



How an Orthodox Accusation Became a Source of Inspiration for Congar's pneumatology*

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that due to the so-called “accusation of Christomonism” made especially by the Orthodox observers during the Vatican II sessions, the pneumatology of French theologian Yves Congar proceeded to develop in a way that would have never happened without such a reproach. We will go through the accusation itself, its theological consequences, and then we will study the direct and indirect responses of Congar. Was Congar even aware of the effects that this accusation had on his theology?

Keywords

Pneumatology, Yves Congar, Vatican II, Orthodox-Latin traditions, Christomonism, Holy Spirit, Trinity

The name of our panel starts with the words: *Pneumatology Beyond Polemics*; I would like to talk to you about Pneumatology *because* of polemics¹. My aim is to show that we wouldn't have the pneumatological development made by Yves Congar had it not been for a polemic – that of the Christomonism accusation.

In 1979–1980 Congar wrote a trilogy that came to be one of the most important books in Catholic pneumatology. The entire third volume of Congar's trilogy called «I Believe in the Holy Spirit: The River of the Water of Life (Rev. 22:1) flows in the East and in the West», is dedicated to the study of the Holy Spirit in both traditions. I suspect that the whole project of this work stems from a polemic.

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Congar considers himself a theologian always concerned with the Trinity and particularly with the Spirit. He said at the end of his life: «I have always thought in terms of the Trinity and I always spoke of the Holy Spirit»². This is true... but we can fine-tune this expression. Let me explain.

Congar's theological production is enormous; the number of titles approaches 1800³, covering the broadest array of topics in theology.

If we look particularly to the texts dedicated to pneumatology, we can divide the list into two different periods: from 1930 to 1960, and from 1960 to 1990. In those first 30 years we find 10 entries about pneumatology; in the second 30 years we find 42⁴, four times more! What happened between those two periods that stirred his interest?

It is true that Congar was always interested in the Holy Spirit — he has writings from as early as 1937 dedicated to the topic; but at the same time, there was a moment when his dedication to the study of the Third Person of the Trinity drastically increased. Why?

The answer I want to propose is the following: the reason for the accentuation of Congar's pneumatology is the «*Christomonism accusation*» put forth by some of the observers during the Second Vatican Council. Congar was fully aware of the accusation, as shown in many citations; for example, he says, «The lack of pneumatology is a reproach which the other Christians willingly put forth to us Roman Catholics, and which the Observers had often formulated regarding Vatican II»⁵.

To better understand the role this accusation played in the development of Congar's pneumatology, I will divide my paper in 4 parts: 1) The accusation itself, 2) Its reception in Congar, 3) Congar's direct response, and 4) The indirect response to the reproach.

1. The accusation itself

The accusation itself is quite simple, but it has some complicated theological consequences. In very basic terms, the accusation is that

² Charles MacDonald, *Church and world in the plan of God: aspects of history and eschatology in the thought of Père Yves Congar o.p.* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1982), p.ix.

³ Cf. Pietro Quattrocchi, 'Bibliographie générale du Père Yves Congar', in Jean-P. Jossua, *Le Père Congar: la théologie au service du peuple de Dieu* (Paris: Cerf, 1967), pp.213–272; Aidan J. Nichols, 'An Yves Congar bibliography 1967-1987', *Angelicum* 66 (1989/3), pp.422–466; Jean-Marie Vezin, 'Une présentation raisonnée de la bibliographie de Congar', *Transversalités* 98 (2006), pp.37–60.

⁴ Cf. Pier G. Gianazza, *Lo Spirito Santo: summa pneumatologica di Yves Congar* (Roma: LAS, 1998), pp.259–262.

⁵ Yves M. Congar, 'La Pneumatologie dans la théologie catholique', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 51 (1967), p.250; Yves M. Congar, ed., *Vocabulaire oecuménique* (Paris: Cerf, 1970), p.197.

in Western theology there would be an excessive, almost exclusive, attention to Christ, at the expense of a coherent Trinitarian – and particularly pneumatological – view, as though we had forgotten about the divinity of the Holy Spirit, almost reducing Him to a mere Vicar of Christ. This is what we call *Christomonism*.

