In my response to Dr Cox I shall deal with a few of his lesser concerns before turning to the matters of experience and eschatology. I will then offer a general concluding comment and appreciation.

As a matter of formal theological method I understand my book to locate the starting point of theology in the Holy Spirit—not transcendental consciousness (Rahner et al.) or existential self-understanding (Bultmann). Therefore Cox is correct in concluding that I am not in the experiential-expressivist camp. Affections do not ground theology. Rather, beliefs and actions are integrated in the affections whose source and goal is God. The concern for affections is a pastoral one and represents nothing more high-flown than a recognition that without love all we do or think profits us nothing (1 Cor. 13). Affections are generated, sustained, directed toward and judged by the living God whose kingdom is experienced as an already—not yet tension and longing which keeps hope alive and directed toward the goal.

In Chapter 1 the discussion of the place of prayer (in dialogue with Barth and Saliers) is crucial for understanding the significance of the starting point in the Holy Spirit. Prayer and theology belong together as surely, and in an analogous way, as Spirit and Word. Scripture is normative but not the text alone. It is text as inspired and illuminated by the Spirit which is authoritative and transformative. The continually sanctifying reception of the Holy Spirit is the sine qua non for a theology which avoids fanaticism and mere speculative intellectualism. It is this transcendent presence of God which is at the heart of the fusion-fission dialectic discussed in Chapter 2. I believe that I am the first to use...
this intellectual device, and I hope that it might prove useful in analyzing other spiritualities. I used it to indicate the varied results of the powerful presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and church. The discussion of various aspects of spirituality under the rubric of fusion–fission was a way of demonstrating that Pentecostal spirituality is distinctive and not merely a general feeling or emotional state. Under the impact of the eschatological presence of the Spirit, this fusion–fission structure is reflected in the architectonics of the three affections discussed in Chapter 3. Cox states that these affections ‘define the Pentecostal reality’. But these affections were meant to be exemplary—neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Chapter 4’s ‘short, promising proposals’ have an inner coherence and programmatic character which represents my future agenda.

The influence of my three dialogue partners may be felt throughout the book: Barth (and Hans Frei) in Chapter 1, Moltmann in Chapter 2, Wesley (Saliers, Edwards et al.) in Chapter 3 and all three in Chapter 4. I have used them in ways which might make each uncomfortable for different reasons. Recently I have benefited from and often found myself in agreement with Donald Gelpi. But Gelpi was not so much in my mind as Barth, Wesley, Hans Frei and most especially 1 John. The dialogue with Barth, Wesley and Moltmann respectively parallels my understanding of the theological task in terms of a concern for orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxy. Theology is a discerning reflection upon the living reality of God with us in the eschatological missionary community. It is not experience—whether Pentecostal, liberationist or feminist—that is normative. It is the living God of Scripture. To use Cox’s words, it is this ‘more subtle and complex’ understanding of experience, one that is ‘attentive to the role of biblical narrative’, which informs my negotiation of the ‘minefields’ associated with this issue.

For me, experience does more than mediate evidence. This is perhaps a matter of semantics, but I think something more is at stake between Cox and me at this point. Experience understood as affections is dispositional and therefore affects the receptivity to God. Walking in the light is a prerequisite of receiving more light. Walking in love opens one to new insights and sensitizes one to further leading of the Spirit. While it is true that some Pentecostals (for example Bishop J.H. King) claim a trinitarian deepening of their spirituality as a result of Spirit-baptism, it is also true

1. The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology (New York: Paulist Press, 1994).