeting based on 2 Cor 13:13.³

The simpler form (“The Lord be with you” / “And with your spirit”) is found in the Roman texts, and its derivative (“The Lord be with you *all*”) is found in the Alexandrian Greek Liturgy of St. Mark and the Coptic Cyril. The preanaphoral dialogue in the Byzantine and other non-Alexandrian eastern eucharists falls into the second tradition.

[T]he Churches to the North and East within the Antiochene sphere of liturgical influence seem never to have known “The Lord (be) with you” as a greeting in the preanaphoral dialogue or, for that matter, elsewhere. “Peace to all” is the normal short greeting throughout the East, and one or another form of greeting based on 2 Corinthians 13:13 can be found in the preanaphoral dialogue from the second half of the fourth century, first in Antioch. This is the earliest evidence extant for the liturgies of the East beyond Egypt.⁴

The oldest known church manual is *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, or the *Didache* for short. Some elements of this manual may date from the first century, possibly as early as 60 A.D.⁵ The *Didache* contains eucharistic instructions (chapter 9) and a eucharistic prayer (chapter 10). The earliest section, often labeled “The Two Ways” (chapters 1–5), reveals that the so-called primitive church possessed a very profound understanding of the presence and power of Christ in the holy ministry of the word and sacraments. Chapter 4 begins:

My child, you shall remember night and day him who speaks to you the word of God, and honor him as the Lord; for where that which pertains to the Lord is spoken, there the Lord is.⁶

The eucharistic prayer contains no dialogue (nor *Verba*), but it does conclude with thoughts similar to the later tripartite dialogue.

Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the son of David. If any is holy, let him come; if any be not, let him repent. *Maranatha. Amen.*⁷

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One would not expect to find the greeting “The Lord be with you” in the Syrian⁸ *Didache*, since this greeting is not common to the East, as Robert Taft has pointed out (see above). The East preferred either the brief “Peace to all,” which may appear in numerous places in the liturgy, or a longer greeting based on 2 Cor 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” The biblical and theological meaning of the greeting “The Lord be with you” is located in the expression *Maranatha*. Jasper and Cumming point out,

The Aramaic words *Marana tha* were interpreted by the early Fathers as meaning “The Lord has come,” but they should probably be translated “Come, Lord,” as in the parallel passages at the end of 1 Corinthians 16:22 and Revelation 22:20. In all three passages prayer is made for the grace of Christ, and it is possible that a liturgical closing formula is behind all three.⁹

The understanding of the Lord’s presence in the eucharist is reinforced by the inclusion of the acclamation “Hosanna to the son of David.” The words *Lord*, *peace*, and *grace* say the same thing yet in different ways. Each adds a different element to the full gift, which is always more than words can express. The intimate con-

Lord. . . . And every prophet who speaks in the *Spirit* you shall try or judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven. But not everyone that speaks in the *Spirit* is a prophet, but only if he have the ways of the Lord.¹¹

The earliest surviving full text of the dialogue representing the Roman-Egyptian form with a eucharistic prayer is found in the *Apostolic Tradition* (ca. 215). The *Apostolic Tradition* actually describes two eucharistic prayers, the first in connection with the ordination of a bishop and the second after a baptism.

As it was in the *Didache*, so also the *Apostolic Tradition*. The early church believed it to be of great importance that her pastors and teachers were faithfully passing on the doctrines of the apostles and thus passing on Christ. Even the choice of titles given to these church orders emphasized this: *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, *Apostolic Tradition*, *Apostolic Constitution*, *Apostolic Church Order*, and *Didascalia Apostolorum*. The opening paragraph of the *Apostolic Tradition* establishes the importance of the Holy Spirit in the office and work of the bishop. Since the Holy Spirit bestows perfect grace on those who believe rightly, it was very important that “those who preside over the Church should hand down and guard all things.”

Chapter 2 of the *Apostolic Tradition* describes the selection of the bishop (“chosen by all the people”) and the laying on of hands by the Presbytery and then the prayer:

And all shall keep silence, praying in their hearts for *the descent of the Spirit* [emphasis added], after which one of the bishops . . . shall lay his hand on him who is being ordained bishop, and pray thus.¹²

The prayer that follows asks that the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” would bestow upon the bishop being ordained the same “princely Spirit” given to the Old Testament priests and the New Testament apostles.

[Y]ou foreordained from the beginning a race of righteous men from Abraham; you appointed princes and priests, and did not leave your sanctuary without a ministry. . . . now pour forth that power which is from you, of the *princely Spirit*¹³ which you granted through your beloved Son Jesus Christ to your holy apostles who established the Church in every place as your sanctuary, to the unceasing glory of your name.