1.1 The story

Congar himself tells us at the beginning of the second part of the second book of his trilogy that: «In October 1963, the schema on the Church was being discussed. I was having lunch with two Orthodox observers, who said: “If we were to prepare a treatise *De Ecclesia*, we would draft a chapter on the Holy Spirit, to which we would add a second chapter on Christian anthropology, and that would be all”»⁶.

Behind this event is the idea that Western theology had somehow forgotten the role of the Spirit, and Congar repeatedly remembers later on: «At Vatican Council II, the observers almost unanimously reproached the projects of the conciliar texts for their lack of pneumatology. We can dispute the legitimacy of this reproach»⁷.

1.2 Explaining the underlying theology

Congar explains how the Orthodox world understands the Christomonist accusation, responding in particular to one of the Orthodox observers, Nikos Nissiotis. Congar says:

«He [Nissiotis] has returned insistently to what he calls the “Christomonism” of the Latins and an “ecclesiological pneumatology” which the Latins lack and which is said to be the soul of Orthodox ecclesiology. The Latins tend to make the Holy Spirit merely one of Christ’s functions – the function of bringing salvation to personal appropriation (what is sometimes imprecisely called “subjective redemption”) or of assuring the harmony of ecclesial life, its development, its fidelity to its origins by institutional and personal charisms – in short, of effecting, in the Church, the work of *Christ*... This is to misunderstand the fully personal character of the Holy Spirit’s Pentecost mission, that mission’s importance for constituting the Church after and along with the work of Christ, and finally the personal action of the Third Hypostasis in the historical life of the Church»⁸.

⁶ Yves M. Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), p.66.

⁷ Yves M. Congar, ed., *Vocabulaire oecuménique* (Paris: Cerf, 1970), p.197.

⁸ Yves M. Congar ‘Pneumatology or Christomonism in the latin tradition?’, in Mark E. Ginter, ed., *The Spirit of God. Short Writings on the Holy Spirit*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), p.163.

The consequences of falling into a Christomonist theology are extremely serious. If the Word plays a greater role, and the Spirit is considered only a Vicar, or even worse a function of the Son, then the entire Trinitarian theology would collapse; we would have a kind of subordinationism of the Spirit to Christ, and the *Pneuma* would no longer be fully God.

The accusation also has consequences at the economical level, because the lacking pneumatology would be reflected in the structure of the Catholic Church, which would give much more importance to the institution at the expense of charisms⁹, that is, it would emphasize structure over spirit, or law over inspiration, all that ends in an oversized hierarchology.

According to some of the accusers the origin of the problem was to be found in the *filioque* debate; because if the spiration of the Spirit is from the Father *and* the Son, then the Spirit is somehow dependent on and subordinated to the Son¹⁰.

2. The reception of the accusation in Congar's writings

Let's see briefly how Congar received this accusation, and then we will consider his response to it, both directly and indirectly. We will see that his reception is multifaceted, not univocal; there is more than one way to consider the role this polemic played in the thought and work of our author.

2.1 Congar's concern

In my opinion Congar was really affected by this accusation, which is shown in the fact that he addressed it in many different writings. He gave much importance to the topic: on my count, he mentions

⁹ Cf. Pier G. Gianazza, *Lo Spirito Santo: summa pneumatologica di Yves Congar* (Roma: LAS, 1998), p.46.

