

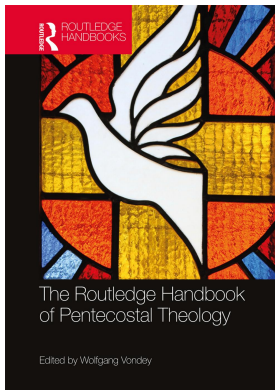
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THE PNEUMATOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

The logic of Pentecostal theology

Amos Yong

The term *pneumatological imagination* was coined by Lucien Richard, OMI, with whom I took a PhD seminar in Roman Catholic theology in 1997 (Yong 2000, 106n6). In that context, I suggested that such an imaginative approach “provides us with a fundamental orientation to God, ourselves and the world, and renders more plausible the idea of God as present and active in the world” (Yong 2000, 29; see also Oliverio 2009; Stephenson 2013). I initially proposed the concept in the context of Pentecostal theology in my first book, a slightly revised version of my PhD dissertation on a Pentecostal-Charismatic approach to Christian theology of religions. What I was attempting was a constructive theological project along at least three fronts: in Pentecostal theology, in theology of the Spirit, and in theology of religions. The fundamental question, then, was how to take up these tasks in a methodologically cohesive manner. What kind of principle could or would facilitate dialogue, effectively, across these three discursive domains, each of which was in its own a relatively recently emerging arena of inquiry? And since these were all theological topics, the organizing guideline had to derive from within, rather than being imposed in an alien manner from outside, that conversation. My idea was to articulate a certain theological notion—a theo-logic, if one wills—that could mediate these three spheres of inquiry.

Two decades later, I not only affirm the basic thrust of the pneumatological imagination as originally developed but also have a more expansive understanding of its theo-logical capacities. Chiefly, its reach is extended by way of delving deeper, more radically, into the Pentecost narrative that is the bedrock of the Pentecostal theological movement and retrieving its pneumatological impulses for the wider ecumenical Christian theological task. Consistent with the aspirations of the early modern Pentecostal believers, I have come to see more vividly that the Pentecostal theological witness is not just for Pentecostal churches but for the church catholic, and that such promise begins to be fulfilled when the logic of the Pentecostal movement and experience—what I have called the pneumatological imagination—is plumbed and its resources unleashed for the wider ecumenical endeavor.

This essay begins with a concise historical and thematic part situating the emergence of the concept amid wider theological advances and then devotes its attention to delineating various features of the pneumatological imagination through a re-reading of the Pentecost narrative in the Book of Acts. My goal is to indicate how the logic of Pentecostal theology

can empower Christian theological reflection at large and how a Pentecostal theological logic can serve as a foundational element for all Christian theologizing. Put another way, the pneumatological imagination is, or ought to be, part of the theo-logic or Pentecost-logic—the overarching architectonic/superstructure, or the underlying substructure (these various metaphors communicating different but complementary insights)—of the Christian way, especially having to navigate the pluralism, not just real but recognized, of a dynamic and complex world.

The logic/s of Pentecostal theology

As a young and aspiring Pentecostal theologian gripped by the question of religious plurality and therefore committed to engaging the theology of religions discussion in the mid-1990s, I was confronted by the need to find a methodological *via media* that brought biblical and theological materials into dialogue with religious data, on the one side, and with contemporary scholarship on the religions, on the other. My intuition was that the recent renaissance of pneumatology in the wider theological academy (cf. Kärkkäinen 2002; Shults and Hollingsworth 2008), as well as an emerging turn to the Spirit in theology of religions discussions (see Yong 2003, 83–128), invited exploration of how Pentecostal spirituality, attuned as such was to the work of the Spirit, might make a contribution at this nexus. In hindsight (cf. Yong 2005, 167–234), this insight was precipitated by the scriptural witness that, on the day of Pentecost, the work of the Spirit spawned from the assembly of those gathered “from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5), speaking and hearing, “each of us, in our own native language” (2:8), so that those from around the known world exclaimed: “in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power” (2:11). The logic of this Pentecost narrative was that the outpouring of the Spirit enabled the witness of those “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9b). My extension was that if this language was appropriate for thinking about dialogical theologies with those from many ethnicities, cultures, and linguistic groups (see Yong 2014a), then it was also relevant for thinking theologically about and with others in a world of many faiths.

