

## **The Theological Hermeneutic of Amos Yong, In the Prime of His Theological Career**

**L. William Oliverio, Jr.**

*Northwest University, Kirkland, Washington, USA*

### **Introduction**

There is no more influential Pentecostal theologian in the academic world today than Amos Yong. The breadth of his influence is now in full bloom, and the depth of his contributions have left a wake in which many have only begun to swim. This article identifies and explains central aspects of his theological approach to interpreting human life and all of reality, that is, his theological hermeneutic, at a moment where Yong continues to produce his theological work in the prime of his career. While doing so, the essay adds a comparative twist by relating Yong's project to two of the most influential thinkers in the Catholic theological tradition, the twentieth century German Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner, and the great doctor, the thirteenth century Dominican Thomas Aquinas. The breadth of Yong's contribution to global Pentecostal theology now deserves to be treated analogously to those who have made orienting contributions to other Christian traditions. While it is entirely premature to make long-term historic judgments on Yong's influence, as that is in the midst of becoming and the future unknowable, this comparison might be considered more along the lines of a midterm assessment of that influence, while he remains in the prime of his theological career.

### **A Brief Comparison with Rahner: Karl and Amos**

Yong's intellectual contribution on behalf of the relatively young Pentecostal tradition is in some ways analogous to that of Karl Rahner's on behalf of the Catholic. Remaining orthodox to the Christian tradition, Yong has explored the boundaries and interiorities of his Pentecostal tradition to release the depths of what has been embedded in Pentecostal spirituality, and he has made forays into the liminal space where theological reflection has moved beyond its previous boundaries on account of the great questions of the day. Rather than staying safely within the prescribed boundaries of Classical Pentecostal questions, Yong has taken the path of theological courage in engaging the serious questions of the day, ones which Pentecostal Christians wrestle with, often on their own or in other contexts, but are not often addressed within the confines of their communities. Like Rahner, Yong's exploration of the borders and depths of his tradition of

Christianity, beyond the reigning doctrinal articulations, has meant both appreciation<sup>1</sup> and critique.<sup>2</sup> However, beyond the volume on his theology edited by Vondey and Mittelstadt, Yong's work has been insufficiently engaged, with too few in the Pentecostal academy or in church leadership having the theological and philosophical acumen or the time and will to engage his huge corpus.<sup>3</sup>

Like Rahner, Yong has pushed the boundaries as he has teased out the spiritual essence of the tradition. That this has been properly faithful to that spiritual essence has been, at times, contested for each, as several of the above-noted critiques show. His interreligious engagement, ecumenical theology, and multidisciplinary work have been forays into a Pentecostal theology that has not been merely content to serve as an apologetic or doctrinal explication for Classical Pentecostalism, neither for particular cultural instantiations of Pentecostal and Christian life, but his purpose has been to explore the multiplicity of these and their potentials for spiritual life in the last modern, globalized world.<sup>4</sup> In a certain sense, Yong has been introducing and explaining we global Pentecostals to one another, finding commonalities, and philosophically and

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<sup>1</sup> For an initial sampling of works which primarily appreciate Yong's theology, see Wolfgang Vondey, "Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology: Implications of the Theology of Amos Yong," *Pneuma: Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 28, no. 2 (2006): 289-312.; the thirteen chapters in Vondey and Martin Mittelstadt, eds., *The Theology of Amos Yong and the New Face of Pentecostal Scholarship: Passion for the Spirit*, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies 14 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2013); and the panel discussion edited by Christopher Stephenson in the April 2016 issue of *Evangelical Review of Theology* on Yong's *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), with responses from Lisa Stephenson, Chris E.W. Green, Mark H. Mann, Thomas Jay Oord, and a response from Yong.

<sup>2</sup> For an initial sampling of works which primarily critique Yong's theology, see Roger E. Olson "A Wind that Swirls Everywhere," *Christianity Today* 50, no. 3 (March 2006): 52-54; Roger Stronstad, "A Review Essay on Amos Yong, *Who is the Holy Spirit?: A Walk with the Apostles*," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 22, no. 2 (2013): 295-300; and Robert P. Menzies, "The Nature of Pentecostal Theology: A Response to Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen and Amos Yong," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 26, no. 2 (2017): 196-213.

<sup>3</sup> Currently, that includes over two dozen monographs, over two dozen edited or co-edited volumes, co-editing five book series, over two hundred scholarly articles and book chapters, over five hundred book reviews and book notes, and around four hundred scholarly presentations. These can be seen in his CV on the Fuller Seminary website (accessed 13 September 2020): <https://www.fuller.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Amos-Yong-vita-publications0820.pdf>. While this version of his CV, updated to August 2020, shows 64 responses directly on his work, the response to Yong's work from the academy has been understated thus far. There are a number of reasons for this, including: 1) Yong's theological loci diverging from standard Classical Pentecostal ones, thus locating him, again like Rahner here, as both highly influential and yet sometimes treated like an outsider within; 2) his philosophical and theological robustness outstrip common knowledge in a Pentecostal academy still predominantly filled with biblical scholars, historians, social scientists, and pastoral theologians; 3) the continued but lessening effects of Pentecostal marginalization in the wider theological and religious studies academy; 4) that the sheer quantity of his work combined with the quality of his intellect seem to have intimidated some at further engagement with his work; and 5) closely related to this previous reason, that the breadth and multi-disciplinarity of his work has created a sense that to engage Yong in one area is to miss other areas that are related and necessary to understanding the whole of his work.

<sup>4</sup> I present this claim in a fuller manner in an earlier assessment of Yong in "The One and the Many: Amos Yong and the Pluralism and Dissolution of Late Modernity," in Vondey and Mittelstadt, *The Theology of Amos Yong*, 45-61.

theologically resourcing Pentecostals through providing numerous interdisciplinary and integrative theological works.

As also for Rahner, Yong's hard-won results are often best remembered through notable concepts which symbolize a complex body of work. This would suggest that as Rahner gave Catholic Christianity the "supernatural existential,"<sup>5</sup> Yong's "many tongues" principle is similarly a conceptual coinage and gift to Pentecostal Christianity. In the conclusion of this essay, I will work this principle from Yong back around to the noetic agenda of another great Catholic, Thomas Aquinas, and there point to how Yong's principle does some of the work in the late modern context which Thomas' *Summa* did in the high medieval for Christian approaches to the integration of divine revelation with general human knowledge, though, of course, with some significant theological and philosophical differences, not least in Yong's postfoundationalist epistemology in relation to Thomas' foundationalism.<sup>6</sup>

Analogies are limited, so it is important to clarify that this initial comparison between Rahner and Yong, which I offer here, is centered around the broad orientations which they provide. That is, Rahner and Yong each provide a key axis for the faith which seeks to be understood within their respective Christian traditions. In Rahner's *magnum opus*, his *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* – which he famously considered merely "an introduction" to the idea of Christianity – Rahner distinguished yet connected the realization of Christian faith in everyday life with its abstract ideation in theology, and he did so through considering the existential conditions of Christian faith, relating historical and everyday life to transcendental ideas as their conditions.<sup>7</sup>

This is the key point of comparison, that Rahner and Yong each provide a novel development in a philosophical-theological synthesis which seeks to account for the very spiritual essence and lived experience of their respective Christian traditions. That is, they are each providing a philosophical-theological account of what is going on within, again respectively, what are now Christianity's two largest traditions. These are major contributions. As this article focuses on

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<sup>5</sup> See David Coffey, "The Whole Rahner on the Supernatural Existential," *Theological Studies* 65, no. 1 (March 2004): 95-118. A comparison between Rahner's "supernatural existential" and Yong's "foundational pneumatology," especially in the area of divine grace, would be a helpful study.

<sup>6</sup> While the majority understanding of Thomas has been that he and the Thomism which follows him are epistemically foundationalist, there is a minority report, or at least a caveat for some that his reliance on divine revelation and figurative language in Scripture has led to questions that, at least in some considerations, such an interpretation of his approach is anachronistic or, more potently, that this claim fails to sufficiently account for underlying mystery or grace in that which serves as foundational in his project, as in A.N. Williams, "Is Aquinas a Foundationalist?," *New Blackfriars* 91:1031 (2010): 20-45.

<sup>7</sup> Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. William V. Dych (New York: Seabury, 1978; orig. German, *Grundkurs des Glaubens: Einnführung in den Begriff des Christentums*).