¹⁰ See also: Walter Kasper, 'La théologie oecuménique d'Yves-Marie Congar et la situation actuelle de l'oecuménisme', *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclesiastique* 106 (2005/1), p.17. Kasper explains: «dans l'opinion de certains théologiens orthodoxes, en particulier l'illustre V. Lossky, le *filioque* a des conséquences concrètes pour la compréhension de l'Église. Pour ces théologiens, toute l'efficacité de l'Esprit Saint semble ainsi liée à la personne et à l'action de Jésus Christ, ce qui ne laisse aucun espace de liberté à l'Esprit Saint; le *filioque* enchaîne, pour ainsi dire, l'Esprit Saint entièrement aux institutions établies par le Christ. Selon cette interprétation, avec le «filioque», les catholiques soumettent les charismes à l'institution, la liberté individuelle à l'autorité de l'Église, le prophétique au juridique, le mysticisme à la scholastique, le sacerdoce commun au sacerdoce hiérarchique et, enfin, la collégialité épiscopale à la primauté romaine».

it at least 10 times in 7 different texts¹¹. In particular, he dedicated special attention to it in an article called: “Pneumatologie ou «Christomonisme» dans la tradition latine?”¹², and also in chapter seven of his book *La Parole et le Souffle*¹³. For a specialist in ecclesiology like himself, this accusation had a special resound, because an un-equilibrated vision of the Son and the Spirit would carry over into a vision of a clerical, hierarchical church, an unacceptable conclusion for the theologian that spent his life promoting the idea of the Church as the «people of God».

Let’s see together how he reacted to this reproach: sometimes dismissing it, sometimes accepting it, and finally explaining it.

2.2 Dismissal

One first position is very straightforward and clear: «So general and simplistic, the accusation loses in credibility»¹⁴, wrote Congar in 1972. The accusation left him perplexed, wondering what it was all about: In 1970, he wrote: «To speak of “Christomonism” seems not only imprecise; one might wonder what it means exactly»¹⁵.

And he had said before in 1967 that Roman Catholic theology simply didn’t merit such an accusation: «Does Latin theology, however, merit the reproach put forth by the Orthodox when they say that it is purely Christological? We think not»¹⁶.

¹¹ Cf. Yves M. Congar ‘Pneumatology or Christomonism in the latin tradition?’, in Mark E. Ginter, ed., *The Spirit of God. Short Writings on the Holy Spirit*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), pp.162-163; Yves M. Congar, ‘Le troisième article du Symbole. L’impact de la pneumatologie dans la vie de l’Église’, in *Dieu, Église et société* (Paris: le Centurion, 1985), p.294; Yves M. Congar, ‘Les implications christologiques et pneumatologiques de l’ecclésiologie de Vatican II’, in Giuseppe ALBERIGO, éd., *Les Eglises après Vatican II: dynamisme et prospective: actes du colloque international de Bologne, 1980* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1981), pp.117–130, pp.118,130; Yves M. Congar, *La Parole et le Souffle* (Paris: Desclée, 2010), p.186 ; Yves M. Congar, ‘Actualité renouvelée du Saint-Esprit’, *Lumen vitae* 27 (1972/4), p.550; Yves M. Congar, ed., *Vocabulaire oecuménique* (Paris: Cerf, 1970), p.197 ; Yves M. Congar, ‘La Pneumatologie dans la théologie catholique’, *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 51 (1967/2), p.251.

¹² Recently translated: Yves M. Congar ‘Pneumatology or Christomonism in the latin tradition?’, in Mark E. Ginter, ed., *The Spirit of God. Short Writings on the Holy Spirit*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2018).

¹³ Yves M. Congar, *The Word and the Spirit* (London: Chapman, 1986).

¹⁴ Yves M. Congar, ‘Actualité renouvelée du Saint-Esprit’, *Lumen vitae* 27 (1972/4), p.550.

¹⁵ Yves M. Congar ‘Pneumatology or Christomonism in the latin tradition?’, in Mark E. Ginter, ed., *The Spirit of God. Short Writings on the Holy Spirit*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), p.194.

¹⁶ Yves M. Congar, ‘La Pneumatologie dans la théologie catholique’, *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 51 (1967/2), p.251.

So we have one first clear reaction, it seems that there is no room for such an accusation. But this is not the only way Congar received the problem.

