

## Eschatological Hope in Amos Yong's Thought

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**ABSTRACT:** This article examines Amos Yong's reinterpretation of eschatological hope within the framework of Lucan pneumatology. Yong contends that eschatological hope is not a distant or static promise, but a dynamic, present reality made manifest by the active outpouring of the Holy Spirit. By dissolving the conventional boundary between the "already" and the "not yet", he argues that the Spirit's work transforms both individual and community life and empowers believers to participate actively in the unfolding kingdom. This perspective challenges traditional eschatological models by proposing that divine promise is continually being realized in the here and now, thereby reshaping political practice and providing a solid foundation for reimagining social structures. The paper goes on to explore how this dynamic vision of hope reorients public theology and provides an impetus for transformative engagement with issues of justice, inclusion, and collective renewal.

**KEYWORDS:** eschatological hope, Lucan pneumatology, Pentecostalism, political theology, Holy Spirit, kingdom of God, communal renewal, Down syndrome

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### 1. Introduction

The theological vision of Amos Yong offers a compelling and integrative approach to one of the most enduring questions in Christian thought: how should we understand hope in the light of the eschaton? Moving beyond static or postponed conceptions of the end times, Yong proposes that eschatological hope is not merely a deferred promise, but a present and active force that shapes human experience, ecclesial life, and societal transformation. Central to this vision is the Holy Spirit, whose indwelling presence becomes the means through which the future invades the present and the redemptive purposes of God take root in daily life.

By placing pneumatology at the heart of eschatology, Yong reorients theological reflection toward the immediacy of God's reign. His work, especially within a Pentecostal framework, redefines hope as a Spirit-empowered participation in God's unfolding Kingdom, one that calls individuals and communities to embody divine justice, peace, and renewal in the here and now. This shift reframes salvation not simply as an individual

expectation of deliverance, but as a communal and missional journey of transformation already underway.

Moreover, Yong's theology engages the broader socio-political landscape, challenging entrenched structures and offering alternative visions grounded in the Spirit's work. His treatment of disability, politics, and the social sciences is shaped by a radical openness to the Spirit's activity in unexpected places and among marginalized communities. In doing so, he casts eschatological hope as both a theological and ethical imperative, one that confronts the status quo and inspires creative, redemptive action.

This article will explore the various dimensions of Yong's eschatological thought, tracing its implications for theology, public life, and social imagination. Through this exploration, it will become evident that for Yong, eschatological hope is not simply something to be awaited, but something to be lived – embodied by the Spirit-filled church as it anticipates and enacts God's promised future.

## **2. Eschatological hope through the lenses of Lucan pneumatology**

Amos Yong's analysis of eschatological hope in biblical theology is primarily focused on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as expressed in the gospel of Luke. Yong contends that eschatological hope is not merely a past or isolated event, but rather a dynamic force that reconfigures the believer's present experience of salvation. This perspective challenges traditional views that place the fulfillment of eschatological promises in a distant future. Instead, Yong asserts that the Spirit's presence inaugurates a new era in which hope is both the assurance of God's redemptive promise and the lived reality of transformation in everyday life. Yong's pneumatological soteriology reorients the concept of eschatological hope by dissolving the strict boundary between the "already" and the "not yet" (Yong, 2005, p. 96). According to Yong, the gift of the Holy Spirit functions as the conduit through which believers undergo continuous renewal, empowering them to actively engage in the unfolding drama of God's Kingdom. The Spirit's activity is regarded as the medium through which the future promises of redemption and restoration are actualized in the present. Consequently, hope is not merely a passive anticipation of an indeterminate future; rather, it is a dynamic, experiential force that empowers the church to bear witness and engage with the world in anticipation of the ultimate realization of God's plan.

Furthermore, Yong underscores the communal significance of the outpouring of the Spirit, asserting that it is through the collective reception of this divine gift that the church is called into a deeper and more transformative participation in the eschatological hope. The Spirit's action is not confined to the individual level; rather, it binds the community together, thereby enabling a shared vision of renewal and redemptive purpose. This communal aspect redefines the

traditional notion of salvation as an isolated experience, replacing it with a collective journey toward the full realization of God's reign. In doing so, Yong's model of hope becomes an active, ecclesial pursuit rather than a solitary, deferred promise (Yong, 2005, p. 97). Central to Yong's argument is the idea that the Spirit's gift is the catalyst for a radical reimagination of eschatological hope. The promise encapsulated in the command "And You shall receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38) is not merely a future inheritance to be awaited, but rather an assurance of continuous divine empowerment that transforms the believer's present reality. This vision of hope underscores the idea that the Kingdom of God is already at work, breaking into the present world through the Spirit's activity. Consequently, believers are assured not only of a future renewal but also of the ability to embody the values and mission of God's Kingdom in their present actions. This active engagement with the transformative power of the Spirit challenges any notion of eschatological hope as merely abstract or distant, rooting it instead in the tangible, experiential reality of the church's life.

