

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.”

We thank the John Templeton Foundation for its generous support of the consultation and of this publication. We are particularly grateful to

perhaps it dawns on one individual, such as an Einstein or Galileo or Kant, in a brilliant moment that changes the world. Even when there is insufficient evidence, we will know her by the hallmarks: knowledge, discernment, truth, beneficial results.

The Spirit in Philosophical, Theological, and Interdisciplinary Perspectives

MICHAEL WELKER

This chapter starts with the question, Does the strong theological and philosophical interest in the personhood of the Spirit conflict with the interest in making the Spirit a worthwhile topic in the science-and-theology dialogue? My answer is that it depends on the notion of personhood used in theological and philosophical inquiries. I will show that great philosophers such as Aristotle and Hegel cultivated a notion of the personhood of the spirit that is not adequate for an understanding of the Spirit of God as grasped and reflected in the Jewish and Christian normative texts of the biblical traditions. The core of the philosophical concepts of personhood and spirit is a cognitive self-referentiality. The biblical traditions, however, require a more demanding concept of personhood (which in the current culture is possibly still counterintuitive). The discourse with the sciences, but also the ecumenical discourse between different faith-traditions, might be of help in the interpretation of, and the operation with, this more complex understanding of the personhood of the Spirit.

The Self-Referential Spirit in Aristotle's and Hegel's Philosophies

One of the most famous philosophical texts in human history is Book XII of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.¹ With this text, Aristotle shaped Western intel-

1. *The Works of Aristotle*, vol. 8: *Metaphysica*, trans. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon, 1928).

lectual religiosity in general (beyond specific religious traditions) by proposing a notion of “the Divine” or “the Divinity.” He also shaped a notion of “the spirit” that was adopted by Western elites inside and outside of religious communities. This notion of “the spirit” was used in religious and anthropological theories, in epistemologies, and in theories of cultures. It provided a key concept to orient religious and cultural developments. Although the term *nous*, which he uses, has been translated not only as “spirit” but also as “reason” and “thought,” the activity described by Aristotle appeared to many thinkers to be a convincing candidate for “the ultimate” and even “the Divine.” Book XII of the *Metaphysics* implicitly equates God and this spirit (reason, [ultimate] thought). A fragment by Aristotle *On Prayer* explicitly says, “God is *nous*.”²

Aristotle describes the spirit as a creative and living thinking power, which takes part in and becomes part of what is being thought: “Spirit becomes itself an object of thought by grasping and thinking that which is thought, so that spirit and that which is thought are identical.”³ It is characteristic of the spirit that it connects a thinking relation to itself and a relation to another content of thought. Aristotle says that the spirit should not be reduced to the mere potentiality of thinking. The point is the self-actualization of the spirit in which — without losing itself — it can identify itself with the content of thought and can differentiate itself from the content of thought. “For that which is capable of receiving that which is thought and which is, is also spirit, to be sure, but it is in actual activity only when it has (that which is thought). Thus actually active thought, more so than the capacity to think, is the divine element that the spirit seems to have.”

Aristotle does not only differentiate the lower level of the potentiality to think from the higher level of the actualized activity of the spirit. He also differentiates between levels of actualization. The thinking spirit can deal with more or less trivial or important contents. What is it that allows us to make gradations within the contents and the activities of the spirit? For Aristotle it is the fuller and stronger self-awareness in the activity of thinking that qualifies “higher” activities of the spirit from lower ones. The self-experience of the spirit (which cannot be achieved by resting on the

level of mere potentiality of thinking!) is that which is best and which is the high point of all imaginable pleasure. Philosophical thinking, *theoria*, comes closest to this pleasure, which Aristotle understands as divine. “Intellectual contemplation (philosophic thought) is what is most pleasant and best. If, then, the Divinity is always doing as well as we sometimes (are), this compels our wonder. If the Divinity is doing still better, this compels our wonder still more. And the Divinity indeed is doing better.”

