Introduction

Soon after completing my PhD thesis I wrote a book on theological method, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective*.[1] I was motivated in this direction in part because the theological academy was caught up, around the turn of the millennium, on questions related to method,[2] and in part because my own graduate training under a philosophical theologian alerted me to the importance of providing methodological argumentation in a time when theological claims were no longer being received merely because they were asserted. Both trends were reactions to the post-Enlightenment world that had been emerging with increasing clarity across the last century. Yet even in *Spirit-Word-Community*, I realized that questions regarding theological method were bound up with theological content, and vice versa. One could not write about the former apart from the latter. Hence this earlier book urged a pneumatological imagination driven by reflection on the person and work of the Holy Spirit, even as it presented itself as a pneumatological and therefore Trinitarian theology.

This volume does not depart from the major thrusts of *Spirit-Word-Community*. Rather, it provides exemplifications of the methodology proffered there in order to refine the pneumatological imagination and its Trinitarian and methodological payoff (the latter will be articulated most clearly in the conclusion of this book). Along the way, however, we shall see why starting with the Spirit theologically and methodologically opens up the kind of dialogical inquiry so important for theological thinking and formulation in the twenty-first-century context.

Put succinctly, our present information age reduces theology to being one voice among many others. The question is how to make universal claims

1. Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*; my doctoral dissertation was published as Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*.

2. E.g., Kinast, *Theological Reflection*.

when very few are paying attention. There are 1) methodological challenges related to our postfoundationalist context, 2) intra-Christian disagreements related to the accelerating fragmentation of the Christian world, 3) an increasingly diversified public square related to our postsecular situation, and 4) a cacophony of many religious voices trumpeted in our postmodern environment. The four parts of this volume address, respectively, each of these challenges, and suggest, in conversation with our twelve interlocutors, that a pneumatological and dialogical approach can turn these obstacles into opportunities for contextual reflection and global Christian witness.

The dialogical approach manifest in the pages to come signal a fundamental Christian virtue—that of respecting the voices of others—while attempting to model how theological inquiry might proceed in this way.[3] It also presumes that there is a biographical and narrative dimension to the theological task, and therefore seeks to not only depict but also to conduct theological inquiry in such a performative mode.[4] Herein, dialogue is not only said to be integral to theological method, but shown to be so as well. This introduction identifies the animating (autobiographical) concerns behind each of the chapters while situating them vis-à-vis these overarching issues.

THE POSTFOUNDATIONALIST TURN: ON EPISTEMOLOGY AND THEOLOGY

The debate regarding foundationalism continues to rage. The question of whether there are epistemic, anthropological, or other ontological foundations upon which human thinking inevitably proceeds is an important one, since an affirmative answer would suggest human disagreements can be adjudicated across cultural, religious, and other lines, while a negative response would indicate that there are incommensurable discourses that leave people groups in relative isolation, even if globalization might bring more and more of them alongside each other. Perhaps more importantly for Christian theologians, the rejection of all types of foundationalism implies that Christian faith is one form of life and set of beliefs among many others, each with its own internal justifications. Numerous options have emerged across this spectrum in response to these matters, even if few would resort

3. Here I agree with William James McClendon Jr., who has argued for *Biography as Theology*; see ch. 4 within.

4. Narrativity, especially of the testimonial sort, is central to the pentecostal tradition that informs my thinking; see Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 15–18.

to the Cartesian version of foundationalist warrant dominant during the early modern period.[5]

The three essays in Part I of this volume take up the gauntlet hurled by the turn from foundationalism. They argue that the pneumatological imagination invites recognition of a set of what might be called shifting foundations that recognize the multiplicity of starting points any dialogical encounter must be prepared to engage. Such a posture avoids a self-destructive epistemological and philosophical relativism while providing theological justification for considering the possibility that there are a multiplicity of entry points into dialogical interaction. Put alternatively and perhaps more constructively, the pneumatological imagination not only allows but in a sense also insists that we inhabit our historically situated particularity, though not at the expense of the possibility that what is known and believed potentially has universal applicability.

