

Editorial: Identity and the Shape of Pentecostal Theology

Shane Clifton

Exactly what, if anything, constitutes Pentecostal identity has been a topic of reflection and debate from the initial Pentecostal revivals at the turn of the 20th century. In this present edition of the journal, Mark Hutchinson takes on this issue afresh, drawing on the Australian experience of the charismatic revivals to ask whether the charismatic movement is appropriately identified as a “new reformation of the twentieth century?” It is not my place to steal Hutchinson’s thunder, except to affirm his premise that identifying definitions are contested, and that terms such as pentecostal and charismatic “are subject to differences of historical opinion over definition, ideology, and application.” Even the choice of whether to use capital letters (Pentecostal/pentecostal¹) becomes a sticky issue, because identifying definitions shape the future. Hutchinson is a historian and sociologist, and there is little I can add to his in-depth analysis of the meanings and consequences of the charismatic movement. Instead, in this editorial essay, I take the opportunity to think alongside Hutchinson, using a different discipline and set of sources to ask whether and how pentecostal identity might shape the scholarly reflection of a pentecostal theologian.

Pentecostal revival and the rejection of distinctives

In the earliest days of the Pentecostal revival, most of the participants understood the movement as a renewal of the wider church, and so without its own ecclesiology and theology. From this perspective, the movement did not exist for itself, and debates about identity were purpose defeating. In Australia,

1. For the most part, I will label Pentecostalism without the capital "P," since I take the label to reference a movement rather than a specific church or denomination.

for example, the founder of the fledging Pentecostal movement, Sarah Lancaster, insisted that the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) was not “another CHURCH (emphasis hers),”² and for many years the assemblies she led, and those in relationship with her, had no formal pastors, doctrinal statement, or interchurch structures. And the subsequent formalisation of the AFM was judged a concession to contextual pressures (including external critique of female leadership). Lancaster’s views were not unique among global Pentecostal founders. To take one further example, Lewi Pethrus, the leader of the Swedish Pentecostal Movement (SPM) for most of the first half of the 20th century, lamented the fact that global Pentecostalism had become a movement for Pentecostals and not the whole church.³ He consistently rejected Pentecostal denominationalism and any formalised structures that controlled the relationship between local Pentecostal assemblies. For him, the SPM was a spiritual fellowship of independent local churches whose existence was not grounded in denominational structure and identity but in the unity of the Spirit that knew no boundaries and that constitutes the true ecumenical church.

A non-self-identifying Pentecostal vision was a worthy ideal, but it was not long before Pentecostalism in Australia and Sweden, as elsewhere, functioned in much the same way as any other denomination.⁴ As Weber’s commonly referenced theory on the routinisation of charisma predicts, the movement’s growth and spread resulted in the promulgation of Pentecostal distinctives and the instigation of formal ecclesial structures.⁵ And their

-
2. Shane Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, ed. A. Davies and W. Kay (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009), 58.
 3. Tommy H. Davidsson, *Lewi Pethrus’ Ecclesiological Thought, 1911-1974: A Transdenominational Pentecostal Ecclesiology* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2015), 214. Davidsson’s book is reviewed later in this journal.
 4. Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition*, 2009, chap. 2; Davidsson, *Lewi Pethrus’ Ecclesiological Thought, 1911-1974*, 106.
 5. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (California: University of California Press, 1978).

existence as being for the wider church was further undermined by mainstream rejection of pentecostal spirituality, and the concomitant intransigence and divisiveness that was to become an unfortunate feature of Pentecostalism in the 20th century. Indeed, as Pentecostals formed their own assemblies and interchurch networks, they disputed among themselves about the theology and practice of Spirit baptism, and over core doctrines (such as between Trinitarian and Oneness Pentecostals). Ecclesiology itself became a matter of dispute, and local and interchurch wrangling took their course.⁶ Inevitably, those who emerged with power decided matters, and Pentecostal identity took institutional form.