Aristotle’s remark with respect to the Divinity that enjoys “eternal life” in its self-referential actual spiritual activity is not a pious gloss. It marks a problem of human aspiration towards higher and higher “spiritual” activities. The stronger the self-actualization and the self-awareness, the closer the human spirit gets to the Divine. The mere relation to the potentiality of thinking, however, will not be the solution, no matter how intellectually sophisticated it may be. The highest potentiation of the self-relation is a self-actualization that disengages itself from the mere potentiality of thinking.

It was Hegel who most clearly noticed this complicated core of Aristotle’s theory. He admired the depth of Aristotle’s insight and closed his *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* with a long citation of the text inspected above.⁴ Hegel sees that in the spirit thus conceived there is a dramatic tension. In order to reach the higher and highest level of self-referentiality, the spirit has to wrest itself loose from itself, to release itself. A self-bifurcation and a self-acquisition have to go hand in hand. This “life of the spirit” includes a moment of self-alienation. The greater and the richer the intensity of the full self-awareness that is intended, the harder the breaking away from itself must be. It is at this point that Hegel could include his “death of God” theory in his reading of Aristotle’s theory of the spirit.

Hegel has no problem with the final goal of a self-referential spirit in Aristotle’s theory. “As spirit I am only insofar as I know myself. . . . Know thyself, the inscription above the temple of the knowing God at Delphi, is the absolute commandment that expresses the nature of the spirit.”⁵ His complaint, however, is that Aristotle’s theory of the spirit conceptualizes the working of the spirit in terms too intellectual. Aristotle’s theory re-

2. *Aristoteles Fragmenta Selecta*, in W. D. Ross (ed.), *Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 57.

3. This and the following quotations are from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* 1072b, 19-32.

4. *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1830), ed. F. Nicolin and O. Pöggeler (Hamburg: Meiner, 1968), p. 463.

5. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* 3, *Werke*, 20:480-81.

mains abstract, fixated on a highest principle. He fails to grasp the spirit in its true reality, that is, as a world-shaping activity. According to Hegel, Aristotle ingeniously sees the ultimate principle of the spirit. "But this element of thought itself is abstract. It is the activity of an individual consciousness. Spirit, though, is not only understood as individual, finite consciousness, but as spirit that is universal and concrete in itself."⁶ Spirit is thus not only a thinking relation to itself. It is a power in which individuals, communities, cultures, indeed, a whole world not only captures itself in thoughts, not only comes to an understanding of itself, but also presents and manifests itself, shapes and transforms itself. Spirit is much more than just a contemplative creativity.

In all this, however, the spirit does not lose its goal of self-referentiality. Although the spirit enters into the finite and perishable, in its union with what is finite and perishable, the spirit is only "in itself and at home with itself." Hegel can say: "spirit is being-at-home-with-self" or spirit is the "reconciled return to itself out of its other."⁷ Although this return to itself includes an element of self-differentiation, even of self-estrangement, this element is only a "moment" in the life of the spirit. The self-referentiality embraces the activity of the spirit in the same way that is described by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* Book XII, 7.

The Spirit and Its Personhood in the Biblical Traditions

The cognitive self-referentiality, so central to Aristotle's notion of the *nous* and the divine life, is no topic in the biblical references to the Spirit. There is no indication that they are interested in a "reconciled return" of the Spirit "to itself out of its other" in Hegel's sense. This does not mean that the Spirit is without cognitive dimensions. Quite on the contrary, the messianic traditions of the *Tanach*/Old Testament declare that the messianic bearer of the Spirit will bring not only justice and mercy to Jews and Gentiles but also a universal knowledge and cognition of God (Isa. 11:2, 9; 42:6-7; 61:6). And the "pouring of the Spirit" is clearly connected to a new cognition of God and a renewal of spiritual insight and proclamation

6. Hegel, *Vorlesungen*, p. 481.

7. Cf. Hegel, *Philosophy of Fine Art*, vol. 2, trans. F. P. B. Osmaston (New York: Hacker Art, 1975), p. 309.

The Spirit in Philosophical, Theological, and Interdisciplinary Perspectives

(Ezek. 39:28-29; Joel 3:1; Zech. 12:10 with 13:4-5; Acts 2:11, 17ff.). Throughout the New Testament traditions we find a close association of "Spirit" and "truth."