You who know the hearts of all, bestow upon this your servant, whom you have chosen for the episcopate, to feed our holy flock and to exercise the high-priesthood. . . . and by the *spirit of high-priesthood* to have the power to *forgive sins according to your command*.¹⁴

At the conclusion of the prayer, “all shall offer him the kiss of peace, greeting him,” after which he begins the celebration of the eucharist with the greeting, “The Lord be with you.” The people respond, “And with your spirit.”¹⁵ Should *spiritu* / πνεύματος be rendered “Spirit” or “spirit”? Is it in reference to the Holy Spirit, the “princely Spirit,” bestowed on the man ordained into the holy ministry, or is it simply referring to his spirit or soul? The former

The biblical and theological meaning of the greeting “The Lord be with you” is located in the expression Maranatha.

nection of the pastor with the giving out of the grace and peace of the Lord, and of the Lord himself, has already been seen in chapter 4; and now again in the text immediately following the eucharist prayer. Chapter 11 begins:

Therefore, whoever comes and teaches you all these things of which were previously spoken, receive him; but if the teacher himself turn aside and teach another teaching, so as to overthrow this, do not listen to him; but if he teaches so as to promote righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, *receive him as the Lord* [emphasis added].¹⁰

The *Didache* places great emphasis on the presence of the Spirit in the prophets who teach the things of the Lord. One way to check whether or not the prophet has the Spirit is to look at his life. If he behaves in a way morally incompatible with the ethics of the Two Ways, he reveals himself to be a false prophet and thus void of the Spirit. Chapter 11 continues:

Now concerning the apostles and prophets, [deal with them] according to the ordinances of the Gospel. Every apostle who comes to you, let him be received as the

is certainly consistent with the thrust of the prayer and flows naturally from it. It allows the people repeatedly to acknowledge and confess the doctrine of the holy ministry through a concrete and personal liturgical exchange with their pastor and bishop. It allows the people to receive and acknowledge the holy ministry as a gift from the Holy Spirit.

CHRYSOStOM, THEODORE, AND NARSAI

The use of “spirit” in the dialogue is both ancient and universal. That the fathers understood πνεύματος in its fuller Spirit-filled sense is demonstrated by explanations offered by Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Narsai of Nisibis. Chrysostom (ca. 345–407) comments on “The Lord be with your spirit” in his homily on 2 Timothy 4:22:

The Lord Jesus with your spirit. Nothing is better than this prayer. . . . And he does not say, “The Lord with you,” but “with your spirit.” So the help is twofold, the grace of the Spirit as well as God helping it.¹⁶

In *De sancta Pentecoste hom.* 1, 4, preached in the presence of Bishop Flavian of Antioch, Chrysostom explained “that if there were no Holy Spirit there would be no pastors or teachers, who became so only through the Spirit.” Then he continues:

If the Holy Spirit were not in this common father or teacher [Bishop Flavian] when he gave the peace to all shortly before ascending to his holy sanctuary, you would not have replied to him all together, “And to your spirit.” This is why you reply with this expression not only when he ascends to the sanctuary, nor when he preaches to you, nor when he prays for you, but when he stands at this holy altar, when he is about to offer this awesome sacrifice. You don’t first partake of the offerings until he has prayed for you the grace from the Lord, and you have answered him, “And with your spirit,” reminding yourselves by this reply that he who is here does nothing of his own power, nor are the offered gifts the work of human nature, but it is the grace of the Spirit present and hovering over all things which prepared that mystic sacrifice.¹⁷

The statement “when he gave the peace” refers to the opening greeting in the East, “Peace be with you.” It is noteworthy that the peace is not “wished upon” or “acknowledged,” but “given.”¹⁸ Taft quotes Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350–428), *Hom.* 15, 37.

But it is *not the soul* they are referring to by this “And with your spirit,” but it is the *grace of the Holy Spirit* by which those confided to his [the bishop’s] care believe he had access to the priesthood.¹⁹

Narsai of Nisibis (d. ca. 502) indicates that “spirit” was understood as pertaining to the Spirit received by those in the Holy Ministry. He wrote,

The people answer the priest lovingly and say: “With thee, O priest, and with that priestly spirit of thine.” They call

“spirit,” not that soul which is in the priest, but the Spirit which the priest has received by the laying on of hands. By the laying on of hands the priest receives the power of the Spirit, that thereby he may be able to perform the divine Mysteries. That grace the people call the “Spirit” of the priest, and they pray that he may attain peace with it, and it with him. This makes known that even the priest stands in need of prayer, and it is necessary that the whole church should intercede for him. Therefore she [the Church] cries out that he may gain peace with his Spirit, that through his peace the peace of all her children may be increased; for by his virtue he greatly benefits the whole Church, and by his depravity he greatly harms the whole community.²⁰

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

Should *spiritu*/πνεύματος be translated “Spirit” or “spirit”? Unlike the ancient texts or even the German texts, the English requires a choice between an upper or lower case *s*. English translations of *spiritu* have consistently chosen the lower case for spirit.²¹ Is *spiritu*/πνεύματος a reference to the Holy Spirit promised to the ordained minister, or is it simply referring to his spirit or soul? Is it both? The early church fathers emphasized the former. In many contemporary English revisions, *spiritu*/πνεύματος drops out all together. The result is twofold: (1) The episcopal greeting is emptied of any freight pointing to the uniqueness of the office of the holy ministry in the word and sacrament and the liturgical life of the church. (2) *Spirit* is replaced by the pronoun *you*. Thus the parallelism of the greeting and response is replaced with a uniformity of greeting and response that blurs the distinction

It allows the people repeatedly to acknowledge and confess the doctrine of the holy ministry through a concrete and personal liturgical exchange with their pastor and bishop.

between the role of the pastor, who speaks in the stead and by the command of the incarnate, crucified, risen, and present Lord Jesus Christ, and that of the people, who listen and in faith receive the divine gifts. The pastor cannot do this without the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is acknowledged in the Prayer for the Ordination of a Bishop found in the *Apostolic Tradition*. The prayer asks God to pour forth the same power “of the princely Spirit” that he granted to his holy apostles “to establish the church in every place as your sanctuary.” The prayer for the “spirit of high-priesthood” is prayed in order that the bishop may be able “to have the power to forgive sins according to your command, to confer orders according to your bidding, to loose every bond according to the power which you gave to the apostles.”²²

There is little doubt that "your command"²³ is in reference to John 20. The Lord's words of institution of the office of the holy ministry in John 20:19–23, though brief, contain the chief and necessary elements: the risen Lord, the giving of peace with God, the risen Lord truly present in his flesh,²⁴ the sending by the Lord, the receiving of the Holy Spirit from Jesus, and the power to forgive and retain sins. On these elements the church was and continues to be built.²⁵

"And with your spirit" may come in as an everyday greeting, but it is transformed by its use in a meal that is unlike any other meal.

