

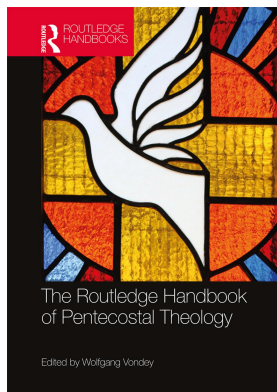
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## **The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology**

Wolfgang Vondey

### **Systematic Pentecostal Theology**

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Christopher A. Stephenson

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# 1

## SYSTEMATIC PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

### A typology

*Christopher A. Stephenson*

This chapter offers a typology of methodologies in systematic Pentecostal theology that introduces the reader to the varieties of this theological tradition. This task faces several challenges: (1) Pentecostal theologians do not always demonstrate that they are aware of the methodological features of their own theology. Some make explicit statements on this score, but others simply proceed without acknowledging these matters. Of course, a theologian's awareness of one's own methodology is neither necessary nor sufficient for assessing the methodology. An interpreter can evaluate theological method without explicit statements of the author's awareness of methodology, and an author's explicit statements of methodology do not guarantee that the theologian in fact follows the methodological features thus identified. (2) Such a task inevitably requires one to assess the theology of several figures who are still active and, therefore, whose theology is still developing. Small and subtle shifts in successive publications can affect the broad contours of a theologian's thought. (3) As with any typology, there may be more than one way to arrange the same data and to present it in a way that is faithful to the primary sources in question. Therefore, I offer what I believe is not the only but the most accurate typology of systematic Pentecostal theology. This typology, I argue, provides important perspectives for anyone who seeks to understand the scope and nature of Pentecostal theology in light of the diversity of perspectives of this theological tradition.

The above challenges invite humility when classifying the various methodologies. Nonetheless, some theological characteristics are more fundamental than others. While a few characteristics might surface in most or all Pentecostal theologies, there are deeper similarities and differences in areas like the relationship between Scripture and tradition, philosophical sophistication, the relationship between theology and other disciplines, and points of continuity and discontinuity with theologies outside the Pentecostal tradition. Although one cannot altogether separate the formal and material components of Pentecostal theology, I focus here on the basic theological contours of representative Pentecostal theologians rather than trying to give account of the details of each theologian's views. Herein, "theological method" refers to the ways that Pentecostals go about thinking and writing theologically, not to a stultifying procedure that guarantees precise theological statements if one only makes sure to follow perfectly defined steps and procedures.

All of the figures that I discuss in this chapter have written either a book that addresses several traditional loci in systematic theology or a constructive volume with implications for theological method. An important fact about the recent surge in Pentecostal systematic theology is that it coincides with a growing distrust for intellectual systems in parts of the academy. Some theologians now prefer “constructive” theology instead of “systematic” theology because they fear that any attempt to organize all theological concerns around one theme or principle—an abiding approach in Western systematic theology—inevitably marginalizes people groups and perspectives. They are also concerned that “systematic” connotes an arrangement of timeless truths immune from constant criticism and reformulation (Coakley 2013, 33–60; Wyman 2017). Pentecostal theologians are only beginning to navigate these questions and have not yet expressed a decided preference for one term over the other, so that I use the designation “systematic theology” to include theology around a thematic principle, as well as constructive, philosophical, fundamental, spiritual, and liturgical theology. I exclude purely scriptural or historical works. Although my presentation is representative rather than exhaustive (Stephenson 2013), I suggest that one can identify six broad types of the way Pentecostals pursue the theological task. I describe and assess each type, in turn, and conclude with some reflections on the impact of this typology for the study of Pentecostal theology.

### Theology as Bible doctrines

The first type of Pentecostal systematic theology can be labeled “Bible doctrines” and is represented by the works of Myer Pearlman, E. S. Williams, and French L Arrington. This methodology is primarily a categorical arrangement of the biblical texts presented as a simplified version of biblical studies within a structure composed of traditional loci of systematic theology. This methodology features literal readings of Scripture that tend to see equal value for theological reflection in all statements in the Bible, since the Holy Spirit inspires all of the Bible. In short, the Bible doctrines approach largely reduces systematic theological method to biblical interpretation.