Yong, if the reader will forgive the length of this quote (and its lack of gender inclusive language), it will stand in for a more sufficient account of the Jesuit's project:

For a Christian, his Christian existence is ultimately the totality of his existence. This totality opens out into the dark abysses of the wilderness which we call God. When one undertakes something like this, he stands before the great thinkers, the saints, and finally Jesus Christ. The abyss of existence opens up in front of him. He knows that he has not thought enough, has not loved enough, and has not suffered enough. There have always been attempts like this [*Foundations of Christian Faith*] to express the structure of Christianity, of Christian faith and of Christian life, as a single whole, even if only in theoretical reflection...But there must always be new attempts at such reflection upon the single whole of Christianity. They are always conditioned, since it is obvious that reflection in general, and all the more so scientific theological reflection, does not capture and cannot capture the whole of this reality which we realize in faith, hope, love, and prayer. It is precisely this permanent and insurmountable difference between the original Christian actualization of existence and reflection upon it...The insight into this difference is a key insight which represents a necessary presupposition for an introduction to the idea of Christianity. Ultimately what we want to do is merely reflect upon the simple question: "What is a Christian, and why can one live this Christian existence today with intellectual honesty?" The question begins with the fact of Christian existence, although this existence looks very different today in individual Christians. This difference is conditioned by personal levels of maturity, by very different kinds of social situations and hence also of religious situations, by psychological differences, and so on. But we also want to reflect here upon this fact of our Christian existence, and we want to justify it before the demands of conscience and of truth by giving an "account of our hope" (1 Pet. 3:15).<sup>8</sup>

Rahner's articulation of his theological project is demonstrative of the tension that can be seen in the type of theologian that he and Yong both are, where their work, on the one hand, is expansive in both quantity and in terms of the borders of the tradition, yet, on the other, it is still also "faith seeking understanding" in the Augustinian-Anselmian tradition of Christian theology, working out the faith that is being practiced and sought. In this regard, while Rahner's methodology is that of a modern Catholic existential theology, a transcendental Thomism, Yong's is that of a late modern global Pentecostal interdisciplinary hermeneutical theology in which the "many tongues" of Pentecost resound together. Yet both are seeking in faith to understand better, and thus lay out the groundwork for better becoming, in the multiplicities of Christian existence, yet in mutuality and with an ecumenical spirit to account for our hope in Christ and the Spirit. Practically speaking, then, Rahner did what Catholics have referred to as foundational theology, while Yong provides a philosophical theology for Pentecostalism, one which seeks to unpack the idea of Pentecostal Christianity more so than to describe what is in Pentecostalism.

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<sup>8</sup> Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 2.

In a certain sense, Yong unveils the potential of Pentecostalism for itself and global Christian theology. This can perhaps be understood better through considering the topic of this essay, his theological hermeneutics.

Methodological and hermeneutical questions are important because methodological-hermeneutical approaches represent the powerful further belief-forming mechanisms within personal, communal, and cultural habits which are embedded within a hermeneutical paradigm, as in a theological hermeneutic.<sup>9</sup> Examining hermeneutics brings the humanity and locality of theologians and Christian communities to bare upon Christian understanding. This is because it is best to be self-aware of one's or one's community's location rather than relying on populist and naïve claims which assume only a negligible (or even no) influence of one's humanity, community, location, traditions upon one's understanding of Christian faith, which sometimes results in being blithely unaware of the linguistic, epistemic/hermeneutical, cultural, and ontological dynamics of the human knowing process, and simply claiming "the truth" for one's own cultural-communal understanding and appropriation of faith, experience, and Scripture.<sup>10</sup> Rather, theological truths might better be understood as a way of knowing in dialectical tension between knowers and the known, in which locations and hermeneutics contribute greatly to theological agendas and claims.<sup>11</sup>

Rahner and Yong's methodological approaches each self-consciously embed theological, philosophical, and other content into their methodologies. In the former case, Rahner developed a transcendental Thomism under the influence of Heideggerian existentialism, and these were integrated with his social-linguistic location in mid- to late-twentieth century Europe, pre- and post-Vatican II, with certain Catholic, and, of course, given his uniqueness, his certain Rahnerian theological emphases. This powerful combination of philosophical theology, existential philosophy, social-linguistic location, and theological affirmations formed a hermeneutical nexus which formed the axis through which Rahner provided his theological influence on twentieth and now twenty-first century Catholic thought. Yong's theological project provides a deep intellectual reexamination of the realities involved in Christian life and ideas, both broadening and deepening

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<sup>9</sup> I have further articulated this point in *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition*, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies* 12 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), 2-5, 319-53.

<sup>10</sup> James K.A. Smith's *The Fall of Interpretation: Philosophical Foundations for a Creational Hermeneutic*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Grand Rapids, MI, 2000) narrates this well. For more on specifically Pentecostal approaches and for the importance of traditioned approaches, see Simo Frestadius, *Pentecostal Rationality: Epistemology and Theological Hermeneutics in the Foursquare Tradition*, *Systematic Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2020).

<sup>11</sup> I articulate how such hermeneutical awareness might work for Pentecostal hermeneutics in a hermeneutical realist mode in "Contours of a Constructive Pentecostal Philosophical-Theological Hermeneutics," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 29, no. 1 (2020): 35-55.

the account of his tradition's contribution to the world, and prescribing contours for a guiding theological program. Each has seen at least some success in influencing the wider traditions as a whole, though much greater success in influencing the theological discourse.

### **Yong's Hermeneutical Trajectories**

This article focuses on key aspects of Yong's hermeneutics as providing the contours for his project. My assumption here is that hermeneutics and methodology begin with the embodied conditions of the theological person and persons in community, so that theology begins with these historically-situated realities described above, even though theology becomes the naming of the existential-transcendental conditions of reality, an ontic-naming so that such comes to form future historically-situated realities, especially, in this case, in the form of religious experiences, in a linguistic-naming of experiential-theological realities. For Yong, historically-situated revelation, that is, Scripture, is the primary (re)source for theological understanding, as authorizing and correcting and furthering Christian understanding, though he continually also embraces, integrates, and acknowledges other resources for Christian theological understanding, as such generalized knowledge is also always already assumed in biblical interpretation and in doing theology.

In his *Learning Theology*, Yong explicitly embraces the Wesleyan quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience to explicate the dynamics of theological understanding.<sup>12</sup> On the level of authority, Yong respects Scripture as having the primacy for theological knowledge. On another level, though he tends to acknowledge his own tendencies as Wesleyan, Yong's Thomistic-like move concerning general knowledge as having its own rights within disciplines not theology. Being informed by all kinds of other disciplines in his reading of Scripture influences Yong's readings of Scripture in interpretations that often run outside of certain Classical Pentecostal norms, much on account of their tendencies to invoke the common sense realism of the Anglo-American world, often in folk forms. This is part of the rub between Yong and some of his Pentecostal and Evangelical critics.<sup>13</sup> The assumptions about general knowledge are powerful in interpreting what is revealed in the biblical texts, and such a realization affirms the hermeneutical nature of all human knowing, of human understanding what is through our

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<sup>12</sup> The Wesleyan quadrilateral structures the first four chapters of the eight chapters in Yong, *Learning Theology: Tracking the Spirit of Christian Faith* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2018).

<sup>13</sup> Common sense realism's influence on Pentecostal hermeneutics plays a starring role in my account of Pentecostal interpretive practices and rationality in *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition* as well as Kenneth J. Archer's *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2009).

linguistic-conceptual assumptions and their development, and of our experiential feeling about and embodied knowing.

Yong's resultant theological hermeneutic might be quickly oriented to through a reading of the opening of his *Who Is the Holy Spirit?: A Walk with the Apostles*, which, at the very least, triples as a devotional guide to Acts, a Pentecostal social ethics and political theology, and an enactment of what Yong means when he refers to a "pneumatological imagination."<sup>14</sup> In this text, he considers Luke-Acts theologically as not only narrating a model for, as he initially understood his religious identity, a Pentecostal pilgrim who saw the work of the Holy Spirit as purifying him from the world and involved in the work of the Spirit "out there" in the world. In this understanding, the Spirit's role can be seen especially in convicting unbelievers of sin and turning them to Christ, and otherwise the work of the Spirit is largely restricted to the life of the church. This was the Pentecostalism in which Yong was raised, as the son of a Malaysian (Chinese)-American pastor.<sup>15</sup>

Not denying these aspects, though loosening the boundaries they may place on certain aspects of the Spirit's work, in *Who Is the Holy Spirit?* Yong rereads Acts as the Spirit at work transforming all aspects of life—including the social, political, and religious. As he puts it, "In other words, I now think that the world of the Holy Spirit is much wider than I'd guessed, and that the work of the Spirit is to redeem and transform our world as a whole along with all of its interconnected parts, systems, and structures."<sup>16</sup> Yong's pneumatological hermeneutic thus involves a broadening understanding of where the Spirit is at work into domains sometimes reduced to a remaining creational common grace.

Yong's hermeneutic represents multiple interpretive trajectories which address concerns for theological hermeneutics. Because his works are so many, the whole is difficult to account for, and especially because he engages in the use of multiple disciplines within theological and biblical studies, and his training and development in philosophy moves his work into that disciplinary mode in which only a smaller but increasing contingent of Pentecostals are trained. Interpretations of Yong's hermeneutics, rationality, and methodology have provided orienting work which provide first layers of interpretation and evaluation of his work while Yong remains squarely in the prime of his theological career.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Yong, *Who Is the Holy Spirit?: A Walk with the Apostles* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Of Chinese ancestry, Yong grew up near Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia prior to his family's migration to California during his early adolescence.