2.3 *Partial acceptance*

Even though Congar considers the reproach exaggerated and unfounded, in certain texts he opens himself up to its plausibility. Let's see a second group of texts from our author.

Talking about the Christomonism accusation, in 1984, he wrote: «All the same, there is certainly some justification for their criticism»¹⁷, and in 1985, he said, «I do not deny that the accusation has some basis in fact»¹⁸.

And before, in 1967 he had already recognized that: «The Greek Fathers, in particular, always mention the Spirit when they speak about Christ. In the West, we have too much of a tendency to “Christologize” everything, to put everything under Christ»¹⁹.

Congar, though a son of Aquinas, distanced himself from the great Scholastic on this point: «It is certain that the Christological aspect is quite developed in Latin theology. It is to Christ, for example, that Saint Thomas connects the grace and the sacraments, including Confirmation»²⁰, whereas for the French theologian those aspects are clearly more connected to the Holy Spirit than to Christ.

And if we go back to 1949, we find that Congar had already written: «For my part, I believe that the well known difficulty of any theology of Confirmation, the charisms, the laity, etc., comes from the same insufficiency on the level of pneumatology»²¹. It appears then, that Congar himself recognized a certain lack of development in Roman Catholic pneumatology even before the Orthodox proposed as much with their Christomonism accusation.

We can clearly see that Congar's response to the *Christomonism* accusation is not univocal, which is why Italian Professor Pier Giorgio Gianazza has labeled it a *dialectical* response²².

¹⁷ Yves M. Congar, *The Word and the Spirit* (London: Chapman, 1986), p.114.

¹⁸ Yves M. Congar, 'The third article of the Creed: the impact of pneumatology on the life of the Church' in in Mark E. Ginter, ed., *The Spirit of God. Short Writings on the Holy Spirit*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), p.254.

¹⁹ Jean Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité* (Paris: Le Centurion, 1975), p.189.

²⁰ Yves M. Congar, 'La Pneumatologie dans la théologie catholique', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 51 (1967/2), p.251.

²¹ Yves M. Congar, 'Bulletin de théologie dogmatique', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 33 (1949), p.452.

²² Cf. Pier G. Gianazza, *Lo Spirito Santo: summa pneumatologica di Yves Congar* (Roma: LAS, 1998), p.52. Another quotation of Congar further shows this dialectical

If the Orthodox accusation, then, is founded, what happened in Roman Catholic theology that brought it to this point? How had this been overlooked? We will consider the reasons that Congar himself gave, when accepting – if only partially – and responding to this accusation.

3. Congar's direct response and explanation

Congar's direct response to the accusation can be synthesized in five points.

3.1 *The Western style of thought*

First, Congar, searching for the possible roots of this underdeveloped pneumatology, turns to the structure of establishing knowledge in Western culture and thought. One thing we must understand, explains the French theologian, is the Western thought process, influenced by the Hellenic philosophy. It is typical of Western thought to seek to thoroughly define all things. We have a tendency – even a need – to clarify, break apart, delineate, and give shape to our objects of study. Congar puts it this way:

«Latin thought likes to define the form or outline of things, the structures of existence or action to the limit; it sinks into “legalism”. On the one hand, the Holy Spirit is the divine dynamism which gives life to the structures created by the Word, but on the other hand, it is difficult to specify exactly what concerns him»²³.

It is difficult then in our Western world to develop the theology of the third Person of the Trinity, given that He is less close to our natural experience, unlike fatherhood or filiation. The Paraclete is dynamic; He is like the Wind that «blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes» (Jn 3,8), and thus He is harder to grasp, to analyze, to comprehend, and to submit to the Western style of study.

approach: «The Latin tradition has a theology of the Holy Spirit, of the Spirit's operations, and of the Spirit's sanctifying indwelling in souls. It remains the case that during the Scholastic period, where something like the classic moment of this tradition can be seen, it showed its predilection for developing the Christological aspect of the Christian mystery», Yves M. Congar, 'Pneumatology or Christomonism in the latin tradition?', in Mark E. Ginter, ed., *The Spirit of God. Short Writings on the Holy Spirit*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), p.194.