Historians and sociologists define pentecostalism

Precisely what it is that constitutes that identity has long been of interest to the Pentecostal academy. In 1993 *Pneuma: the Journal of the Society of Pentecostal Studies* devoted an edition the journal to “the search for a Pentecostal identity.”⁷ Of importance was the paper “Whither Pentecostalism?” by the then president of the Society of Pentecostal Studies, David W. Faupel. His reading of early pentecostal history was that its origins were to be found in Pietism, not — as is often assumed — conservative evangelicalism, and that its emphasis on experiential spirituality meant that liberalism and pentecostalism were fraternal twins.⁸ From his perspective, pentecostalism arose as a critique of emerging fundamentalism. Faupel goes on to argue that, rejected by the church they tried to revive and reform, pentecostals created their own ecclesial institutions, and then “borrowed the language of their opponents to establish their legitimacy.” In so doing, they

-
6. There is no better telling of these power plays than that provided by Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (London: Harvard University Press, 2001).
 7. Murray W. Dempster, “The Search for Pentecostal Identity,” *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (January 1, 1993): 1–8, doi:10.1163/157007493X00013.
 8. David W. Faupel, “Whither Pentecostalism? 22nd Presidential Address Society for Pentecostal Studies November 7, 1992,” *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (1993): 16.

embraced the narrow fundamentalism they had sought to reform.⁹ Faupel concluded by asserting that pentecostalism had come to a crossroads, one in which it needed to decide the shape of its identity; either as a subgroup of fundamentalism/evangelicalism, or – in the Spirit of its founders – as an experiential spiritual movement with open and inclusive horizons.

Two other articles stand out in the 1993 edition of *Pneuma*. Harvey Cox, looking from the outside in, highlighted the positive impulses of pentecostalism; its experiential centre, authentic spirituality, celebratory worship, and “this-worldly” brand of practical Christianity. But, he also identified the dark side of historic and contemporary pentecostal identity; its sectarian spirit, tendency to acquiesce uncritically to the status quo of the prevailing culture, naïve and dogmatic biblicism, and co-option by the political forces of the religious right (his 1993 analysis prescient for Pentecostal churches in 2017, co-opted as too many have been by right-wing political forces across the globe).¹⁰ From the inside, pentecostal historian Cecil Robeck summarised the movement’s identity as being ecumenical, globally multicultural, and evangelistic, but he also highlighted the myriad of ways in which, over the course of the 20th century, its actions had belied these identifying traits. In response he called for repentance, asking that “we look past ourselves and our parochialisms, be they theological, denominational, cultural, or regional, and become active participants in the work of God for some form of visible unity in the world.”¹¹ Robeck’s call to repentance was essentially a challenge to return to the original spirit of the pentecostal revivals; not so much a rejection of pentecostal identity *in toto*, but a willingness to hold that identity loosely for the sake of the work of the Spirit in the wider church.

Although Cox and Robeck took a global view, the debate about pentecostalism’s relationship to evangelicalism was largely North American,

9. *Ibid.*, 21–23.

10. Harvey Cox, “Some Personal Reflection on Pentecostalism,” *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (1993): 29–34.

11. Cecil M Jr Robeck, “Taking Stock of Pentecostalism: The Personal Reflections of a Retiring Editor,” *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (1993): 58.