<sup>16</sup> Yong, *Who Is the Holy Spirit?*, x.

<sup>17</sup> I have previously assessed Yong's hermeneutics as centering around three locations: 1) the nexus of his Trinitarian theology, his fallibilistic epistemology, Peircean metaphysics, and pneumatology; 2) the discernment of

## Pneumatological Imagination

Yong's hermeneutical circle (or spiral) might be understood as driven by the interaction between the text of Luke-Acts and the rest of Scripture with what he has called the "pneumatological imagination." Luke-Acts especially exemplifies the Spirit's work in the economy of salvation so that "The Spirit enables the reconciliation between God and humankind; the Spirit empowers the new relationship established through Jesus Christ; the Spirit is the relational medium that makes the incarnational and paschal mysteries."<sup>18</sup> Yet this Spirit is the one which Christian believers, though not just, encounter as God's presence in the world. The Spirit is most closely identified by love and brings salvation, goodness, creativity, and peace to the world. The Spirit mediates prevenient grace for the experience of God that leads to salvation, but also prevenient grace for the experience of God in general.<sup>19</sup>

The pneumatological imagination is important for Yong's theological hermeneutic for several reasons. It is funded by Luke-Acts, though not just, as, for example, in his *Spirit of Love* he develops it further from a (William) Seymourian theology of Spirit baptism into divine love, engagement with several other Pentecostal theologians (Steven Land, Samuel Solivan, and Frank Macchia), and draws on Johannine and Pauline pneumatologies as well. It is, thus, a biblical hermeneutic. Second, it accounts for the point of experience in which persons and persons in communities interpret their worlds as they interpret in various "spirits."<sup>20</sup> Yet, third, these "spirits" participate in what has elsewhere been called the "social imagination," through which human ideas and conceptualizations are mapped onto embodied experiences in the hermeneutical "fusion of horizons" in which socially conditioned interpretations through the

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Spirit(s); and 3) the trialectic movement of Spirit-Word-Community, *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition*, 227-246. For interpretation of the first and third, see my "An Interpretive Review Essay on Amos Yong's *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective*," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18:2 (2009): 301-311. Simo Frestadius emphasizes three overlapping points in considering Yong's "Pentecostal rationality": 1) his "pneumatological imagination"; 2) the sources of knowledge and acquiring knowledge; and 3) the justification or warrant for beliefs, in *Pentecostal Rationality*, 9-20. Christopher Stephenson has addressed his theological method in the opening of *An Amos Yong Reader: The Pentecostal Spirit* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2020) in the areas of 1) metaphysics and foundational pneumatology; 2) epistemology and pneumatological imagination; and 3) hermeneutics and communal interpretation, 2-7. Stephenson also addressed this trilogy in his "Reality, Knowledge, and Life in Community: Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Hermeneutics in the Work of Amos Yong," 63-82, in Vondey and Mittelstadt, eds., *The Theology of Amos Yong*.

<sup>18</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 30.

<sup>19</sup> Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012) develops this. On salvific prevenient grace, in particular Yong says, "The Day of Pentecost outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh is God's prevenient gift that makes possible the repentance of individuals hearts so that any who call upon the name of the Lord will experience for him- or herself the forgiveness of sins and receive the Holy Spirit," *Spirit of Love*, 96.

<sup>20</sup> This is especially developed in each of his three early monographs, *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal Contribution to Theology of Religions* *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement* 20 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); *Spirit-Word-Community*, and *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003).



human faculty of the shared imagination map onto human experiences.<sup>21</sup> Yong has referred to the historical-linguistic sourcing of these, in a dialectic of experience and understanding, in terms of “root metaphors” which provide sourcing for the pneumatological imagination. In a turn that is, in the end, an anti-nominalist move, this sourcing engages the real content of dynamic spiritual realities. For the Christian, this imagination is holistic in its affective, volitional, and spiritual dimensions, and it is the means of engaging the world, but it is only properly “nourished by the image and mind of Jesus through the Spirit.”<sup>22</sup> This is the pneumatological imagination that is put forth to, we might say, remembering Rahner the Jesuit, in the words of Ignatius of Loyola, “go, set the world on fire” with it, as perhaps the growth of global Pentecostalism, with its now 450-650 million adherents, may be thought of as having done—with its pneumatological imagination.<sup>23</sup>

### Hermeneutical Trialectic

Key interpretations of Yong’s theology have sought to explain his realism that is closely connected to his Peircean pragmatism, as the philosophical handmaiden to his theology. Yong’s early work developed this, and it remains implicit in the core of Yong’s theological interpreting of human existence in relationship to all that is and called to be. His very early essay, “The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of Truth: What Evangelicals Can Learn from C.S. Peirce,” set the stage for his theological project as a whole, followed up and further explicated in detail in his *Spirit-Word-Community*.<sup>24</sup> This is a relational-pragmatic realism, a hermeneutical-dynamic realism, one that considers rationality in light of the becoming of what is and what is interpreted from those who are becoming with those realities. This contrasts with a scholastic approach to knowledge, which has a tendency to freeze or provide still-life imagery of dynamic being, for both knowers and that which is known. In a broad way of understanding Yong’s engagement with Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914)—often considered the founder of American pragmatist philosophy, also a noted logician, and mathematician—so that Yong’s Peircean pragmatic-realism allowed him to move past foundationalism without succumbing to relativism.

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<sup>21</sup> For a brief philosophical explanation of the “social imaginary,” see Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), esp. 23-30.

<sup>22</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 133-141.

<sup>23</sup> The historian of global Christianity, Douglas Jacobsen, accounts for 450 million Pentecostals and Charismatics, with an additional 200 million Pentecostal-influenced Christians worldwide right now in *The World’s Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chichester, UK: Wiley/Blackwell, 2020).

<sup>24</sup> Yong, “The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of Truth: What Evangelicals Can Learn from C.S. Peirce,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 29, no. 3 (Spring 2000): 563-88. The material from this essay is embedded throughout *Spirit-Word-Community*, though particularly in 84-109. The significance of this essay can be seen in its reprinting in Yong’s *The Dialogical Spirit* and *The Hermeneutical Spirit* as the opening essay. *Spirit-Word-Community* won the 2004 *Pneuma* Book Award from The Society for Pentecostal Studies.

In this early essay, Yong found contemporary evangelical foundationalism wanting for assuming that objective propositional truth can be infallibly known, in line with the correspondence theory of truth.<sup>25</sup> Deconstructive, postmodern, pragmatist, linguistic, hermeneutical, process, and other critiques have been negatively decisive. The naïve fusing of the epistemic and the ontic in a non-fallibilistic foundationalism, assumed often enough in popular evangelical theologies, has led to widespread scholarly repudiation of this approach. As Yong succinctly simplifies the objection to this approach to knowledge, in a repudiation of the unqualifiedness of its corresponding theological claims, “All knowledge is undoubtedly tradition dependent.”<sup>26</sup> The demise of strong foundationalism, however, has not led to the loss of truth, as the title of this essay indicates. In the North American Christian theological world of the late-twentieth century (this essay was published in 2000), two alternatives had emerged in the forms of weak foundationalism, especially among Christian philosophers like Alvin Plantinga and William Alston, and postliberalism, which represents a wide array of contemporary Christian theologians and theologies. This is to paint with broad brush strokes, of course, of a wide-ranging, detailed, and important set of debates for Christian theology today.

Yong’s Peirceanism does build its accounts of reality upon certain strong affirmations about what is, yet it gives a special place for criticism of these foundations or “perceptual facts” about reality, while retaining a critical realism, where human understanding of these imperfectly and critically speaks truths. Peirce was navigating between the unknowability of the *noumenal* from Immanuel Kant and the common sense realism of Thomas Reid and his ilk.<sup>27</sup> Peircean pragmatism seeks to get at the real in light of the fallible human knowing process. Yong nicely summarizes this in relation to common alternatives:

He rejected the method of tenacity (which grasps a desired end regardless of outside influences or resulting consequences), the method of authority (which subjects itself sometimes uncritically to the powers that be), and the *a priori* method (which claims to be reasonable when oftentimes it is no more than an expression of intellectual taste). Instead, Peirce advocated a method ‘by which our beliefs may be determined by nothing human,

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<sup>25</sup> Yong defends the use of correspondence, along with coherence and pragmatic approaches, to truth, but not on the foundationalist understanding, in *Spirit-Word-Community*, 164-75. Yong has a robust understanding of correspondence in his theory of truth, but such correspondence is not a simple one between propositions and external realities, as with classical foundationalism; rather, it is a dynamic and ontic correspondence, named in ontologies and metaphysics and empirical observations and theories, but not reducible to the naming itself, in a deep and thoroughgoing hermeneutical-linguistic turn that is embedded in Yong’s realism.

