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How to choose among conflicting theories in systematic theology?

Proposal for a solution to an unresolved question in Wolfhart Pannenberg's philosophical theology

John Daniel Andersen AND Atle Ottesen Søvik

According to Wolfhart Pannenberg, systematic theology should aim at being as coherent as possible as a test of all its inherent truth claims. But what if two systematic theologies are argued to be coherent presentations of the Christian faith, yet include different and conflicting claims? This is a relevant question raised by Pannenberg's philosophical-theological method which he does not answer adequately. In this article, we will suggest a solution to the problem. We use resources in Rescher's and Puntel's philosophies for using and specifying an aspect of coherence called "cohesiveness", looking further into the strength of connections and their granularity. Cohesiveness and granularity cannot only be used as criteria for evaluating a systematic theology as a whole, but also for determining which elements are most important to integrate into systematic theology.

Introduction

What are the criteria that determine the truth content of Christian theology? According to the German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg, coherence is the ultimate criterion of truth, and systematic theology¹ should therefore aim at being as coherent as possible.² Pannenberg employs the works of the American philosopher Nicholas Rescher and the German philosopher Lorenz B. Puntel in his understanding of the criterion of coherence.³ As they present it, coherence has three aspects: consistency, comprehensiveness, and cohesiveness. That a theory is coherent means that it should be consistent (consistency) and that it is more coherent the more data it is able to integrate (comprehensiveness) with as many and as strong connections as possible (cohesiveness).⁴

Note the specific meaning of the term "data" that is taken from Rescher. It does not mean empirical evidence or something

uninterpreted. Rather, it means any proposition taken as a truth candidate – anything thought to be true. This entails that all data must be interpreted, and that many data are best interpreted as being false claims and imagination only. Data are like small theories, but they are usually thought to be more certain than larger theories, and thus they are used to test theories. But larger theories and data can continually be revised in light of each other, as demonstrated in science many times. Thus, it is important, in Pannenberg's view, for systematic theology to integrate data from biblical material, historical theology, scientific results, everyday experience, etc., but no theory will include all data as true because data, as we have described them, can conflict with each other.

In this article we argue that there is an important problem raised by Pannenberg's philosophical theological method which he does not answer adequately. It seems that two systematic theologies could appear, or at least claim to be, coherent when we consider the three aspects of coherence. They can both be consistent and integrate a large amount of data with seemingly strong connections. And yet, one theory might include different data than the other theory, and these data might be inconsistent with each other. Both theories can then not be true, but how can we use the criterion of coherence to evaluate the data in such cases?

Disagreement on specific data is a common problem in systematic theology. One example could be different views on female leadership in the church, partly to be explained by different emphases on and understandings of so-called narrative and propositional biblical literature,⁵ as well as how different data from church history, social sciences, and contemporary experience of female leadership in society and in the church are integrated. Many disagreements on ethical questions are due to different data being given different weight. Another example are different views on the atonement, where different emphases on biblical material and the understanding of God's love give different conclusions.⁶ Since seemingly different coherent positions can claim to have integrated the most important data, but disagree on whether some data should be integrated or not, clarifications or more specific criteria with which to navigate in such discussions are necessary, but in our view Pannenberg does not address this issue properly.

In this article we will in the following section present in more detail how Pannenberg answers the question of what the criteria are for determining which theory in systematic theology is the best, then how he justifies his answer. We will show that there is an important question left by

Pannenberg's philosophical theology; namely, what to do in cases where there appears to be several coherent systematic theologies. We will then suggest an answer to this question in the third section. Our answer will use resources in Rescher's and Puntel's philosophies for using and specifying the aspect of coherence called "cohesiveness", looking further into the connections between data and their granularity. Cohesiveness and granularity are criteria that can be used not only for a good theory as a whole, but also for determining which data are most important to integrate.