and is confused today by the uncertainty surrounding evangelical identity in the West (including debates between so-called conservative evangelicals and neo-evangelicals). For an understanding of global pentecostal identity, the rigorous historical work of Allan Anderson stands out. Above all, his oeuvre presents a challenge to the tendency of earlier scholarship to define pentecostalism by its North American context. To facilitate the discipline of pentecostal studies, Anderson describes four primary approaches to defining the movement: 1. The typological approach differentiates between classical Pentecostals (those with historic links to the early 20th century revivals), older independent and Spirit churches (as found in China, India, and Africa), Charismatics (those in mainline churches impacted by the charismatic renewal), and neo-pentecostal and neo-charismatic churches (independent mega-churches and so on); 2. The social scientific approach seeks to identify common characteristics or phenomena (such as David Martin's categorisation of pentecostalism as "an indigenous enthusiastic Protestantism and extension of Methodism," or "a fissiparous dynamism of untutored religiosity"¹²); 3. The historical approach traces the multiple roots of churches that identify themselves as pentecostal/charismatic (in which case pentecostalism is a heuristic label given content by historical study); and 4. The theological approach defines pentecostals as those who share a pneumatology and other aspects of theological worldview deemed essential.¹³ Anderson himself considers whether is best to speak of a range of pentecostalisms — assuming that the movement is too diverse to identify common traits — but concludes that it is appropriate to use the term "pentecostalism" to describe "churches and movements globally that emphasise the working of the gifts of the Spirit." He also notes that a broader definition "should emphasise pentecostalism's ability

12. David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 18.

13. Allan Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 16–25.

to incarnate the gospel in different cultural forms,”¹⁴ and insists that global pentecostalism is of a different character to that typically seen in North America. While Western classical pentecostals have generally identified themselves by reference to the doctrine of Spirit baptism, globally “Pentecostalism is more correctly seen in a much broader context as a movement concerned primarily with the experience of the working of the Holy Spirit and the practice of spiritual gifts.”¹⁵ My reading of Anderson’s insistence that pentecostalism is not American or Western is that he is not only expanding our view of the movement’s history, but narrating history to hold up a model of the movement that is not constrained by conservative evangelicalism’s dogmatic tendencies. And in so doing he shows that there is a choice about how we identify modern pentecostalism, and so also a choice about the type of movement it might become as it moves forward through the 21st-century.

Identity and theology

Central to choosing that identity is differing assumptions about pentecostal theology that lead to divergent theological paths. In the context of biblical studies, many have followed the lead of giants such as Gordon Fee, drawing on the historical method that predominates among evangelicals to explore pentecostal topics; Fee’s *God’s Empowering Presence*, which studies every passage that references the Spirit in the New Testament, as the exemplar.¹⁶ Taking this approach, pentecostal scholars have debated evangelicals about biblical constructions of baptism in the Holy Spirit, as well as other topics of pentecostal concern, borrowing the evangelical rules of

14. Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 14–19.

15. *Ibid.*, 18.

16 Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, Reprint edition (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2009).

engagement.¹⁷ Taking a different trajectory are scholars that have sought to describe pentecostal hermeneutics in its own terms, emphasising the Spirit's involvement to explain the creative and non-historical Bible reading that predominates in the pentecostal pastorate. To this end, such scholars utilise alternative reading strategies, often referencing developments in semiotics, narrative analysis, reader response criticism, and other post-modern hermeneutical theories (although sometimes without the ideological critique that is central to post-modern theory).¹⁸ Taken altogether, there is a general consensus that pentecostal hermeneutics involves an interplay between the Spirit, the community, and the Scripture, which generates biblical readings that shape the storied and shared life of Spirit-filled communities. In this context, the insights of evangelical historical-critical exegesis might form one of the community voices, but other interpretations are also given their due, as the Spirit moves.

If we lift our gaze from biblical hermeneutics to the broader discipline of theology, again we faced with divergent paths. For many, under the influence of conservative evangelicalism, theology is biblical theology; a task that involves systematising the message of the Bible, and drawing on Christian tradition and the contemporary context primarily for the sake of translation, so that pentecostals can communicate the one true message of the (Spirit filled)

-
17. James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (London: SCM, 1970); R. Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1984); Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Zondervan, 2011).
18. Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture And Community*, unknown edition (Cleveland, Tenn.: CPT Press, 2009); Jacqueline Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament* (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick, 2011); John Christopher Thomas, "'Where the Spirit Leads' – the Development of Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 30, no. 3 (December 1, 2009): 289–302, doi:10.1080/13617670903371589; Kenneth J. Archer and L. William Oliverio Jr, eds., *Constructive Pneumatological Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Christianity*, 1st ed. 2016 edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Scriptures to the modern world.¹⁹ The problem with this approach is not so much that it mirrors conservative evangelicalism, but that in doing so it fails to appreciate the extent to which Christian tradition and the contemporary context have shaped its biblical theology. And because it confuses its contextual worldview with “the Word of God,” it tends to be narrow-minded and dogmatic.