<sup>26</sup> Yong, “The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of Truth,” in *The Dialogical Spirit*, 23.

<sup>27</sup> Yong, “The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of Truth”, 26-27.

but by some external permanency – by something upon which our thinking has no effect (5.384). The objective of pragmatism was to get at the truly real.<sup>28</sup>

Such an externalism, an out there, informs this realism. For Yong, it leads to the formation of a “relational, realistic, and social metaphysics,”<sup>29</sup> and it uses Peirce’s semiotic triadic metaphysics to do just this, though Yong will reinterpret and operate with such an approach as a global Pentecostal theologian. Yong’s summarization of Peirce’s triad is worth quoting at length here as foundational for understanding Yong’s postfoundationalism:

Peirce created his own technical nomenclature of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness to account for the distinct but interrelated universes of lived human experience. Firstness is the quality of things which enable them to be experientially present. It is the evaluated particularity – the thisness or suchness – of a certain type of texture, taste, color, smell, perception, affection, emotion, image, concept, etc., which makes that experience what it is and nothing else. Abstracted from everything but its own meaning, Firstness is pure possibility. Our thinking it in terms of its various qualities make real possibility present to us. Secondness is the facticity or factuality of things as they resist and oppose each other. It is the decisive concreteness of things in their environmental rootedness signifying their over-and-againstness and their relatedness to each other. Human experience consists most vividly of Secondness: brute physical interactions, resistance and struggle – hence our experience of actuality. Thirdness is that which mediates between (F)irst [*sic*] and Secondness, what Peirce called the activity of law or real generality. It is the habitual disposition or tendency to act in specific ways thus orienting experience dynamically toward the future. As real universals, Thirdness provides the impulses that drive both the evolution of the world and the trajectories of lived-experience, thereby structuring our experience of the emergence of actualities from possibilities – hence our experience of legality and continuity within development. Finally, Thirdness is the interpretant which makes meaningful Secondness’ otherness over and against Firstness. Alternatively said, Thirdness is the interpretation of actual or concrete signs or symbols (Secondness) with regard to their objects (Firstness). Note that in this metaphysical scheme there are not different three [*sic*] kinds of things or experiences in the world. Rather everything presents itself to us experientially through the three elemental modes of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness.<sup>30</sup>

Peircean metaphysics plays off of or against historic Western philosophical metaphysics, especially the Platonic-Aristotelian, but also the modern, as in the Cartesian, Kant’s critical project, various idealisms, and common sense realism.

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<sup>28</sup> Yong, “The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of Truth”, 28. The in-text citation of Peirce is from vol. 5, *Pragmatism and Pragmaticism*, of Peirce’s *Collected Works*, edited by Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss, and Arthur W. Burks (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1931–1958).

<sup>29</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 101.

<sup>30</sup> Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 92-93.

Amos Yong is a Peircean, and he is to be understood as such. He has explicitly and expressly developed his theology in a Peircean philosophical approach and mode, and he is misunderstood, often enough, by those who do not understand him on his own terms, difficult, in some ways, as this may be, a point that is also applicable to other areas of his work. Yong's pneumatological foundationalism should be understood in relation to his Peirceanism. It is a foundation of spirit, of the fluidity of the becoming of being in relationship to God, of the interpretation of life that is always a movement of spirits.

Yong develops this metaphysics in ontic and epistemic directions, in a hermeneutical holism where his epistemology works in relationship to his metaphysics with an at least attempted coherence.<sup>31</sup> This is especially correlated with the doctrine of the Trinity, for Yong. Firstness in metaphysics is like the First Person of the Trinity, providing meaning, possibility, and sourcing to all things, as the Father represents the breadth of all that is among abstract realities. The Second Person of the Trinity correlates with Peircean Secondness, as the Incarnate Son has come and dwelt among us in particular concreteness, as historical reality, and as the Word continues in particular presences of the person and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. The dynamism of mediation, the movement of life in Thirdness is correlated with the Spirit and all that is as spirit, as the Third Person of the Trinity elicits actualities from possibilities in calling humanity and the world to God-given purposes. The Trinity is a dynamic relationship so that God is spirit.

This triadic metaphysics images the Triune God. The community interprets the concrete realities in dynamic spirit, as the collective image of God. *Spirit-Word-Community* puts forth Yong's hermeneutical paradigm. We begin as spirits, and we ought to with the Spirit; we interpret concrete signs, and we ought to turn to the Word; and we do so in self-discovery of who we are as a community, and we ought to receive in grace the knowledge of the Father who is the source of all that is dynamically becoming.

### **Biblical Theology-Theological (Pneumatological) Interpretation of Scripture**

Though primarily a philosophical and systematic theologian, Yong is also a biblical theologian and theological interpreter of Scripture. Whereas, for example, Rahner begged off of the functional task of exegetical work on account of the functional specialization of the modern disciplines in religious studies,<sup>32</sup> Yong has embraced the interpretation of Word throughout his works. Almost all of his book-length works could be said to include dimensions of biblical theology and

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<sup>31</sup> This statement is not a criticism but rather an acknowledgment of the vastness of his project, and the difficulty of keeping coherence in his large body of work as it has manifested from this paradigm.

<sup>32</sup> As in Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 3-14.

theological interpretation of Scripture, with some exegetical work, and sometimes he employs these fairly heavily. His methodology often includes narration of key biblical texts which inform the theological topics he is engaging. In some regards, he might be considered as more akin to Aquinas, who wrote a number of commentaries on Scripture beyond his scholastic theological summations and treatises, and who continually “on the other hand” (*sed contra*) turned to Scripture, than the kind of scholastic who systematizes based on numerous assumptions concerning Scripture, the type who effectively systematizes one’s own tradition. Rather, Yong’s hermeneutic has both a “from below” of exegetical reading and hearing of the text and a “from above” of theological interpretation of the text, which move dialectically.

If there is a point of demarcation for Yong’s turn to theological (pneumatological) interpretation of Scripture approach, it might be found in a 2017 review article in *The Journal of Theological Interpretation* in which he worked through three commentaries on the book of Revelation by Pentecostal commentators and provided a brief typology of these before offering his own proposal.<sup>33</sup> Locating one’s Pentecostalism in biblical interpretation can occur implicitly and authorially, where one is a Pentecostal yet the influence on the generalized argument concerning Scripture is far less specified to such an identity and its attendant understanding of Scripture and life.<sup>34</sup> There is, on the other hand, a particularist hermeneutic which explicitly reads the text from within the Pentecostal tradition and often with a particular motif or loci within that.<sup>35</sup> The third model he recounts is what he calls the hybridic, one in which the interpretation is both particularist and generalist (or implicit-authorial in its Pentecostalism), where some of the particularity of Pentecostal reading of the text finds a pneumatology there, it is also treated as one theological loci among others “and thereby is inhibited from being theologically generative.”<sup>36</sup> What Yong suggests as being particularly theologically generative for Pentecostal interpretation of Scripture is a thoroughgoing pneumatological trajectory, that is, “Third Article theology...from a pentecostal standpoint...grounded centrally in the Day of Pentecost narrative

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<sup>33</sup> Yong, “Unveiling Interpretation after Pentecost: Revelation, Pentecostal Reading, and Christian Hermeneutics of Scripture,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 11, no. 1 (2017): 139-155.

<sup>34</sup> Yong’s exemplar here is Jon K. Newton, *The Revelation Worldview: Thinking in a Postmodern World* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Yong’s exemplar here is Melissa L. Archer, *“I Was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day”: A Pentecostal Engagement with Worship in the Apocalypse* (Cleveland, TN: Center for Pentecostal Theology Press, 2015). Yong’s reference here is clearly and more broadly here to the “Cleveland School,” which comes out of Pentecostal Theological Seminary and the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) biblical theologians who have developed their own Pentecostal theological interpretation of Scripture movement, often focusing on reception history. Yong specifically references John Christopher Thomas and Robby Waddell, beyond Archer, here, “Unveiling Interpretation,” 146-147, esp. fn19.