Paul says that the Spirit teaches and "interprets spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:12-13) and connects sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth (2 Thess. 2:13). John also speaks of the "Spirit of truth" (14:17) and declares that God "must be worshipped in Spirit and truth" (4:23-24). 1 John 5:7 states: "the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth," and 2 Timothy 1:14 refers to "the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us."

However this relation of Spirit and truth is understood, it is most important to notice that self-referentiality is not its basis. John 16:13 says: "When the Spirit of truth comes, it will guide you into all the truth, *for it will not speak on its own authority*, but whatever it hears it will speak, and it will declare to you the things that are to come." The "Spirit of truth" will bear witness to Christ and will not speak on its own authority (cf. John 15:26).

Although the New Testament traditions insist on the fact that insight and proclamation in the power of the Spirit are stronger than mere human words and wisdom (cf. Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:4; 1 Thess. 1:5), they clearly emphasize the revelatory and enlightening power of the Spirit in the lives and minds of human beings. First Corinthians 2:10 speaks of God's revelation through the Spirit and says: "For the Spirit searches everything, even the depth of God." The Spirit provides a depth of insight and circumspection that leads to Paul's claim: "The spiritual person judges all things, but is itself to be judged by no one" (1 Cor. 2:15).

Is this all self-congratulating rhetoric, or can we gain a picture of the activity of the Spirit that allows not only understanding but also an academic defense of these claims? In Romans 8:26-27 Paul speaks about the Spirit, who intercedes "for us with sighs too deep for words."⁸ Why and how does the Spirit reach these depths of pre-cognitive insight and pre-verbal expression? The answer to this question is that the Spirit of the New Testament traditions is not a self-referential personality but an utterly empathetic personality with a multi-contextual presence.

John Polkinghorne has argued that the personhood of the Holy

8. Cf. also Romans 8:27: "He who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

Spirit should be understood in relation to its context-sensitivity and encounter-sensitivity.⁹ The Holy Spirit is not a power that acts and operates in every context in “the same way.” First Corinthians 12:11 speaks of the “one Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as it wills,” and Hebrews 2:4 says that God acts “by various gifts and miracles of the Holy Spirit distributed according to its own will.” This might be compatible with the affirmation in John 3:34 that God “gives the Spirit without measure.” All associations of uniformity and homogeneity, however, must be corrected associations, which might be evoked by some “oneness statements” such as 1 Corinthians 12:13: “by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,” or Philippians 1:27: “you stand firm in one spirit,” or that according to Philippians 2:1, by participation in the Spirit we have the “same mind, the same love.” According to the biblical traditions, the Spirit is context-sensitive and individuality-sensitive. This is perfectly compatible with the assurance in 2 Corinthians 3:17: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

But how, then, can we avoid the conclusion that the Spirit is an amorphic and only so-called “personality,” a chameleon that changes with each encounter and each context? The personal identity of the Spirit, its faithfulness and its trustworthiness, is guaranteed by the dual relation to God the creator and to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Second Corinthians 3:18 states: “The Lord who is the Spirit changes us into his likeness from one degree of glory to another.” The text oscillates between the Lordship of the Spirit and the Lordship of Christ.

As we have shown in several research projects with scientists, biblical scholars, and theologians, we have to correct reductionistic biologicistic and scientific modes of thought when we want to deal with the “new creation” and the reality of the resurrected Christ.¹⁰ We need not abandon all rationalities and modes of academic and scientific inquiry when we deal with the reality of the resurrection. However, we have to face, and to think, the edifying “wholeness” of the person and life of Christ who encounters us in

9. John Polkinghorne, *Faith in the Living God: A Dialogue* (London: SPCK/Philadelphia: Fortress, 2001), pp. 71ff., 97; and cf. his essay herein.

10. John Polkinghorne and Michael Welker, eds., *The End of the World and the Ends of God: Science and Theology on Eschatology* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2000); Ted Peters, Robert Russell, and Michael Welker, eds., *Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Hans-Joachim Eckstein and Michael Welker, eds., *Die Wirklichkeit der Auferstehung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2002; 2nd ed. 2004).

the resurrection. The resurrection is not a resuscitation, but the presence of the wholeness of Christ’s life and person in “Spirit and faith,” a “spiritual body,” so difficult to grasp for a conventional biologicistic and natural-scientific way of thinking. This wholeness can draw human beings poly-individually into this life. Different spiritual gifts make possible different relations to the eternal life of God. In different individual ways we are changed “into his likeness from one degree of glory to another.”