The discussion should be read as an exploration of the potential within Pannenberg's philosophical theology, without discussing its fundamental basis. It is a suggestion for how Pannenberg's theological method can be made more coherent and applicable without discussing Pannenberg against very different alternative approaches, which is not possible within the frame of an article. The criterion of coherence should not be understood as the sole criterion that is, or can be, used by churches, but as a general philosophical criterion which can prove fruitful in discussions of truth also within systematic theology. While we think that this criterion should be recognized as important to churches (since it is a criterion of truth), we recognize that the issue is more complex when it comes to determining church dogma.⁷

Presentation of Pannenberg's understanding of the role of coherence in systematic theology

In this section, we present Pannenberg's arguments for how systematic theology should be developed and for the importance of coherence. We will mainly use Pannenberg's three-volume *Systematic Theology*, considered his "crowning achievement"⁸ and the "definitive statement of his mature theology",⁹ and point out one important unanswered question along the way.

In order to understand Pannenberg's work on systematic theology and emphasis on coherence, we shall first take a brief look at Pannenberg's context. The background for writing his *Systematic Theology*, was, according to Pannenberg's own words, pastoral concerns. Why should people be Christians if the Christian message is not true?¹⁰ Pannenberg's theological project, with its emphasis on public theology, ought to be understood in light of and partly as a reaction to dialectic theology. Even though, as we will see, Pannenberg is inspired by Barth's emphasis on revelation, he is at the same time critical of Barth's philosophical

thinking.¹¹ Pannenberg strongly opposes all efforts of immunization, and vigorously rejects what William Barley called a “retreat to commitment”.¹² Claims of truth ought to be subject to scrutiny and testing.¹³

In contrast to Barth, Pannenberg takes an historical approach, from “below”¹⁴, with an emphasis on so-called “historical reasoning”, which is a way of reasoning that he shares with philosophers like Hegel, Dilthey and Gadamer.¹⁵ This means, though, that our access to truth is only through our experience and reflection, which is always historical in character.¹⁶ Pannenberg is here influenced by Dilthey’s thoughts on the “historicity of experience”, maintaining that our access to truth is relative as long as history continues.¹⁷ Thus, Pannenberg with his public theology and belief in universal truth should probably best be described as a critical realist. Pannenberg does not accept all postmodern assumptions. As he himself explains, he came to the conclusion that Kant’s critique of the metaphysical tradition has limitations, and that “the principle of self-conscious subjectivity need not be accepted as the final basis for every discussion of metaphysics, as was the case in the entire tradition of German idealism”.¹⁸ This is why Pannenberg believes that it is possible to have true beliefs and that Christians can even have a strong confidence in the final revelation of God through Jesus, because he has anticipated the end of history.¹⁹

In Pannenberg’s view, systematic theology ought to be a “systematic investigation and presentation” of Christian doctrine.²⁰ It needs to be *systematic* in the sense of presenting a coherent theology that is probably true.²¹ The reason for this is that the question of truth is primary.²² Thus, the truth of Christian doctrines should not be decided in advance, but be treated “as an open question”.²³ Christianity must, in other words, be able to argue for its truth in a pluralistic world with competing truth claims. In Pannenberg’s opinion, this is also how systematic theology becomes a scientific discipline.²⁴ The inspiration and authority of the Bible can therefore not be presupposed, Pannenberg claims, since such references to authority would hinder critical investigations of theological truth claims and “ruin the argument”.²⁵ Any theological statements about truth or “the divine inspiration of holy scripture and its authority in the church” must therefore come after the faith in Jesus Christ is theoretically justified and not the other way around.²⁶

