

Amos Yong. *The Missiological Spirit: Christian Mission Theology in the Third Millennium Global Context*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014. 276 pp.
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Reviewed by J. Stephen Jester*

This book is a compilation of Amos Yong's essays as a dialogic approach to the relationship between a Pentecostal theology of mission and a Christian theology of religions. In 2014, Yong received appointment as professor of theology and mission in Fuller Seminary's School of Intercultural Studies and appointed director of their Center for Missiological Research. This volume appeared later that year as his treatise on "Christian theology from a missiological or missional perspective" (1). The central thesis he proposes is that "the missiological compulsion of the present twenty-first-century global and pluralistic context can be invigorated by a pneumatological imagination derived from the Day of Pentecost narrative" (2). The twelve chapters comprising the work appeared previously in various academic venues. In this volume a new introduction and conclusion provides summative coherence. The various essays emphasize the intersection of pneumatology and missiology within the pluralistic milieu of the religious other.

Yong delineates his pneumatological imagination theme through a four-part division of twelve chapters. The first part, labeled "Reluctant Missiology," begins in chapter one with an engagement of Julie Ma's missiology through her writings on Pentecostal theology in the Philippines. He believes her work establishes a worthy attempt at bridging the gap between indigenous pneumatic theology and Western theology contextualized in specific environments. In chapter two he grounds his central thesis by examining the Day of Pentecost narrative as it relates to pneumatology, missiology, and religious pluralism. Pentecost occurs as a mutual encounter of diverse others shaped by "the particularities of ... linguistic, socio-historical, and cultural backgrounds" (42), yet preserves diverse identities through unity in plurality. This new

* J. Stephen Jester (PhD in Intercultural Studies, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary) has served as a missionary since 1990 and currently coordinates special book projects for Life Publishers International in Springfield, Missouri.

and diverse community of God represents a temporary modality in “anticipation of the kingdom of God” (47). Further, participation in this community entails “full immersion into the liberating and reconciling work of the spirit of God in all spheres of life” (48).

Yong is sensitive to the sociocultural environment of missional engagement and recognizes the historic emphasis of the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ who reconciles the world within its particularities. He asks the question, “why would this reconciling work of the Spirit ... not include the redemption of the religious sphere of human life?” (48). For Yong, all human existence, including non-Christian faith practices, holds redemptive possibility because he affirms “the Spirit’s presence and activity in the religions” (49). As a result, he calls for a theology of mission that is pneumatologically ecumenical in interfaith encounters. This requires sensitivity to the religious other as dialogue partner.

Chapter three specifically addresses the context of encounters within a religiously plural world by proposing a way forward past the traditional paradigmatic impasse. That is, practitioners either engage religious others on purely Christian terms, which preserves Christocentric dialogue, or encounter revolves around the religious other’s terms, thus losing the centrality of Christ (56). He proposes a pneumatological framework of dialogue focused on the Pentecost narrative as the universalizing model of the Spirit’s activity to reconcile culture, language, and religion. This proposal suggests that religious conversion is a life-long process of encounter, that tradition and ecclesiology evolve over time, and that all religions display dynamic fluidity. In order for the pneumatological paradigm to function, dialogue partners need opportunity to both speak and listen to the other. This leads to conversion of the dialogue partners to the other’s religious perspective, which “will not contradict or compromise our commitment to Christ. What may happen is that the Christian perspective of Christ will be deepened or transformed” (65). He faces potential objections to this pneumatological paradigm by declaring that when the Spirit intersects with human contexts, then categories, human insights, and normativity become less unique and predictable simply because Christian revelation is dynamic rather than static, an inherent quality of the interreligious environment (73).