My primary interlocutor amidst this set of three essays is the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914). I was introduced to Peirce in a spring 1997 seminar with Robert Cummings Neville (my *doktorvater*), wherein we wrestled with Peirce's legacy in contemporary philosophy and theology.[6] Chapter 1 introduces Peirce's ideas in conversation primarily with contemporary evangelical theology. My attentiveness to the evangelical theological horizon was then driven by my seminary education into an evangelical context and the anxieties stoked within that domain when the theological conviction, confidence, and certainty it cherishes are confronted with the postfoundationalist turn. Historically conscious evangelicals have wrestled with what might be called the scriptural foundationalism of conservative Protestantism, even as the recourse to "tradition" seems to trade in one set of putative foundations for another that is no less stable. Peirce gave me the tools to see beyond the binary of either foundationalism or relativism. His triadic and pragmatic semiotic also helped me realize that there were Trinitarian and pneumatological implications and that these could facilitate theological engagement across various spectra (e.g., theology as a public enterprise, in light of Peirce's fallibilism; theology and science, the interface of which Peirce also navigated; the evangelical-ecumenical divide, given Peirce's own Episcopalianism, however unconventional it may have been). Peirce did not devote any attention to things pneumatological, but

5. See, e.g., the argument that Christian faith cannot dispense with "foundations" altogether by Eduardo Echeverria, "Revelation and Foundationalism."

6. The previous semester, my first in the PhD program, I had written another seminar paper—later published as "Tongues of Fire in the Pentecostal Imagination"—that utilized Peircean semiotics to illumine pentecostal glossolalia.

my own emerging pneumatological imagination told me that there were connections to be mined.[7]

The second chapter, written in 2002, especially brings the pragmatic dimensions of Peirce's thought onto the contemporary stage. Peirce worked incessantly to distinguish his pragmatism from that of his colleague William James's—the former being concerned that the latter's version could be used instrumentally and utilitarianly to justify any means—and thereby developed his ideas within a robust metaphysical and ontological framework. Once I acknowledged to myself that I had to come to grips with the pragmatism inherent in my own pentecostal tradition,[8] I realized Peirce's triadic semiotic both undergirded as well as disciplined pragmatist inclinations to engage thoughtfully and critically with reality. I thus felt drawn almost inexorably to the work of contemporary pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty (1931–2007), one of the more celebrated pragmatist thinkers at the time I produced the first draft of the essay. Rorty also defended a non-foundationalist approach—but, accentuating the naturalistic strand converging with and coming out of Peirce's expansive *oeuvre*, his conclusions leaned toward agnosticism (at best) or atheism (at worst) regarding religion. I am not opposed to a good dose of naturalist philosophy as an antidote to hyper-supernaturalistic notions, although I think the naturalism/supernaturalism divide is a more quintessentially modern binary than either side recognizes.[9] Of more interest to me was how to rescue what is valuable in Peirce's pragmatism from the Rortyean interpretation in order to justify and enact the kind of conversation that Rorty applauded, but from which he excluded religious or theological contributions. If for Rorty religion and theology are conversation stoppers because of their alleged dogmatisms, for me his version of pragmatism neither motivates nor sustains conversation in the public domain. Hence Rortyean postfoundationalism jeopardizes such public interaction and tolls the death knell for theology—unless we can find ways to speak intelligently beyond our tribal interests. Peirce again seems to have resources that Rorty chose not to retrieve because they smacked (to Rorty) of the unenlightened intuitions that those moving into the third millennium had to leave behind. Still, there is much to learn from the Peircean-Rortyean stream of pragmatism for contemporary theology's navigation of the local and the global—the particular and the universal—even if most

7. My *Spirit-Word-Community*, esp. Parts I and II, expanded on Peirce's categories in both pneumatological and Trinitarian directions.

8. As argued by Wacker, *Heaven Below*.

9. See Yong, *Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, ch. 7.

theologians will leave behind Rorty's skepticism regarding things religious and theological.