The decision to "translate" (or paraphrase) *et cum spiritu tuo* as "And also with you" is often justified on the basis that the original expression was a Semitism.²⁶ Even if it is true that the original Hebrew expression simply carried the meaning of the person, "you," the fact remains that it took on new theological and liturgical meaning for early Christians when they gathered for the eucharist around their bishop in Jesus' name. Jesus began with just another celebration of the Passover meal, but the Lord of the Sabbath made of it a new meal, a new testament. Similarly, nothing remains the same when incorporated into the Lord's meal. "And with your spirit" may come in as an everyday greeting, but it is transformed by its use in a meal that is unlike any other meal.

In *The Liturgy of the Mass*, Pius Parsch gives a passing nod to the popular opinion among scholars that "The expression (And with thy spirit) is a Hebraism, meaning, simply, 'with you, too.'"²⁷ He goes on, however, to articulate the special pneumatic and ministerial meaning that the liturgy has given to the word *spiritus*/πνεῦμα.

However, from another aspect, it is not altogether correct to translate the phrase *Et cum spiritu tuo* simply, "and with you too," for the liturgy imparts a special significance to the words "thy spirit." It envisages here the power of orders conferred upon the celebrant and would say in effect: "And with the Spirit (πνεῦμα) that is in you by reason of your ordination."²⁸

Parsch offers numerous examples from the liturgy to document the special significance of *spiritus*: (1) The response is not given to anyone below the order of deacon.²⁹ (2) The rite of ordination of priests and deacons (but not subdeacons) contains numerous prayers invoking the Holy Spirit upon the ordained. From this Parsch concludes: "Thus the *Dominus vobiscum* is the solemn greeting of the priest and the deacon to the people, and its response is the respectful acknowledgement by the people of the power of orders that resides in their minister."³⁰ (3) The greeting *Pax vobis* is sometimes used by the bishop and the consecrated abbot. This was the common greeting of the risen Christ to his disciples. Particularly instructive for the meaning of this greeting is John 20:19 and following. Parsch writes: "The

words 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost' are equivalent to 'Receive the power of orders which comes to you by the Holy Spirit,' and this is the sense which the liturgy gives to the word 'Spirit' in the response *Et cum spiritu tuo*."³¹ (4) The ceremonies (kissing the altar and greeting with outstretched hands) which precede and accompany the *Dominus vobiscum* reflect the deep significance of the greeting and response.³² (5) The place of the *Dominus vobiscum* in the structure of the liturgy is significant. It occurs eight times in the mass and is "always linked in some way with the ceremony which immediately follows it. . . . It is therefore true to say that it is the priest's invitation to the people to take an active part in the ceremony."³³

Still, the question remains: Is *Et cum spiritu tuo* simply a Semitism? Robert Taft takes deadly aim at this popular opinion.

Today it is taken to be no more than a Semitism for "And also with you." But there is no philological basis for this demonstrable misconception. In Semitic texts it is *soul* (*nephes*, Syriac *naphso* = נֶפֶשׁ), not *spirit* (*ruah*, Syriac *ruho* = רֹּחַ), that bears this meaning. Agreement on this point among both biblical and knowledgeable liturgical commentators is universal. . . . Furthermore, the Semites themselves, whom one might expect to recognize a Semitism when they see it, did not take it to be one. . . . The Liturgy of Addai and Mari, oldest and most Semitic of the Semitic liturgies, has the response: "with you and with your spirit." That would be ridiculously tautological if both meant the same thing. So what we have here is not a Semitism but a "Paulinism" that has become a "Christianism," as Botte put it. [Botte, *Dominus vobiscum*, p. 34 ff.]³⁴

In the East Syrian tradition the *Dominus vobiscum* took the form of *pax vobiscum*. As Taft pointed out, the response was "And with you and your spirit." The full pre-anaphoral dialogue in Addai and Mari finds corroboration in a fifth-century sermon of Narsai on the liturgy.³⁵ Narsai interprets the meaning of the Addai and Mari response as follows: "They [the people] call 'spirit,' not that soul which is in the priest, but the Spirit which the priest has received by the laying on of hands."³⁶ No tautology here.

All of this is not to suggest that only those ordained into the holy ministry possess the Holy Spirit or that they receive more of him. The Holy Spirit is not a liquid that can be measured out. To have the Spirit is to have the whole Spirit. The Holy Spirit, however, is given to the ordained with the special promise that when they preach repentance and forgiveness and loose sins in holy absolution, he is there accomplishing that of which his word speaks. Whether or not the Spirit dwells in all Christians is not the question. He does (Rom 8:9–11). The questions are: Does πνεῦματος refer to more than simply a person's selfhood? Does it in the case of those ordained into the holy ministry refer to the Spirit-filled spirit, reflecting John 20:22?

