

# THE HOLY SPIRIT IN WERNER ELERT'S THEOLOGY

Edward Schroeder

[For information on Elert's life and thought I recommend the Wikipedia article: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werner\\_Elert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werner_Elert)

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A Loooong Introduction

Asking an 85-year-old professor to give a lecture—on any topic—is dangerous. Bob Bertram's quote: When you're in your dotage, you often slip into anecdotage. Here's some anecdotal stuff.

I was Elert's student at the University of Erlangen in Germany during the academic year 1952-53. Two other Concordia Seminary (St. Louis) students were there too: Bob Schultz and Dick Baepler. We three went to Erlangen because our Concordia prof, Jaroslav Pelikan, recommended Elert as a "remedy" for the hang-up of our Missouri Synod on Biblical inerrancy. "Elert is today's major confessional Lutheran theologian doing law/gospel theology free from the albatross of verbal inspiration." So we went.

But why should we be paying any attention to a man named Werner Elert at a Crossings conference?

[Pronunciation: The German letter "e" is pronounced as "ay" is pronounced in English. Open mouth "ay." So Werner Elert is "Vayr-nayr Ay-layrt," Not "Wur-nur El-urt."]

I'll give a brash answer to that question: "If Elert had never existed, neither would the Crossings Community. We wouldn't be here in this room today." And it starts with those three

Concordia students in Erlangen 63 years ago.

The Crossings connection to Elert is evident on the Crossings website. The first-ever Crossings conference had an Elert-expert (Rudolf Keller nine years ago) come from Germany and give a lecture on Elert. You can read it on the website. Lots of other items show up there when you put E-L-E-R-T into the internal search slot. The biggest item is the 26-page document that we'll be looking at later, Elert's "Feste Sätze," theses-sentences he would slowly dictate to us at the end of each class session, in effect, "Here are all the notes you need for this lecture just completed."

[GO to  
<<https://crossings.org/archive/ed/promisingtradition/default.shtml>> on the Crossings website. The "Feste Sätze" are chapter 18 in the collected essays called THE PROMISING TRADITION.]

Same thing – "If it hadn't been for . . . " – could be said, more obviously, for Bob Bertram, who dreamed up the CROSSINGS name and the whole idea. It's also on the website: "Crossings Inc. A Proposal. Epiphany 1974."

Same could be said for O.P. Kretzmann, long-term president of Valparaiso University. If he hadn't been in Bavaria in the summer of 1953 and "crossed" paths with Bob Schultz, Dick Baepler and me at a retreat he was conducting with U.S. military chaplains and invited us "Missourians" to join him there—where the conclusion was (in his inimitable voice): "I WANT YOU BOYS AT VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY!" – The Crossings Community would never have come into existence.

For today, it's just Elert.

More anecdotage: The track from Valparaiso University to Crossings needs telling. Here's the history:

Baepler to Valparaiso University in 1954

Schultz to V.U.—doctorate under Elert completed—1956. Schroeder to V.U. 1957

Aided and abetted by Schultz's frequent presentations and publications in Missouri Synod venues, "law/gospel" [Erlangen version] became the mantra for "Valpo theology."

Robert Bertram, chair of the department, was also a law/gospeller. ['Twas possibly already in his DNA. His grandfather, William Dau, had translated and published the Law-Gospel lectures of Missouri Synod patriarch C.F.W. Walther into English. His father, Martin Bertram, had translated Elert's dogmatics, *The Christian Faith*, for the Missouri Synod's Concordia Publishing House. However, CPH eventually decided not to publish the translation since Elert was "in error" on verbal inspiration.]

There were additional kindred spirits among our Valpo departmental colleagues.

And possibly the major messengers publicizing "Valpo theology" throughout the Missouri Synod were our students who then went home and told their parents—and pastors(!)—what they were learning.

The course syllabi for core theology courses (required of all students!) were cranked out on law/ gospel mimeograph machines.

Ooops. Anectdotage is taking over! Herewith a fast-track to our being here today:

—Bertram goes to Concordia Seminary in 1963. Systematic theology department. Four of his department colleagues are "old Missourians," four are kindred spirits.

—Schroeder to Concordia Seminary in 1971.