This requires the “tolerant” but by no means indifferent forms of faith, hope, and love to deal with a spiritual reality that gives time and space for such different accesses to the same complex reality. It is remarkable that the working of the Spirit is continuously associated with “joy and peace,”¹¹ a constellation in which the individual member of the community of faith is not only affirmed but elevated and elated and at the same time reconciled even with those who seemed to endanger this person’s very existence. Differences are transformed into contrasts; conflicting differences are transformed into creative ones.

The context-sensitivity and encounter-sensitivity of the Spirit is also correlated with its vulnerability. Statements such as 1 Thessalonians 5:19, “do not quench the Spirit”; Ephesians 4:30, “do not grieve the Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption”; Acts 5:9, “do not tempt the Spirit”; and Hebrews 10:29 about “outraging the Spirit of grace” would be impossible if the Spirit were merely an irresistible force. The power of the Spirit and the subtlety and sensitivity of its working do not contradict each other.

The intrinsic richness of the Spirit is acknowledged, when its definite givenness to human beings is expressed by the terms of “pouring” the Spirit and the mode of “filling” them with the Spirit.¹² The Spirit enables people to gain an immediacy to God, even a unity not only with one another but above all with Christ himself and with the divine Creator.¹³ This unity becomes manifest in the intimate address to God. “God sent the Spirit of his Son into your heart, crying Abba!” (Gal. 4:6; cf. Rom. 8:15). On the other hand, this unity, intimacy, and immediacy does not mean simplicity and uniformity. A rich personality in faith and a complex and lively community

11. Cf. Rom. 8:6; 14:17; 15:13; Gal. 5:16ff.; Eph. 4:3; 1 Thess. 1:6.

12. Cf. the notion of the “temple of the Holy Spirit” in 1 Cor. 3:16 and 6:19 and the frequent talk about human beings “filled” by the Spirit in Acts.

13. Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:17.

are constituted by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives the power to human beings to host in themselves the fullness of Christ and the creativity of God.

The ability to host the Spirit even in our bodies and to unite with God in Christ "in the Spirit" is a simply breathtaking elevation, an extension of the real human existence. The ability to be present "in the spirit" even when we cannot be bodily present (1 Cor. 5:3; Col. 2:5) mirrors this anthropologically and realistically. Visions, experiences of theophany and revelation, and the power to proclaim the gospel in a convincing way are related to the workings of the Spirit. Various New Testament texts emphasize the access to eschatological realities experienced by people "who have tasted the heavenly gift and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit" (Heb. 6:4) — eschatological realities such as the participation in the resurrection, the entrance into the reign of God, a share in eternal life (Gal. 6:8). Paul even speaks of salvific repercussions on the bodily existence and the whole creation that let those "who have the first fruit of the Spirit, wait for the redemption of our bodies . . . with patience" (Rom. 8:23).

The multicontextual and polyphonic presence of the Spirit accounts for the connection of various very different phenomena addressed by biblical traditions:

- the canonic coherence of the biblical traditions provided by the Spirit, who speaks as the one voice in and through the different voices of the canon;¹⁴
- the fact that different ways of access are possible for Jews and Gentiles, related to the working of the Spirit or of the Messianic bearer and dispenser of the Spirit, respectively;¹⁵
- the trust that the Spirit is present in different contexts of trial and danger and that it gives voice to the persecuted and oppressed;¹⁶
- the figure of the "pouring" of the Spirit and the insistence that "male and female, young and old, masters and slaves" and people of different nations, languages, and cultures will be endowed with prophetic insight and power.¹⁷

14. Cf. Mark 12:36 par.; Acts 1:16; 4:25; 11:28; 20:25. See also Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), ch. 5.5.

