The main thesis of our book *Scholarship and Christian Faith: Enlarging the Conversation* (Oxford University Press, 2004) is that the work of research, writing, creative activity, and teaching undertaken by Christians in the academy connects to faith in many different ways. There is no one model that works for everyone. Instead, each of us will develop his or her own style of Christian scholarship based on the life questions our experiences have encouraged us to ask, the specific faith traditions that have informed our Christian confession, the ways we have been mentored into our different academic disciplines, and the varied places where we teach or present our work as scholars, artists, and experts in our fields.

A subsidiary theme is that Christian scholarship should be characterized by hope rather than by pessimism. This is God’s world, and we as scholars have the awesome and wonderful task of trying to understand God’s good creation. Our first job is not the drudgery of defending Christian faith from the attacks of the secular academy. Defense and debate may be needed on occasion, but our first task is constructive: How do we as Christians participate as hopeful peers alongside others in the scholarly effort to make sense of, manage, and enjoy the world in which we live? Christian faith calls us to be hopeful, and so does the present state of higher education, which is more open to questions of meaning, purpose, faith, and spirituality than has been the case for many years.

The goal of *Scholarship and Christian Faith* is to encourage a wider conversation among Christians and other scholars about the many different ways Christians can learn from and contribute to the academic pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty. The goal is not to boil down the many different forms of Christian faith to one common essence of Christianity, but to encourage Christian scholars to speak out of their own particularity and out of the traditions that have formed them as persons of faith.

The currently dominant model—at least within the more or less evangelical arena of higher education—does not do this. This model is called “the integration of faith and learning,” and its primary mode of operation is first to outline “the” Christian worldview and then contrast that singular Christian worldview with the theories and claims of the various academic disciplines. The goal is the philosophical analysis of faith and learning for the purpose of separating truth from error and simultaneously discovering truth wherever it might be found.
The integration model has many strengths, of that there is no doubt; but it also has its limitations. Also, many of its proponents have a penchant for claiming that it is the only valid model of Christian scholarship. But this model is not for everyone. The integration model was birthed within and is deeply formed by a distinctly Reformed (i.e., Calvinistic) understanding of Christian faith. Christians from non-Calvinist traditions may find it stifling rather than helpful.

The integration model focuses almost entirely on “the life of the mind” with its philosophic and high-culture bent. We have no desire to denigrate the life of the mind, but in our perspective the term is too truncated to describe our calling as Christian scholars. Of course, we need to use our minds to think, but as human beings, as scholars, and as Christians we also bring a whole host of other concerns, values, moral convictions, experiences, passions, and creative insights to our work. There is no easy way of working all that into one formula that defines the norm for Christian scholarship. Instead we need to explore and reflect upon the many differing connections of faith, learning, and life that are present within our own lives and within the Christian traditions we affirm.

The purpose of such exploration should not be to separate Christian scholarship along denominational lines. No one will benefit from neatly segmented zones of scholarship in which Lutherans can follow their particular predilections in their own little sphere, and Methodists in theirs, and Catholics in theirs, and Pentecostals in yet one more segregated arena. Rather, the goal is to encourage scholars in all the various Christian traditions to explore the distinctive resources available in their own traditions and then to share those perspectives conversationally with one another. And the word conversation is very important. The purpose is not to argue about which view is better. This is not a competition. The purpose is to share our scholarly insights, practices, and passions in conversation so we can borrow from one another, complementing our weaknesses with the strengths of other perspectives and layering new depths of meaning and understanding on top of our developing views.

Writing for Pneuma, we want especially to encourage Pentecostals to reflect on the specific resources that Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians can bring to this broad and exciting conversation about Christian scholarship. What does it mean to be intelligent people of the Spirit? What might it mean for Pentecostals to have a spiritual influence within the broader academy? How might truth derived from the academic disciplines reshape Pentecostal faith and practice? What forums might be created so that Pentecostals can freely and effectively share their insights with and learn