Pearlman, Williams, and Arrington usually interpret Scripture in a straightforward fashion that avoids tropes like allegory and seeks the so-called plain sense of Scripture. Thus, Arrington notes the value of scholarly tools for studying the Bible and insists that the average Christian can understand Scripture with the Spirit’s help and largely without these tools. This insistence is one of the hallmarks of the influence of common-sense realism on classical Pentecostalism. The three representatives also make word study primary when interpreting Scripture. They seem to assume that words have static meanings that one can uncover by vocabulary-based study, and they employ lexical resources to expound on the meanings of individual Hebrew or Greek words. Rather than detailed exegesis based on historical, grammatical, and literary investigations, one finds word study of biblical terms (Pearlman 1937, 85–86; Williams 1953, 1, 131–35; Arrington 1992–94, 2: 121). The pre-supposition for this methodology is the assertion that the Bible is the primary source for learning doctrine. That is, to know what to believe about a doctrine, one reads all portions of Scripture related to the topic, since relying on a statement here or there is not sufficient for attaining a comprehensive perspective on a Christian teaching. Pearlman, Williams, and Arrington treat the Bible as if it were a collection of data that one must pour over in order to reach general conclusions. Thus, Pearlman and Williams sometimes do no more than state a proposition followed by Scripture references that serve as prooftexts for a particular belief.

Related to this assumed relationship between Scripture and doctrine are other categories such as dogma and systematic theology. For example, by “doctrines,” Pearlman means

complete ideas contained in the Bible, not ideas extrapolated from Scripture that undergo further development and achieve more nuanced articulation in the theological tradition that is in keeping with their biblical points of departure. “Dogmas,” however, are later human developments that formulate the “doctrines” revealed in Scripture into creeds. As an illustration of these conceptual distinctions and their relationships to each other, Pearlman says that early Christians safeguarded the truth of the “doctrine” of the Trinity by formulating “dogmas” such as the Athanasian creed. “Dogmas,” he suggests, are necessary to deter erroneous interpretation of “doctrines” in the Bible (Pearlman 1937, 20–21, 71, 144–46).

Each representative places at the beginning of his systematic theology a rudimentary theological epistemology with the Bible as its central component. That is, each discusses Scripture as the means for justifying the claim that one can have knowledge of God. While none of the authors show awareness of basic questions in metaphysics or epistemology, each one operates, even if unconsciously, with presuppositions surrounding the epistemological crisis of the late modern world and the corollary skepticism of some thinkers about the possibility of metaphysics. For Pearlman, Williams, and Arrington, Scripture guarantees that humans can have genuine knowledge of God and that systematic theology (from the perspective of this methodology) is a legitimate enterprise. This practice of starting with the theological epistemology highlights the following elements: (1) before one considers various topics in systematic theology one must first give an account of how one claims to have any knowledge of Christian truth or doctrine; (2) God’s revelation alone is the source of this knowledge; (3) some knowledge of God may be attained through general revelation; (4) the inadequacy of general revelation—due in part to the noetic effects of sin—makes special revelation necessary for sufficient knowledge of God; (5) Scripture is the most important form of special revelation; (6) the trustworthiness of Scripture depends on the Spirit’s inspiration of it; (7) one’s ability to interpret Scripture correctly depends on the Spirit’s illumination of it; and (8) all of these seven characteristics are predicated on the conceptual distinctions among revelation, inspiration, and illumination.

### **Theology and spirituality**

The second type makes primary the relationship between theology and Christian spirituality, and two major representatives are Steven J. Land and Simon K. H. Chan. Both address the place of elements such as prayer, worship, religious affections, virtues, and spiritual disciplines in systematic theology. Land argues that spirituality is the very means through which Pentecostals express their theology, and Chan argues that Pentecostal theologians should rejuvenate theology and spirituality by incorporating aspects of the wider Christian spiritual tradition and by adopting a normative liturgy centered on word and sacrament.

Land (1993, 1) describes spirituality as “the integration of beliefs and practices in the affections which are themselves evoked and expressed by those beliefs and practices,” the integration of orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and orthopathy, and Pentecostal spirituality consists of the various manifestations of this triad (Land 1993, 112). One of the most important Pentecostal beliefs for Land is the fivefold gospel—the confession that Jesus is savior, sanctifier, baptizer in the Holy Spirit, healer, and soon-coming king. Frequent Pentecostal practices are water baptism, the Lord’s Supper, footwashing, singing, praying, spiritual gifts, and preaching. Affections norm beliefs and practices and are also normed by beliefs and practices. Affections give rise to beliefs and practices and are also fueled by beliefs and practices (Land 1993, 120–21, 138). Key Pentecostal affections are gratitude, compassion, and courage.

