

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

Pneumatology and Pentecostalism

Edited by

Michael Welker

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Acknowledgments

This book is the result of a consultation entitled “Pneumatology: Exploring the Work of the Spirit from Contemporary Perspectives,” held in New York City in November 2004. It brought together international scholars in the areas of theology, biblical studies, religious history, anthropology, and natural sciences. The interdisciplinary discourse on the topic had a specific profile as scholars with Pentecostal and Charismatic religious backgrounds and scholars with Anglican, Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, and Roman Catholic heritages entered into a dialogue with each other. The conference took place almost a century after the so-called “Azusa Street Revival” in Los Angeles, which is often regarded as the initial event in the amazing development and spreading of last century’s Pentecostal and Charismatic movements — movements that now encompass more than one fourth of the two billion Christians in the world.

One of the main interests of the John Templeton Foundation is to support research on “spiritual realities.” This is a very complicated area in which a myriad of vague notions have been propagated. They have often prevented serious academic discourse and have driven respected scholars away. The combination of a dialogue among different traditions of faith and a dialogue among different academic disciplines including the sciences and philosophy was meant to provide space for critical and self-critical reflection on “spiritual realities.”

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