<sup>36</sup> Yong, “Unveiling Interpretation,” 151. Yong’s exemplar he is the co-authored Two Horizons New Testament Commentary volume from John Christopher Thomas and Frank Macchia, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016). Yong does not significant appreciation for Thomas and Macchia as two leading Pentecostal scholars here, constraining his criticism of this as “a missed opportunity,” *ibid*.

of the Spirit's outpouring on all flesh."<sup>37</sup> Again, this is not a new motif in Yong but the maturation of a hermeneutic of "the Spirit poured out on all flesh," of the development of theological interpretation of Scripture that explicitly considers interpretation in light of the implications of a pneumatology that assumes a Pentecostal theology in which Acts 2:17-18 (and thus Joel 2:28-29) indicate a foundational pneumatology. Yong's third major work, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh* might be understood as his early foray into such a theology and pneumatological approach to Scripture, one that has come to maturation in his later works.<sup>38</sup> A key aspect of this maturation has been a more thoroughgoing outworking of this pneumatology as representing a post-Pentecost hermeneutic.<sup>39</sup>

*Yong's Mission After Pentecost* (2019) thus represents a later maturation of his biblical-theological hermeneutic, a "pneumato-missiological interpretation of Scripture"; that is, the entirety of this text is a theological hearing of the Old and New Testaments, utilizing a "pneumatological reading of Scripture" approach,<sup>40</sup> which has been developing in his works over the past twenty years.<sup>41</sup> This approach has been present since his first writings appeared at the turn of the twenty-first century, and his use of biblical theology a constant presence in his systematic-interdisciplinary theologies, that one is hard-pressed to make the claim that this is anything more than the culmination of an approach that has been building throughout his

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<sup>37</sup> Yong, "Unveiling Interpretation," 152.

<sup>38</sup> Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2005).

<sup>39</sup> "The most important aspect of any pentecostal approach to Scripture that aspires to be ecumenically relevant, I suggest, is less that it derives from the particularity of the Pentecostal ecclesiality (although this is certainly important) but that it builds on the pentecostal story itself, the work of the Spirit unleashed in and through the Day of Pentecost outpouring. The credentials of such a Pentecostal hermeneutic, then, are founded not in the idiosyncrasies of Pentecostal spirituality but in the scriptural narrative's attestations regarding the foundational and universal work of the Spirit poured out 'upon all flesh'...In this respect, the proposal for a pneumatological reading of scripture after Pentecost not only strives to understand how the NT authors read their sacred texts after the Spirit's gifting but also seeks to receive all of these early Christian writings as pentecostal treatises written *in* and carried *by* the Spirit. I suggest that such provides a more radical Pentecostal grounding, based not only on contemporary Pentecostal experience but on *the* Pentecostal character of Christian life and faith after Easter. At the same time, the normativity of this primordial Pentecost begs for elucidation and this can arise out of any community that is formed by the ongoing work of the pentecostal Spirit. Put in other terms, such a pneumatological hermeneutic welcomes the specificity of pentecostal situatedness but only as one among many expressions of the 'fellowship of the Holy Spirit' (2 Cor 13:13, NRSV) in this dispensation, each strand adding something important and significant to the overall 'choir' of the Spirit. As such, then, it is poised to promote a pneumatological and pentecostal reading of Scripture that has wider purchase, for the church catholic and also for the theological academy," "Unveiling Interpretation," 153. It might be noted that Yong's "choir of the Spirit" here may be another indicator of the "many tongues" principle noted below.

<sup>40</sup> Yong, *Mission After Pentecost: The Witness of the Spirit from Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), xv, 1.

<sup>41</sup> This approach may be identified as having clearly and self-reflectively emerged in Yong, "Unveiling Interpretation."

theological career, one that has culminated in a more robust move toward the theological (for Yong, especially pneumatological) interpretation of Scripture.

Yet Yong might also be considered as doing biblical theology, if we take it to mean “seeking to articulate the inner unity of the Bible.”<sup>42</sup> For example, Yong finds canonical unity in *Mission after Pentecost*, unity in Luke-Acts in *Who Is the Holy Spirit?*, and he identifies continuities in Johannine, Pauline, and Lukan pneumatologies of love in *Spirit of Love*. Thus, on a certain level, this functions as recognizing a unity “from below” that arises from Scriptural revelation in Yong’s hermeneutics. On the other hand, Yong’s approach here embarks on more of a “from above” in (re)interpreting texts in light of theological convictions which have emerged from other (and perhaps that very) scriptural text. Yong’s colleague – and predecessor as dean at Fuller Seminary, Joel B. Green, puts the dynamic this way:

Biblical theology locates meaning in the past; theology is “contained” within the biblical text; and the text’s potential ongoing significance is discerned through a process that moves from left to right (historical description → theological synthesis → constructive theology) or from bottom to top (foundation → superstructure). Theological interpretation locates meaning in the dynamic interaction of the past and present (and expectations of the future); theology (and thus ongoing significance) is the outcome of that interaction. Undertaken from different locations, conceptualizing the same data yet doing so differently, these interpretive approaches serve different aims and so order their questions differently.<sup>43</sup>

Yong does take and interpret the biblical texts “from below” in their inner unity, and he occasionally performs some (lighter) exegetical work, and he further regards and utilizes the results of historical-critical approaches fairly regularly. What is significant here is that he circles back around through the implications of pneumatology after Pentecost.

Yong himself explicitly considers that we “can and do read scripture also [beyond biblical studies] from a theological posture of faith that invites interaction with biblical content as communicating God’s word for human benefit.”<sup>44</sup> This has meant engagement from within his own Pentecostal tradition and its spirituality, but, as he has sought to go beyond the particularist and hybridic

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<sup>42</sup> This is how Craig Bartholomew puts it in his article on “Biblical Theology” in Kevin Vanoozer, gen. ed., *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 84-90.

<sup>43</sup> Joel B. Green, “What You See Depends on What You Are Looking for: Jesus’s Ascension as a Test Case for Thinking About Biblical Theology and Theological Interpretation of Scripture,” *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 70, no. 4 (2016): 457. For additional work on these distinctions there is Kevin Vanhoozer’s “Introduction: What Is Theological Interpretation of the Bible?” in Vanhoozer, ed., *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, 19-25.

<sup>44</sup> Yong, *Mission After Pentecost*, 12.

approaches, this has meant a more ecumenical orientation,<sup>45</sup> yet one that also brings a deeper pneumatological orientation:

The proposal is that Christians, at least – those who are followers of Jesus the Messiah, meaning those also filled with the same spirit that anointed Jesus – can read scripture only after Pentecost. The controlling Christian vision therefore is Jesus the Christ, the Messiah anointed by the divine spirit, including his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and then giving of his spirit (Acts 2:33), not just to the church institutionally conceived (and effectively controlled in many cases), but to all flesh understood as the people of God gathered from every tongue, tribe, and nation (cf. Rev. 5:9 and 7:9)...the Pentecost narrative is itself essentially a missiological account, concerned as it is with the gift or economy of the spirit as enabling witness from Jerusalem and Samaria to the ends of the earth.<sup>46</sup>

Yong, however, perhaps does better at performing pneumatological interpretation of Scripture than he does describing it, at least to date. This can be found in *Mission After Pentecost, Who Is the Holy Spirit?*, the heavy amounts of biblical interpretation in *Renewing Christian Theology* – a one-volume systematic theology based off of the Assembly of God World Fellowship’s Statement of Faith, and embedded in numerous works, which provide abundant examples of the hermeneutical strategy in its implementation.<sup>47</sup> These exemplars each also include two other centers of his theological hermeneutic – inclusion of sources of understanding beyond theology and continual acknowledgment of the legitimacy of different understandings from different locations in Yong’s “many tongues” principle.

### Interdisciplinary Theology

Yong’s theological hermeneutic is especially interdisciplinary. I would contend that it is far more interdisciplinary, which means it is actually integrative, rather than multidisciplinary, which indicates sourcing from multiple disciplines but falling short of integration. Yong is constantly, at worst, attempting to integrate sources from across the disciplines of knowledge, into theological understanding; at best, he is a successful pioneer in this realm, particularly for Pentecostals, who has explored far ahead of the field of his religious fellows. This interdisciplinarity is pervasive in his work. For instance, in *Spirit of Love*, after providing a historical summarization of theologies

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<sup>45</sup> While I find that Yong’s criticism, in “Unveiling Interpretation,” of Frank Macchia’s contribution to his joint commentary, *Revelation*, with John Christopher Thomas, in the hybridic-type as perhaps cogent, Macchia has, on the other hand, made a similar move to both deepen Pentecostal theology while simultaneously broadening ecumenically in a theology for the whole church as part of his *modus operandi*, especially in his *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006).

<sup>46</sup> Yong, *Mission After Pentecost*, 12-13. This post-Pentecost approach resembles the approach of Craig Keener in biblical studies in *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016).