Pannenberg emphasizes, nevertheless, that Christian theology must begin with God’s revelation, even though his understanding of truth and truth-criteria appears to be influenced by coherentist philosophers. Pannenberg firmly rejects that his systematic theology should be associated with a specific philosophical system because Christian theology

must be rooted in the historical revelation of God.²⁷ However, Pannenberg's understanding of epistemology, as well as of the concept of truth, is clearly influenced by the philosophers Nicholas Rescher and Lorenz B. Puntel, which is evident when Pannenberg insists on the concept of coherence as our best available tool in evaluating truth claims.²⁸ Coherence functions as "the final criterion of truth [...] because it also belongs to the nature of truth"²⁹ and is "the basic thing in the concept of truth".³⁰ Pannenberg writes that correspondence between beliefs and reality, as well as consensus, are related to coherence where the reality or "[c]oherence in the things themselves, not in judgments about them, is constitutive for the truth of our judgments".³¹ The theological justification for this emphasis on coherence is that it can be "closely related to the concept of the one God"³² who all finite reality is dependent upon.³³ God is truth and the unifying centre of all reality, which no human can control.³⁴

Pannenberg provides a broad conception of coherence as a truth criterion, meaning "both the interrelation of the parts and the relation to other knowledge".³⁵ Rescher's book, *The Coherence Theory of Truth*, which Pannenberg refers to, can shed some more light on how a broad conception of coherence functions as a truth criterion along these lines of thinking. For Rescher, the concept of coherence is more than just logical *consistency*. It also embraces *cohesiveness* – how well the different parts of a theory are connected – and *comprehensiveness* – the ability to integrate a broad range of experiences.³⁶

Pannenberg stresses that systematic theology should investigate truth claims with regard to overall coherence.³⁷ Since truth cannot be taken for granted, the truth of Christian doctrine must also be a theme of systematic theology.³⁸ Specific doctrines and other truth claims ought to be evaluated with regard to the unity of our knowledge and experience, and not just focus on details.³⁹ Integration of various data is not supposed to be a random selection of isolated results from other disciplines without critical reflection upon method and frameworks.⁴⁰ "Systematic presentation is itself a test of the truth claims of each of the specific assertions that enter into a comprehensive account".⁴¹ Pannenberg explains how he thinks systematic theological work should be done to accomplish this goal:

Dogmatics as systematic theology proceeds by way of both assertion and hypothesis as it offers a model of the world, humanity, and history as they are grounded in God, a model which, if it is tenable, will "prove" the reality of God and the truth of Christian

doctrine, showing them to be consistently conceivable, and also confirming them, by the form of presentation.⁴²

Systematic theology should, in other words, present a big picture (comprehensive theory) of God and the world, which is evaluated with regard to overall coherence.

We will now proceed from the topic of coherence in general to the topic of what data to integrate in Christian systematic theology. In Pannenberg's view, it is not enough if systematic theology provides a consistent and comprehensive philosophical theory that does not account for the historical origin of its ideas and concepts, tracing them back towards the historical revelation of God through historical theology:

Christian doctrine is from first to last a historical construct. Its content rests on the historical revelation of God in the historical figure of Jesus Christ and on the precise evaluation, by historical interpretation alone, of the testimony that early Christian proclamation gives to this figure. Its terminology, which has evolved since apostolic times in attempts to formulate the universal scope of the divine action in the person and history of Jesus, cannot be understood apart from its place within the history of these attempts.⁴³

We can see here that it is crucial for Pannenberg that systematic theology considers biblical and historical data in the assessment of Christian doctrines. A systematic theology that only focuses on the unity between its parts will otherwise be "arbitrary and nonbinding", Pannenberg claims.⁴⁴ There seems to be two reasons for this emphasis on biblical and historical data which can be linked to his emphasis on coherence. First, *history* includes all of reality and therefore all possible data.⁴⁵ Thus, philosophy and systematic theology need to take exegesis and the historical development of doctrines into consideration. Even nature and natural laws are part of ongoing history.⁴⁶ Second, *religion* is the primary human form of perceiving the reality of God or the divine.⁴⁷ Concrete historical and lived religions must be considered and compared in order to stay in touch with reality.⁴⁸ Christian systematic theology must therefore consider biblical and Church historical data because Christian doctrines are supposed to express God's revelation through history.⁴⁹