According to Land, Pentecostal affections are far more than emotions, and maintain Pentecostal spirituality as a way of living. Apocalyptic vision intensifies the affections by adding to them a sense of urgency about the church's mission. The Holy Spirit ignites a passion for the kingdom of God, which governs all other Christian affections and gives them their distinctively Pentecostal tenor (Land 1993, 136–37). The emphasis on Jesus as soon-coming king invigorates all other Pentecostal beliefs. For Land, then, Pentecostal spirituality's eschatological context must receive proper consideration for the spirituality to be comprehensible. In fact, the eschatological impulse is the driving force of the Pentecostal tradition (Land 1993, 22–23, 29, 56–64).

In Land's view, the entire worshipping community carries out the theological process, which involves discerning reflection on lived reality. Spirituality—the fundament and precondition of all theology—calls for theology that is concerned precisely with this discerning reflection. In turn, both theology's process and its result reflect the distinctively Pentecostal spirituality (Land 1993, 192, 218–19). In short, spirituality is theology's content, medium, and mode of expression, and the theological process establishes spirituality by integrating beliefs, practices, and affections.

Ascetical and mystical theology figures prominently in Chan's descriptions of the relationship between spirituality and theology (Chan 1998, 9–18). Chan insists that Pentecostals must discern the place of their own spirituality within and in light of the broader Christian spiritual tradition. This discernment is necessary because only it can lend the coherence to Pentecostal beliefs and values required for Pentecostals to communicate them successfully to future generations (see Chapter 9). Chan calls this process “traditioning” and maintains that it requires the integrative thinking of systematic theology and the development of a detailed theology of the spiritual life (Chan 2000, 7–12).

The failure of Pentecostals to understand their beliefs and spiritual practices against the background of the larger spiritual tradition undermines their ability to “tradition” their members, who, in turn, come to hold relatively shallow versions of Pentecostal beliefs. Chan illustrates the difficulty with two of the most prized Pentecostal beliefs—baptism in the Holy Spirit and glossolalia—which he says are far richer in experience than in the common explanations given by Pentecostals (Chan 2000, 7–16). To demonstrate how even the most distinctive of Pentecostal beliefs might meet with continuity in the wider spiritual tradition, Chan suggests formal similarities between the Pentecostal three-stage soteriology of being saved, sanctified, and baptized in the Holy Spirit and the spiritual tradition's three ways of purgation, illumination, and union.

The church is the most important context in which one lives the Christian life, and Chan highlights Pentecostals' particular need to develop a strong ecclesiology that is marked by a theology of worship and an accompanying liturgical spirituality. He stresses the “ontological”—rather than purely “sociological” or “functional”—identity of the church as the basis for spiritual practices and worship practices (Chan 2006, 2014). Other characteristics of a robust ecclesiology include acknowledging that the church is closely related to the kingdom of God and that the church defines the rest of creation more than the rest of creation defines the church. The church, he adds, completes the story of the triune God's activity in creation, inasmuch as the Father sends the Son and the Spirit, and the Spirit establishes and indwells the church (Chan 2011).

### **Theology in light of the kingdom of God**

The third type is theology in light of a doctrine of the kingdom of God. The chief representative is Frank D. Macchia, whose theology contains three stages of attention to pneumatology. An emphasis on the kingdom runs through each stage: (1) a facet of pneumatology

(glossolalia), (2) a pneumatological account of justification, and (3) pneumatology as the organizing principle for theology. Macchia (1993, 158–59) finds in the pietist theology of Johann and Christoph Blumhardt an eschatology fueled by the dawning of God’s kingdom manifested in history as the liberation of the sick and the poor. The Blumhardts’ theology of the kingdom, Macchia suggests, encourages Pentecostals to embrace the healing potential of modern medicine through technological advancement and concrete political involvement through social activism, not just through prayer and faith (Macchia 1993, 166–67).