<sup>47</sup> A biblical commentary is also forthcoming in Yong, *Revelation, Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* series (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, forthcoming in 2021).



of love from Augustine, Aquinas, and Tillich, he turns to empirical research on altruism – that is, before he also goes on to examine Pentecostal praxes and then theologies of love, drawing on Steven Land, Samuel Solivan, and Frank Macchia in the latter, prior to drawing on Lukan, Pauline, and Johannine pneumatologies of love, all before ending with nine theological conclusions on love. His theological projects seem to be attempts at developing pneumatologically-driven interdisciplinary *tours de force*. Illustrative is his opening to the chapter, and justification, of his inclusion of empirical research on altruism in *Spirit of Love*:

The preceding theological reflections invite us to understand love as woven into the basic structure of the cosmos that we inhabit. Beyond these ontological considerations, Tillich's theology of love also identifies its existential dimensions, especially love's role in healing and salvaging a fragmented world. Both of these aspects of love – the ontological and existential – invite other, not strictly theological questions and analyses. Further, the long legacy left by the medieval understanding of theology as science (*scientia*) suggests that contemporary scientific perspectives may be fruitfully brought to bear on illuminating the phenomenon of love. Might it be possible that the contemporary natural sciences could shed light on the ontological character of love while the social and human sciences could inform our existential experience of love?<sup>48</sup>

Yong's answer is, of course, in the affirmative to this final dual question. This interdisciplinarity has been fairly broad.

Yong's work in theology of disability, or perhaps better, his theology of ability, is another key location for integration and interdisciplinarity. Beyond other writings and a number of presentations on the subject, he published two major works in this area, *Theology and Down Syndrome*<sup>49</sup> and *The Bible, Disability, and the Church*.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps few things drill deeper down into the "unthought," those deep cultural assumptions than assumptions about human ability. Yong draws on scientific, social science, medical research, psychological, and moral philosophy, in the latter text, while drawing heavily on reflections from key biblical texts to reread them in light of an anti-exclusionary interpretation that rereads Scripture in this light, and comes to theological

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<sup>48</sup> Yong, *Spirit of Love*, 21. Yong goes on to explain that, "I advocate a theological approach to the natural world and a dialogical understanding of the relationship between theology and science in the conviction that all truth is God's truth and that Christian theological self-understanding can illuminate the natural world and contribute to the scientific enterprise in ways that do not undermine the integrity of science," *ibid.*, 22.

<sup>49</sup> Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2007).

<sup>50</sup> Yong, *The Bible, Disability, and the Church: A New Vision of the People of God* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011). On a biographical note here, one might wonder if Mark Yong, younger brother of Amos, and a person with Down Syndrome, beyond all the other things God has done through him, has been a gift to the Pentecostal theological world through his influence on his oldest brother's journey, leaving us to wonder if we would have the Amos we have without Mark, including if the Yong family even immigrates to California in Amos' early adolescence if not for their experience after Mark's birth in Malaysia, *ibid.*, 1-5.

conclusions in light of the integration which then emerges. This interdisciplinary center is highly integrative with his pneumatological interpretation of Scripture center, for example, as his Lukan (and highly pneumatological) reflections on disability in Luke's (the physician's) and other New Testament texts, reconsider ministry practices in light of multiple aspects of sensory experience, rather than just seeing and hearing.<sup>51</sup> Such interdisciplinarity provokes reconsiderations of assumed approaches to all kinds of subject matters.

Yong has also made forays into theology and science as well as political theology with interdisciplinary integration.<sup>52</sup> His major work in political theology, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology*,<sup>53</sup> performed interdisciplinary interpretation with a focus on political theory and underlying philosophical and moral philosophies. Yet here he employed both his "many tongues" principle, in terms of accounting for the many-ness of (and differences within) global Pentecostalism in relation to the political, and also a more distinctly Pentecostal theological grid on the subject matter, structuring much of the volume through the fivefold version of the Pentecostal gospel tradition: Jesus as savior, sanctifier, Spirit baptizer, divine healer, and soon coming King. In a certain sense, Yong was constructing and mapping Pentecostal theology (really, theologies) back onto the political, in a case for appropriate multiplicities of Pentecostal political theologies, calling for commonality in a post-Pentecost imagination which he spelled out in five domains, a liturgical, sanctified, pneumatological, charismatic, and eschatological imagination, of course correlated with the five-foldness of full-gospel politics.<sup>54</sup> Yong's *The Spirit of Creation* not only takes into account the domains of physics, philosophical and theological reflection on late modern science, and history of Pentecostalism on the doctrine of creation, but it also includes psychological and sociological reflection on the topic in a quickly moving work that exemplifies an interdisciplinary theological modality which centers around the questions of divine and human action.<sup>55</sup>

### The "Many Tongues" Principle

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<sup>51</sup> Yong, *The Bible, Disability, and the Church*, 49-81.

<sup>52</sup> Of the five sections of Christopher Stephenson's recent editing of Yong's works into a (relatively) short reader, three of the five are in these interdisciplinary areas, with Part Two as "Religion and Science," Part Three as "Theology and Disability," and Part Four as "Political Theology," Yong, *An Amos Yong Reader: The Pentecostal Spirit*, edited by Christopher A. Stephenson (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2020).

<sup>53</sup> Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology*, *Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010). This text originated in Yong's Edward Cadbury Lectures in Theology at the University of Birmingham (UK) in 2007.

<sup>54</sup> Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 361-362. The characterization of this as "post-Pentecost" or "after Pentecost" was not quite coined by Yong, as such, at this point, but it is clear from this text that he was moving, or had already implicitly moved, to such a stance.

<sup>55</sup> Yong, *The Spirit of Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination*, Pentecostal Manifestos Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

A key centerpiece for Yong is his “many tongues” principle. A landmark for this was Yong’s publication of “Many Tongues, Many Senses: Pentecost, the Body Politic, and the Redemption of Dis/Ability” in *Pneuma* in 2009.<sup>56</sup> As aforementioned, concerning the book-length theology of disability that followed this in 2011, Yong recognizes the multiplicity of knowing in human sensory experience, beyond sight and hearing as dominant. He finds the Lukan texts in the New Testament to recognize God’s work inclusive of the human somatic sensory capabilities, in a receptive capacity, so that those limited in one or more may still receive from the Lord in the others. This, however, turns outward. “Glossolalic utterances, the dance, the shout, the laying on of hands, prostrations, tarrying at the altar, being slain in the Spirit, and so on – each of these are affective-somatic signs of the Spirit’s presence and activity in Pentecostal contexts,” he notes, with focus on their restorative and reconciling functions.<sup>57</sup> Here, Yong is moving towards the insight that the seemingly “weak,” as well as the seemingly “strong,” have a tongue to speak. That is, this key insight that Yong had begun developing several years earlier was moving deeper into theological anthropology, and it moved, to borrow Charles Taylor’s metaphor, which he has used to describe the modern proliferation of beliefs and options to the even more exponential late modern, from a nova to a supernova.<sup>58</sup> In 2005, in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, Yong’s article, “Academic Glossolalia?” started developing this idea that engagement in various endeavors, such as the academic disciplines, that receives from the Holy Spirit and works to the benefit of others, is an implication of the Pentecost-event, in its diversity.<sup>59</sup> Between 2005 and 2009, Yong goes deeper, exponentially, into the multiplicity of human noetic experience that legitimately works in concert with the Spirit of God.

As I have argued elsewhere, Yong holds together unity and plurality, difference and change, continuity and change, in his metaphysics and hermeneutic.<sup>60</sup> The “many tongues” principle holds down the vast, pluralistic supernova of all graced encounter with the Spirit of God in the world. Yong has been working out the implications of “the Spirit poured out on all flesh” since very early in his theological career. The “many tongues” principle is a Pentecostal take on difference, plurality. Yong is an ontic realist yet a vast pluralist in terms of the vastness of humanity, the vastness of the *imago Dei*. A *missio Dei*, then, requires this recognition.

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<sup>56</sup> See also, Yong, “Many Tongues, Many Senses: Pentecost, the Body Politic, and the Redemption of Dis/Ability,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 31, no. 2 (2009): 167-88.

<sup>57</sup> Yong, “Many Tongues, Many Senses,” 182.

<sup>58</sup> This is a key metaphor throughout Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007).

<sup>59</sup> Yong, “Academic Glossolalia? Pentecostal Scholarship, Multi-Disciplinarity, and the Science-Religion Conversation,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 14, no. 1 (2005): 61-80. Another key earlier development in this “many tongues” metaphor is his explicit reflection on it in interreligious encounter in Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008), 62-64.

<sup>60</sup> Oliverio, “The One and the Many: Amos Yong and the Pluralism and Dissolution of Late Modernity,” 45-61 in Vondey and Mittelstadt, eds., *The Theology of Amos Yong*.

To reference two other Catholic theologians, Yong's "many tongues" principle does similar work to David Tracy's "analogical imagination" and Hans Urs von Balthasar's "symphony."<sup>61</sup> Since around 2010, Yong's "many tongues" principle is littered throughout his works, often implied and occasionally explicitly reflected upon. The result is a bit of an interdisciplinary mashup of resourcing theological reflection and argumentation, drawing on "many tongues" in almost all instances. As any reader of Yong knows, he rarely fails to be complex. If Yong's logic is analyzed, it would be assessed more along the lines of convergent affective-pneumatic and manifold general premises forming multi-layered complex argumentation, rather than the inductive analytical reasoning and deductive syllogisms of scholastic theologies. Thus, while he is constructing a noetic approach in his theological hermeneutic that holds the kind of potential for a broad integration of all forms of human knowledge together, like Thomas, to whom I will briefly compare him below, what is, as we moderns say, "under the hood" of this vehicle is wired and built otherwise.