THE BIBLICAL MEANING OF THE LORD BEING "WITH" A PERSON

In short, what does the greeting mean? Robert Taft observes that "Several authorities, most thoroughly W. C. Van Unnik, have examined its pristine biblical and Roman-Egyptian liturgical

form, '(The) Lord with you (thee).'³⁷ For van Unnik, the phrasing of the salutation raises four questions:

1. Who is "the Lord": God the Father or Jesus Christ?
2. What mood of the verb "to be" should be supplied: "is" or "be"?
3. What is contained in this "to be with somebody," when said of the Lord?
4. Why is this former part followed by "*and with thy spirit*," this second part of the response being coupled to the former by *kai* and this continuation suggesting that there is a certain parallelism? But how and why? Is this spirit the special grace of the priest given at his ordination?³⁸

Van Unnik considers number three the crucial question necessary for answering all four questions. He does not limit himself to an examination of the small number of texts usually quoted in which "the Lord with you" is used in the context of a greeting. Instead of beginning with an obscure greeting from Judges or Ruth, or even with an apostolic greeting, Van Unnik begins with the dominical promise in Matthew 28. He acknowledges that

It goes without saying that the Bible and the Christian Church firmly believed in God's transcendence. God is in heaven and Jesus who was once on earth is now at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Eph 1:20). But what did Jesus promise to His disciples when he said, "*And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*" (Mt 28:20)?

Kai iðoũ always alerts the hearer that "something extraordinary and unexpected" is to follow. A promise is then given to the eleven disciples (see 28:16). It is common to jump immediately to the church "as the locus of the presence of Christ during the interval between His resurrection and parousia." Broadly speaking this is true; however, Van Unnik's exegetical treatment is more precise. He asks,

But is it not, I dare to ask, *loose thinking*? Are we to credit the early Christians who so clearly knew about Jesus' separation from the *earth* and His glorification in *heaven*, with such a conflicting view? On the other hand, Jesus does not speak to the church (a word Matthew knows), but to the apostles as missionaries. The use of the word "locus" suggests a static presence while, as will appear from the following pages, Jesus' "being with them" has quite different associations.³⁹

A study of the meaning of God being "with" a person in Peter's speech at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:38), Stephen's sermon reference to Joseph's life (Acts 7:9ff.), Nicodemus's visit with Jesus (Jn 3:2), demonstrates that this "being with" is (1) located in a person, (2) an active not static presence, and, (3) connected with the Holy Spirit. A study of the phrase in the Old Testament reveals the same understanding. That God (or the Lord) is "with" a person is found frequently in the Old Testament. Van Unnik locates and studies no less than 102 Old Testament references,⁴⁰ from which he makes the following observations:

1. The formula uses the words "God" and "the Lord" promiscuously and without distinction in meaning; sometimes both words are combined.
2. The verb "to be" is sometimes used, sometimes left out. It is deployed in all three tenses. . . . The Lord's active help was there in the past, is experienced in the present and will be there in the future. In past and present it can be seen. As to the future it is not always formulated as a wish . . . but *mostly as a definite declaration*.
3. Frequent though the expression is, it occurs only twice in greetings, viz. Judges 6:12 and Ruth 2:4, the usual greeting-form being: "Peace. . . ."
4. The Gideon-story is highly significant, because it shows that God's "being with a person" was not conceived as a permanent fact, but as a dynamic experience that acts in special cases which can be sharply discerned. . . .
5. The fact that "The Lord is with a person" can be discovered by others. It manifests itself outwardly, and even unbelievers see it. . . .
6. In some places the term is given in the form of a wish. . . . [Yet, in its usage] [i]t is important to see that this note of certainty about future help and blessing is far stronger than the subjective forms of wish and possibility. . . .
7. . . . [W]here the copula is missing in the Greek text (in literal translation of the Hebrew). . . . In all these cases it is practically always a declaration, as appears from the context and therefore the later translators rightly add "was" or "is. . . ."
8. . . . [T]here is a curious distribution throughout the OT. It is fairly seldom found in Psalms and prophets, where one would expect it, and rather frequent in the historical books . . . [especially] Genesis, Joshua, Samuel, and Chronicles. There is no connection with liturgical context. . . . [It] is not bound up with the Ark or the Temple; in those cases the OT speaks about the "dwelling" of God and this difference once more brings to light the *active* character of the expression. . . .
9. If one makes a list of those "with whom God is," it is typical that the number of instances where the people of Israel as a whole, the chosen people of God is intended, forms a minority. In the large majority of texts the term is used of *individuals*, and even where the people is meant it is sometimes individualized. . . . The line does not go from people as a whole to the individual, but rather the other way. It is not applied to every pious man in general, but to very *special persons*. . . . It is often mentioned in connection with a special divine task, in which the particular man is assured of God's assistance. . . . the man himself is afraid to accept the task, because he has no strength in himself.
10. Here we come to a point that is of vital importance for the exact and full understanding of the expression. *Most of the individuals of whom it is declared that "God was with them" were specially endowed with the Spirit of God.*⁴¹

Number nine is especially helpful in shedding light on the meaning of the Lord's promise "I am with you (*ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι*) to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20). Eager makes the very important connection between

the apostolic context of the Matthean promise to analogous OT commissioning scenes in which Yahweh appoints envoys to speak on his behalf, as in Acts 18:9–10. And when those commissioned protest their weakness, God replies, “I will be with you” (Ex 3:10–12, 4:10–12; Jos 1:9; Jer 1:6–8; Is 41:10, 43:5).⁴²

Van Unnik’s observation number ten is particularly evident in the John 20 account of the risen Lord appearing to his disciples and giving them the Holy Spirit.