Related to a doctrine of the kingdom of God, Macchia develops a thorough constructive Pentecostal theology of glossolalia. He states that Jesus’ death and resurrection make Pentecost an eschatological theophany. Since his death and resurrection are the height of Jesus’ liberating work “for us,” glossolalia should prompt us to seek justice “for others.” Liberating humans takes place within the context of new creation, and when glossolalia promotes social and ecological action that liberates, it is evidence that new creation is already underway (Macchia 1992, 68–72). By emphasizing the connection between glossolalia and baptism in the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of initial evidence points to the heart of baptism in the Holy Spirit, which Macchia describes as encouragement for social engagement. Through glossolalia, believers groan with creation and wait for final redemption; it may also move them to advocate for victims of injustice (Macchia 1998, 159–64).

Concerning what Macchia calls “Spirit-baptized justification,” he observes a shift in his own thought to associating justification with the kingdom of God more intentionally. The newer association stems from increasingly seeing God’s kingdom within a pneumatological context by emphasizing Jesus as the one who both inaugurates the kingdom and baptizes in the Holy Spirit (see Chapter 23). Macchia argues that giving justification a pneumatological orientation has implications for Christian ethics: the Spirit’s preparation of humans for ultimate justification in the form of the resurrection from the dead is the work by which the church resists forces like racism and sexism. On this score, Macchia criticizes the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* for an inadequate pneumatological basis, which limits its focus to the justification of individual persons and, thus, hinders a conceptual transition from justification as declared righteousness to justification as the renewal of all of creation (Macchia 2010). Hence, a different organizing principle is needed for Pentecostal theology.

Macchia’s organizing principle for systematic theology is an account of baptism in the Holy Spirit that (1) rejects bifurcation between sanctification and charismatic empowerment by serving as a soteriological metaphor that includes justification, sanctification, and charismatic gifts; (2) commends itself as the single central Pentecostal distinctive; (3) resists a false dilemma between baptism in the Holy Spirit and eschatology; and (4) serves as systematic theology’s organizing principle *precisely as* the Pentecostal tradition’s chief doctrinal distinctive. In the process, Macchia attempts to set baptism in the Holy Spirit within the context of pneumatology itself. The upshot is a thoroughly eschatological doctrine of Spirit baptism that is broad enough to encompass the entire Christian life in the Spirit (Macchia 2006, 15–18).

Another implication concerns the relationships among the church, the kingdom of God, and Spirit baptism. Macchia observes that ecumenical debates over Spirit baptism tend to focus on its relationship to Christian initiation, and he states that acknowledging baptism in the Holy Spirit as part of the means through which Jesus inaugurates the kingdom suggests that baptism in the Holy Spirit should not be restricted to the ecclesiological realm. Instead, the kingdom is a more helpful context in which to understand Spirit baptism because the kingdom both includes and transcends the church (Macchia 2006, 62–63). Herewith, Macchia tries to avoid the two extremes of either dichotomizing the church and the kingdom or

identifying them without any distinction. This approach also leads Macchia to a Christology from the perspective of Pentecost, in which Jesus is both Spirit-baptized and Spirit-baptizer (Macchia 2018).

### Philosophical and fundamental theology

The fourth type is systematic Pentecostal theology in the form of philosophical and fundamental theology, and the main representative is Amos Yong. His foundational pneumatology, pneumatological imagination (see Chapter 14), and concomitant theory of interpretation take up questions about God's nature and relationship to the world and first theology (Yong 2002, 2017). For Yong, foundational pneumatology is an account of the relationship between God and the world in pneumatological perspective. The prominence of pneumatology owes to Yong's contention that "Holy Spirit" is the most appropriate category for referring to God's agency in the world (Yong 2000b, 175). The ideas of God and the world are correlated such that God is capable of acting in the world and the world is capable of receiving God's presence and activity (Yong 2000a, 99). Pneumatological imagination spans the gap between the order of being and order of knowing, which are distinct from but related to each other. That is, the Holy Spirit illuminates the rationality of the world (see Chapter 7) and makes it intelligible to human minds (Yong 2002, 123). Nonetheless, human beings should be humble because knowledge is fallible since it is always indirect and semiotic, situated in a particular time and place marked by social and cultural influences on our interpretation, and finite (Yong 2002, 176–83). Communal interpretation refers to the fact that all metaphysics and epistemology are necessarily hermeneutical because human knowledge of reality always arises from within interpretive communities (Yong 2002, 275–76). Yong strives to avoid the polar extremes of naïve realism and epistemological pluralism, for he both grants the perspectival nature of all human knowing and denies that interpretive communities are insulated intellectual ghettos that are normed only by their own narrow concerns.