–Law/gospel theology, esp. law/gospel Biblical hermeneutics, articulated as the “Aha!” of Reformation theology, attracts many students, deemed a winsome alternative to the lenses of verbal inspiration for reading the Bible.

–January 1974 the explosion at Concordia Seminary. Biblical hermeneutics the hot potato. 45 profs dismissed. The four “old Missourians” in systematics department and one exegete remain.

–Seminary-in-exile comes into existence, Seminex. Law-Gospel the trademark for “Seminex theology.”

–Explicit “Crossings” seminars –“Word of God and Daily Work”–offered by Bertram/Schroeder in Seminex’s later years. The Crossings Community incorporated.

–1983 Seminex closes shop in St. Louis. Crossings’ board of directors asks Schroeder to become executive secretary as full-time job and take Crossings on the road.

–1983 to 1993. Decade of semester-long accredited academic courses (via Webster University) and weekend workshops: “Word of God and Daily Work.” Bertram, now at the Lutheran seminary in Chicago, but resident in St. Louis, commutes home every weekend. Bob teaches one 3-credit course on Saturday, Ed does two during the week. A twenty-course curriculum evolves. Ed out of town many weekends doing “Word of God and Daily Work” workshops around the country, 200 in ten years. The two plot and scheme as Ed taxis Bob to the airport every Monday morning for his commute back to Chicago.

–1993. Bertram and Schroeder both retire. Next generation takes over. Internet the main venue. Law-Gospel theology the continuing golden thread.

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Back to the question: Would we be here in this room at this conference if Elert had never existed? If so, it would have to have been a very different story. Maybe you can imagine it. I cannot. But then at 85 comes dotage. Defined by Webster as " a period or state of senile decay marked by decline of mental poise and alertness."

FINALLY, back to Elert. And my assigned topic.

Picking up from the long anecdote above. 63 years ago at the University of Erlangen in Germany. I was 22 yrs. old, half-way through the five-year seminary program at Concordia Seminary here in St. Louis. Three of us from Concordia Seminary were there, Bob Schultz, already graduated, Dick Baepler, my classmate (same age) and me. All three of us registered for Elert's lectures on dogmatics, the UR -text of his dogmatics book: *Der christliche Glaube* [The Christian Faith]. All three of us were members of the seminar he offered that semester called "Kerygma und Dogma."

Let's start with that seminar, "Kerygma und Dogma." Those two nouns are important for what I'm asked to do here today. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is patently a segment of the dogma of the trinitarian nature of God.

And if that is important at all, it is important for what Christians proclaim, for the Christian kerygma. In the K&D seminar we focused explicitly on that topic for a whole semester. My "Seminarschein" –evidence that I was indeed there—and Elert's signature now appear on the first page of the *Feste Sätze*, now present on the Crossings website.

What are these "Feste Sätze?" They are the theses-sentences Elert would slowly dictate to us at the end of each class session. In effect "Here's what I've been teaching you this past hour." The "Feste Sätze" from class are the skeleton for Elert's

fully-fleshed-out dogmatics book, The Christian Faith.

Elert's maxim was: "Dogma ist das Sollgehalt des Kerygmas." Dogma is the "Sollgehalt" of the kerygma. It's not easy to put that word "Sollgehalt" into English. Here's my translation: "Dogma prescribes what should be in the Christian kerygma." What should be there in the kerygma (= message) to insure that it is the CHRISTIAN message.

Both dogma and kerygma are Greek words found in the NT. Basic definition: "Prescription and proclamation."

"Dogma" as "prescription" in NT texts:

- Luke 2. Caesar Augustus's "dogma": Get registered in your home town.
- Acts 16:4. Paul and Silas head out to tell the new Christians in Asia Minor the "dogmata" of the Apostolic Council of Acts 15.
- Eph. 2:15. Christ . . . having abolished the law of commandments and "dogmas."

Dogma does not mean teachings. We'll come back to that later.

For kerygma, think "message" which has now also become a verb, not just a noun, in English during my lifetime. But that makes it close to the word kerygma. For the "kery-" Greek root generates three prominent words in the NT. Kerygma = the noun for message. Keryx = the noun for messenger. And keryssein = the verb: "To message. To be a keryx messaging the kerygma."