This twentieth-century mutation is a good example of the danger and complexities that attend liturgical tampering.

With the Old Testament understanding in mind, van Unnik addresses the New Testament occurrences of the phrase. Having already dealt with Matthew 28, he turns his attention to Matthew 1:23 (Is 7:14); Luke 1:28; John 8:29; 14:16, 16:32; Acts 18:9 ff.; Romans 15:33; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:16; 2 Timothy 4:22. From this he concludes:

In reviewing these texts from the NT we discover that in light of OT usage they receive their full force. The phrase is like a short-hand note. At face value it does not seem of great importance and is therefore passed over in the commentaries. On closer inspection, however, it turns out that the NT authors themselves understood its full meaning perfectly well and were sure that their readers would understand it as well. They did not use an out-warn phrase, but wrote it down as expressing a self-evident truth. There is a marked difference here from later Judaism. . . . In its humble wording it contains the fullness and certitude of the Christian faith.⁴³

APOSTOLIC GREETINGS

Paul ends his letter to the Galatians with the greeting, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen” (ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί· ἀμήν). For Paul the word “spirit” means more than simply “you.” Taft concludes the same in his study of Paul’s understanding of the word “spirit.”

Paul does not define spirit, but sets it in opposition to the letter (Rom 2:29, 7:6; 2 Cor 3:6, 8), the flesh (Gal 3:3, 6:8; Rom 8:4–6, 9, 13; 2 Cor 7:1; Col 2:5), the body (Rom 8:10–11; 1 Cor 5:3–5, 7:34), human wisdom (1 Cor 2:13). So it seems difficult to deny a special Pauline nuance to “And with your spirit,” a reference not just to oneself but to one’s better, Christian, Spirit-filled self.⁴⁴

A recent publication prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy acknowledges that it is now “generally accepted that [*Et cum spiritu tuo*] is not a Semitism but a Christianity based on the Pauline use of *pneuma*. Where the spirit is [to quote Bernard Botte], ‘la partie spirituelle de l’homme le plus apparentée à Dieu, objet immédiat des actions et des influences divines.’”⁴⁵

Taft recognizes that the word *spirit* in Pauline usage can also mean a person’s selfhood (Rom 8:10, 16; 2 Cor 7:1; Col 2:5), but he adds:

Even in this latter sense, however, it seems to bear an intensity hardly captured by the translation “And also with you.” For it is the possession of the Spirit of God that distinguishes the Christian, and one cannot exclude this overtone in the response, which one could paraphrase as “He is also with your God-filled spirit.”⁴⁶

Paul concludes his second epistle to Timothy with a greeting that comes very close to the common liturgical response. Actually, it combines both greeting and response in interesting fashion. Paul writes, “The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you” (Ὁ κύριος μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματός σου. ἡ χάρις μεθ’ ὑμῶν. In this case Paul is writing to a pastor. The singular πνεύματος σου indicates Paul is addressing only Timothy. This is followed by a general greeting with the plural ὑμῶν.

CONCLUSION

The replacing of the response “And with your spirit” with “And also with you” came at a time of unprecedented liturgical revision within the Lutheran and Anglican communions and even greater change within the Roman Catholic Church. In 1970 the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET) suggested the appropriate translation of the greeting and response would be, “The Spirit of the Lord be with you” / “And also with you.”⁴⁷ Thomas Krosnicki explains:

The reason ICET did not translate *spiritu* in the people’s response was given: “If ‘Spirit’ is used in the greeting, it need not be used in the response.” In light of the comments that resulted from the use of the initial ICET translation of the greeting, in 1972 the English was changed to: “The Lord be with you.” It should be noted, however, that the people’s response remained unchanged (without explicit reference to the spirit) although the original argument for its omission by ICET was no longer valid. The 1975 ICET translation follows the 1972 text without additional comment or explanation.⁴⁸

During the 1970s and 1980s the new ICET response found its way into Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and other churches. The Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship accepted the new ICET text. As a result, the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978) follows the new response in total, as does *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989) and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod’s *Christian Worship* (1993). *Lutheran Worship* (1982) retained the ancient response in Divine Service 1, Matins, Vespers, and the Agenda, while adopting the new form in Divine

Service 11.⁴⁹ The Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* (1979) also uses both forms. The *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (1996) of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod uses only the historic response.

Liturgical scholars repeated the Semitism argument without questioning its validity. Furthermore, few have bothered seriously to explore the historical, liturgical, and biblical meaning of the greeting and response. This twentieth-century mutation is a good example of the danger and complexities that attend liturgical tampering, whether undertaken by experts or dilettantes. Examples such as this should not go unnoticed by those who would carelessly tinker with the liturgy from week to week in a constant search for new and “creative” worship experiences.