There is nothing wrong with learning method from others, which is the only way to develop expertise in a discipline (especially exegetical methods, since the Bible is the historical text). And if pentecostalism is a movement of and for the wider church, it must do theology with other traditions, both regarding content and method. My formative training has been in a Catholic University, and I have drawn especially on the *Method in Theology* of Bernard Lonergan in my work as a theologian.²⁰ From Lonergan’s perspective, method is grounded in the processes of human knowing, and as such precedes (or transcends) any particular ecclesial tradition. Thus, there is no pentecostal method per se, but, rather, the Pentecostal theologian applies common methodological tools to the content of pentecostal theology and praxis. But should pentecostal identity do more than provide the data of theological reflection? Should it inform a unique epistemology that also shapes theological method?

James Smith answers that it should; that “it is inadequate and inauthentic for pentecostals to simply adopt “off-the-shelf” options in theological and philosophical discussion.”²¹ While he recognises the value of learning from the wisdom of others, he argues that pentecostal spirituality contains “a unique

19. The classic illustration of this approach is J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective*, Three Volumes in One edition (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1996); Also William W. Menzies and Stanley M. Horton, *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective* (USA: Logion Press, 2012).

20. Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972).

21. James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2010), xiv.

theological ‘genius’” that is a gift to the church catholic,” and, therefore, that pentecostal scholars should have the hermeneutical courage to be unapologetically pentecostal.²² In terms of identity, Smith takes an open definition of pentecostalism, emphasising radical openness to the operations of the Spirit, rather than denominational distinctives. He then defines a pentecostal worldview as encompassing:

(1) a position of radical openness to God, and in particular, God doing something differently or new; (2) an “enchanted” theology of creation and culture; (3) a nondualistic affirmation of embodiment and materiality; (4) an affective, narrative epistemology; and (5) an eschatological orientation to mission and justice.²³

But what does it mean to say that the Spirit helps us to “know?” Smith highlights the Pentecostal assumption that human knowing is not just conscious and deliberative, but it is also precognitive and affective. He argues that Pentecostalism elevates the epistemological significance of the experience of the Spirit, most fully symbolised in Pentecostal worship, where the Spirit is understood to transform a person’s emotional core so that they claim to “know” the divine voice.²⁴ It is difficult to see precisely how the elevation of this experiential, affective, and precognitive knowing can impact on theological method, since the latter is a public discipline, and so necessarily conscious and evaluative. But Smith goes on to highlight the importance Pentecostals place on testimony for spiritual discernment, concluding that narrative is central to pentecostal knowing. In a noteworthy aside, he thus suggests that “memoir is the consummate pentecostal theological genre” (a claim that may redeem my theological work as — at least implicitly — methodologically pentecostal²⁵).

22. Ibid., 22.

23. Ibid., 32–33.

24. Ibid., 75.

25. Story, including memoir, is central to my recent work in disability, Shane Clifton, *Husbands Should Not Break: A Memoir about the Pursuit of Happiness Following Spinal Cord Injury* (Eugene, Or.: Resource Publications, 2015); Shane Clifton, “Grieving My Broken Body: An