In essence, Amos Yong's pneumatological approach presents a substantial reinterpretation of eschatological hope within the framework of biblical theology. By prioritizing the believer's experience as a continuous, life-affirming outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Yong restores hope as a dynamic and immediate reality. This reorientation of both individual and communal life directs them toward the imminent fulfillment of God's Kingdom. This reinterpretation of eschatological promises as a dynamic, present reality challenges the conventional understanding of hope as a fixed, future expectation. Instead, it proposes a reevaluation of how eschatological promises are experienced as a continuous, transformative force that is present in the here and now and has the potential to redeem and renew creation from within.

### **3. Eschatological hope as a foundation for the human condition**

Amos Yong's perspective on eschatological hope is a central force that underpins the transformation of practical life and human experience. In his book, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology*, Yong argues that eschatological hope is not a passive, future-oriented expectation, but rather an active, transformative impulse rooted in the Pentecostal experience. This hope, as articulated in his argument, provides believers with a prophetic critique of prevailing political and social structures and offers an alternative framework for reimagining the public sphere. According to Yong, Pentecostal engagement with political theology is animated by a vision of a coming kingdom that inspires concrete actions, mobilizing communities to challenge oppressive systems, promote economic solidarity, and articulate an alternative civitas that reflects the values of God's reign (Yong, 2009, p. 355). Yong underscores that the eschatological vision inherent in Pentecostal thought serves as a foundation for

practical transformation, contending that the anticipated arrival of the kingdom instills a sense of urgent hope that compels believers to transform not only their spiritual lives but also the political, economic, and social dimensions of their communities. This vision transforms abstract future promises into a lived reality that critically informs public theology. The Pentecostal model, therefore, is one in which hope functions as both a motivator and a guide for engaging and transforming the structures of society, thereby creating a dynamic interplay between divine promise and human practice.

Furthermore, Yong posits that the active presence of the Holy Spirit serves as the catalyst that makes eschatological hope tangible in everyday life. The Spirit is presented as a transformative agent whose work in the public sphere transcends traditional boundaries between the sacred and the secular. This pneumatological perspective redefines hope as an ever-present, dynamic reality that not only anticipates the final consummation of God's kingdom but also energizes believers to bring about immediate changes in society. According to Yong, the Spirit's identity is intricately linked with public theology, serving as a catalyst for practical action that challenges injustice, promotes community well-being, and renews cultural and social life from within. Yong's central argument asserts that eschatological hope, grounded in the active outpouring of the Holy Spirit, provides a normative basis for rethinking the role of religion in public life (Yong, 2009, pp. 352–353). This framework enables the transformative power of the Spirit to transcend the confines of personal piety or abstract eschatological speculation, thereby influencing tangible political engagement and social reform. By integrating the anticipation of the kingdom with concrete political and economic action, Yong proposes a public theology that is both prophetic and pragmatic. This theology challenges existing power structures and fosters spaces for alternative forms of social organization and collective action, rooted in the assurance of divine redemption.

Amos Yong's perspective on eschatological hope is multifaceted and encompasses a profound transformation in public engagement. By synthesizing elements of Pentecostal political theology and pneumatological soteriology, Yong presents a vision where the Holy Spirit's active presence is instrumental in redefining hope as a force that reshapes practical life. This hope, as articulated by Yong, imbues believers with the capacity to engage in a profound reimagining of society, transcending the conventional boundaries of political critique and contributing to the establishment of a novel communal ethos that is in alignment with the imminent reality of God's reign.