Yong's theological method forms the logic by which the rest of his theological program operates. Claiming that theology should draw on a plurality of perspectives, he uses the metaphor of "many tongues" from Pentecost, in which a plurality of tongues are spoken and heard by several different people groups. Among the areas of Yong's thought that most clearly demonstrate this methodology are his theology of religions, his proposals for a global theology, his treatment of certain systematic loci, and his contributions to the dialogue between religion and science.

Yong (2000a) has been one of the most vocal theologians encouraging Pentecostals to articulate a theology of religions (see Chapter 41). Integral to his own contributions is his account of discerning the presence, activity, and absence of the Holy Spirit and of other spirits in various religious traditions. He invites Pentecostals to recognize the possibility that the Spirit is at work in places where Christ is not explicitly confessed. This implies that interreligious dialogue partners can temporarily suspend Christological questions that might lead quickly to an impasse in the conversation and can focus on pneumatological questions first (Yong 2000b, 70). The recognition of the Spirit's presence in non-Christian religions has both ontological and concrete levels. Concerning the ontological, the texts, myths, rituals, and moral codes are what they are to some extent because they are creations of the Spirit. Concerning the concrete, the extent to which these same elements represent themselves authentically and are situated coherently within their respective religious traditions attests to the Spirit's presence within those traditions to a greater or lesser degree. Not all such symbols convey divine presence, however, and to the extent that they disrupt

human flourishing, they suggest divine absence, or, the demonic. The possibility of divine or demonic presence requires a theology of discernment that carefully interprets religious symbols rather than reaching conclusions a priori about presence, activity, and absence (Yong 2000b, 133, 136–37).

With respect to global theology, Yong insists that Christian theology has much to contribute to the current global contexts. Thus, Christians should not shy away from making global claims in the public domain outside their ecclesial contexts. Because Pentecostalism spans the globe, it provides unique resources for shaping a Christian theology that can address all people groups without minimizing the differences among the many Christian traditions. Granting the vast differences among Pentecostals, Yong (2002, 101) contends for a recurring theological theme, namely, an emphasis on the concrete nature of salvation as attested by the Spirit's works in physical, social, and political dimensions. Hence, the same foundational pneumatology guides Yong's theology of disability (Yong 2007, 10–14) and the dialogue between religion and science (2012), since Yong sees the natural, social, and human sciences as additional examples of some of the "many tongues" (Yong 2011, 27–29) to which Pentecostals must listen to create a broad and hospitable theology (see Chapters 32 and 42).

### **Theology as full gospel**

Type five casts systematic Pentecostal theology in the light of the full gospel, a dominant historical motif derived from classical Pentecostalism, and the chief representative is Wolfgang Vondey. While remaining sensitive to Pentecostalism's global diversity, Vondey (2013) resists the notion that this diversity necessitates speaking of a plurality of Pentecostalisms to the exclusion of a singular center of the Pentecostal tradition and its theology. He proposes that the full gospel—exemplified in the fivefold proclamation of Jesus as savior, sanctifier, Spirit baptizer, healer, and soon-coming king—is the theological narrative of Pentecostalism, which corresponds to Pentecost as the core theological symbol which the narrative projects (Vondey 2017, 1–10). The origin of the full gospel, and therefore participation in Pentecost, are Pentecostal spirituality and worship manifested in practices oriented around the altar. Pentecostal theology, therefore, does not refer to a central doctrine but to a way of living that is concerned fundamentally with God's renewing work in the world. Pentecost embodies an ethos of play (Vondey 2010, 2018) before it gives rise to doctrine through a participatory liturgical narrative that yields a biblically and theologically organized and embodied theology (see Chapter 16).

Vondey posits that Pentecostal theology is fundamentally soteriological. Although the narrative of salvation is centered on Jesus, in Pentecostal perspective, salvation through Christ is accomplished by the Spirit. Christology is interpreted in pneumatological perspective and pneumatology is interpreted in Christological perspective, so that Pentecostal articulations of salvation always take the form of some kind of Spirit Christology, inasmuch as Luke-Acts describes Christ's saving work in terms of his anointing with the Holy Spirit. Vondey contends that the Pentecostal perspective of salvation begins with a narrative of Jesus, which is imbued with the Spirit: the Son and the Spirit co-determine the Incarnation; the Spirit creates and unites the humanity of Jesus with the eternal Son; and the Son's action in Christ is determinative for the Spirit, since the salvation made possible by the Incarnation manifests Jesus' obedience to the Spirit's leading (Vondey 2017, 54). From here the theological narrative can be widened to other theological themes and concerns.