15. Cf. Isa. 11; 42; 61; Rom. 15:16; Eph. 2:18. See also Welker, *God the Spirit*, chs. 1 and 6.2.

16. Cf. Mark 13:11 par.

17. Joel 3:1ff. and Acts 2:17ff.; cf. Welker, *God the Spirit*, chs. 3.3-4 and 5.1.

The multicontextual and polyphonic presence of the Spirit requires us to question simple one-on-one relations and monohierarchical forms of social interaction in their ability to express basic religious experiences and interactions. Theories of "emergence" have to be used to explain the multicontextual and polyphonic character of the Spirit and its working.¹⁸

The pouring out of the Spirit brings about a pluralistic striving for God's righteousness and truth. The complex multicontextual and polyphonic unity brought forth by the Spirit is not a luxury or a "postmodern" invention. The pluralistic unity of the Spirit is the divine power by which God works through frail and finite human creatures against the powers of sin and distortion. Not only the pouring of the Spirit, but also the resurrection of Christ, the constitution of the post-Easterly body of Christ and the coming of God's reign are of such an emergent pluralistic structure. They all have in common that they work among human beings in complex instead of in monolinear ways. They work in emergent ways — that is, they alter a complex constellation with a multiplicity of internal relationships by reconfiguring the internal relations and clusters of relations, be it gradually or at once.¹⁹ The new relationships and constellations do not only modify each other; they also have unforeseen effects and joint effects on "the whole" constellation.

The powers of God that counter evil and the forces of sin, freeing creation from self-jeopardy and self-destruction, often come in most astounding modesty. This is very clear with respect to the "coming reign of God." According to the parables used in Jesus Christ's proclamation, this reign does not come like a storm and not even like a train or a bus.²⁰ It comes like green leaves out of a branch or like grass out of the ground. While for some they are still invisible, for others they predict a good harvest. God's reign comes like the early morning light, which some see as the beginning day and others still call night and darkness. Jesus' parables speak of this emergent reality brought forth in numerous experiences of mercy, of forgiveness, and of free and unexpected deeds of justice and love.

18. Cf. Amos Yong's essay herein.

19. Cf. the essay by Donald and Anna York herein.

20. Cf. Michael Welker, "The 'Reign' of God," *Theology Today* 49 (1993): 500-515, and "Theological Realism and Eschatological Symbol Systems: Resurrection, the Reign of God, and the Presence in Faith and in the Spirit," in Ted Peters, Robert Russell, and Michael Welker (eds.), *Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 31-42.

Similar observations can be made with respect to the resurrection of Christ. It happens in a much less triumphalistic mode than often depicted. In his many different appearances and revelations, in the midst of uncertainty and doubts, the insight emerges that Jesus has risen from the dead. Out of a multitude of witnesses, mingled with skepticism and uncertainties, grows the post-Easter body of Christ that bears Christ's new presence. It is this complex spiritual reality that overcomes the powers of death and destruction: a reality that guides the search for truth in the midst of uncertainty and doubts.²¹

Consequences for the Ecumenical and Interdisciplinary Dialogue about the Spirit

Deep, ecstatic experiences of an awesome power are characteristic of the experience of the Spirit. This holds true for the biblical witnesses and the Pentecostal and Charismatic theologies.²² This also holds true for philosophical and scientific processes of discovery in which most amazing truths are found and revealed and most astonishing truth-claims are encouraged in the midst of uncertainties and open questions.²³ The power that conditions these experiences both in natural reality and in human minds is identified as "the Spirit." The Spirit has the dual character of a personal, namely, context-sensitive and intentional instance — and of a structuring force-field, which operates in polycontextual and polyphonic forms.²⁴ The notion of the "pouring" of the Spirit seems to combine both characters and modes.

The biblical traditions know about good and evil spirits, salvific and demonic powers. The New Testament traditions identify the divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of the merciful creator and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which is the divine living and loving power that unites the self-revealing God and connects God and creation in sustaining, saving, and ennobling ways. In science and philosophy, too, we know about deceiving

21. Cf. Michael Welker, "Resurrection and Eternal Life: The Canonic Memory of the Resurrected Christ, His Reality, and His Glory," in Polkinghorne and Welker (eds.), *The End of the World and the Ends of God*, pp. 279-90.