Pannenberg's theory of the revelation of God as *history* is the unifying factor that holds his whole theological system together.⁵⁰ Pannenberg shares Karl Barth's view that it is only through God's self-revelation

that we can know anything about God. The question is how God has revealed himself, and Pannenberg's answer is that God reveals himself through his deeds and actions in history, as can also be seen clearly in the history of Israel. However, a single act or event that God is involved in is not understood as a complete revelation of God. In isolation, these revelatory events do not convey sufficient knowledge of who God is. They can be regarded as incomplete contributions. Only history itself, or the totality of history, can be reckoned as God's self-revelation. This means that God's historical self-revelation will be complete only at the end of history, when we in retrospect will be able to see the full picture. Despite this, Pannenberg argues that because Jesus has anticipated the end of history through his resurrection, we already have an eschatological revelation of God. Therefore, the revelation of God – and what we can know about him – is somehow fixed around the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth.

Pannenberg's theory of revelation, as summarized above, explains why he insists that Christian theology must be rooted in God's historical revelation as witnessed by the biblical scriptures,⁵¹ as well as the necessity of an historical construction of Christian doctrine as expressed in the quotation above. This does not mean that the historical construction of Christian doctrines should be done uncritically. As already mentioned, Pannenberg does not presuppose any special verbal inspiration of the biblical texts. For him, the biblical scriptures are fallible human testimonies of God's revelatory actions in history.⁵² However, the significance of the Bible for doctrines should not be overlooked. This is because these historical texts are our primary sources to God's revelatory actions which reached their climax in the person of Jesus. The texts express how the revelatory events were originally understood by the people who were part of them, and, therefore, the significance of God's actions. This is how we can say that the biblical scriptures convey knowledge of God, which explains Pannenberg's emphasis on historical interpretation and exegesis. In a nutshell, Christian theology must trace its ideas from the Bible.

The common content of the Christian faith and the New Testament scriptures is God's acts of salvation through Jesus, Pannenberg argues. Even though he, given the results of historical critical research, does not find the Bible consistent in every detail, Pannenberg argues that historical critical research at least confirms a unity of scripture (*Einheit der Schrift*) with regard to its central content (*zentralen Sachgehalts*).⁵³ This central content or common meaning of the Bible is *God's acts of salvation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth* – which is also the object of the Christian

faith, according to Pannenberg.⁵⁴ The revelatory events surrounding the life of Jesus is what the New Testament texts bear a common witness to, despite all of their differences.⁵⁵ According to Pannenberg, the central and common meaning of the biblical texts can only be discovered through exegetical work that aims at the author's intention. But since the reader and his understanding might influence the interpretation of biblical texts, it is also important that the interpreters' interpretations are subject to a public discussion.⁵⁶ A public discussion is important for a theological proposal to be justified as Christian.⁵⁷ It should, as expressed in the quotation above, be able to clarify where its ideas come from. Christian theology has several presuppositions, including the belief that Christian teaching actually exists, the diversity of Christianity in history, Christian impact on culture, the church with its proclamation and liturgy, and "the Bible as a point of reference and norm for the Christian identity of ecclesiastical and theological teaching".⁵⁸ The function of Christian doctrines, which systematic theology expounds, is to try to summarize the common material content of Scripture and present it as God's truth.⁵⁹ That does not mean that doctrinal summaries or creeds exhaust the Bible's content.⁶⁰

Because the Bible's content, as well as its truth, can be disputed – and final knowledge only awaits at the end of history – Christian systematic theology cannot presuppose its own truth, but must test (doctrinal) truth-claims.⁶¹ This is why Pannenberg argues for systematic theology to be coherent and historically oriented, which in turn explains Pannenberg's lists of four criteria for determining that a doctrine in systematic theology is not good enough, laid out in his book, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie*: (1) The theory is not an implication of biblical traditions; (2) The theory lacks reference to reality as a whole, not being supported by current experience or able to demonstrate a philosophical awareness of this problem; (3) The theory cannot integrate/be integrated into the relevant field of experience (lack of compatibility), or such integration is not attempted at all; and (4) The theory's explanatory power is inferior to already existing theories and does not overcome their problems.⁶²