Vondey's doctrines of choice and manner of articulating them constitute some of the most exciting and creative portions of his full gospel theology. He selects creation (cosmology),



humanity (anthropology), society (social and cultural anthropology), church (ecclesiology), and God (doxology), and correlates each of these areas with the five tenets of the full gospel. Vondey suggests that Pentecostal theology pursues these (and other) theological loci through the emphases on salvation (see Chapter 21), sanctification (see Chapter 22), Spirit baptism (see Chapter 23), divine healing (see Chapter 24), and the coming kingdom (see Chapter 25). Thus, for example, he explores “creation baptized in the Spirit” and “divine healing and the egalitarian church.” Vondey also connects Spirit baptism explicitly with human embodiment. On a superficial level, making this connection requires little imagination, since the day of Pentecost is the first fulfillment of the promise for the Holy Spirit to come upon all flesh, and the fleshly creatures who will dream, see visions, and so on are human beings. And yet, Vondey insists that the embodiment in question is both social and relational, not purely individual (Vondey 2017, 185–88). He relates salvation to cosmopolitan deliverance and states the need for a “confrontational soteriology” that wrestles with spiritual powers and authorities in social realms such as culture, politics, religion, and economics. In the process, he retains a place for some elements of traditional Pentecostal accounts of demonology and spiritual warfare while replacing the historic dualism of these categories with an emphasis on God confronting all ontological facets of existing things (Vondey 2017, 201–6). Even if it resists strictly doctrinal articulation, the full gospel is an organizing mechanism for global Pentecostal thought and praxis (Vondey 2016). Finally, Vondey claims that Pentecost is an eschatological and not merely historical category. One implication of this emphasis is that Pentecost, in some sense, is an eternal event within the life of God (Vondey 2017, 276). With a focus on the kingdom of God as a corollary to this implication, Pentecostals interpret Pentecost as the final revelation of the kingdom of God before the return of Christ.

### Theology for the pluralistic world

The five-volume constructive theology (2013–17) of Finish Pentecostal Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen makes him a key representative of the sixth methodological type, which focuses on systematic theology for the pluralistic world. While Kärkkäinen does not see his project as an explicitly Pentecostal theology, he observes that there is never a single theological method but always a plurality of methods at work. In fact, theologians at times become preoccupied with methodology as they attempt to navigate all of the methodological options, and such an approach risks getting lost in contentious details at the outset (Kärkkäinen 2013–17, 1:1–4). Instead, he describes systematic or constructive theology as an integrative discipline that searches for a coherent and balanced understanding of truth in light of the Christian tradition and in the contexts of contemporary thoughts, cultures, and living faiths. It seeks to be inclusive, dialogical, and hospitable (Kärkkäinen 2013–17, 1:13). “Integrative” refers to drawing on multiple sub-disciplines within theology in addition to systematics, as well as drawing on academic disciplines outside religious studies. “Systematic/constructive” refers to a need for theological statements to be coherent, but not at the expense of the characteristic of correspondence. That is, theological claims should avoid both internal contradiction and conform to realities external to the system of thought itself.

For Kärkkäinen, attending to external realities in systematic theology requires an engagement with non-Christian religions, particularly through comparative theology. Comparative theology involves taking the theological beliefs of a single faith tradition as the point of departure and exploring the beliefs of another faith tradition comparatively in the hopes of achieving the articulation of a theological belief informed by both the faith tradition in which the comparative theologian is situated and the newly explored faith tradition. This

procedure requires the comparative theologian to have faith commitments to a particular tradition; it does not rule out faith commitments (Kärkkäinen 2013–17, 1:23–29). Kärkkäinen closes his methodological considerations by observing that theology should be understood as an expression of hospitality and mutual exchange since it both receives insights from other traditions and contexts and shares its own convictions by humbly and respectfully arguing for the truth of its claims.