22. Cf. the contributions by James Dunn and by Frank Macchia herein.

23. See the essays by John Polkinghorne and by the Yorks herein.

24. Cf. the contribution by Bernd Oberdorfer herein.

spirits, we know about individual and shared certainties that prove to be wrong, misleading, and distortive. We know devastating forms of consensus that breed dangerous ideologies or stale theories that block insight over ages. Thus the discernment of the spirits is a most important task in all named fields of experience, knowledge, and conviction.

One of the most pressing questions in the dialogue within and between the different traditions of faith that gave rise to this volume was the role of individual excitement and its public resonance in valid experiences of the Spirit.²⁵ Does the Spirit primarily work in exceptional events on the interior depth of the individual person or persons? Or does it work in more hidden ways through historical and social processes in ordinary life, as a patient comforter, enabler, and teacher?²⁶ There was no pressure for an abstract "either/or" in the dialogue. But there were questions concerning the standards to discern the spirits in religious and academic contexts. The connection of Spirit and truth was affirmed by all members of the discourse. The related question was how truth-seeking communities were to be understood both in religious and academic environments.

Most members from the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions have insisted on the importance of "Spirit baptism" for their own faith tradition.²⁷ The interpretation of this symbol in the framework of the polycontextual and polyphonic dwelling of the Spirit opened a way to mediate between the insistence on dramatic and sensational individual experiences as "initiation events" of faith and the insistence that the "Spirit of truth" is characterized by its connection to Jesus Christ and to a Wisdom that operates in astounding, though not necessarily spectacular ways.

The unfolding of multidimensional anthropology as proposed by the sciences, over against transcendental and existentialist theories of the human being, and theories of pluralistic configurations in current societies, cultures, and ecumenical communications will help us to develop our ability to handle emergent processes with greater ease. Methodologically, it will be crucial to understand the inner texture of truth-seeking communities in order to make clear that the multicontextual and polyphonic presence of the Spirit does not create chaos or lead to the loss of clear orientation.

25. Cf. the essay by Margaret Poloma herein.

26. Cf. the contributions of Kathryn Tanner, John Polkinghorne, and Lyle Dabney herein.

27. See especially the contribution by Frank Macchia.

Truth-seeking communities are not groups of people who look around to somehow find some kind of truth. Nor do they claim to possess the full truth and to speak it with the expectation that everybody else just has to listen, to agree, and to obey. Truth-seeking communities are willing to formulate truth-claims, to express an utmost certainty similar to the famous words of Luther before the Reichstag at Worms: "If I am not overwhelmed by clear arguments of reason or arguments from Scripture, then I am already overwhelmed and my conscience is bound in God's Word." In formulating truth-claims, truth-seeking communities express not only utmost certainty, but also topical insight. In addition, they develop standards of argumentation for the challenge of their truth-claims and certainties and for the improvement of their insights.²⁸

Truth-seeking communities do not affirm the same certainties in repetitive ways. Rather, they search for growth in certainty, they strive for a strengthening of their conviction and consensus. At the same time they search for growth in insight. Neither correct insight without personal and communal certainty nor personal and communal certainty without topical insight is sufficient. The mutual challenge and possible growth of certainty and insight bring individuals and communities on the road towards truth.

28. Cf. Polkinghorne and Welker, *Faith in the Living God*, ch. 9, and Michael Welker, "Theology in Public Discourse outside Communities of Faith?" in Luis E. Lego (ed.), *Religion, Pluralism, and Public Life: Abraham Kuyper's Legacy for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 110-22.

Contributors

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The New Testament scholar James D. G. Dunn is emeritus Lightfoot Professor of Divinity at the University of Durham. His writings on the Holy Spirit, St. Paul, and Jesus and his studies of the evolution of the historical-critical method are widely known. Having chaired several academic associations, he was founding chairman of the Association of University Departments of Theology and Religion and Religious Studies in the U.K. and president of both the British New Testament Conference and the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*. He is the editor of the Cambridge University Press series, *Theology of the New Testament*, as well as of three journals. As author or co-author he has published some 180 articles and about twenty-four books, from the early *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (1970) to the recent *Jesus Remembered* (2003), the first volume of *Christianity in the Making*.