The two joined words in "Sollgehalt" make up this key term. "Soll" is a "you ought to, you should, (almost) you are under orders to" item. Gehalt is "contents," what's in the package. So, you ought to have x,y,z in the package if the package is to be the Christian kerygma.

Notice that the "should" is not addressed to the hearer: It is

not: "You should believe this or that."

It is addressed to the proclaimer. It's a "you should, you ought to" –yes, even "you gotta"–to preachers. But it's not a "you gotta" of Law. It's a Grace-imperative. You've gotta be saying such and so if you're a messenger messaging the Gospel message.

For Elert there were basically only two dogmas, both coming from the first centuries of Christian church history: Trinity and Christology.

So there are two foci for my assignment today. Like an ellipse with two centers.

–The Holy Spirit in the trinitarian dogma.

–The Holy Spirit in the christological dogma.

–And then conclusion: How that makes God-talk and Jesus-talk to come out Good News.

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Here's how the whole dogmatics is organized: seven parts.

Prolegomena

1. Natural Religion. Man's Self-understanding Under the Hiddenness of God
2. The What and How of God's Revelation
3. Dogma of the Triune God
4. God and the World
5. The Christological Dogma. Reconciliation
6. The New Existence. Third Article of the Creed
7. The Future and Its Fulfillment. Eschatology.

Back to the Feste Sätze. Elert on the Trinity.

[Project the "Feste Saetze" on the screen– the Promising Tradition, p. 77 from the Crossings website.

<https://crossings.org/archive/ed/promisingtradition/default.shtm>

## #18. THE TRINITARIAN DOGMA AS A CONFESSION OF MONOTHEISM

- 1) Theology in the narrower sense as the doctrine about "God Himself" is possible only because God, while speaking to us, also speaks about himself.
- 2) We can speak about God only in the manner in which we ourselves are addressed by him in law and gospel.
- 3) The eternal Word of the Father is the Son of God. He is witnessed to us by the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Consequently theology in the narrower sense must speak about God himself in trinitarian terms.
- 4) The church's trinitarian dogma fulfills the monotheistic obligation incumbent upon her especially in her rejection of all mythological distortions, above all that of modalism.

## #19. THE CHRISTOLOGICAL AND PNEUMATOLOGICAL GROUNDS OF THE TRINITARIAN DOGMA

- 1) We can speak of God only in the manner in which he himself has spoken to us in the Son. Consequently christology is presupposition for the doctrine of God himself.
- 2) In contrast with the logos-christology of the ancient church, which sought to interpret the person of Christ in terms of the logos concept (E. Brunner today does likewise), we can comprehend the concept of logos only in terms of the person of Christ. We need the totality of Christ's life, teaching, death, and resurrection in order to comprehend what sort of word is meant by designating him "logos."
- 3) This Logos of God, like every other word of God, is creative word, for it creates new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17). In this act of new creation, we are the object, while God and Christ constitute the inseparable subject.



4) The N. T. witness compels us to the confession of 2 Clement: One must think about Christ the way one thinks about God (1:1). Thereby the theological problem arises, not only that of the relationship between God and man in Christ, but also the relationship between God and God.

5) God's address to us in Christ comes only via the paraclesis of the Paraclete. Consequently pneumatology too is presupposition for the doctrine of God himself.

6) In the N.T. the word "pneuma" is sometimes used in such a fashion that one might understand it as a thing. This possibility is, however, excluded when God is designated "pneuma", and when the same is said of Christ.

7) As the promise is made about the sending of the Holy Spirit, and as that promise is fulfilled, we are nothing more than receivers. God and Christ are once more for us the inseparable subject.

8). Pneumatology too raises the question of the relationship between God and God, since the N.T. witness predicates relationships between God himself, his pneuma, and Christ that are without analogy anywhere else.

## #20. THE GROUNDS AND LIMITS OF THE TRINITARIAN CONFSSIONAL FORMULA

1) The trinitarian dogma cannot be understood or based on speculative foundations. Its intention rather is to do justice to the necessary circumstances of the doctrine of God himself, viz., that it can only be monotheistic, and yet also trinitarian. The reason for this is that God has not revealed himself to us in any other fashion.