### **A Brief Comparison with Aquinas: Thomas and Amos**

Thomas has been rarely engaged by Pentecostals, and when this is the case, it has often been for the sake of engaging his work on the biblical charisms or reviewing his contribution to received Western theological categories.<sup>62</sup> As just stated, the comparison between Yong and Thomas is limited, especially in that Yong is clearly not an Aristotelian nor a scholastic theologian as Thomas was, although Yong has clearly still worked within many of the received categories of Western theology and scholasticism as influenced by Thomas. Yong's Peirceanism moves away from the substance metaphysics of the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition while holding to the continuity of the abstraction and concreteness in Peircean Firstness and Secondness, which works to account for what is form-matter on the Platonic-Aristotelian register, while adding the dynamism of Thirdness, of spirit. Yong's engagement with more dynamic approaches to causation and divine action marks a large difference between the contemporary Pentecostal and the medieval Dominican. He is interested in considering divine action in terms of late modern science and the

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<sup>61</sup> Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), esp. 446-456; and von Balthasar, *Truth is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987; orig. *Die Wahrheit ist symphonisch: Aspekte des christlichen Pluralismus*, 1972), esp. 43-64. Of course, there are differences between Yong, Tracy, and von Balthasar here. The point is that they each are accounting for the unity-plurality dynamic with a significant degree of adequacy.

<sup>62</sup> For example, James G. King, Jr., "Thomas Aquinas and Prophecy," *Pneuma: Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 1, no. 2 (Fall 1979): 50-58; and Berhard Blankenhorn, "The Metaphysics of Charisms: Thomas Aquinas, Biblical Exegesis and Pentecostal Theology," *Angelicum* 91, no. 3 (2014): 373-424. Some typical examples of Pentecostal engagement would be Yong's review of Thomas' theology of love in the *Summa Theologiae* in *Spirit of Love*, 9-14; Frank Macchia's review of Thomas on habitual grace in *Justified in the Spirit: Creations, Redemption, and the Triune God*, Pentecostal Manifestos (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 18-22; and Steven Studebaker's review of Thomas' Trinitarian theology in *From Pentecost to the Triune God: A Pentecostal Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 111-118.

theological turn to the future where God's action is understood eschatologically and the laws of nature are considered regularities for this epoch of history, not in terms of a static metaphysical order.<sup>63</sup> There are, however, some key points of continuity between Yong and Thomas, and they are worth recounting, especially as Pentecostalism, at times, has some tendencies which more closely resemble Catholic tendencies than classical Protestant ones.

First, differing from certain forms of Protestantism, there is a positivity towards general knowledge in both Thomas and Yong. For the former, grace fulfills or completes nature. Still, the fall has damaged human nature.<sup>64</sup> Yong has similar tendencies, more in the Irenaean trajectory in theological anthropology in regard to the human noetic function, where human fallenness has not erased the ability to know truthfully, even as it is diminished through sin. Broad knowledge from multiple disciplines illuminates human understanding. For Yong, it is also especially funded through the Incarnation and the calling ahead of eschatology in its redemption.<sup>65</sup>

This relates to habit, of course, in "the exercise of human acts," in habituating virtue or sin. Thomas considers that the rational nature cannot be taken away completely, "for sin to cause man to cease to be rational is impossible, since he would then no longer be capable of sinning. It

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<sup>63</sup> Yong, "How Does God Do What God Does?: Pentecostal-Charismatic Perspectives on Divine Action in Dialogue with Modern Science," 50-71, in *Science and the Spirit: A Pentecostal Engagement with the Sciences*, James K.A. Smith and Amos Yong, editors (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010).

<sup>64</sup> The medieval scholastic clarifies that, "The good in human nature is threefold. First there are the principles constitutive of nature together with the properties derived from them, for example the powers of soul and the like. Secondly, since it is from this nature itself that man has an inclination to virtue, as previously indicated, this inclination is itself a good of nature. Thirdly, the gift of original justice can be termed a good of human nature in the sense that in the first man it was bestowed as a gift to all humankind. Of these goods, the first is neither destroyed nor lessened through sin. The third has been totally removed by the sin of the first parents. But the middle one, man's connatural inclination to virtue is lessened through sin," *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae.85.1, 81.

<sup>65</sup> Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 283. In fact, these features of theological anthropology are illuminated also by the biological, cognitive, psychological, anthropological, and sociological sciences, and we neglect them to our ignorance...From a theological perspective, we might agree with the Roman Catholic hierarchy...that human souls are uniquely implanted into human lives by God. From a scientific perspective, any kind of 'emergent anthropology' would suffice that see these intellectual, moral, and psychical capacities as arising unpredictably from out of a sufficiently complex nexus of constituent parts (like how the features of water, H<sub>2</sub>O, are novel and are unforeseeable merely as hydrogen and oxygen taken separately). Both the theological and scientific views are, to varying degrees, postures of faith, complementary in outcome but derived from different starting points. But whatever is refracted dimly about humanity in a fallen world grows in brilliance when illuminated in the light of Christ. Life in Adam reveals the frailty of the present human condition; life in Christ projects and even makes present what is possible, what is emerging, what is promised in the gospel. Thus Irenaeus' instincts are sound, indicative of the fact that we know about the image of God not necessarily from what we see present in ourselves, but from what is revealed eschatologically in Christ: 'Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven' (1 Cor. 15:49).

is not possible, then, that this good be totally taken away.”<sup>66</sup> This means that there is still left a natural capacity for good that remains in the human,

The good of nature lessened by sin, as has been said, is man’s natural bent to virtue. Because he is rational, it belongs to man to act in accord with reason, which is to act virtuously. For sin to cause man to cease to be rational is impossible, since he would then no longer be capable of sinning. It is not possible, then that this good be totally taken away.<sup>67</sup>

Yong’s dialogical approach to those of all kinds of people, including of other faiths, presumes something along these very lines. Yong’s sense of something like a pneumatological common grace upon humanity, even amidst other religions, through which some truth might be known likewise provides not just a leftover creational common grace that remains, but one that includes the dynamic and present reality of the Spirit of God in the world, not limited to the Spirit’s presence in the Church.<sup>68</sup>

Second, this all results in a more thoroughgoing and implemented theological hermeneutic that includes a Thomistic-like understanding of the interaction between general or philosophical knowledge and theological knowledge funded by special revelation, furthered and enlivened by a robust pneumatology and its attendant pneumatological imagination. In effect, this is the key point of comparison between Yong and Thomas here, and the center for the comparison. Academic and thoroughgoing human glossolalia means that Pentecostalism can actually address all realms of human knowledge. Thomas’ attraction to the Dominican order and its broadening of what high medieval Christianity could address provides a parallel, as he and they turned to the arrival of Aristotelian philosophy via Islamic interlocutors, as a discovery made through interreligious encounter.

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<sup>66</sup> *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae.85.2, 85.

<sup>67</sup> *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae.85.2, 85.

<sup>68</sup> “(A)ccording to the Christian theological tradition, the *imago Dei* in human beings derives in part from our having received the divine breath of life. This breath sets us apart from other creatures. We are distinguished from them by our rational, volitional, moral, and interpersonal and relational capacities. Because human beings subsist through the expression of these capacities, we are all, in the words of Lyle Dabney, ‘otherwise engaged in the Spirit’ (cf. Acts 17:28). To choose freely, to act morally, to relate to others intentionally, to experience interpersonal subjectivity – these are the pneumatological features of human living in the world. Thinking itself, in this fundamental sense, is thus intrinsically pneumatological. Our processes of reasoning, whether in terms of imagining, hypothesizing, deducting, inferring, and so on, constitute, in part, our life in the Spirit. From this perspective, the Spirit is the means of thought in general and perhaps the object of thought when focus is placed specifically upon the Spirit’s presence and activity. Any and all who think are therefore potentially addressed when discussing pneumatology; they become an actual part of the conversation when they accept our invitation to theologize about the Spirit or about human life and spirituality. In this sense, foundational pneumatology, by nature of its content, requires a universal horizon and involves a universal audience as well,” Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 131.

