Book reviews surprise the author in one of two ways: they either discredit the bulk of what he or she has been wanting to say or they graciously lead the author to believe that maybe he or she was onto something when writing the text. Clearly, the latter is the case in Professor (emeritus) Clark Pinnock’s review of my Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective. Coming as it is from the hand of the senior North American Dean of Evangelical Studies, the review both humbles and encourages this theologian of the younger generation of Evangelicals, among whose privileged guild I dare—hopefully, not presumptuously—to count myself.

Pneumatology is the first in a series of three textbooks, all coming from Baker Academic Books, the other titles of which are Christology: A Global Introduction and God in Global Perspectives: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives (forthcoming in summer and fall of 2003). So, I begin with the Spirit, who is the ‘contact point’, then deal with the Son, and finally, God the Father. The way my honored reviewer grasps the purpose of my pneumatology text—to ‘survey the lay of the land and chart the territory’—is exactly what I attempted to do. Professor Pinnock is also right in that, rather than laying down my own constructive proposal, I set
out to offer an ecumenically representative survey at the international level of past and present thinking about the Spirit. In other words, I wanted to introduce the reader to biblical, historical, and contemporary views, including non-Western and other contextual interpretations. Rather than trying to be encyclopedic in scope, I sought to highlight the rich variety of testimonies to the Spirit, including voices that are often either ignored or marginalized in standard textbooks, such as those of Medieval mystics or today’s African charismatic churches. I embrace the plurality of biblical approaches to the Spirit—as well as to other members of the Blessed Trinity—as a methodological guide to doing theology. That it happens to accord with the current wave of (postmodern) approaches to theology is a more or less irrelevant factor; as Evangelicals, we need to be faithful to the biblical tradition. For me, as a European theologian, honoring the distinctive nature of the biblical text shows more faithfulness to the canon than an artificial suppressing of this sometimes disturbing plurality.

My approach to theology, and thus to writing a text like Pneumatology, is heavily shaped by my own intercultural and ecumenical pilgrimage. As a citizen of Finland (a country from the ‘ends of the earth’ as the name of my homeland literally means), I have had the privilege of teaching and living with my family on three different continents, Europe, Asia, and North America; I happen to write this response in Seoul, Korea, while participating in an ecumenical dialogue arranged by the World Council of Churches. I come from a country with two state churches, Lutheran and Eastern Orthodox. Those, plus my own tradition, Scandinavian Pentecostalism, have all nurtured my spiritual life. Professor Pinnock was right in reading between the lines: I have personal experience of the Spirit and my sympathies lie with free churches, although never apart from dialogue with the other major traditions.

Professor Pinnock wondered whether I am a Luther scholar. Unfortunately, I do not qualify for that honored title. Yes, I was trained at the University of Helsinki, in the so-called Mannermaa School under Professor (now emeritus) Tuomo Mannermaa, the venerated ecumenist and Luther specialist who, with his students, has challenged the canons of German interpretation of Luther, including pneumatology. While I have done some

1. In my recent Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology, and Theology of Mission (ed. Amos Yong; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), I offer some constructive thoughts on pneumatological issues in dialogue with Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant voices.