The late Jesuit theologian Donald L. Gelpi (1934–2011) was keenly attuned to the need to rethink the North American theological tradition in conversation with its greatest thinkers, from Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) on through Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947), a line that for him certainly included Peirce. I first began reading Gelpi in the spring of 1997 and was astounded to discover that he was deeply informed by the charismatic renewal movement in the Roman Catholic Church and even devoted much of his early work to developing a philosophical construct for Christian experience that took seriously charismatic spirituality. Gelpi also engaged Peirce's semiotic substantively, finding loose correlations between his triadic pragmatism and a pneumatologically robust Trinitarian faith and praxis, all of which inspired me as a budding pentecostal theologian to attempt to understand ("master" is too ambitious a word to apply to someone as obscure as Peirce) the pentecostal experience better, at least philosophically, if not also theologically. What I began to realize after reading Peirce and Gelpi was that what began as a quest for a postfoundationalist theology—which for me meant not necessarily non-foundationalism but a shifting foundationalism, as this book will make clear—turned out to also render plausible pentecostal-charismatic spirituality and practice in a post-Enlightenment world. When my good friend James K. A. Smith founded the Philosophy Interest Group in the Society for Pentecostal Studies in 2001, I wrote up an essay the next year—now chapter 3 of this volume—for the annual meeting, introducing the benefits of engaging Gelpi in order to ponder more deeply and philosophically, not to mention theologically and practically (read: pragmatically, in the Peircean sense), about pentecostal experience. Gelpi taught me, in part through Peirce, how orthodoxy and orthopraxy were conceptually and theologically intertwined. Here was a theologian with a profoundly charismatic world view and way of life who imbibed the particularity of the North American philosophical tradition, yet modeled the plausibility of a robust theological and ethical program with implications beyond this continental and even hemispheric context. Although I had been living with Gelpi for longer than Rorty, and even though the Rorty chapter (2) was written (shortly) after this Gelpi chapter (3), the latter rounds out this first part of the book since it also serves as a window into my efforts to render more sturdy and robust the bridge I had struggled to construct during graduate school between my early and initial philosophical work and my pentecostal identity.

THE POST-CHRISTENDOM ERA: A "PENTECOSTAL" RETRIEVAL

There is some chronological and thematic overlap between the essays in this section and those of the preceding, since chapter 4 was written in 2001 (before the Gelpi and Rorty essays) and since my dialogue with Gelpi is with a fellow pentecostal-charismatic theologian, unlike my dialogue with James William McClendon Jr., a Baptist (I doubt "Bapticostal," although I do not know for certain) theologian. However, I have placed the Gelpi chapter in part I because he worked explicitly with Peirce; my conversation with McClendon belongs better in this "post-Christendom" section. McClendon, whose Baptistic roots are lodged deep within the Radical Reformation tradition, espouses a post-Christendom mentality less characteristic of Gelpi the Catholic theologian. Hence McClendon's Baptistic theology aligns better with the post-Christendom and even sectarian impulses—here meant descriptively rather than pejoratively—motivating the "come-outism" of especially early modern pentecostal movements.

Remember that my time as a graduate student (from 1989 to 1998) was one during which the whole notion of a *pentecostal theology* was still an oxymoron. Pentecostals were known for their spirituality and even missionary zealousness, and this, combined with their long history of anti-intellectualism[10]—which has roots in the fundamentalist reaction to the modernist developments at the turn of the twentieth century—had by this time produced missiological treatises and even a spiritual theology. But a pentecostal theology remained foreign. My own halting efforts to think theologically as a pentecostal during this time were focused in my PhD thesis on what that meant for living in a religiously pluralistic world. Along the way I realized that any pentecostal theology worth its name had to be globally informed, since pentecostalism had been emerging as the Christianity of choice, so to speak, in the majority world.[11] Yet it was also the case that precisely this type of renewalism was at the vanguard of the emerging world Christianity.[12] Hence the global expansion of pentecostalism appeared to have coincided, if not mapped onto, the arrival and maturation of Christianity across the global South.[13] If the center of gravity had been gradually if not inexorably shifting from the Euro-American West to Asia, Africa, and Latin America, pentecostal-charismatic Christianity was as much to blame (for