What is meant by the word “Lord” in the greeting? Most would automatically respond that it refers to Jesus. Van Unnik concludes:

The “Lord” is here not so much the Father or the Son; it is the manifestation of the Lord in the Spirit (Cf. 2 Cor 3:17, and interpretation of an OT text). The greeting is a declaration that the Spirit of God is really present. The response of the congregation is very much to the point: When the minister assures them of the presence of the Spirit who “is with them,” i.e., with their spirit as Christian folk, they in turn assure him of the same divine assistance with his spirit, he having the special charisma and standing in need of that assistance because of his prophetic work.⁵⁰

Van Unnik began his essay with a beautiful quote from the German liturgical reformer Wilhelm Löhe (1853), who wrote, “sich jedesmal der Knoten der Liebe und Eintracht zwischen Pfarrer und Gemeinde aufs Neue schürzt.”⁵¹ Mere Semitic greet-

ings do not elicit such profound and intimate descriptions of the church and ministry. This essay has shown that the word “spirit,” as well as the entire greeting and response, carry profoundly thick theological content. The early church fathers recognized this and expressed it in their commentaries on the liturgy. The various liturgies of both East and West, from the earliest known manuscript (*Apostolic Tradition*) on, consistently used “and with your spirit.” The ambiguity of the words “Spirit/spirit” and “Lord,” plus the variety of greetings, “The Lord be with You,” “Peace be with you,” “Grace and peace be with you all,” serve to compound the richness of its meaning. Norman Nagel writes:

The terms *Lord*, *grace*, and *peace* are all interchangeable, and yet not equitable. Each says the same thing, and something more that is its special freight. “Peace be with you” confesses the risen Lord as the one who is among us. “Grace” tells of God’s favor where Jesus is welcomed and confessed as Lord. “This world passes away” [*Didache*] echoes Matthew 24:35, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”⁵²

That the salutation and response could be changed with hardly a whimper of objection might just possibly be a blessing in disguise. The dialog with the greeting is among the oldest parts of the liturgy, yet old age and continual use offer no guarantee that it will be understood today—no assurance that it will be meaningful. Nevertheless, as we have seen, it is full of meaning. Sometimes a treasure is not appreciated until it is gone. If nothing else, the old gem is being reappraised, and this is a blessing. FOOTNOTES

NOTES

1. The response “And with your Spirit/spirit” is not found in Scripture as a response to a greeting.

2. Robert Taft, “The Dialogue before the Anaphora in the Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgy. 1.: The Opening Greeting,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 52 (1986): 299–324. Taft notes: “Given Hippolytus’ pretenses at representing tradition, scholars feel safe in supposing that this mid-fourth century Latin text preserved in fifth century palimpsest folia of codex Verona LV (53) is a version of the Greek original of the preanaphoral dialogue certainly in use at Rome around 215, and undoubtedly earlier too, since from comparative liturgy it is obvious that Hippolytus did not invent it. Furthermore, the Sahidic version of *ApTrad* 4 witnesses to the dialogue in the same form, changed but slightly (variants in italics) to conform, undoubtedly, to the local usage familiar to the Coptic redactor:

Ὁ κύριος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν.
Μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος σου.
Ἄνο ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας.
Ἐχομεν πρὸς τὸν κύριον.
Εὐχαριστήσωμεν τὸν κύριον.
Ἀξίον καὶ δίκαιον.

3. Ibid., 306.

4. Ibid., 309.

5. R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed* (New York, Pueblo Publishing Company, 3rd rev. ed., 1987). “English and American scholars at first tended to assign it to the second century, but it is now generally accepted as most probably having been written in the first century in Syria. P.J. Audet suggested that, when the *Didache* quotes sayings of Jesus, its version is earlier than that given in

Matthew’s Gospel, which implies a date around A.D. 60.” p.20.

6. Roswell D. Hitchcock and Francis Brown, ed., ΔΙΔΑΧΗ ΤΩΝ ΔΩΔΕΚΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ—*Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1885), 8; translation by the author.

7. Hitchcock and Brown, 18, 20.

8. Because the text has been preserved in Greek and Coptic, and some Greek and Latin fragments have been found in Egypt, some scholars suggest Egypt as a possible provenance. For a detailed history of the various theories about the dating and provenance, see Clayton N. Jefford, *The Sayings of Jesus in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1989).

9. Jasper and Cuming, 21.

10. Hitchcock and Brown, 20.

11. Ibid.

12. Geoffrey J. Cuming, *Hippolytus: A Text for Students with Introductions, Translations, Commentary and Notes* (Bramcote Notts, England: Grove Books, 1976), 8.

13. LXX, Psalm 50(51):14, πνεύματι ἡγερμονικῶ. English translations follow the Hebrew of 51:14, רַחֵם בְּרִיבָה (“steadfast” or “willing spirit”).

14. Cuming, 9; emphasis added.

15. This greeting and response occurs two more times in the *Apostolic Tradition*. When the candidates have been baptized by the bishop, anointed by the presbyter in the name of Jesus Christ, the bishop then lays his hands on the candidates and “invokes, saying: Lord God, you have made them worthy to receive remission of sins through the laver of regeneration of the Holy Spirit: send upon them your grace, that they may serve you.” He then anoints the baptized upon the head a second time and says, “I anointed you with holy oil in God the Father almighty and Christ Jesus

and the Holy Spirit." Hippolytus then adds, "And having signed him on the forehead, he shall give him a kiss and say: The Lord be with you. And he who has been signed shall say: And with your spirit" (Cuming, 20).

The third time the greeting occurs is at the bringing-in of lamps at the Communal Supper. The deacon brings in the lamp and the bishop (when present) says: "The Lord be with you." The people respond, "And with your spirit." Interestingly, the bishop continues with part 3 of the dialogue: "Let us give thanks to the Lord," and the people say, "It is fitting and right . . ." Hippolytus explains that the second part, "Up with your hearts," is omitted because "that is said (only) at the offering [eucharist?]" (Cuming, 23).