We have now presented Pannenberg's understanding of the role of coherence in Christian systematic theology and will proceed by looking at an important question raised by Pannenberg's philosophical theology and understanding of epistemology. We have seen that Pannenberg argues that the question of truth should be regarded as open, and that specific truth claims within Christian systematic theology must be evaluated with regard to overall coherence. But how do we evaluate or test data (doctrines, truth-claims, smaller theories) in cases

where there is disagreement between two seemingly coherent systematic theologies?

Disagreement on data between different systematic theologies are commonplace. Disagreement can be about whether a datum should be included or not, but also about how a datum should be integrated. However, in practice it can often be difficult to assess overall coherence. Systematic theologies may appear, or can claim to be, coherent, being consistent theories that also are comprehensive with many connections between parts. To make an overall assessment of coherence requires a large amount of time, resources, and knowledge. Since everyone has limited knowledge, it is unrealistic to expect that one can conduct a final evaluation of what the most coherent theory is. An overall assessment can be further complicated by the fact that different systematic theologies often have different strengths and weaknesses, as well the general problem of how to weigh the different aspects of coherence as a “multidimensional concept” against each other.⁶³ Nevertheless, there is often concrete disagreement on specific issues where much of the relevant information is known, and where both parts argue that they have the most coherent theory. In such cases, it would be helpful with more tools to make progress in the discussion.

In our view, Pannenberg does not adequately answer the relevant question about disagreement between apparently coherent systematic theologies. In the next part we will propose what should be understood as *our* solution to the problem, where we attempt to draw on Pannenberg’s philosophical theology and try to develop it further.

Constructive proposal

In this part, we propose that the aspect of coherence called *cohesiveness* can be further nuanced to help in the evaluation of conflicting doctrines and other pieces of information in apparently coherent systematic theologies. Cohesiveness means that a theory should have as many and as strong links as possible, but what does it mean to have strong links? We shall argue that this aspect of coherence can be used in evaluating a theory as a whole (i.e. how its data are interconnected), but also that cohesiveness may also be used to determine which data are most important to integrate in a theory.⁶⁴ By nuancing the criterion of cohesiveness, we will get criteria that also help us choose the most important data and evaluate the strongest connections. We start by considering how cohesiveness can determine which data are most important.

Data with many connections are more important than data with few connections. When data with many connections are connected with other data with many connections, it means that important data are connected with important data. Having a high number of connections to other data with a high number of connections is thus an additional criterion of importance, specifying which connections are most important in the criterion of cohesiveness.

Some data are central and important for theology because they have many connections with many data relevant for Christian faith. The belief in the triune God, the incarnation, or the idea of God loving the world unconditionally are data which are connected with many other data in systematic theology. This is also the case with the claims of Jesus being resurrected from the dead, etc. However, claims about the authorship of the Pentateuch, the exact date of the Exodus or about the destruction of cities like Jericho and Ai, etc., are not as central for systematic theology because such data has fewer connections with data that are most relevant for the Christian faith.

While cohesiveness is a criterion to use for systematic theology as a whole, it is thus also a criterion that can be used to determine which data are most important to integrate. The belief *that* God has created the whole world is a more central “datum” for Christian systematic theology than beliefs about *when* it happened. Since the belief that the earth is around 4,6 billion years is well connected to many other data (e.g. scientific theories), unlike the belief that the earth is 6000 years old, it is something more important for systematic theology to be able to integrate. As this example shows, cohesiveness can help us determine whether it is most important to integrate the belief in a young or an old earth in systematic theology. In this way cohesiveness can function as a criterion for evaluating which data are most central, and therefore most important, to integrate into systematic theologies.