10. See, e.g., Nañez, *Full Gospel, Fractured Minds?*
11. E.g., Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*.
12. As documented by Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*.
13. E.g., Johnson and Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*.

those seeking culpability) as anything else. A post-Western Christianity was characterized by renewalism; simultaneously, a post-Christendom world, following the demise of modern European and North American colonialism, was one in which Christianity was also emerging with vigor and vitality in postcolonial states starting in the second half of the twentieth century.

Pentecostal theology, therefore, if it was indeed going to be theological rather than merely about spirituality or solely missiological, had to be global—not in the sense of being politically hegemonic, as Christianity had been in the Western world in the millennium or more after Constantine, but in the sense of being attentive to and informed by its plurality of voices, experiences, and forms after the dissolution of Christendom. Paradoxically, then, pentecostal theology in particular, if not Christian theology in general, had to be international on the one hand, but also radically local and particular, informed by all of its diversity on the ground, on the other hand. I have argued elsewhere that Christian unity in diversity and vice versa is grounded in the many tongues of the Day of Pentecost,[14] and the three chapters in part II further triangulate this theme from three angles.

First, my dialogue with McClendon introduced me to a post-Christendom theology that had been struggling for articulation for almost 500 years since the days of the Radical Reformation. The Anabaptists, of course, did not think the magisterial reformers were going far enough in their protests against the official church, but they rested their argument more on the call to discipleship echoed in the Gospels than on the proclamation of justification retrieved from St. Paul. Theirs was a post-Christendom theology not least in the political sense of drawing a sharp line between the church and the state (which is consistent with contemporary pentecostal inclinations about the church-state relationship, or lack thereof, as the case may and should be, so they feel), but also in the theological sense of following Luther's priesthood of the believer to its logical conclusion, so as to insist on believers' adult baptisms following Christian confession. If Luther's priesthood of all believers was grounded in the Pauline doctrine of justification, the Anabaptist version was rooted in their restorationist hermeneutic focused on the life of Jesus and the earliest apostolic community. McClendon's Baptistic retrieval of the Anabaptist this-is-that resonance with the apostolic experience is paralleled by the pentecostal adaptation of restorationist commitments precipitated by the Radical Reformation. And if Peircean pragmatism supported the Gelpian orthodoxy-orthopraxy interconnection, McClendon's post-Christendom theology grounded orthodoxy (right believing) in ethics (right practices), following the ethics of Jesus. This was certainly consistent with

14. As developed in Yong, *Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*.

pentecostal instincts about *doing* what the apostles did, not just *believing* what they believed. Interestingly, the baptist emphasis on the freedom of the believer's conscience (so as not to be bound by a state-supported orthodoxy, among other constraints on religious liberty) that produced a multiplicity of baptist churches, not to mention denominations, has in the last century given way to a pentecostal pluralism, even as the latter's tendency to multiply and diversify is often described negatively in terms of fragmentation in the contemporary media. In any case, if the Radical Reformers and those following that train of thought were the most resistant to the mechanisms of Christendom in the sixteenth century, pentecostals and those caught up in the global renewal movement are most resistant to the Christian status quo, whatever and wherever that may be in the present time. McClendon's Baptistic vision for Christian theology at the turn of the twenty-first century thus provides a helpful mirror for the emerging pentecostal theology for the third millennium.