Given the dominance of ecclesial powers in his day, and the dominance of religious knowledge in his context, the opening of Thomas' greatest work provides what may appear to be a surprising question. In his answer to the originating question of the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas defends the very need for a theological discipline in concert with the philosophical, which, for him, was human rationality understood in line with Aristotelianism. For Aristotle, theology was a sub-discipline of philosophy referring to the divine.<sup>69</sup> Thomas does so by holding to the actuality and beneficence of special revelation in Scripture, as that which "is no part of the branches of philosophy traced by reasoning"; God provides this "above all because God destines us for an end beyond the grasp of reason."<sup>70</sup> Yet this does not deny but, in fact, affirms the convergence of human philosophy and divine revelation which the human rational facility, in turn, proceeds to utilize its faculties in forming theological knowledge. Knowledge of things provided by divine revelation assist the frail realities of human existence, as humans rarely have the ability to spend extensive time in philosophical reflection about the divine, yet also since many of these divine truths surpass the human rational capacity for cognition. Both knowledge that comes through philosophy and knowledge that comes through divine revelation, that is, the theology that comes from it and is a science in its own right, serve in the diversification of sciences which are together unified in human knowledge, two interrelated yet differentiable genres.<sup>71</sup> This does not mean that philosophy was altogether positive for the medieval doctor; his writings include a number of negative verdicts about the inabilities of pagan philosophies, and he exempted Christian writers from his occasional epitaph that a given statement was mere philosophical opinion.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1a.1.1 draws on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and 2 Timothy 3:16, Isaiah 64:4, and the apocryphal *Ecclesiasticus* 3:25 in formulating his response.

<sup>70</sup> *Summa Theologica* 1a.1.1, p. 7.

<sup>71</sup> *Summa Theologica* 1a.1.1.2, p. 9, "The diversification of the sciences is brought about by the diversity of aspects under which things can be known. Both an astronomer and a physical scientist may demonstrate the same conclusion, for instance that the earth is spherical; the first, however, works in a mathematical medium prescinding from material qualities, while for the second his medium is the observation of material bodies through the senses. Accordingly there is nothing to stop the same things from being treated by the philosophical sciences when they can be looked at in the light of natural reason and by another science when they are looked at in the light of divine revelation. Consequently the theology of holy teaching differs in kind from that theology which is ranked as a part of philosophy."

<sup>72</sup> Mark D. Jordan, "Theology and Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, edited by Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 233-236; Jordan summarizes the negative side of Thomas' judgment of philosophy here: "Pagan philosophy presented itself as the love of the best knowledge of the highest things, that is, as a way toward happiness. Yet philosophy was incapable of providing happiness. The ancient philosophers multiplied views on the human good, but they could not achieve it. Philosophers were unable to convince even their fellow citizens, because they could not offer a teaching about life that was firm, comprehensive, and useful. No philosophers had enough wisdom to call men back from error; instead they led many into error. The philosophers could not avoid sin, because they could not undergo the unique purification of the true worship of God, which begins in the philosophically unknowable coming of Christ," 234-235. Fergus Kerr considers that the *Summa Theologiae* "might have been composed (though we don't know) to persuade admirers of Aristotle that his *philo-sophia*, 'love of wisdom', was not only quite compatible with Christian assumptions about nature, truth, goodness, and the soul, but greatly illuminated them. Thomas did once say that

Nevertheless, for Thomas and Amos, the Christian tradition needs to make this critical move of expanding both the topics of knowledge and those from whom truth might be known.

Third, Thomas and Amos share an approach towards dialoguing with and engaging religious others in a mode that is unafraid to learn from them and include knowledge gleaned from them, while also providing a Christian apologetic towards them. While Aquinas did so primarily in the mode of an apologist, as in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Yong's pragmatism recognizes the importance of dialogue with religious, cultural, and philosophical others which would require a recognition that they, too, are witnessing to truth in the world. This is because we are meant to flourish together:

(D)ialogue with others, Christians and religious or unreligious others, informs faithful Christian praxis. How then do we live faithfully in the complicated postfoundationalist, post-Christendom, post-secular, postmodern, and pluralist context of our present situation? Faithful living means, in part, being able to flourish with others, and such flourishing requires that we know our neighbors in order that we can develop common cause toward a more just and humane world. Dialogue enables such vital praxis to emerge. The Christian theological endeavor contributes to such an important objective when it proceeds dialogically in and with the company of others.<sup>73</sup>

Such a dialectic is funded by the pneumatological imagination which mediates a back-and-forth and represents a spirit of understanding between persons and communities. For the Christian, such dialogue entails inclusion of the Spirit in it, as the Spirit is necessarily present for the

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philosophy is a kind of revelation: 'the study of philosophy is in its own right allowable and praiseworthy, because God revealed to the philosophers the truth which they perceive, as the Apostle [Paul] says' (*ST 2/2.167.1*). On the other hand, in one of his last sermons at the University of Paris, he said this: 'A little old lady (*vetula*) of today knows more about things concerning the faith than all the philosophers of antiquity' – quite a significant remark (we might think) to his assembled colleagues and students at the height of the crisis over the effects on Catholic Christian doctrine of the study of the pagan Aristotle," *Thomas Aquinas: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 35.

For Thomas, cognition is his "fundamental epistemic category," with intellect as that through which the human soul (Thomas held to the Aristotelian hylomorphic anthropology, where the soul is the substantial form of the body) assimilates the corporeal substances it encounters to itself. Thomas reserves *scientia* for complete and certain cognition of the truth of a thing, with cognition remaining the broader intellectual power of the human, Scott MacDonald, "Theory of Knowledge," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, edited by Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 160-163. MacDonald notes that Thomas does account for probabilistic *scientia*, noting a passage that explicitly states this in Thomas' *Posterior Analytics II.12.5*. As Thomas moves from inferences about reality, which establish premises, to deductive conclusions about such, his systemic theological and philosophical system produces a foundationalism. Thomas developed a faculty psychology where the active intellect, together with the will, marked the distinctive feature of the human rational capacity for cognition and action, For appreciation of Thomas' faculty psychology which evaluates it and otherwise relates it to contemporary neuroscientific developments as well as contemporary philosophy of language, see Nancey Murphy, *A Philosophy of the Christian Religion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2018), 224-235.

<sup>73</sup> Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit*, 284.



Christian as the Spirit of Christ.<sup>74</sup> Insofar as the Spirit's presence is explicitly understood as such for the Christian, it is easy to speak about. However, Yong is often dealing with other types of common human experiences in daily experience, like ones where those at various places in their Christian discipleship are encountering others of some or little or no or other faith. In cases like these, Christians may be encountering the witness of the Spirit within them and from others just as others are encountering the Spirit. Despite some qualifications concerning this in his earlier work, particularly *Beyond the Impasse*, where, in dealing with discernment of spirits, he focused on the phenomenology of discernment and cultural-linguistic frameworks for such,<sup>75</sup> Yong's work past his early works most often points to the Christological criterion for such discernment.<sup>76</sup>

Operating from convergent affective-pneumatic premises rather than deductive syllogisms, with a pneumatological imagination, Yong's theological hermeneutic has developed to the point that it can handle some of the heavy lifting for the Pentecostal tradition, the way that Thomas' work has for the Catholic, that is, it is a serious foray, the most serious to date, for Pentecostals to handle the breadth of human knowledge in experience. In its "many tongues," it is, to borrow from another leading Pentecostal thinker, J. Aaron Simmons, a "mashup" approach. Like contemporary musical "mashups" where musical genres are mixed yet identifiable, and they each provide something the other could not, Yong puts for a theological hermeneutic that can handle the "mashup" of disciplines and human abilities and cultures and approaches to life, a theological hermeneutic of unity-plurality for the late modern world.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Despite Yong's early dabbling with a denial of the *filioque* in *Spirit-Word-Community*, even as such was even then significantly qualified by his engagement with mediating positions to the Eastern-Western debate, such as that of David Coffey, Yong's subsequent work has often affirmed that the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, even as the human encounter with the Spirit may not and often does not include thematic recognition that this is the Spirit of Christ.

<sup>75</sup> Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 129-161.

<sup>76</sup> "First and foremost, the dialogue enabled by the Holy Spirit will ultimately point to Jesus Christ. This means that Christians who are dialogically engaged will inevitably, even if also incessantly, revolve around Christ. Here the life of Christ, his teachings, and his selfless and atoning death are the normative shape of the Spirit's presence and activity. Voices, behaviors, and phenomena that are contrary to this Christic and cruciform character are those of the antichrist and hence opposed also to the spirit of Jesus. Those that manifest the fruits of the spirit of Christ (Gal. 5:22-24) and are consistent with the values of the shalom Jesus, proclaimed and embodied, can be said to at least anticipate, if not also participate in, the coming reign of God. At the same time, because Christ is the one who is also yet to come and we see through a glass dimly (1 Cor. 13:12)...We may find ourselves transformed into greater Christlike-ness only in hindsight, even as others come into more consciously thematized knowledge of Christ only eschatologically. On the other hand, if we gradually or otherwise cease to bear the fruits of the spirit of Christ in the course of our dialogical encounter, then the conversation will be animated by other spirits – at least our own, certainly – rather than the spirit of Jesus," Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit*, 285.

<sup>77</sup> J. Aaron Simmons, "On Shared Hopes for (Mashup) Philosophy of Religion: A Reply to Trakakis," *Heythrop Journal* 55, no. 4 (2014): 691-710.