At the same time, the general criterion of cohesiveness is not enough, since it is possible that some data are connected to many others and can integrate many others because they are very *coarse-grained*. As Erik Olsson has pointed out, the more comprehensive a theory is, the more connections it also entails, which means that a theory can appear cohesive due to its size.⁶⁵ For example, one can make claims about a hidden God, a deceiving demon, yin and yang, Brahman, energy and many other things that can be related to anything and integrate anything, but only in a very imprecise and coarse-grained way, like in a conspiracy theory. It does not logically or naturally follow that these data are important to include in the theory or that the connections between them are

correctly understood, since it is so easy to make up coarse-grained truth claims that can be related to anything. The possibility of comprehensive and coarse-grained theories appears to posit a challenge for the approach Pannenberg proposes since he suggests that the truth of smaller parts is determined by the whole systematic theological theory.

However, Lorenz Puntel's ideas on depth and granularity considerations may shed further light on the sub-criteria of comprehensiveness and cohesiveness. Puntel is inspired by Rescher and thinks of coherence as having the same three aspects of consistency, cohesiveness, and comprehensiveness.⁶⁶ But Puntel adds two criteria for comparing theories. The first is *depth*, which means the degree to which structures are valid in many different theoretical frameworks; and the second is *granularity*, which means differentiation, detail, and specificity.⁶⁷ In addition, Puntel offers clarifications on how to understand connections. Connections can differ in strength, in the sense that a deductive connection is stronger than an inductive connection. But "connection" does not refer merely to inductive and deductive connections between elements. Any description of any relation between the data (e.g. causal relations, spatial relations, and so on) gives a more finely grained description of the states of affairs that the theory describes and a more precise integration in the theory, which thus makes it more coherent.⁶⁸ In our view, depth can be seen as falling under comprehensiveness and granularity as falling under cohesiveness, and so one could still say that it is the same three aspects of coherence as we have been looking at all along. But now the understanding of them is more fine-grained.

We suggest that fine-graininess is an indication of important data because detailed connections increase their plausibility. If various data are interconnected in finely grained ways, it seems unlikely that this is a result of chance or pure luck, but rather more plausible that the theory is well connected with the data because it says something about how the world really is. Exact confirmations of theories in physics make it much more plausible that they are true. In contrast to such fine-grained theories, the claim that all fossils are the result of the flood from the time of Noah is very coarse-grained and seems less plausible.

In any systematic-theological discussion on how to weigh different data, there will often be disagreement on whether to include or exclude certain data. If the data are finely grained and make finely grained connections, we suggest that these are to be preferred over less finely grained data. Thus, coarse-grained answers, like "the hidden God", "the mysterious ways of God", or "revelation in the

eschaton" should not be regarded as preferred answers in systematic theology if fine-grained answers already exist. Pannenberg expresses a similar view when he states that a theological proposal is falsified if the theory's explanatory power is inferior to already existing theories and does not overcome their problems. But here we have specified what it means to have stronger explanatory power as opposed to inferior. Explanatory power can therefore be related to granularity. Fine-grained connections are preferred over coarse-grained connections since the former increase plausibility, which is why fine-graininess is an indication of important data.

Conclusion

To sum up our answer to the problem of how to evaluate conflicting data like doctrines and information in case of two or more apparently coherent systematic theologies: We suggest that the aspect of cohesiveness can aid the overall judgment about coherence by looking deeper into the data covered by the systematic theologies and focusing on the integration of central data (i.e. data with many connection-points connected to other data with many connection-points) and fine-grained data (i.e. data with detailed connections). The aspect of cohesiveness can in this way help us identify "central data" and/or "fine-grained data" – and the integration of, or lack of integration of, such data. Thus, the discovery of presumably important data will inform the overall discussion of systematic theologies and the final decision about data. Lack of integration of important data may be taken as a sign of incoherence, and vice versa. An implication of such findings is that if a specific systematic theology is unable to integrate central and/or fine-grained data, then this inability may indicate a need for a revision or perhaps even a rejection of the systematic theology. Presumably, individual theologians can still disagree on which theory has integrated the most connected data and the most finely grained data, but at least we have given more tools to use in deciding among them.