More broadly, a pentecostal epistemology incorporates the effort to discern the work of the Spirit in the world, especially in surprising places. The wind of the Spirit blows where it wishes (John 3:8), and spiritual grace is ever at work where it is least expected. Smith thus holds that openness to the creativity of the Spirit — a Pentecostal aesthetic — is a central trait of pentecostal worldview, and generates the capacity to imagine a new world and a better future.²⁶ In referencing imagination, Smith is drawing on the many publications of Amos Yong, whose principal project has been to develop and apply a pentecostal theology that he labels the “pneumatological imagination,” which is:

theology as particular and yet aspiring toward the universal; of theology as local and yet claiming to be global; of theology as occasional and yet handed down once for all; of theology as narrativistic and yet also metanarrativistic; of theology as conservative and yet novel; of theology as modern and yet postmodern; and so on. This is a theology pursuing after the Spirit, reflecting the attempt to “live in” and “walk according to” the Spirit. I call this a pneumatology of quest—a dynamic, dialectical, and discerning theology of the question, driven by a “pneumatological imagination.”²⁷

Yong posits a triadic framework for theology that “includes three moments: that of Spirit (praxis, experience, act of interpretation), that of Word (thought, object, given of interpretation), and that of Community (context,

Autoethnographic Account of Spinal Cord Injury as an Experience of Grief,” *Disability and Rehabilitation* 36, no. 21 (2014): 1823–29; My earlier ecclesiology was also grounded in the story of the Pentecostal church in Australia, Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition*, 2009.

26. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 28.

27. Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2005), 10.

tradition, public of interpretation).”²⁸ Explicitly rejecting any singular hermeneutic principle, such as *sola Scriptura*, Yong envisages theology that is biblically grounded, but that reads the Scriptures through a hermeneutical grid informed by the experience of the Spirit in Luke-Acts. In that narrative, Pentecost is not a one-off event, but the template for an open and creative discernment of the Spirit in imaginative interpretations of the Bible and the community; interpretations which look to transform the world. Wolfgang Vondey labels what emerges as “a theology of imaginative play,” which is biblical, poetic, storied, critical, and constructive, and offers an “ethical alternative to the orthodox establishment.”²⁹

Even though creative, Yong’s pneumatological theology is not divorced from Christology and orthodox Christian belief; “pneumatology provides the orienting dynamic,... Christology provides its thematic focus.”³⁰ Pentecostal tradition has always been Jesus centred, since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. And notwithstanding pentecostal debates about the doctrine of the Trinity (re Oneness Pentecostalism), the pneumatological imagination of Yong is also deliberately Trinitarian and orthodox because it intends to be ecumenical. Even so, it is critical of theological traditions that subordinate and minimalise the Spirit, and it understands Pneumatology as having universal reach, and so looks for the work of the Spirit beyond the church.

In this light, Yong’s understanding of “community” is deliberately wide-ranging, and not restricted to the pentecostal movement, the Christian tradition, or the ecumenical church. Yong argues that “only a pneumatological imagination is able to sustain the dialogical task of theology in a pluralist world,... only the pneumatological inspired and empowered imagination is

28. Amos Yong, “The Hermeneutical Trialectic: Notes Toward A Consensual Hermeneutic And Theological Method,” *The Heythrop Journal* 45, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): 23, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2265.2004.00240.x.

29. Wolfgang Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism: The Crisis of Global Christianity and the Renewal of the Theological Agenda*, Pentecostal Manifestos (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), 41.

30. Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out*, 27.

capable of both listening to the many voices but also critically discerning their contributions.”³¹ Yong has sought to apply the pneumatological imagination to the doing of theology in dialogue with communities rarely addressed (and sometimes explicitly rejected) by other pentecostals. One example is his long-term project in developing a pneumatological theology of religions, which seeks to discern the presence, activity, and absence of the Holy Spirit in other religious traditions.³² Yong’s openness to the work and voice of the Spirit in other religions, as well as in other disciplines (such as disability studies and contemporary science), indicates that he is working from an understanding of pentecostal identity that imagines what the movement might be if it allowed its orientation to the creativity of the Spirit to have its way, over and against its fundamentalist impulse.³³

Because the Spirit blows where it wishes, the pneumatological imagination breaks down religious, cultural, gendered, and other barriers, empowers people on the margins, and enables the capacity to listen to and speak in the tongues and testimonies of outsiders.³⁴ It risks new conversations, new (and ancient) ways of thinking, new relationships, and new practices for the sake of mission, because the Spirit is the first fruit/deposit of the future.