²³ Yves M. Congar, 'La Pneumatologie dans la théologie catholique', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 51 (1967/2), p.250.

3.2 Indirect treatment in Roman Catholic theology

Second, according to Congar there is a sufficient presence of pneumatology in Roman Catholic theology, only it has not been directly addressed in a single, systematic treatise; rather, it has been developed in the context of other treatises. He writes: «All of this [that has to do with the Holy Spirit] is really very present in Catholic theology, but is scattered through all the treatises. Certain assertions, in themselves very rich, were hardly the object of their own specific development»²⁴.

So the obvious question is, where is it developed? And Congar answers that the pneumatological elements are particularly present in two places: in the *Deo Trino*, and in all other areas of theology. Admittedly, this answer is a bit too wide, so Congar proceeds at least to narrow it down to eight specific areas where the theology of the Spirit is present: the incarnation, anthropology, economy, revelation, ecclesiology, sacraments, ecumenism and eschatology²⁵.

3.3 Defense of Vatican II's pneumatology

Third, Congar defends the documents of the Second Vatican Council. The Greek theologian Nikos Nissiotis continued to pose the Christomonism accusation after Vatican II, stating that the Council texts were lacking in pneumatology, especially *Lumen Gentium* and *Dei Verbum*²⁶. Congar, however, disagrees. He writes: «Having re-read it carefully, I maintain that one cannot accuse *Lumen Gentium* of “Christomonism”»²⁷.

Congar says that considering the Second Vatican Council Christomonist is a sign of not having read the documents, or to have read them with a preconceived view²⁸. Keeping in mind Congar's role in

²⁴ Yves M. Congar, ed., *Vocabulaire oecuménique* (Paris: Cerf, 1970), p.200.

²⁵ Cf. Yves M. Congar, ed., *Vocabulaire oecuménique* (Paris: Cerf, 1970), pp.200–210. He returns to the same eight areas when talking about «pneumatology invested in the others treaties of theology» in Yves M. Congar, 'La Pneumatologie dans la théologie catholique', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 51 (1967/2), p.252, see also pp.252–258.

²⁶ «The observers at the Second Vatican Council often made the reproach that the schemas, in particular those of the dogmatic constitutions *Lumen gentium* and *Dei verbum*, lacked a pneumatology» Yves M. Congar, 'Pneumatology or Christomonism in the latin tradition?' in Mark E. Ginter, ed., *The Spirit of God. Short Writings on the Holy Spirit*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), p.162.

²⁷ Yves M. Congar, 'Christological and pneumatological implications of Vatican II's ecclesiology' in Mark E. Ginter, ed., *The Spirit of God. Short Writings on the Holy Spirit*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), p.227.

²⁸ Cf. Yves M. Congar, 'Christological and pneumatological implications of Vatican II's ecclesiology' in Mark E. Ginter, ed., *The Spirit of God. Short Writings on the Holy Spirit*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), p.241.

preparing those texts, we can understand how precious they were to him.

For the French Dominican it was clear that the Council Fathers were looking to open the Church to the action of the Spirit; he notes many times that the Council had developed their pneumatology and made more space for the presence of the Holy Spirit²⁹.

3.4 Lesson learned

Fourth, Congar acknowledges the accusation as at least partially founded, and responds with the idea that *we have learned our lesson*. The French theologian admits a weakness in the Western tradition regarding the presence of the Spirit, but he insists that progress has been made since the Council, allowing us to talk about and amend any errors or underdevelopment. He says: «The movement of ideas that prepared the way for Vatican II, then the Council itself and finally the continuing developments in theology since the Council all point to the fact that the one-sidedness of the past has been and is still being corrected. The way is now open for a real pneumatology to be developed in the Church»³⁰. He further states, «I would agree that the criticism of “Christomonisme” in Western Catholicism is to some extent right, but I have, I think, shown that this is being corrected»³¹.