He enlarges upon the pneumatological paradigm of the Pentecost narrative in the second part of the volume where he proposes Pentecostal missiology as a pragmatic mission theology. Beginning in chapter four, he describes a theology of hospitality within the interreligious encounter that recognizes “Incarnation and Pentecost ... are the ultimate expressions and

manifestations of divine hospitality through which God both gives himself to the world and invites the world to receive the salvation that comes through divine visitation” (88). Hospitality invites participation as guests and hosts to the religious other and allows the missional agent to “stand in solidarity and serve with the sick, the poor, and the oppressed” (89). Discernment is imperative within sociocultural and religious contexts of encounter. This empowers a pneumatological framework, which “is much more ambiguous than exclusivistic and pluralistic theologies of mission because it requires constant attention to context along with spiritual vigilance in attending to what the Holy Spirit might be saying and doing” (93).

Chapter five surveys some of the developments in Pentecostal missiology, beginning with Hodges, leading up to more recent articulations. He believes there is a strong connection between Pentecostal mission theology and Pentecostal theologies of religion. In relation to this intersection, he discusses the paradigms of exclusivism, pluralism, and inclusivism. The position he advocates amalgamates all three through the “‘pneumatological imagination’... that suggests the possibility of the Spirit’s presence and influence in the world in general and in the world’s religions more particularly” (109). He follows this in chapter six with a call for less demonization of the religions and a recognition of “kin-domization” as a witness of the pneumatological imagination (120). The Day of Pentecost narrative provides the universalizing backdrop to the kin-domization of all cultures and faiths in their distinct cultural particularities while universal in their praise of God (136). In chapters seven and eight he applies the thesis to specific contexts: Native Americans and the Buddhist-Christian dialogue. He elaborates more on postcolonial missiology in North America in chapter nine with an analysis of the colonial mindset and his discussion of a post-Constantinian and post-Christendom model.

Part four is the final section with chapters ten, eleven, and twelve. Chapter ten relates the *missio Spiritus* as involving a mission theology that recognizes the Spirit’s universal role in creation, redemptive history, and eschatological fulfillment. He posits that the *missio Spiritus* encompasses the Spirit’s presence and redemptive capacities in culture, economics, politics, and religious life. Chapter eleven takes up the challenge of a Spirit-Christology with a declaration that “faith in Christ can be pneumatically generated even if not expressed according to traditional manifestations” (199). The concept is the development of hidden and cultural believers rather than ecclesial participants because the Spirit reveals the already present Christ within the religious contexts of missional encounter. He finishes the argument in chapter twelve with a

Trinitarian missiology focused on the relational, shalomic, and transformational aspects of encounter.

Yong's work leaves the reader with much to consider and analyze. Informed readers will recognize the dialogic approach he discusses as an often utilized contextualization approach of mission frontier practitioners. His recognition of the Spirit's work as proposed in this volume becomes crucial for those who would establish a posture of embrace and respect within dialogic encounters of religious others in a postcolonial context in a religiously pluralistic world.

There are, however, some concerns inherent within his approach that require discernment. He would argue that dialogic encounters with religious others "cannot be merely the expansion of the church as an institution" (138), but should be "the manifestation of the kin-dom" (138). Kin-dom implies belonging in relationship, which to this reviewer indicates ecclesiastical community. While chapter twelve calls for a Trinitarian mission theology, there is a central *missio Spiritus* distinct from the Body of Christ that could logically lead to incommensurate connections between pneumatology, Christology, and ecclesiology. For example, Yong states that while proclamation should not be minimized, "perhaps we can understand Christ's saving presence and activity in the world in terms irreducible to the church's activities" (227). While the church is the "normal modality" of God's salvific activity, there exist contexts in which the Spirit reveals Christ outside those domains (227). The implications of this position connote Christ as present in the religions, awaiting the pneumatological imagination to reveal him. Many scholars would agree with his conclusions in principle that Christ fulfills the religious aspirations of all cultures and peoples, however, establishing distance between mission and church may potentially lead ultimately toward an irreconcilable and unscriptural position that is untenable in Pentecostal missiology and goes beyond the Christological intent of Luke in his Day of Pentecost narrative. A Pneumatological mission theology is always Christocentric and ecclesiastically grounded.