If McClendon's project helps to ground a pentecostal theology post-Christendom, the work of Finnish pentecostal Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen provides the constructive fodder for such a task. I first met Kärkkäinen in 1998; he was completing his *habilitationsschrift* and I my PhD, and I marveled in the years thereafter at his prolific scholarly productivity.[15] I turned my attention to engaging his work in 2005 since by that time he had emerged indisputably as the most renowned pentecostal theologian anywhere, with ten books or monographs written, all in fewer than ten years! And note that in the less than ten years (as of the time of this writing) since I wrote on his work, Kärkkäinen has not only edited a half-dozen or more volumes, but also published another three books, not including two more of an anticipated five-volume systematic theology.[16] So my review essay can be considered no more than a very preliminary report on the work of a theologian who, even after completion of his current mammoth project, can still be anticipated to write a magnum opus. Yet as I try to show in chapter 5, the methodological trajectories of Kärkkäinen's present work were already charted in his first ten books—one that was global in perspective, deeply marked by pentecostal intuitions and pluralism, and respective of difference while being doggedly ecumenical rather than incoherently heterogeneous. Therein were features of constructive Christian theology taking up the

15. I was blessed to make a small contribution to it by gathering and editing a set of his essays for publication: Kärkkäinen, *Toward a Pneumatological Theology*.

16. See Kärkkäinen, *The Trinity*; *Holy Spirit and Salvation*; *Holy Spirit*. The five-volume systematics is titled *A Constructive Christian Theology for a Pluralistic World*, Volume 1 being *Christ and Reconciliation*, and Volume 2 being *Trinity and Revelation*; the rest of the volumes are anticipated to be released annually from 2015 to 2017.

opportunities and engaging the challenges of Christian faith in the third millennium, global precisely in its attentiveness to the many tongues of local contexts. As importantly, Kärkkäinen modeled for me that respectful dialogue could occur not only across Christian divides but also in a religiously pluralistic world, without abandoning the missionary posture that is the *raison d'être* of Christian faith and identity. It was around this time (from about 2005 onwards) that, inspired by Kärkkäinen's work, I began to publish specifically on missiological themes as a systematician.[17]

I have already mentioned my good friend Jamie Smith. He was trained philosophically at Villanova (under John Caputo), yet has always had deep theological interests, whereas I was trained theologically at Boston (under Robert Cummings Neville) but have always had an abiding philosophical inquisitiveness. Jamie approaches the postfoundationalist turn (outlined in Part I of this volume) using continental philosophical resources, while I do so following the North American philosophical tradition. His pentecostal identity has long been shaped by the Reformed tradition (part of his graduate training was at the Dutch Reformed-dominated Institute for Christian Studies)—so much so that he calls himself a Reformed-Charismatic[18]—while mine is embedded in the classical pentecostalism of my upbringing. Chapter 6 was originally inspired by Jamie's third book, an introduction to the Radical Orthodoxy (RO) theological movement. In that chapter you will see why I think RO provides an alternative for contemporary theology, albeit one that needs the post-Christendom sensibilities of pentecostal theology and spirituality. Jamie published a response to my original essay, and we have since continued to work on other projects together.[19]

THE POSTSECULAR MILIEU: THEOLOGY AND RELIGION IN A WORLD OF SCIENCE

Discussion of Radical Orthodoxy provides a nice segue way into Part III because of RO's insistence that we now live in a postsecular age. RO means by this that the claims of a preceding generation that modernization and secularization will spell the end of religion are increasingly being recognized as hollow, and that rather than the disappearance of religion, we have

17. See a collection of these in Yong, *Missiological Spirit*.

18. See the "Introduction" of James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*.

19. See Smith, "Spirit, Religions, World"; cf. not only our coedited *Science and the Spirit* but also our coedited book series, Pentecostal Manifestos, published by Eerdmans, which, as of early 2014, has released six volumes, with three more under contract.

seen its global intensification.[20] But if religions remain vital in a postsecular world, the course of modernization has not yet been fully run. What I mean is that the advance of science, technology, and medicine marches on. Postsecularity does not mean the abandonment of science, but its intertwining with religion rather than the overcoming of either one by the other. In this postsecular context, science and religion continue to expand, sometimes alongside each other, other times in competition with and against each other.