#### 4. Eschatological hope as a foundation for political thought and social sciences

Amos Yong articulates the eschatological hope as a transformative foundation that reshapes political practice by infusing it with the dynamism of divine promise. In his reflections on Pentecostalism and political theology, he challenges conventional understandings of politics by situating hope at the heart of a public life that is at once radical and redemptive. For Yong, the eschatological horizon is not an abstract endpoint but an ever-present force that destabilizes entrenched power structures and invites a reimagining of the polis (Yong, 2009, pp. 354–357). This hope, born of the dynamic experience of the Spirit, becomes a catalyst for alternative political formations, ones that prioritize justice, inclusion, and the creative reordering of society. His work emphasizes that when political engagement is rooted in an eschatological vision, it becomes capable of transcending the limits of traditional statecraft and embracing a more fluid, communal, and restorative ethos.

In his analysis of the Pentecostal tradition, particularly in the chapter “The Heavens Above and the Earth Below: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Creation” from the book *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, Yong deepens this vision by linking the transformative power of the Spirit to the ongoing work of creation. Here, the eschatological hope inherent in Pentecostal practice is presented as a force that animates both heaven and earth, forging connections between divine purpose and human activity. The Spirit’s action is seen as a process of re-creation, actively dismantling oppressive structures and reconstituting social and political relations in the light of a renewed, inclusive creation. This pneumatological perspective challenges the static nature of traditional political orders and urges a continual re-imagining of community life in which hope serves as both promise and present reality (Yong, 2005, p. 251).

Yong extends his eschatological vision into the realm of the social sciences by drawing on his theological engagement with disability, particularly as explored in his reflections on Down syndrome. He reinterprets the lived experience of disability not as a deficit, but as a distinctive mode of human existence imbued with divine creativity. Through the lens of his own personal encounters and family narratives, Yong shows that what society often labels as limitation can be reimagined as an expression of God’s alternative design—a design that challenges normative standards of ability and worth. In this view, the presence of disability exemplifies a counter-narrative to the conventional social order, suggesting that inclusivity and diversity are not mere accommodations but integral elements of a reimagined creation (Yong, 2007, pp. 17–18).

By situating disability within his broader eschatological framework, Yong argues that the social sciences must undergo a fundamental redefinition. Traditional social theories, which often marginalize or pathologize difference,

are reconfigured considering a theology that values vulnerability, interdependence, and the unexpected manifestations of life. For Yong, the experiences of people with Down syndrome illustrate a paradigm in which deviation from the norm is not a failure but a call to recognize the inherent dignity of every human being. This perspective invites scholars to reconsider the metrics by which society measures normalcy and progress, thus opening new avenues for understanding human diversity and community flourishing. In this broad reorientation, eschatological hope emerges as a critical resource that challenges both political and social structures. For Yong, the anticipation of a future, re-created world serves not only as a beacon for political engagement, but also as a profound corrective to the social sciences' often reductionist view of difference. Integrating the lived realities of disability with an expansive theological vision, he presents a model in which hope becomes an active, redefining force—a promise lived and continually actualized in the present. This dual emphasis on political renewal and social redefinition encapsulates a vision of human life that is both inclusive and dynamic, where the marginalized are seen not as aberrations but as vital contributors to a collective, reimagined creation.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, Amos Yong's thought presents eschatological hope as a dynamic and transformative force that reconfigures both political practice and the conceptual framework of the social sciences. He argues that hope is not a distant promise reserved for an unspecified future, but rather an active, present reality animated by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This living hope undergirds a political vision that challenges conventional power structures and invites communities to reimagine the polis as a space of radical inclusion, justice, and creative renewal. Through his reflections, Yong underscores that the Spirit's action continually dismantles oppressive paradigms and nurtures an alternative civitas that is both restorative and forward-looking.

At the same time, Yong's engagement with disability—exemplified by his reflections on Down syndrome—provides a compelling illustration of how eschatological hope can reshape the foundations of the social sciences. He reinterprets what is often seen as limitation as an expression of divine creativity that challenges traditional norms of ability and worth. By presenting the lived experience of disability as a counter-narrative to dominant social orders, he argues for a reconceptualization of social theory that embraces diversity, vulnerability, and interdependence. This perspective not only enriches our understanding of human difference, but also challenges reductionist approaches, ultimately proposing a model of society that is both inclusive and transformative. In this way, Yong's vision of eschatological hope serves as a

unifying principle that bridges theological insight and practical transformation. It compels believers and scholars alike to recognize that the promise of God's kingdom is not confined to a deferred future but is actively unfolding in the present—reshaping political engagement and redefining social structures from within.

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