Is glossolalia merely a manifestation of an unmediated mystical experience? Is tongues speech irrational and, therefore, devoid of any meaningful truth value? Does the presence of glossolalic-like speech guarantee a transformed individual or community? And, if glossolalia does transform, what role do we play in this transformation process? Though Amos Yong does not address these questions explicitly or in such order, he joins with the mounting body of Pentecostal/Charismatic scholarship on glossolalia to imply an answer to all of them. Yong’s proposals take place in the context of applying R.C. Neville’s book, *The Truth of Broken Symbols*, to Pentecostal glossolalia. First, rather than holding that tongues merely manifest an unmediated experience, Yong implies that glossolalia participates in a broader network of powerful symbols that continue to emerge from, and shape, our experience of God. Secondly, Yong implies that though glossolalia transcends rational approaches to truth, it is not therefore devoid of a truthfulness that can be discerned and understood by the community of faith. The truth of glossolalia is in the value that is carried over from God to the lives of believers and is discerned in the meaning that their transformed lives imply concerning God and the world. The truth of glossolalia is thus found in its role in the growing sanctification and witness of the people of God. Thirdly, as Paul

* Frank D. Macchia (DTheol, University of Basel) is Associate Professor of Theology at Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God, Lakeland, Florida, USA.
Tillich and R.C. Neville after him noted, symbols are finite (better: fallen) and, therefore, ambiguous. They participate in disclosing God but not in a way that entails losing their finitude and capacity for misuse. In Neville’s term, the symbols are ‘broken’. Consequently, discernment becomes necessary to distinguish glossolalic speech that is liberating from that which is not, or even, the sense in which such speech does liberate and disclose God and the sense in which human weakness is manifested in the face of this disclosure. And the symbols of glossolalia do not mechanically transform us or ‘zap’ us in a life-transforming way without our active participation. We participate in the transforming power of glossolalic symbols through discernment and interpretation. The value of Yong’s fine piece on glossolalia is precisely in his highlighting all of the above points.

Yong is quite correct in his assumption that the truth value of glossolalia is a neglected concern in the scholarship. Of course, more recent theological discussions of glossolalia have explored the truths that the presence of tongues speech implies, as Yong himself notes. What is fresh in Yong’s discussion is his proposals concerning how the truth of glossolalia confronts the people of God and how we come to engage this truth. After years of researching the theology of glossolalia, I am delighted only seldomly by a really fresh and challenging discussion of the issue. I can say without hesitation that Yong’s article was a delight for me to read.

Yong adds something rich and fresh to the conversation concerning the theological meaning of glossolalia by creatively applying an outside voice (Neville) to the discussion. Yong shows an awareness of much of the significant scholarship on glossolalia, but his major concern is to expose Pentecostals to the significance of Neville’s thought. Yet I found myself wondering at points how Yong would interact specifically from the perspective of Neville’s theological concerns with certain more recent Pentecostal and Charismatic works on glossolalia. Worthy of note would have been Jean-Daniel Plüss’s excellent criticism of the formalization of glossolalia as a dogma in relation to the power of tongues as symbols, since Plüss provides an analysis that is quite complementary to Neville’s theories. Also, it would have been interesting to see how Yong would respond to Jenny Everts’s and