It is important at this juncture to note how I felt this approach navigated the general methodological challenge for theology in the contemporary world. On the one hand, as the Lukan text notes, a pneumatological approach located in the day of Pentecost event was and is theologically funded in the work of the Spirit of Christ poured out on all flesh from the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:17, 33). This narrative opens up explicitly theological resources for whatever tasks may be at hand (see Chapter 16). More exactly, the work of the Spirit foregrounds pneumatology, but as such is related to the person of Christ and the Fatherhood of Yahweh the Jewish deity, this relationship, in turn, prompts elaboration according to the trinitarian traditions evolved in later Christian theological discourse. The point is that my Pentecostal turn to the Spirit was not only a scriptural one grounded in the Acts narrative but also a theological move that both anticipates and can be informed by the tradition’s pneumatological and trinitarian developments.

On the other hand, the day of Pentecost account depicts the work of the Spirit not only in abstract theological but in concrete personal and historical terms. God, by the Spirit, is not only present among human creatures but also active within and between them (cf. Fee 1994, xxi). In other words, the turn to pneumatology was not exclusively theological but also anthropological. This equation must also be stated otherwise: the turn to pneumatology is not only anthropological but is also simultaneously theological. This may have been a subtle difference from modernist pneumatologies that may have been reductive of such differences

to the anthropological domain—as the criticism of the line from Schleiermacher to Feuerbach often travels—but it was and continues to be an important one (Yong 2015). Talk about the Spirit mediated pentecostally—i.e. through the day of Pentecost event and its legacies—registered human voices in the theological conversation, but these were never bereft of substantive divine accents (see Chapter 19).

One significant interlocutor from those initial days remains important for our purposes: Pentecostal-turned-Methodist theologian D. Lyle Dabney. The major contribution of this student of Jürgen Moltmann was to develop the Moltmannian pneumatological trinitarianism into a paradigm for thinking theologically in the present time and in light of the historical tradition (see Dabney 1996; cf. Yong 2018b). Dabney suggested it was possible to consider the trinitarian character of the Nicene confession as unfolding also paradigmatically: with the First Article on God as creator characterizing patristic and then culminating in medieval theologies; with the Second Article on Christ the redeemer as being restored to central position in Reformation theological traditions; and with the Third Article focused on the Spirit foregrounded by especially Pentecostal movements in the twentieth century. While this is a horrible generalization at one level, for our purposes the pneumatological-pentecostal connection he makes is further shored up given that the last hundred years have been designated not only the “Pentecostal century” (e.g. Synan 2012) but also the century that has seen for the first time, mediated by both the prior century of missions and then the Pentecostal movement, the emergence of a global or world Christianity (Sunquist 2015). From this perspective, then, the many tongues of the first century Pentecost not only antedate the many languages of the modern Pentecostal movement but also anticipate the many forms of contemporary world Christianities (Johnson and Ross 2009).

Dabney’s pneumatological logic thus is also a Pentecostal logic—a way of thinking informed by and related to the events of the day of Pentecost—that suggests how Christian theology in the twenty-first century can navigate the experience of pluralism that is intensified in our contemporary world. This is a theology of the Third Article that is not only a pneumatology (a theology of the Holy Spirit) but is also a pneumatological theology: a theological imagination shaped at each juncture and locus by the person and work of the Spirit (see Pinnock 1996; Habets 2016). Such a pneumatology, however, neither displaces nor marginalizes the prior theological paradigms (those of the First and Second Articles) but complements, deepens, and enriches these predecessors so that there is a cumulative spiraling into, or opening out toward, a more fully trinitarian or triune theological vision (see Chapter 17). Arguably, we are still only in quest of a more robustly trinitarian Christian understanding, but this goal cannot be attained apart from pneumatological and pneumatological-theological efforts (Yong 2012). Yet, simultaneously, such a Pentecostal logic lifts up the wonders of God through the works of the Spirit of Christ not by ignoring but coordinating through the many voices, tongues, and witnesses. Hence, the pneumatological imagination proceeds not only after the Incarnation, the cross, and Easter (the provenance of most theologies of the Second Article), but also after Pentecost, and it is exactly in this vein that it is both theological and anthropological/creational discourse concurrently.