While the pneumatological imagination is a pentecostal method, it is not just for pentecostals, but intends to offer a way forward for Christian theology

31. Amos Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit: Christian Reason and Theological Method in the Third Millennium* (Cascade Books, 2014), 284.

32. Amos Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*, 1 edition (Sheffield: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2000); Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2003); Amos Yong and Clifton Clarke, eds., *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism, and the Great Commission* (Lexington, Ky: Emeth Press, 2011).

33. Amos Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007); Amos Yong, *The Spirit of Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2011).

34. Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit*, 16.

as a whole.³⁵ In this way, it returns to the earliest impulse of pentecostal revivalism. While it is unlikely that many of the first-generation pentecostals would recognise the content of Yong's theology, he is, even so, carrying forward their spirit. Yong develops a pentecostal theology that transcends pentecostalism for the sake of the wider church. For him, pentecostal identity is not the focus of attention. Even the ecumenical church is too small of an object for a theology revived by the pneumatological imagination. Rather, renewed theology looks to the transcendent God, and discerns the imminent presence of the Spirit in surprising locations, stories, and communities.

There is, in fact, nothing uniquely pentecostal in the pneumatological imagination, which is as it should be. Its threefold structure reflects common assumptions about theological sources, and its emphasis on affective experience and narrative is central to the biblical text (especially the dramatic story of the gospel). And while theologians have too often concerned themselves with proposition rather than story, there has been increasing recognition of the importance of narrative for theological meaning.³⁶

Neither can the pneumatological imagination replace other theological methods, given that the processes and limitations of human knowing precede particular cultures and traditions. Instead, it might function as an overlay, an orientation to the creative Spirit that adds character and life to disciplinary rigour. If we take Lonergan's functional specialities as an example, the pneumatological imagination embraces sources of *research* beyond traditional authorities, bringing diverse and marginal voices to the foreground.³⁷ In

35. Amos Yong and Jonathan A. Anderson, *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* (Baylor University Press, 2014).

36. Hans W. Frei, *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays*, ed. William C. Placher and George Hunsinger, First Edition edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Kevin J. Vanhooser, *Faith Speaking Understanding: Performing the Drama of Doctrine* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014).

37. Lonergan scholars themselves have spoken of the importance of the Holy Spirit for Lonergan's method, and of the fact that this opens wide the sources of research, Robert M. Doran, "Functional Specialities for a World Theology," *Lonergan Workshop* 24 (2013): 99–111.

addition to using disciplinary methods in *interpreting* those sources (such as historical and socio-critical exegesis), it allows room for imaginative play, and for attending to the inspiration, not only of authors, but of readers and hearers. And since the pneumatological imagination also entails discerning the Spirit's absence (or the daemonic), there is scope for attending to the experience and ideological criticism of feminist and other postcolonial interpreters of authoritative texts – too often ignored by conservative evangelical scholarship. The judgements made about the *history* of theological ideas, about what is moving forward or backward in redemption or decline, can be awakened to enchantment, to the changes wrought by the presence of the Spirit, to materiality and the like. There is a tendency in theological analysis to take a left-wing bias (for good reason, given the gospel's concern for social justice), but the pneumatological imagination has an open mind about personal and social empowerment, prosperity, and flourishing in the here and now.³⁸ The conflicts that emerge in *dialectic* analysis, and the stand one takes for and against alternatives, is likewise inevitably influenced by pre-existing worldview (whether pentecostal or another), but is also open to revision, as the process of learning is self-correcting.³⁹ Lonergan describes this process of learning in terms of conversion; intellectual, moral, and religious. Intellectual conversion can be a product of authentic subjectivity — of the diligent application to the processes of learning and the pursuit of truth — but it can also begin as a gift of the Spirit, who orients us to the love of beauty, the desire for goodness, and the pursuit of truth.⁴⁰

And what of imagination? Lonergan treats imagination as one of the

38. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 11; Shane Clifton, "Pentecostal Approaches to Economics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics*, ed. Paul Oslington (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

39. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 141. There are eight functional specialities, but I hope I have done enough to make the point.