16. Cuming, 62, 659.

17. Cuming, emphasis added. Taft quotes *Patrologiae cursus completus* 50, 45809; cf. also *In ep. 1 ad Cor. hom.* 36, 4, PG 61, 312.

18. Writing in 1976, Johannes H. Emminghaus speaks of the greeting as proclamation. "The congregation's answer is literally 'And with your Spirit.' From a purely philological standpoint, the phrase is simply a Semitic expression of 'And also with you.' 'And also with you' is the translation that has been adopted by the official English Missal. When the German Missal was being redacted, it was frequently suggested that this simpler everyday form be used, but it was finally decided not to use it on the grounds that it would impoverish the meaning of the greeting. Just as the president's greeting is not simply an expression of his personal good will and readiness to communicate with the congregation, but is a proclamation of salvation in the name of Christ, so too the congregation is not responding to an individual person with a human function but to a minister who is a 'servant of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God' (1 Cor 4:1). The greeting and response help form a human community, but this community itself is oriented toward 'the presence of the Lord to his assembled community' (GI, no. 28)." J. Emminghaus, *The Eucharist: Essence, Form, Celebration*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell from *Die Messe: Wesen-Gestalt-Vollzug*, 1978 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1988) 114–115.

19. Taft, 309. Cf. *Hom.* 15, 38.

20. Narsai, "Homilae et Carmina," *An Exposition of the Mysteries* (Hom. 17), ET in R. H. Connolly, ed., *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 8–9. See also Kent A. Heimbigner, *The Relation of the Celebration of the Lord's Supper to the Office of the Holy Ministry* (S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1991).

21. When Thomas Cranmer began his liturgical revisions, he had on his desk the Latin Sarum Rite along with German liturgies from Cologne. To this day, his choice of "And with thy spirite" has been the rule in English texts.

22. Narsai, 9.

23. Cf. chapter eleven of the *Didache*, in which the church is being taught how to judge true and false teachers: "but if he teach so as to promote righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord. But in regard to the apostles and prophets, you are to do according to order of the Gospel [κατὰ τὸ δόγμα τοῦ εὐαγγελίου]" (Hitchcock and Brown, 19). The identification of the κατὰ τὸ δόγμα τοῦ εὐαγγελίου with the Lord's command in John 20 merits further study.

24. In the parallel account in Luke 24:36–39, Jesus says, "for a spirit has not flesh and bones." As is typical of Luke, he includes the meal of fish that attended the appearance. See Arthur A. Just Jr., *The Ongoing Feast: Table Fellowship and Eschatology at Emmaus* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993).

25. Cf. Matthew 16:13–20.

26. Philip Pfatteicher, *Commentary on the Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990), 158. In a discussion of the salutation, Pfatteicher states: "The response is always, 'And also with you.' . . . Some (e.g., Van Unnik) believe that 'the Lord' in the first line *Dominus vobiscum* refers to the Holy Spirit; others (e.g., Jungmann) believe it refers to Christ. . . .

The congregation's response, *et cum spiritu tuo*, is also unclear. Some (e.g., John Chrysostom) find deep significance in 'Spirit' as a reference to the indwelling Holy Spirit; most understand it as a Semitism meaning simply the person, 'you.'" Unfortunately, Pfatteicher offers no documentation on who the "most" are and why.

One such scholar is Joseph Jungmann, who concludes: "If we thus see

forming in this early period the large outlines of the later Mass-liturgy . . . a primitive and apostolic liturgy survives, a liturgy adapted by the Apostles from the usage of the synagogue. Here belongs the common way of starting and ending the prayer: At the beginning came the greeting with *Dominus vobiscum* or a similar formula, the answer to which was the generally Hebraic *Et cum spiritu tuo*." *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, trans. Francis A. Brunner, 2 vols. (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1950), 1: 19.

Theodor Klauser also fostered this view. His influential book *Kleine abendländische Liturgiegeschichte* (1965) was translated into English as *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections*, trans. John Halliburton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). He writes: "Similarly derived [from Jewish sources] are some of the congregational responses or 'acclamations' (as they are called), i.e., 'Amen,' 'Alleluia,' 'Hosanna,' and 'Et Cum spiritu tuo'" (6).

Adrian Fortescue, *The Mass: A Study of the Roman Liturgy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1st ed. 1912, 11th ed. 1955). "Et cum spiritu tuo" (*kai to pneumati sou*) is a Semitism founded on Biblical use and means simply: 'and with you'" (246).

27. Pius Parsch, *The Liturgy of the Mass*, 3rd ed. (London: B. Herder, 1957), trans. and adapted by H. E. Winstone. Parsch continues: "The Hebrew often makes use of this kind of circumlocution for the personal pronoun. Instead of saying, 'with you,' he says 'with your soul,' or 'with your spirit.' *Et cum spiritu tuo* is therefore the reciprocated greeting: 'The Lord be with you too' (122).

28. Ibid., 122.

29. Ibid., 122–123. "It is for this reason that the greeting is not addressed to anyone below the order of a deacon. Subdeacons and clerics in minor orders, and laymen (even when they belong to a religious order) may not say *Dominus vobiscum*, since to them one is not able to reply: "And with the Spirit that is in you." Such persons when reciting the Office use instead the formula: *Domine, exaudi orationem meam* (Lord, hear my prayer), with the response: *Et clamor meus ad te veniat* (And let my cry come unto thee).