This point speaks well of both sides: the Orthodox, for pointing out the situation, and the Roman Catholics, for receiving the accusation and responding accordingly.

It is important to remark that Congar had nothing against the Eastern world, on the contrary, he felt a certain admiration for it; in 1975, he wrote an article called *J'aime l'orthodoxie (I love the Orthodoxy)*³², where he expressed: «What I would like to say, from the beginning, is that I love the orthodoxy, and that I have an immense esteem for the orthodox tradition. . . . They [the orthodox Christians] live intensely of the Holy Spirit, and they have conscience of being carriers of the Spirit»³³.

²⁹ For example: «Depuis le concile, la cause du Saint-Esprit a connu des progrès tout à fait remarquables. Au niveau des sources, d'abord: Bible, Liturgie, Pères, Magistère» Yves M. Congar, 'Actualité de la pneumatologie' in *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum: atti del Congresso Teologico Internazionale di Pneumatologia in occasione del 1600° anniversario del I Concilio di Costantinopoli e del 1550° anniversario del Concilio di Efeso, Roma 22-26 marzo 1982*, (Città del Vaticano: Libreria editrice vaticana, 1983), p.16.

³⁰ Yves M. Congar, *The Word and the Spirit* (London: Chapman, 1986), p.115.

³¹ Yves M. Congar, *The Word and the Spirit* (London: Chapman, 1986), p.117.

³² Yves M. Congar, 'J'aime l'orthodoxie', in *2000 ans de christianisme* (Paris: Société d'histoire chrétienne, 1975), vol.2, pp.97–99.

³³ Yves M. Congar, 'J'aime l'orthodoxie', in *2000 ans de christianisme* (Paris: Société d'histoire chrétienne, 1975), vol.2, p.97.

3.5 A *kenosis* of the Spirit

The fifth and final point of Congar's direct response to the reproach is less present in his texts, but I found it interesting and worth mentioning. It was proposed by another Dominican, Aidan Nichols; speaking about Congar's theology, he says: «Congar shows himself sympathetic towards Mühlen's suggestion that the Spirit, by a *kenosis* parallel to that of the Son in Incarnation and Atonement, empties himself of his own personality in order to become the personal bond linking human beings and the Father in Christ»³⁴. That would explain in some way the relative weakness of pneumatology in systematic theology or the less starring presence of the Spirit in the Roman Catholic tradition. For a number of years now there has been a development of the idea of *kenosis* considered not only with respect to the Son, but also to the Spirit³⁵, in the Western sphere.

In 1974, Congar had recognized that the *Pneuma* was less known than the other two Persons of the Trinity:

«To speak about the Father and about the Son we have known human analogies: we know what paternity and filiation are. We have no such resource to speak about the Third Person. The Breath: it is in these terms that Jesus speaks about him (Jn 3,8). We see his effects; something moves, but we do not grasp the Spirit himself. That is why the Spirit often remains as the "unknown divinity"»³⁶.

And he points to the origin of this *kenosis* in Sacred Scripture itself: «The New Testament adds to revelation, allowing us to know God the Father, the Son, and also the Holy Spirit, though the revelation of the Holy Spirit is extremely weak»³⁷.

4. Congar's indirect response

I'd like to end by proposing that Congar also gave an *indirect* response to the accusation, one that he himself may have consciously never connected to the reproach. In my opinion, this indirect response has two parts: one, which I already alluded to at the beginning of this paper, the other one, which is much deeper and far more critical for the theology of the Holy Spirit.

³⁴ Aidan J. Nichols, *Yves Congar* (Wilton: Morehouse-Barlow, 1989), p.141.

³⁵ See for example the very interesting book: Pasquale Bua, *La kenosi dello Spirito Santo: un percorso nella teologia del Novecento* (Roma: Città Nuova, 2015).