If Part I of this book focuses on the philosophical and epistemological dimensions of doing theology and Part II engages with the questions of universality (of Christian faith) and particularity (of pentecostal and other variations), then Part III focuses on how scientific method compares or contrasts with theological method. If modernity privatized religious— and Christian—modes of thinking as compared with the presumed publicness of secular thought, then whither belongs theological reflection in a postsecular time? How can religious and theological articulation be public when science remains the *de facto lingua franca* in the present situation, and how can Christian theology make universal claims in a world dominated by scientific universalism? In some contexts it seems as if science is opposed to religion and vice versa. I postulated, however, that science and religion are complementary—since all truth is God's truth—and so sought a theological method that could support the quest to discern such complementarity.

The chapters in this part of the volume come at these questions in conversation not only with Christian thinkers but also with Buddhist interlocutors. This is not only because observation of how those in other faiths are navigating the postsecular turn provides mirrors for considering the opportunities and pitfalls along the Christian path, but also because any response to the scientific hegemony will only be stronger when fortified across religious lines. On the other hand, as should be clear, I do not see science only as an enemy to be overcome. Rather, the way forward can only be a dialogue between science and theology, even if, as is the case in the three chapters here, it is mediated in part interreligiously. Hence the dialogue of theological method opens up in a postsecular context to a trilogue, one that involves two (or more) faith traditions in conversation with science.

My graduate education in the 1990s had already convinced me that the future of Christian theology could only unfold dialogically with the advance

20. This shift of awareness is nowhere more clearly reflected than in the work of Harvey Cox, who, in the 1960s, predicted the demise of religion in his *Secular City*, but thirty years later heralded the pentecostalization of religion with his *Fire from Heaven*. See also Wariboko, "Fire from Heaven," and Cox, "Response to Professor Nimi Wariboko."

of human knowledge in general, and that the latter is fundamentally carried out by scientific enterprise. However, I did not seriously begin engaging the theology and science discussion until about 2004. My time as the visiting Brueggeman scholar at Xavier University in Cincinnati that fall included the opportunity to team-teach a graduate course on science and religion with Jesuit theologian Joseph Bracken,[21] as well as the chance to meet John Polkinghorne, the Anglican scientist-theologian, at a conference funded by the Templeton Foundation.[22] Out of this came an immersion into the works of the latter and what is now the seventh chapter of this book. My reading of Polkinghorne, starting with his then most recent book *Science and the Trinity: The Christian Encounter with Reality*, helped me on two fronts. First, it helped me to understand how to navigate not only the local (putatively, of religion) and the global (allegedly, of science), but also the ideal (of religiosity) and the empirical (of scientific inquiry). Second, it prompted me to reconsider how the theology and science discussion, which heretofore had proceeded largely in general theistic terms, was amenable to a more explicitly Trinitarian perspective and hence also inviting of a more robust pneumatological contribution. Yet is also showed me that any theological method fit for the third millennium will have to be both broad enough and sufficiently flexible to engage with the dynamism of the scientific imagination. It's not just that science keeps changing its mind while Christianity dabbles in truths once-and-for-all delivered to the saints; rather, scientific understandings and Christian truth claims are both stable in some respects and fluid in other respects, always open to greater clarification and understanding, not least in a postsecular milieu.

In this same postsecular space, however, those in other faiths are also engaging with what might otherwise be a scientific hegemony. Chapters 8 and 9 of this book observe Buddhists entering the postsecular but no less scientifically dominated world. Two points should be mentioned about the Christian-Buddhist conversations in this part of the book. First, if the postsecular mind allows—if not invites—religious faith in the public sphere, then it should also be open to a Buddhist presence in this domain; however, postsecularity may not presume all religious voices are equal—arguments will still have to be made. Yet in both cases examined—that of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and that of one of his translators for a time, B. Alan Wallace—Buddhists across that spectrum of traditions will fault them for not being more amenable to the advances of science and how they might

21. A few years later, I published "A Catholic Commitment to Process Cosmology."

22. The conference proceedings included essays by Polkinghorne and myself published in Welker, ed., *Work of the Spirit*.

eliminate implausible Buddhist convictions on the one hand and, on the other hand, for not holding on more steadfastly to foundational elements of Buddhist teachings as well as practices. Second, however, if Christians cannot ignore science in our postsecular environment, then we also cannot ignore other religious voices in this same space. Hence the two case studies of Tibetan Buddhist arrivals in modernity provide dialogical springboards for considering the nature and scope of Christian theological method for a postsecular world.