30. Parsch, 123.

31. Ibid., 123.

32. Ibid., 123–124. "First, the priest kisses the altar. The significance of this action is already known to us. The Altar is the symbol of Christ, from whom comes every saving grace, and by his kiss the priest receives from Christ the strength of grace. He now turns to the people with outstretched hands and says "*Dominus vobiscum*," intending thereby to impart to the assembled congregation that grace which he himself has receive from the altar. Or, let us say rather, in kissing the altar the priest lays hold of Christ Himself and gives Him to the people in his greeting. When we consider the two things in conjunction, the words and the gesture of the priest, we realize the full significance of this greeting. It is no empty wish. It is a declaration of grace and truth."

33. Ibid., 124.

34. Taft, 320–321. Van Unnik's findings concerning the response's being a Semitism for "with yourself" agree with Taft. "This is stated without further notice, but in view of the linguistic evidence this interpretation is highly improbable, not to say impossible. If *psyche* (*nephes*) had been used, it would have been correct, since this often expresses 'self' or 'person' in Semitic texts, but I do not know of a single unambiguous text where *pneuma* (*ruah*) has his meaning" (*Dominus Vobiscum*, 364). Van Unnik refers the reader to the Hebrew Lexicon by L. Koehler, NT by W. Bauer, and the Syriac of Payne Smith (387, note 24).

35. Bryan Spinks, *Addai and Mari—The Anaphora of the Apostles: A Text for Students*, Grove Liturgical Study 24 (Nottingham, England: Grove Books, 1980), an English translation. See also L. Edward Phillips, "The Kiss of Peace and the Opening Greeting of the Pre-anaphoral Dialogue," *Studia Liturgica* 23, no. 2 (1993): 183.

36. Quoted from Norman Nagel, "Holy Communion," in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice*, ed. Fred L. Precht (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 316, note 7. I am indebted to Norman Nagel, whose commentary on the response "And with your Spirit" in *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* (291–292) alerted me to the richness of the ancient usage of "Spirit."

37. Taft, 316. The article Taft is referring to by W. C. van Unnik is "Dominus Vobiscum: The Background of a Liturgical Formula," *Sparsa Collecta. The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik*, part 3 (Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* 31 (Linden: E. J. Brill, 1983), 362–391. It is ironic that Taft would find the most thorough biblical resource from a Dutch Reformed scholar. Van Unnik's exegetical study was precipitated by the new service-book of the Dutch Reformed Church, which introduced the ancient dialogue ("The Lord be with you" / "And with thy spirit." "Let us pray") as an introduction to prayer. Unnik writes: "To Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran Christians it is a familiar part of the liturgy, because it belongs to the age-old heritage of Latin Christianity. As such it was taken over by the committee which prepared the revision of the Dutch Reformed Liturgy" (362). Unnik explains, "I have consulted many books and various experts, but did not receive a satisfactory answer; it seemed as though this formula is so customary and revered that nobody asks for its proper meaning."

Taft also draws extensively from B. Eager, "The Lord Is with You," *Scripture* 12 (1960): 48–54; Botte, *Dominus Vobiscum*; and H. Ashworth, "Et cum Spiritu Tuo," *The Clergy Review* 51 (1966): 122–130.

38. Van Unnik, 364.

39. Ibid, 365.

40. Ibid., 388, note 37, lists all 102 references. From them he concludes: "it becomes perfectly clear that this expression *does not define a static presence, but a dynamic power*, as is in harmony with the active character of OT revelation. As a short-hand note it indicates *one reality*, but on analysing this unit one discovers *various aspects* in this expression of God's dealing with man. They can be distinguished in the following manner: (a) protection, help, deliverance; (b) taking sides with; (c) blessing

and success, generally very concrete in worldly affairs; (d) assurance that there is no reason to fear; (e) exhortation to valor; (f) sometimes conditioned by man's obedience. It is double-sided in two respects: (1) it is positive and negative; (2) it has an effect upon the person's *psyche* and on his outward circumstances.

41. Van Unnik, 371–374.

42. Taft, 318. Taft is quoting B. Eager's *The Lord Is with You*, 48–50.

43. Van Unnik, 381.

44. Van Unnik, 381.

45. Thomas A. Krosnicki, "Grace and Peace: Greeting the Assembly," *Shaping English Liturgy: Studies in Honor of Archbishop Denis Hurley*, ed. Peter C. Finn and James M Schellman (Washington, DC: The Pastoral Press, 1990), 97. Krosnicki is quoting B. Botte ("Dominus Vobiscum," *Bible et vie Chretienne* 62 [1962]: 34), who in turn is quoting C. Spicq, "Les epitres pastorales" (Paris: 1947), 397.

46. Taft, 321.

47. Krosnicki, 98.

48. Ibid. The reader is referred to the International Consultation on English Texts, *Prayers We Have in Common* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970, 1972, 1975).

49. In other services of *Lutheran Worship*, "And with your spirit" is found in Matins, Vespers, the Easter Vigil "Service of Light," and the rites of burial and ordination. "And also with you" is found in Evening Prayer and Responsive Prayers I and II.

50. Van Unnik, 382.

51. "every time [the greeting and response is exchanged] the knot of love and unity between the pastor and congregation is tied anew."

52. Nagel, 316, note 4.



Say! This week I've really got their attention!