
_Pneumatology_ is one of a series of books by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen intended to introduce the student of theology to various theological loci. These include *Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Jan. 2002), *Christology: A Global Introduction* (Jan. 2003), and *An Introduction to the Theology of Religions: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives* (Nov. 2003). Although I have only had the opportunity to read the first two books (*Pneumatology* and *Ecclesiology*), the quality of these texts belies the rate at which they are being published.

As Kärkkäinen observes, recent decades has seen resurgence in pneumatological reflection, due, he says, to ecumenical dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox churches, and to the dramatic spread of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. Kärkkäinen's own interest in the topic is stimulated by both these trajectories. He has remained self-consciously Pentecostal in an era when many seem to have 'left behind' their Pentecostal heritage. Yet he could never be accused of being narrowly Pentecostal, and his theological orientation is ecumenical, and it is this openness to diverse voices that underlies this book.

The text follows a fairly standard outline; 1. Introduction to Pneumatology as a Theological Discipline; 2. Biblical Perspectives on the Spirit; 3. The Historical Unfolding of the Experience of the Spirit; 4. Ecclesiastical Perspectives on the Spirit; 5. Leading Contemporary Theologians of the Spirit; 6. Contextual Pneumatologies. What is different is that, rather than address these dimensions of pneumatology topically, Kärkkäinen surveys alternate perspectives; theological, ecumenical and contextual.

Kärkkäinen's numerous summaries of this multitude of alternate voices is refreshing in his focus on what each author has to contribute to pneumatological reflection. He resists the suspicious and critical tendency of much contemporary theological writing, and operates with a hermeneutic of grace. i.e. he assumes that writers as diverse as the Cappadocians, Augustine, the medieval mystics, Zizioulas, Rahner, Pannenberg, Moltmann, and Pinnock, traditions as different as Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Lutheran Protestantism and Pentecostalism, and contexts as varied as those driving process theology, liberation theology, ecological pneumatology, feminism and African Christianity, all have something worthwhile to add to our understanding of the Spirit.

In an earlier review of his *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, [1] a book which adopts a similar approach, I suggested that the dilemma of his method was the impossibility of the task he had set himself. The same could be said of this book, since summarising such diverse authors is inevitably reductionist. Furthermore he could be critiqued for having left some glaring omissions, such as his assumption that Protestant pneumatology (except Pentecostalism) is adequately addressed through the writings of Luther; e.g. what about the ecclesiastical perspectives of Evangelicalism?, or his omission of other contexts such as Asian Christianity. Yet such criticisms miss the purpose of Kärkkäinen's text. He is writing an introduction to the field, and his desire is to is to 'illustrate the richness and variety of perspectives on pneumatology' (p.105), and for this task representative illustrations are sufficient.

Overall this is an excellent text for anyone wanting to be introduced to pneumatology. It is likely to be especially useful for students, and may well be set by teachers as an assigned text. Having said this, *Pneumatology* is more than simply a text book. Readers will find themselves inspired, challenged, and most importantly opened up to new ways of thinking about the Spirit.

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