Before moving on, I should clarify: my interaction with Buddhist traditions indicates neither that they are more important than Christian engagements with other faiths nor that they are indispensable to the Christianity-science–other-religions trilogue. Rather, I have focused on Buddhism only because it, of all the East Asian traditions that piqued my interest in graduate school, has remained with me over the decades.[23] The ongoing religion and science discussion will benefit from a multiplicity of faith perspectives at the conversation table.

THE POSTMODERN SITUATION: CHRISTIAN WITNESS AMIDST MANY RELIGIONS

In many respects, the task of doing Christian theology in the pluralistic world of the twenty-first century has driven much of my work. As already indicated, my doctoral dissertation grappled with how to formulate a distinctively pentecostal and yet faithfully Christian approach to religious pluralism, the interfaith encounter, and the interreligious dialogue, and the immense challenges confronting these tasks have followed me throughout my career to date (as my comments above on Part II delineate), even when I have attempted to engage with other important themes and areas of the theological landscape.[24] The issues of postfoundationalism (as should be clear from the preceding introductory remarks and the following Part I) have to do with how to make universal Christian truth claims from our perspectively limited contexts, even as the discussion of religion and science includes, if not mandates (as indicated in the preceding remarks and to be unfolded in Part III within), working both with and alongside, if not also against, those in other faiths engaging these issues in a postsecular arena.

23. More recently, I have published two books in this area: *Pneumatology and the Christian-Buddhist Dialogue*, and *The Cosmic Breath*.

24. So it is not without reason, then, that many of the authors in Vondey and Mittelstadt, eds., *Theology of Amos Yong*, use my theology of religions as a springboard for engaging with the various loci my work has touched upon.

One of the unavoidable challenges of our present time is how to bear adequate Christian witness in a world of many faiths.

Our late modern or postmodern situation accepts all perspectives as true or valid for the perspective holder,[25] at least in part in reaction to the modernist or Enlightenment elevation of scientific reason over non-Western ways of knowing. If liberal theological traditions have presumed there is a common core to the many religions of the world, postliberal reactions (including Radical Orthodoxy), however these may be defined, have accentuated the particularity and distinctiveness of each faith. Where the former tends to elide the differences, the latter minimizes their commonalities. Amidst this late and postmodern vortex, how can Christian theology move forward? More pointedly, are there good theological reasons for whatever is determined as a plausible way forward, or are these merely pragmatically or politically driven?

My pentecostal starting point has from the beginning wagered on a pneumatological intervention in potentially charting this *via media*. Such a pneumatological engine promises to deliver a dynamic, shifting foundationalism that navigates between the Scylla of Cartesianism and the Charybdis of relativism while also opening up dialogues between religions and between science and religion to trilogues, flowing in multiple directions between the various sciences and the many religions. In our postmodern context, my wager is that this empowers Christian witness even as it enables Christian hearing of, and perhaps also learning from, the testimonies of others. This acknowledges the perspectivism of religious knowing while avoiding the relativization, isolation, and privatization of religious beliefs.

The three chapters in the final part of this book, written in the winter of 2011, the winter of 2012, and the fall of 2012 respectively, bring us full circle to engage with the foundational issues of Christian theological method in the global context of religious pluralism. Chapter 10, on the work of Jesuit Hindologist Francis X. Clooney, provides a model for how to engage the beliefs of other traditions, in particular those of the Indian subcontinent. More precisely, Clooney unveils how comparative theology might proceed in the twenty-first century postmodern context when engaged with the textual traditions of the Hindu faith. Yet in this context, there is no honest