³⁶ Yves M. Congar, 'La Tri-unité de Dieu et l'Église', *La vie spirituelle* 128 (1974), p.694.

³⁷ Jean Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité* (Paris: Le Centurion, 1975), p.173.

4.1 Increased pneumatological production

First is the increased interest of Congar for pneumatology after the accusation of Christomonism. We already outlined the increased bibliography in reference to the Holy Spirit, four times more than in the first period of Congar's theology leading up to the Council. In the thirty years that followed he gifted the theological community and all believers his most precious works on the Third Person of the Trinity³⁸. According to professor Mark Ginter, Congar is «the foremost Catholic theologian on the Holy Spirit since the thirteenth century scholastics»³⁹, and that comes from the post-accusation period.

I hope I have demonstrated the importance of the confrontation between these two worlds, the Western and Eastern traditions, and that it was extremely fruitful for Congar's pneumatology. He refers to this matter so many times —he speaks constantly about the Holy Spirit after the Council — that my hypothesis is that there can be no doubts concerning the influence this accusation played in Congar's ecumenical and ecclesiological heart. The fruits are abundant and served to more deeply develop Christian pneumatology. In this sense, we can consider the reproach a gust of divine providence, because it pushed and motivated Yves Congar to respond.

4.2 Pneumatological Christology

The second *indirect* response I propose is that, because of the accusation and the influence of the Eastern world on him, Congar's studies of the Holy Spirit developed, and in his mature theology, he finally arrived at a mature *Pneumatological Christology*; which is a healthy and balanced position. In this theology Son and Spirit are no longer separated, no longer related to one another as juxtaposed or overlapped; rather, both of them *are* and *act* together, interlinked in a, we can say, *perichoretical* comprehension, each one with his own mission, but doing the same *opus*, two missions, one duty⁴⁰.

³⁸ I think especially of the books, the great trilogy, and the other two already quoted: Yves M. Congar, *I believe in the Holy Spirit* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997); Yves M. Congar, *The Word and the Spirit* (London: Chapman, 1986); Yves M. Congar, *Esprit de l'homme, Esprit de Dieu* (Paris: Cerf, 1998).

³⁹ Mark E GINTER, 'The Holy Spirit and Morality: a Dynamic Alliance' in Judith A. Dwyer, ed., *Proceedings of the fifty-first annual convention: San Diego, June 6-9, 1996* (San Diego: CTSA, 1996), p.165.

⁴⁰ This will give origin to the idea of the Spirit as *co-instituant* the Church; see more in: Rémi Chéno, 'Les retractationes d'Yves Congar sur le rôle de l'Esprit Saint dans les institutions ecclésiales', *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*, 91/2 (2007), specially pp.276-277.

Congar's own conclusion to his entire pneumatology is stated as follows: «If I were to draw but one conclusion from the whole of my work on the Holy Spirit, I would express it in these words: no Christology without pneumatology and no pneumatology without Christology»⁴¹. The certainty of a healthy and rich Christology is the consideration of the role and presence of the Spirit, and viceversa.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I hope I have sufficiently shown that:

- Congar's reception of the Christomonism accusation was multi-faceted, not univocal.
- The reproach deeply touched our author and had a profound impact on his subsequent theology.
- He *directly* responded to the accusation, as shown in the five points outlined above.
- The accusation also provoked in Congar what I have called an *indirect* answer, developing much of his pneumatology, and particularly the idea of *Pneumatological Christology*, in order to reinforce the role of the Spirit in the Roman-Catholic tradition.

Finally, I can conclude that if it were not for the Orthodox observers expressing their concerns, we would have missed out on the pneumatological response that Congar gifted the world. And this, I think, is to do Pneumatology *beyond* and *because* of polemics.

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⁴¹ Yves M. Congar, *The Word and the Spirit* (London: Chapman, 1986), p.1.