Kärkkäinen calls for no less than a shift in pneumatology from a “unitive” model to a “plural” model. The latter speaks of the Holy Spirit within a cosmology of many spirits and powers, whereas the former fails to situate discussions of the Spirit this way. Not to be confused with a sloppy relativism that shies away from normative claims about various spirits in the world, his approach attempts to develop a pneumatology that acknowledges the existence of spirits and their relationship to the Holy Spirit. His pneumatological interests are particularly pronounced in his discussion of the Holy Spirit in non-Christian religions. After examining Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions, he offers guidelines for discerning the s/Spirit(s). In light of the fact that Pentecostals have sometimes reduced discernment of spirits to a gift of the Holy Spirit that enables one to know through supernatural means that someone is under demonic influence, Kärkkäinen describes discernment of spirits in broader terms that include more general assessments of religious traditions’ beliefs, symbols, rituals, and practices and their relationship to Christianity. He believes that no less than a robust trinitarian approach will suffice for this kind of theology and warns against recent approaches to Christian theology of religions that he considers one-sidedly pneumatological (Kärkkäinen 2013–17, 4:119–77). A Pentecostal theology for a pluralistic world is characterized by this hospitable but discerning methodology (see Chapter 41).

### Implications of the typology

As with any typology, there may be more than one way to arrange the same data and to present it in a way that is faithful to the primary sources in question. For example, (the later) Macchia and Yong converge on the prominence that they give to pneumatology relative to the whole of theology. In this respect, both of them exhibit characteristics of a type of systematic theology that might be called “third article” or “pneumatological theology.” Macchia and Kärkkäinen converge on the decidedly ecumenical shape of their methodologies. While Kärkkäinen exhibits this trait more consistently and thoroughly, Macchia’s appraisal of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* and analysis of baptism in the Holy Spirit in connection with the church and the kingdom could warrant including him in a type of “ecumenical theology.” Yong and Kärkkäinen converge on the prominence of theology of religions and interreligious dialogue within their systematic theologies. Inasmuch as they contend that one can no longer produce systematic theology responsibly without taking seriously the plurality of non-Christian religions, both of them might be considered representatives of a type of “comparative theology.” Yong and Kärkkäinen also converge to some degree on elements of theology and pluralism, although in slightly different ways. Yong strives to maintain the most desirable facets of liberalism’s emphasis on universality and of postliberal and postconservative attentiveness to the particularities and complexities that vary from one community of discourse to another. Kärkkäinen addresses directly questions surrounding the task of theology in a “post- everything world” (Kärkkäinen 2013–17, 1:17). Finally, Vondy could be seen as a representative of systematic theology as spirituality, since he converges with Land and Chan on an emphasis on Pentecostal spirituality and worship as the most important keys to understanding Pentecostal theology, as well as on the centrality

of narrative for Christian self-understanding and accounting for reality. Land and Vondey are especially close to each other on the fivefold gospel as the structure of Pentecostal spirituality and theology. The typology in this chapter organizes these representatives of Pentecostal theology in a way that captures the most fundamental shape of their thought. Nevertheless, alternative arrangements can accentuate various similarities and differences among them. I encourage and hope to learn from the typologies of these theologians and methodologies that other interpreters might offer, even as I continue both to affirm the value of my own typology (Stephenson 2013) and to expand it as Pentecostal systematic theological method increases.

## Conclusion

The present typology carries important implications for this Handbook of Pentecostal Theology by urging the reader to consider that Pentecostal theology is never *only* Pentecostal, since theologians simultaneously participate in multiple communities of discourse that shape their method and hermeneutic (see Chapters 12 and 13). The theologians in this typology and the contributors to this Handbook are influenced not only by their Pentecostal identity but also, for example, by culture, ethnicity, nationality, gender, church tradition, and education. The essays that follow offer sometimes decidedly Protestant perspectives, while the angles of others may be more Catholic or Orthodox. In the Pentecostal theological tradition outlined by the representatives in this volume, there are significant variances and different approaches to the task and method of systematic theology. Contributors are trained in different disciplines of theology and religious studies, which have different canons of literature and at times different interpretive strategies, even to the same pieces of literature. These variations include disagreements between the types and their representatives identified here: some types are only in their infancy, others have strong historical roots; some are embraced by most Pentecostals, while others are still contested ideas and pioneering efforts. None of these factors in and of themselves keep the theology that they produce from being Pentecostal; however, because Pentecostal theologians are never *only* Pentecostal, we do well to remember that there is no such thing as an “ideal” or “pure” Pentecostal theology.

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