25. I have preferred talking about late modernity rather than about postmodernity, as exemplified in my *Theology and Down Syndrome*; the latter, "postmodernity," presumes too much both about what modernity means and that we have passed it up completely, while the former, "late modernity," recognizes that the processes of modernization remain inviolable, at least with respect to scientific inquiry, technological advance, and medical praxis. However, I use "postmodern" in order to preserve the rhetorical parallels for the four section titles in this book.

encountering of the other texts without some kind of openness to the praxis they presume and prescribe as well. This means that faithful reading is not just an intellectual or cognitive affair, but also practical and affective. If our postfoundationalist epistemology combines orthodoxy and orthopraxis, our postmodern encounter between faiths complicates matters through the inclusion of orthopathy, the role of right feelings that shape approaches to religious texts even as the practices and ways of life reflected in such texts in turn shape devotees' passions and desires. My engagement with Clooney's body of work, however, had already been prepared for in my work as a pentecostal theologian, which presumes the orthodoxy-orthopathy-orthopraxy triad precisely because religious belief and religious life are funded by religious feeling via the pneumatological imagination.[26] This does not make the work of sympathetically engaging other faiths any easier; but it does invite Christians to consider how to think theologically in a pluralistic world, neither merely polemically against nor only imperialistically with those in other traditions, and to proceed dialogically, both challenging yet also being transformed by the mutual encounter. For Clooney, such dialogue emerges out of what he calls dual-religious-belonging: the capacity to enter into and in some important respects inhabit the faith path of others in order to return enriched for the task of Christian theological reflection.

But is such dual religious identity either possible or desirable? Clooney's work will no doubt leave many Christians behind, even those who are seeking a way forward in our postmodern times. The challenges should not be underestimated. Put otherwise, how in our postmodern condition can we cease our colonial practices of domesticating religious others for our own purposes without simply privatizing religious belief and praxis as incommensurable subjectivities? Dutch Reformed anthropologist André Droogers's study of global pentecostalism, especially its spirituality of encounter with the transcendent Holy Spirit, has contributed to his theory of methodological ludism, the human capacity to both suspend one aspect of their identity or reality in order to engage another, and to sometimes embody both views simultaneously. If such a ludic stance is possible, it may also be plausible for the theologian to embrace both Barth's *Nein!* and Tillich's correlation, if not at the same time and in the same respects (although even this might be possible!), then at least successively, albeit no less really. More expansively, perhaps Gelpi's Peircean and charismatic pragmatism, Smith's Reformed and Radical Orthodoxy, Kärkkäinen's ecumenical theology, Polkinghorne's and Tibetan Buddhists' scientific theologies, etc., can all inform some kind of dual- or multi-religious stance that both bears faithful

26. See also Yong, *Spirit of Love*, esp. ch. 5.

witness to the gospel and yet respects and even is informed by the testimony of those on the other side. Might some—if not most—of my readers declare this impossible?

Perhaps not. The twelfth chapter is a lengthy review essay, with minimal notes, of evangelical-Reformed theologian and missiologist Benno van den Toren's *Christian Apologetics as Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, which actually attempts to articulate a kind of Barthian postfoundationalism that takes cross-cultural dialogue seriously, not merely as a ploy for the Christian mission. Some might think van den Toren's task ultimately unmanageable; however, I suggest the pneumatological approach developed in the pages of this volume not only fits such an agenda but is actually needed to bring about its achievement. Such a pneumatological imagination enables the capacity to speak in the tongues and languages of others (Clooney), but also to anticipate fulfillment in Christ (van den Toren); such a pneumatological orientation also empowers the capacity to hear the testimonies of others, sometimes stereophonically (Droogers), even as it facilitates dialogue across religious, cultural, and other lines (van den Toren).

The preceding has provided some autobiographical perspective on the essays within and how they document the emergence and coherence of such a pneumatological and dialogical approach to the task of doing theology in the present time. This book as a whole attempts a cumulative argument for theological reason—more specifically, a pneumato-theological methodology—suited to the postfoundationalist, post-Christendom, postsecular, and postmodern world of the twenty-first century. I will return in the concluding chapter to summarize the results and present an updated statement about where the discussion is at. For now, welcome to the conversation.