Contours of the pneumatological imagination

So far, we have covered in broad brush strokes the overarching rationale for the pneumatological imagination, at least in terms of how I had originally conceived of the notion and then how it has been developed in support of the search for a more robustly trinitarian theology. In order to substantiate the claim that the pneumatological

imagination is both theological and anthropological/creational at the same time, I wish to secure its scriptural grounds. In the confines of this essay I will do little more than begin such an exegetical task with the Book of Acts, although it would also be appropriate to say that what I am doing in the following is a form of theological—or pneumatological, to be more exact—interpretation of Scripture (see Chapter 6). The rest of this chapter suggests that the pneumatological imagination both flows out from and then allows performative engagement with the truths featured in the Pentecost narrative central to Pentecostal theology. Hence, the pneumatological imagination names the theology (or theo-logic) of Pentecost that can revitalize Christian theological engagement with the pluralisms of the third millennium. I explicate this Pentecost-logic for the church ecumenical and catholic—which is not reducible to and more than the *Pentecostal-logic* derived from and for those churches which have their roots in the modern revival movement—*following* the portrait in Acts 2 and thereby proceeding from the experiential to the cultural and the interpersonal dimensions.

Experiencing Pentecost: many senses

Luke writes about what transpired on the day of Pentecost as follows:

And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

(Acts 2:2–4)

I will comment on three aspects depicted in this text in explicating the pneumatological imagination: (1) elements related to the Spirit's infilling, (2) aspects related to sensory engagement, and (3) features related to the phenomenology of environmental experience.

- 1 If in the wider theological tradition, the Spirit is understood to relate God and the world, we see this clearly also in this text. The divine Spirit comes “suddenly from heaven,” we are told. Moving upon earthly flesh, this group of disciples is “filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” The Spirit thus not only comes upon but envelops and then enters into—“fills” is the Lukan descriptor—human bodies (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16 and 6:19). The infilling of human bodies is what then engenders, from within those bodies, life and witness (cf. John 7:38–39), so that, as Luke records, these persons “began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.”
- 2 Yet, proceeding more carefully into the interstices of this text, the Spirit's descent upon and entry into human bodies is not generic but specified along multiple kinesthetic registers. It is surely impossible to ignore *sound*, more precariously denoted as “the rush of a violent wind,” which suggests both a distinct hearing and an intense feeling, a hearing–feeling that overwhelms the senses, not just ringing in one's ears but tangibly perceived and palpably resounded through bodies from the tops of heads to the bottoms of feet. Bodies do not encounter violent winds in any segmented manner, but are caught up, wholly, in their sweep. And amid this baptism of sounds, and through this saturation of feelings, there is also a concrete visual identification of demarcated “tongues, as of fire,” individually “rest[ing] on each of them.” One imagines that the fullness of this

embodied confrontation does not blur the specificity of single flames touching down on (top of) heads and bodies. Hearing, feeling, perceiving, seeing—multiple senses are mobilized or activated in the arrival of the Spirit. Human beings “meet” the divine wind variously, and regardless of impairment of any one or other sensory capacity, the Spirit engages multiply and manifoldly, so that other unimpaired senses—or the whole embodied set of them variously attuned—might encounter the divine (see Yong 2011a, 82–116).

- If so far our understanding of the pneumatological imagination is that it is a site at which deity and humanity converge, then we can also say that such convergence encloses and incases human bodies in their fullness and complexity. This means that there is an embodied, which means also richly affective, dimension of the pneumatological imagination so that theological thinking emerges from out of, not by ignoring, the affections of human life and experience (Coulter and Yong 2016). In other words, the pneumatological imagination is emphatically not disembodied; instead, the Spirit’s infilling involves wholly affective, emotional, and physiological domains (see Chapter 11).
- 3 Yet the Spirit fills bodies not only as segregated units (individuals) but as environmentally situated and constituted realities (persons in relation). Luke denotes that the disciples “were all together in one place” (Acts 2:1), and the Spirit’s infilling was both of and in bodies, and also of-and-in-bodies-together-in-“the-entire-house” (2:2). Bodies are thereby not singularities, but relational media that are both fillable by the divine breath and also through which the divine wind resonates. The pneumatological imagination thus conceived is no mere individually derived intellectualized scheme but is a socio- relationally charged environment (see Chapter 19). There are biologically animated aspects of the Spirit’s work, yet these operate not in isolation but in a psycho-social manner. The speech prompted by the Spirit’s visitation emphasizes the socio-linguistic and even oral character of the pneumatological imagination: a modality of engaging with and then reflecting on the world that is both interpersonal and intersubjective and can be so surely in and through dynamically embodied relations (Yong 2016a). Pentecost is thereby an oral event triunely mediated: the divine Spirit speaks in and through embodied creatures in relationship.