40. In this paragraph I have followed Lonergan's first four functional specialities. There are eight in total, but I have done enough to make the point. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*.

processes of consciousness that contribute to insight, by helping to make sense of the meaning of data and of the flow of meaning through history. He also holds that conversion affects a person's imagination (among other things), by releasing symbols that penetrate to the depths of the psyche. But imagination is given broader meaning in Yong's work. In its broadest sense, our knowledge of the world is imaginatively constructed and, further, the imaginary can creatively transform the world. As Shakespeare famously observed:

And as imagination bodies forth
 The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
 Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
 A local habitation and a name.
 Such tricks hath strong imagination
 That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
 It comprehends some bringer of that joy.⁴¹

The pneumatological imagination, then, is an invitation to the theological creativity that is so rarely found in dogmatic religion, but that is essential to redemptive justice. In argument resonant of Acts 2, Martha Nussbaum describes the capacity of narrative imagination to,

enable us to comprehend the motives and choices of people different from ourselves, seeing them not as forbiddingly alien and other, but as sharing many problems and possibilities with us. Differences of religion, gender, race, class, and national origin make the task of understanding harder, since these differences shape not only the practical choices people face but also their "insides," their desires, thoughts, and ways of looking at the world. Here the arts play a vital role, cultivating powers of imagination that are essential to citizenship.⁴²

41. Shakespeare, *A Midsummer night's dream*, Act 5, Scene 1, referenced by Hart, "Creative Imagination", p.5

42. Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 85.

In the same way, the pneumatological imagination is concerned about speech in other tongues, not to control and sequester diverse voices, but so that we might see the presence of the Spirit in contexts very different to our own.

Conclusion

Reflecting on Pentecostal identity serves as a reminder that theologians too often forget that theology is meant to be practical as well as profound, open as well as true, this worldly as well as transcendent, radical as well as biblical, more generous than critical, more storied than propositional, more spiritual than religious, more open-ended than carefully defined, more dialogical than dogmatic, and awake to the fluidity and diversity of the Spirit's work in the world. And even though aware that theology can say very little about the transcendent God, and that pentecostal theology continues to be done on the margins, a pneumatological imagination contains the promise of Pentecost; that seemingly insignificant things can be used by the Spirit to transform the world.

Beyond the formalities of method, the affirmation of a pneumatological imagination is surely intended to inspire theologians — practical theologians more than abstract metaphysicians — to have Spirit-inspired dreams and visions. That the imagination is most active in the darkness of the night, or when one's eyes are closed in meditation or prayer, speaks to the presence of the life-giving God in hardship and terror (a reality too often forgotten by modern Pentecostals), but also inspiring the joy of imagined new worlds.⁴³ It is an invitation to dream about a world, a theology, a church, a community that is presently unthinkable.

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions,

43. I owe this idea to correspondence with Lauren McGrow.

your old men will dream dreams.

Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy (Acts 2: 17-18).

References

- Anderson, Allan. *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- . “Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions.” In *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, edited by Allan Anderson, Michæl Bergunder, Andre F. Droogers, and Cornelis van der Laan, 13–29. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- Archer, Kenneth J. *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture And Community*. Unknown edition. Cleveland, Tenn.: CPT Press, 2009.
- Archer, Kenneth J., and L. William Oliverio Jr, eds. *Constructive Pneumatological Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Christianity*. 1st ed. 2016 edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- Clifton, Shane. “Australian Pentecostalism: Origins, Developments, and Trends.” In *Global Renewal Christianity: Asia and Oceania Spirit-Empowered Movements: Past, Present, and Future*, edited by Amos Yong and Vinson Synan. Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House, 2016.
- . “Grieving My Broken Body: An Autoethnographic Account of Spinal Cord Injury as an Experience of Grief.” *Disability and Rehabilitation* 36, no. 21 (2014): 1823–29.
- . *Husbands Should Not Break: A Memoir about the Pursuit of Happiness Following Spinal Cord Injury*. Eugene, Or.: Resource Publications, 2015.
- . *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*. Edited by A. Davies and W. Kay. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009.