[So far the Feste Sätze]

So there are christological and pneumatological prior elements, prolegomena, before you get to the trinity. In a sense, we must read Father, Son and Holy Spirit in reverse order—Holy Spirit, Son, Father—to get a picture of the trinity as God unfolds it to us. Which Luther himself does, interestingly, in his Large Catechism: “...we could never come to recognize the Father’s favor and grace were it not for the Lord Christ, who is a mirror of the Father’s heart. Apart from him we see nothing but an angry and terrible judge. But neither could we know anything of Christ, had it not been revealed by the Holy Spirit.”

In Elert’s formulation it comes out like this: We can talk about God only with the data that has been given to us. That available data is what the Paraclete has brought to our attention in the apostolic witness. Central to that data is Christ. And central to Christ’s word and work is his reconciling us to God, now God our Father, as he has been Father of the only-begotten Son from eternity.

The second place in Elert’s systematic theology where the Holy Spirit shows up is—no surprise—when Elert moves to the third article of the Christian Creed. From the Feste Sätze, Section 40:

#### “Pneumatology and Church

—Assertions about the Holy Spirit are possible only within the context of the doctrine of the trinity, as we have done earlier. The person of the Holy Spirit differs from the person of the incarnate Son of God in that the former is perceptible only in his action.

—The church is the work of the Holy Spirit and the place of his action.

—The Holy Spirit creates the church not by speaking of himself, but of him who sent him (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13f.) Christ is not subordinate to the church. It is rather vice versa. The

church is Christ's institution. Its connection to Christ is founded on his commission to proclaim the gospel, on his instituting the procedures of baptism, eucharist, absolution, and on his promise."

Those texts from John's gospel just cited give Elert his major term for discussing the Holy Spirit. The word is Paraclete. Over and over again as this Third-Article section of his dogmatics unfolds he speaks of The Paraclete, and of the Paraclete's work, "Paraclesis." Paraclete is St. John's own favored term—both in the gospel and in the first epistle of St. John. Twice the term is even predicated to Jesus himself. All the other times it is "another," a second, Paraclete, also designated by John as the "Holy Spirit."

[The noun Paraclesis, the work done by the Paraclete, never appears in the work of St. John, but is manifold in the double-volume written by St. Luke—his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles— and also in the letters of St. Paul. The verb "Parakalein" can be found dozens of times from Matthew all the way up to—but not in—the book of Revelation. The last time it shows up is in the book of Jude.]

So what is Paraclesis? The work of the Paraclete. But what is that? Elert frequently cites Paul's use of the term in 2 Cor. 5 and 6.

5:18-6:1. "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God IS MAKING HIS APPEAL through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might

become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we URGE YOU also not to accept the grace of God in vain.”

The capitalized words are parakalein in Greek. Both God and the apostle are the subjects in those two parakalein sentences, and the paraclesis is the same in both cases.

These christological and pneumatological “presuppositions” [Voraussetzungen” in German] could be labelled the two centers of the ellipse of the God-data available to us. In John’s gospel it comes as a surprise that Christ too, not only the Holy Spirit, is called Paraclete, already a signal of their collaboration. Jesus the first Paraclete, Holy Spirit the second. The entire operation trinitarian. In that passage from 2 Corinthians: Jesus as Paraclete one is expressed as: “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.” Holy Spirit as Paraclete two: “We urge (we parakalein) you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.”

Paraclesis reappears as major term in Elert’s description of what the Gospel itself is. Here are Elert’s Feste Sätze on that with a bit of my interpretive commentary.

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## #11 The Gospel

The word “Gospel” is used in two ways in the N.T. It is both a report (indicative sentences: “Here’s what’s happening”) and a message personally addressed to us (imperative sentences: “Hey you, listen. This is about you!”) The indicative sentences are most frequent in the four written gospels of the N.T., the “Hey you” imperatives in the apostolic epistles.

Concerning the indicative sentences, two items are present. First, indicative-mood gospel sentences report about Jesus in

such a way that the Word of God is perceptible in him. John 1 designates Christ as God's "logos," the Word of God. Paul in 2 Cor.5:13 says this Word is the Word of reconciliation, God being reconciled with sinners.

