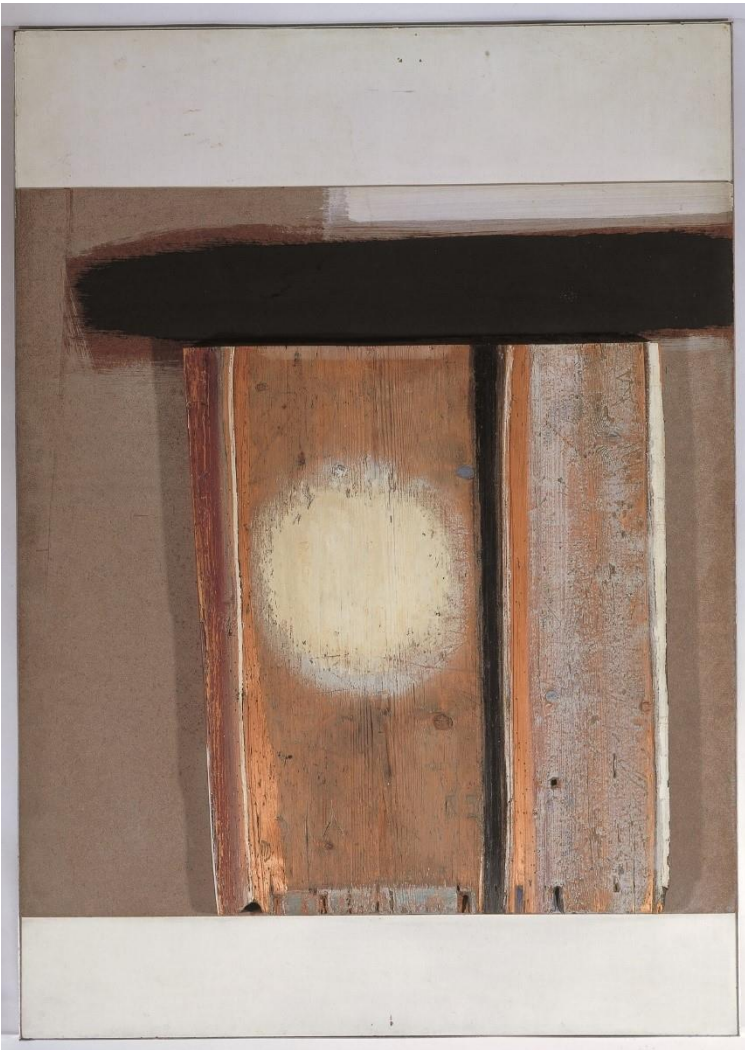


Mysterious Spirit

Rev Dan Balsdon | May 2021 | read online at www.revdanbalsdon.com



Today, 23rd May, is Pentecost Sunday. A day Christians will often remember the story we read in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit is outpoured upon the disciples of Jesus like tongues of fire and 3000+ people joined the community of the saved, the followers of the way.

This painting is called Pentecost, dating from 1962 and was painted by Dennis Hawkins. It is one of the many paintings we find among the Methodist Modern Art Collection. This Painting from Hawkins comes from a larger series of paintings, here's some explanation about the painting and story behind it...

Methodist Modern
Art Collection

Pentecost

Dennis Hawkins © TMCP

The descent of the Holy Spirit, on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, marked the birth of the Church, and is represented by an intense circle of white light, painted on the top of an old school desk. In this way Hawkins represents the success of the Church penetrating unlikely nooks and crannies and dark corners throughout the world and illuminating them with the light of the Holy Ghost. In the 1960s Hawkins produced dozens of "Pentecosts". The traditional iconography of Pentecost was tongues of fire, but instead he chose to use the circle or sphere. He saw it as a numinous object, mysterious without beginning or end and all-embracing, an ideal symbol for the coming of the Holy Spirit.¹

¹ Commentary based on 'A Guide to the Methodist Art Collection'. from [Pentecost - Dennis Hawkins \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

I love way Hawkins demonstrates the coming of God's Spirit in this endless and timeless way, echoing the truth that while we have the Acts 2 Pentecost, God's Spirit is at the beginning in Genesis, and through many different images and metaphors threads its way throughout scripture, throughout time, And throughout our very lives.

I also love the way this sphere of light appears as graffiti on 'normal' objects to the 1960s world. From being an ordinary day to day object, this old school desk is now marked and becomes something unique and special, carrying a hallmark of the life-giving, all-embracing spirit of God.

This image, this art, this metaphor, reminds us that today, Pentecost, is not merely a day where we may read Acts 2 and be reminded of the story we sometimes call the birth of the early church. Today is a day where we remember and celebrate the timeless, endless, all-embracing and life-giving presence of God – which we know as God's Spirit, that rests on and within each of us – ordinary people, who become marked, special and unique, carrying the hallmark of the all-embracing presence and power of God everywhere we go.