- . *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009.
- Cox, Harvey. "Some Personal Reflection on Pentecostalism." *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (1993): 29–34.
- Davidsson, Tommy H. *Lewi Pethrus' Ecclesiological Thought, 1911-1974: A Transdenominational Pentecostal Ecclesiology*. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2015.
- Dempster, Murray W. "The Search for Pentecostal Identity." *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (January 1, 1993): 1–8. doi:10.1163/157007493X00013.
- Doran, Robert M. "Functional Specialities for a World Theology." *Lonergan Workshop* 24 (2013): 99–111.
- Dunn, James D. G. *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today*. London: SCM, 1970.
- Faupel, David W. "Whither Pentecostalism? 22nd Presidential Address Society for Pentecostal Studies November 7, 1992." *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (1993): 9–27.
- Fee, Gordon D. *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*. Reprint edition. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Frei, Hans W. *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays*. Edited by William C. Placher and George Hunsinger. First Edition edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Grey, Jacqueline. *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament*. Eugene, Or.: Pickwick, 2011.
- Hart, Trevor A. "Creative Imagination and Moral Identity." *Studies in Christian Ethics* 16, no. 1 (April 1, 2003): 1–13. doi:10.1177/095394680301600101.
- Lonergan, Bernard J.F. *Method in Theology*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972.
- Martin, David. *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*. Oxford: Blackwell,

- 2002.
- Menzies, William W., and Stanley M. Horton. *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective*. USA: Logion Press, 2012.
- Menzies, William W., and Robert P. Menzies. *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience*. Zondervan, 2011.
- Nussbaum, Martha. *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Robeck, Cecil M Jr. "Taking Stock of Pentecostalism: The Personal Reflections of a Retiring Editor." *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (1993): 35–60.
- Shane Clifton. "Pentecostal Approaches to Economics." In *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Economics*, edited by Paul Oslington. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Smith, James K. A. *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2010.
- Stronstad, R. *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1984.
- Stronstad, Roger. *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.
- Thomas, John Christopher. "'Where the Spirit Leads' – the Development of Pentecostal Hermeneutics." *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 30, no. 3 (December 1, 2009): 289–302. doi:10.1080/13617670903371589.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *Faith Speaking Understanding: Performing the Drama of Doctrine*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014.
- Vondey, Wolfgang. *Beyond Pentecostalism: The Crisis of Global Christianity and the Renewal of the Theological Agenda*. Pentecostal Manifestos. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010.
- Wacker, Grant. *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture*. London: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Weber, Max. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. California: University of California Press, 1978.

- Williams, J. Rodman. *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective*. Three Volumes in One edition. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1996.
- Yong, Amos. *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2003.
- . *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*. 1 edition. Sheffield: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2000.
- . *The Dialogical Spirit: Christian Reason and Theological Method in the Third Millennium*. Cascade Books, 2014.
- . “The Hermeneutical Trialectic: Notes Toward A Consensual Hermeneutic And Theological Method.” *The Heythrop Journal* 45, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): 22–39. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2265.2004.00240.x.
- . *The Spirit of Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2011.
- . *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 2005.
- . *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity*. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007.
- Yong, Amos, and Jonathan A. Anderson. *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity*. Baylor University Press, 2014.
- Yong, Amos, and Clifton Clarke, eds. *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism, and the Great Commission*. Lexington, Ky: Emeth Press, 2011.