Second, the human speech of the apostles is also called God's Word of Gospel because the person of Christ (same as above) is the substance and content of that speaking. Insofar as later proclamation—all the way down to our day—has the same substance and content, it too can be labelled "The Word of God."

Concerning the imperative sentences: The Gospel also comes in imperative sentences when the report about Christ, the indicative, is applied to the hearers and readers: "Hey you . . ." With this in mind the written gospels report how Jesus himself called his hearers to come to him and listen (Matt. 11:28). When we move to the N.T. witness of the apostles, we see how they regularly add an appeal, a "hey you..." to their own presentation of the report about Jesus. Example: 2 Cor. 5:20. Paul uses "report" language about the "word of reconciliation," and then adds the appeal— the "Hey you"— to the hearers: "We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

The imperative element expresses the fact that the substance and content of the Gospel is meant for the hearers. It aims to to strike them, to lay claim to them. "This Gospel is talking about you."

All of the messaging coming from the apostles is the means—media, pipeline—for making the reported Christ-event audibly available. This is the Paraclete in action. The apostles witness to the reconciliation that has happened in Christ. Their testimony does not create it. It had already happened before they came onto the scene. So the hearers are not asked to "believe" the apostles. They are entreated to trust the Christ whom the apostles tell about—in their own indicative and

imperative sentences.

When Elert speaks about the words “Holy” and “Spirit,” he does the same thing he did when he taught us what the Greek term LOGOS meant when applied to the Son of God. [“Don’t put the ‘Son Of God’ into the Greek wineskin of LOGOS. Rather, make it a new wineskin by filling the term LOGOS with what the N.T. says about Christ. The terms and metaphors used for portraying Christ, the Christ-dogma, must be congruent with the ‘Christusbild’– the Christ- picture–presented in the N.T witness.”] His theology of the Holy Spirit follows the same procedure: filling those Greek terms with the substance of Spirit/Paraclete texts throughout the entire New Testament.

His cornerstone text is John 15:7-15. Straight from Jesus.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

8 And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me;

10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more;

11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

12 I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he

will take what is mine and declare it to you.

We might also call this text the cornerstone for Luther's term "Christum treiben." The Paraclete's work is "pushing Christ" into places where he's not yet present. In short, it's the ongoing work of the triune God in world history ever since Jesus' "Going to the Father – the trinitarian road from Calvary to Easter to Ascension to Pentecost."

[Elert does go into the details of the early church's trinitarian debates and the technical terms in both Greek and Latin that were used then, many appearing in the text of the Nicene Creed used in our liturgies, but I won't rehearse that here. GO to the Feste Sätze on the Crossings website for those data, if you want to see them.]

Summa: in the dogma of the trinity, the third person of the trinity is the Paraclete who, as Jesus says in John's gospel, "takes what is mine and declares it to you." Any and all processes, any media and persons doing that are the Paraclete at work doing paraclesis, doing "Christum treiben." In the language of Augsburg Confession V, they are doing "ministry."

Augsburg Confession Article 5:

"In order that we may obtain this faith [just described in Article 4], the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake."

Note that "ministry" here is not a synonym for clergy. Ministry is the label for the transfer process of "taking what is mine and declaring it to you." In other vocabulary from Augsburg,

ministry is getting the merits and benefits of Christ to the troubled sinners who need them. Punning on the academic degree nowadays called D.Min, the Holy Spirit is the Doctor of Ministry in Holy Trinity.

The Paraclete is the foreman of all the actions listed in Augsburg's article 5, actions that would never be self-generated, but are nudged, promoted, animated by the third person of the trinity.

There's no better summary that I know of than what many of us may still remember from catechism class, Luther's Small Catechism on the third article of the creed; let's see how many of us can still recite it.

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I believe in the Holy Ghost; one holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?—Answer.

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.

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Notice how broadly Luther expands the paraclesis of the Paraclete. He presents the Holy Spirit as the salvation foreman for everything on up to and including a blessed outcome on Judgment Day.



That's our segue to the remaining material on Holy Spirit in Elert's treatment of the third article of the creed. You can follow it in the Feste Sätze on the Crossings website.