Let me clarify that this approach to Pentecostal theology is both descriptive and normative. On the one side, we are observing how the day of Pentecost account unfolds the blowing of the divine breath on human persons, but on the other side, we are also drawing out the implied theo-logic (or pneumato-logic, or Pentecost-logic) in this narration. The pneumatological imagination thus construed both emerges from out of the day of Pentecost blustering of the divine wind and invites us to think in, through, and with that breath. The work of the Spirit therefore makes possible our stepping into that experiential reality but yet surely in and through such entry, makes possible our seeing or understanding God and the world, ourselves included, from within that space-time. In short, far from requiring us to take leave of our affective, embodied, and socially constituted experiences, the pneumatological imagination enables knowledge of such realities in theological (pneumatological) register and also then inspires further reflection.

Understanding Pentecost: many tongues

The next segment of Acts 2 expands our understanding of the social or cultural-linguistic character of the pneumatological imagination. We explicate here on its multi-cultural, inter-cultural, and trans-cultural dimensions. As we shall see, the pneumatological imagination

is not only an embodied and social mode of engaging with and considering God in relationship to the world, but this engagement unfolds in, through, and with, rather than apart from, the cultural domain (see Chapter 10).

Pneumatic or Pentecostal multiculturality is specified by Luke in and through the notice that speaking in the Spirit occurs “in the native language of each” (Acts 2:6b). Not only that, but the Pentecostal miracle is, arguably, both that of speech and of hearing: “each one *heard* them speaking in the native language of each” (2:6b), which prompts the question: “how is it that we *hear*, each of us, in our own native language?” (2:8, italics added in both cases). The list of language groups given, involving sixteen distinct regions and provinces, as well as the city of Rome, indicates that “God’s deeds of power” (2:11b) are witnessed through not just one voice but many, these being representative of the known world (e.g. of the list of seventy nations of the Old Testament). The multivocality of the divinely inspired and empowered witness, through the Spirit, therefore includes those that may have been summarily and variously dismissed, perhaps because they represented the oppressive powers that be (Rome); perhaps because they derived from groups estranged from one another (Jews vis-à-vis Arabs; 2:11a); or perhaps because they related to ethnically or culturally stigmatized people groups (e.g. the African continent, whether including Libyans, Cyreneans, or Egyptians; 2:10b). Recall, for instance, the saying found in one of the pastoral letters about Cretans (2:11a): “It was one of them, their very own prophet, who said, ‘Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons’” (Titus 1:12); aside from the put-down, notice the riddle which itself is part of the “joke”: that an untrustworthy Cretan is the one whose saying about untrustworthiness we are invited to trust—which is surely indicative of cross-cultural stereotyping in the first century Mediterranean world! In short, we might not consider certain cultural groups to be potential sources of the divine speech, yet here, and across the rest of the book of Acts, we see the breath of God blowing through unclean gentiles (10:1 *passim*), pagan poets (17:28), and even barbaric islanders (28:1 *passim*; see Yong 2011b: 185–88, 2014b: 141–50). Hence, the pneumatological imagination is multi-lingually enunciated and multi-culturally articulated.

And it is certainly in and through such plurivocality that the pneumatological imagination is thereby as dissonant as it is consonant. Yes, there is a clarity of witness about “God’s deeds of power” that comes through; but this does not justify minimization of the bewilderment (2:6), amazement, and perplexity (2:12) of what is happening. Thus, the response brought forth a request for clarification to and from “one another, ‘What does this mean?’” (2:12). The response, about which Luke says: “others sneered and said, ‘They are filled with new wine’” (2:13), demonstrates that the sequence of events was not self-resolving. I suggest we can grasp the Pentecost event in this sense as being both *multicultural* in echoing many distinct languages and also *intercultural* in that the sounding forth of these many tongues catalyzed as much mis- and non-understanding as it did comprehension. Yet such confusion does not have the final word. Instead, what we have is a paradoxically “unbelievable, universal capacity to understand” (Welker 1994, 231). We thereby ought to celebrate the gift of multi-cultural multiplicity amid cross-cultural communicability, but still not underestimate the tremendous challenges swirling within such inter-cultural spaces and dynamics. Greek-speaking and Hebrew-speaking women, and men, later in the Acts story, grapple incapably with such intercultural confusion (6:1). The point is not to erect an unfathomable chasm between cultures and languages but yet also not to minimize their distinctiveness and fluid incommensurabilities at various junctures. Such recognition holds forth both the challenge and the promise of the pneumatological imagination: that it has the capacity to preserve the particularity of unfamiliar voices without dismissing their alienness. Instead, the pneumatological imagination provides a site for remaining with bafflement and puzzlement,

without needing to move too quickly into congruent resolution that eliminates and does so simply by silencing, ignoring, or submerging.