After sections on church and sacraments, he moves to closure discussing "The New Existence," and actually takes those terms from Luther's explanation above, terms which Luther took right out of the New Testament—calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies, keeps—and links them to the Paraclete's paraclesis.

Here's his list in the Feste Sätze:

Predestination

Election

Calling

Illumination

Justification

In his dogmatics book these five grow to ten N.T. terms for the work of the Paraclete.

Predestination

Election

Calling

Illumination

Justification

Repentance, conversion, regeneration.

Perseverance

Freedom.

Here's a segment from the Feste Sätze illustrating the centrality of the Paraclete as the Creator Spiritus of the new existence. Check the Crossings website for the rest.

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#51 PREDESTINATION, ELECTION, CALLING

1) If one conceives of predestination in terms of God being the cause of all, then that is atheism, since God is no causal

“thing.” If one conceives of God as the origin (Urheber) of all that is, then this notion of predestination amounts to a doublet of the doctrine of creation.

2) If one understands predestination as God’s eternal decree about the eternal salvation or destruction of man, we can then discuss it only in faith or unfaith. A discussion in faith can occur only on the ground of the Word of God spoken to us in Christ.

3) The word about Christ, and the paraclesis too (“be reconciled”), is meant unconditionally and universally. Only because it is meant for all and unconditional, is it also meant for me. The thought that it is not meant for all and that God is not in earnest with this word for some people (and perhaps also not for me), or the thought that He wills the opposite of that which he offers them (or me) in Christ, is plausible on reasonable grounds. But at the same time it destroys the ground and substance of faith.

4) Hardening of hearts is punishment and as such it is God’s present action. Nowhere in the N.T. is it traced back to an eternal decree of God’s. It is also by no means necessarily ultimate and final rejection.

5) To believe in the paraclesis is to believe that God has the freedom in this moment, contrary to the order of death which he himself has inflicted, to be gracious to me.

6) The message that comes to us in the paraclesis is designated in the N.T. as calling (kalein, kleesis) when it is focused on the goal: Into fellowship with Christ (I Cor 1:9), to freedom (Gal 5:13), to peace (Col 3:15), into his own kingdom and glory (I Thess 2:12, I Pe 5:10), to eternal life (I Tim 6:12), into God’s marvelous light (I Pe 2:9).

7) It is called election (eklogē, eklegesthai) when the

personal relationship between caller and called is to be expressed: Christ in relation to “his own” (Jn 13:1); The Father has given them to him (Jn 10:20; 17:6; 18:9); they are his friends (Jn 15:15); he loves them (Jn 13:1); and they love him (a4:15); he knows them and they know him (10:14). From both sides it is a loving knowledge (nosse cum affectu).

8) The concept of salvation entails also the element of being special. The believers are called chosen, since they are factually in a preferred situation before all others. This preferred status they have received as a gracious act of God. Of Christ himself it is said that he is “chosen,” but not in the sense that he is selected out of a group of other sons. Knowing that you have been so selected (chosen out of the world, Jn 15:19, Gal 1:4) follows from God’s preferential act.

9) The concept of fore-knowledge (prognosis) (Rom 8:29: 11:2) affirms that the mutual loving foreknowledge is initiated from God’s side. The substance of God’s pro-thesis (Eph 1:9; Rm 8:28; 2 Tim 1:9) “purpose,” is the salvation of men. Pre-destining (proorizein) is God actualizing his purpose.

10) Certainty that one is elected, namely, already beloved by God, having escaped the destroyer, preferred and the recipient of grace—this is the capstone of Christian certainty (Heilsgewissheit).

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## Conclusion:

What then is the DOGMA of the Holy Spirit—dogma as prescription for the kerygma—in what we have just heard from Elert?

What is the prescription for what must be said when you are speaking of the Holy Spirit in such a way that what you say is the Good News of the Christian Message?

I have some ideas. But I've talked long enough. So, for the next ten minutes, y'all—all y'all—do some talking. Discuss this at your table. And come up with at least ONE answer to that question to tell all of us when the 10 minutes are up.

[THE HOLY SPIRIT IN WERNER ELERT'S THEOLOGY \(PDF\)](#)