In the end, however, creaturely multiculturality (the fact of human plurality) and interculturality (the processes of human intercourse) are, through the pneumatological imagination, mapped onto a pentecostally mediated transculturality. Certainly, since the pneumatological imagination cannot be reduced to the immanent plane, our pentecostally configured scheme not only recognizes but embraces the divine breath's entry into and residence within the human condition. The day of Pentecost narrates the coming of the divine wind into the creaturely sphere, entering into conventionally constructed abodes, alighting on measly flesh, and stimulating creaturely utterances. The transculturality witnessed to, thus, cannot be merely humanly concocted; nevertheless, it also cannot then be insisted on only as super-natural (miraculous) divine intervention. Instead, the transcultural witness of the Spirit happens, however unexpectedly, in and through the specificities of human languages. The pneumatological imagination thereby enables speech about, and understanding of, not just creaturely actualities but as they relate to the divine realm.

My claim is that the pneumatological imagination is shaped by, and arouses aptitude for, such multicultural, intercultural, and transcultural communication. Here I urge that the cultural not be reduced to natural linguistic groups but that they pertain to and encompass the full spectrum of humanly evolved discursivity, from the ethnic to the social and political to the disciplinary. Societal spheres, for instance, breed their own unique speech acts, or discursive practices, that guide engagement in those various domains (e.g. the economic, the aesthetic, the political), so that expert navigation in these arenas involves socialization or the mastery of the pertinent linguistic practices. That is why, for instance, we need political theologies, which can enable adept interface with the realm of the political (see Yong 2010). Similarly, and by extension, the earning of degrees, particularly at the graduate levels, involves acclimation to culturally constructed forms of understanding and inquiry apposite to specific objects or fields of study (see Chapter 10). The human and natural sciences are disciplinary discourses of scholarly, scientific, and methodological practices (see Chapter 42), each forged by cultures of investigation that then nurture environments of exploration, both combining to require years of acculturation (Yong 2011c). Here, the pneumatological imagination harnesses both multi- and inter-cultural communication in all of their variegatedness into a sphere of trans-cultural inquiry and probes both deeper and wider in the search for understanding and truth.

Performing Pentecost: many interpenetrating voices

Acts 2 has moved us from the phenomenological and experiential (vv. 1–4) through the cultural (vv. 5–12) to the interpersonal dimensions of the pneumatological imagination, prompted by the shift to Peter's explication, as recorded by Luke (vv. 14–21). In this passage, the explanation is buttressed scripturally (from Joel 2:28–32), indicative also of the pneumatological imagination's scripturalism, i.e. its motivation to correlate the biblical witness to the presence and activity of the divine wind of breath—*ruah* in the Hebrew and *pneuma* in the Greek—with our experience of and interaction with the world. If the Christian hermeneutic revisits the texts of ancient Israel after incarnation and Easter so as to re-read the Old Testament Christologically, then the pneumatological imagination also reconsiders the sacred writings of the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants after Pentecost so as to retrieve and reappropriate the Hebrew Bible ruahically or ruahologically (see also Yong 2019). Hence, the many voices of the prophets and writings of the Jewish canon reverberate within the pneumatological imagination.

Turning to what is said in the Pentecost narrative, the first part of the Petrine citation identifies the subjects of the pneumatological imagination:

In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

(Acts 2:17–18)

The important observations concern both the democratic comprehensiveness of the Spirit's inspirational enablement and their capacity to mobilize what postcolonial perspectives would label as subaltern voices (Joy 2014). On the former point, the four registers are all-inclusive according to first-century understandings: all are born either sons or daughters—with no middle or alternative descriptor—and are thereby either men or women; further, also, all are either young(er) or (getting) old(er). In other words, the universality of the Spirit's outpouring—*upon all flesh*—is consistent with the earlier denotation, “from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5), even as it anticipates the later pronouncement of “the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets” (3:21b). The pneumatological imagination is aspirationally universal in its horizons and enfolding capacities.

This universality, however, privileges those from the so-called underside of history: women, the young, and servants or slaves. These who are the socially marginalized in patriarchal and aristocratic gerontocracies are *the* receptors of the Spirit's blowing. The pneumatological imagination, in other words, lifts up those whose voices have been historically and traditionally sidelined, whether because of gender, power, or class/economics (Yong 2019b). Truly, that the Spirit would enable young girls, even female slaves and servants, to prophesy (cf. Acts 21:9) confirms that “God is no respecter of persons” (10:34b; KJV). There is a strong sense, then, that the powers of the present age, the conventions, traditions, and structures of this world, are being undermined by the witness of those filled with the Spirit. The status quo is passing away and the new world of the messiah—the Spirit-anointed redeemer (10:38)—is dawning.

What does this pneumatological imagination initiate? Nothing less than the possibility, according to Peter, citing Joel, as recorded by Luke, that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (2:21). There is, therefore, a soteriological trajectory envisioned by the pneumatological imagination, one which promises the gift of the Spirit for all, across space and time: “For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him” (2:39). Yet the Pentecost experience, and message, thereby is soteriological precisely as eschatological (see Chapter 25), meaning that the redemptive salvation of the wind of God is at hand now (2000 years ago) and always, and is available here and everywhere, indeed, “in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth [*eschatou tes ges*]” (1:8b). The apocalyptic character of the Joel prophecy captured in the Petrine-Lukan reappropriation heralds the cosmic expansiveness of the pneumatic in-breaking. Of course, then, there will be “portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist;” what else would be expected than that, “[t]he sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day” (2:19–20). The eschatological hence salvages not just the temporal dimension of time but the geographic and creational-material domain of space, unending even, so that the pneumatological imagination instigates yearning for and reception of cosmic renewal by the divine breath.

The pneumatological imagination, consequently, is not merely a speculative conceptual schema that facilitates discernment of deity in relationship to the world but also envisions

performative praxis for participating in and implementing the salvific renewal of the world accomplished by the triune God. So, although Jesus' response to the disciples' post-Easter question, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" (1:6), disabused them of their assumption that now was the time for undermining the *Pax Romana* and kicking the oppressors out of Palestine, in another respect his answer addressed their longing for redemption—albeit not in monergistic terms of Jesus overthrowing Roman rule but in the synergistic collaboration of his followers being filled with his Spirit to form creatively new communities of equals (2:42–47, 4:34–37). The pneumatological imagination authorizes practical activity and behavior that inaugurates the divine reign and rule (detailed in the Book of Acts) according to the form revealed in the life, ministry, and message of Jesus the Spirit-bearing Messiah (see Chapter 20) delineated in the Gospel of Luke.

Conclusion

Coming from a modern Pentecostal background, I confess that the pneumatological imagination being proffered here has roots in what may be called the Pentecostal social imaginary (see Smith 2010). Yet I hope to have shown that even if of (contemporary) Pentecostal derivation, the pneumatological imagination is fundamentally of (ancient) Pentecost inspiration, meaning funded by the (first century) day of Pentecost's outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh. In that respect, the pneumatological imagination is not a disposition for only contemporary believers in the modern Pentecostal movement, but is, or ought to be, a Pentecost sensibility for all followers of messiah Jesus who seek to follow in his steps empowered by the same Spirit.

From this perspective, it might be added, all Christian theology is Pentecostal—or Pentecost-based—and charismatic, if only implicitly then in a way that this chapter seeks to render more explicit: we confess Christ only in and through the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3) and therefore also think, particularly theologically, in the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10–16; cf. Yong 2016b). As aforementioned, the pneumatological imagination is both Patrological and Christological, albeit in different respects, so that it contributes to the fully trinitarian theological vision that is central to the Christian faith. From this, the pneumatological imagination envisages the creational, incarnational, and Pentecostal interfaces between God and the world so as to enable understanding of and redemptive praxis amid a currently fallen existence. Last but not least, the pneumatological imagination recruits the many voices—of individuals and the fullness of their embodied experiences, of culturally embedded persons-in-communities, and of all persons on the putative underside of history—so that they can harmonize, however dissonantly, in declaring the wondrousness of divine truth and in "speaking about God's deeds of power" (Acts 2:11b). In the present moment early in the twenty-first century, surely on the front end of the third millennium, I suggest that we need more of what I have here called the pneumatological imagination in order to navigate theologically the many voices in a multi-cultural, multi-religious, and post-secular public square. We need a pneumatological and Pentecost theology, which is at least, if not much more, than the Pentecostal theology that the modern revival movement has helped name and catalyzed.

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