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Notes

1. Pannenberg uses the term “systematic theology” for dogmatics, understood as the “systematic doctrine of God and nothing else” (Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 59). Thus, he also makes a distinction between dogmatics and ethics, since his concern is on God and his actions, which include creation and the church (Pannenberg, n. 128, p. 59). We will use the term “systematic theology” to include both dogmatics and ethics, since Pannenberg’s distinction seems difficult to maintain.
2. Pannenberg, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 6; Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 21–22.
3. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 52–53.
4. Rescher, *Coherence Theory of Truth*; Puntel, *Structure and Being*.
5. Andersen et al., “Kvinnelige ledere i kirken.”
6. See for instance the discussion in *Teologisk Tidsskrift* between Asle Eikrem and Harald Hegstad on this issue (Hegstad, “Var korset nødvendig?”; Eikrem, “Korsets gåte?”; Hegstad, “Koherent”).
7. See for instance Pannenberg’s discussion of the essential attributes of the church and the question of heresy: Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 3*, 405–15.
8. Whapham, *The Unity of Theology*, x.
9. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 77.
10. Whapham, *The Unity of Theology*, 140–41.
11. Pannenberg, “An Autobiographical Sketch,” 14.
12. Pannenberg, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 16.
13. Pannenberg, “Nature of a Theological Statement.”
14. See Barth and Pannenberg’s letter-exchange in Barth, *Letters, 1961–1968*.
15. Whapham, *The Unity of Theology*, 18; Pannenberg, “An Autobiographical Sketch,” 16.
16. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 54.
17. *Ibid.*, 54.
18. Pannenberg, “An Autobiographical Sketch,” 17.
19. Pannenberg, “A Response,” 319–21.
20. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 21.
21. Pannenberg, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, chap. 1.
22. *Ibid.*, 4–5.
23. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 50.
24. Pannenberg, “Nature of a Theological Statement”; Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und theologie*.
25. Pannenberg, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 17; Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 2*, 464.
26. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 2*, 463–64.
27. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, xii.

28. Pannenberg, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 6; Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 52–53.
29. Pannenberg, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 6.
30. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 53.
31. *Ibid.*, 53.
32. Pannenberg, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 6.
33. *Ibid.*, 8–9.
34. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 52–53; Pannenberg, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 6.
35. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 21–22.
36. Rescher, *Coherence Theory of Truth*, 31–38, 168–75.
37. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 21–22.
38. *Ibid.*, chap. 1.
39. Pannenberg, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 6, 8.
40. *Ibid.*, 18–19.
41. *Ibid.*, 8.
42. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 60.
43. *Ibid.*, x.
44. *Ibid.*, x–xi.
45. Pannenberg, “An Autobiographical Sketch,” 14.
46. Pannenberg, *The Historicity of Nature*.
47. Pannenberg, “A Response,” 313.
48. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, chap. 3.
49. *Ibid.*, 16–17.
50. See Pannenberg, chap. 4. The following presentation is based on that chapter, which is a modified version of his thesis on revelation as history in Pannenberg, “Dogmatic Theses.”
51. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 3*, 150.
52. See Andersen, “Hvordan bør Bibelen tolkes?” chaps 4 and 6.2. Pannenberg has often been criticized by evangelical scholars for this view of Scripture’s revelatory status, see Stanley, “The Appraisal of Pannenberg,” 24.
53. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, n. 23, pp. 14–15; Pannenberg, *Systematische theologie: Band 1*, n. 23, p. 24.
54. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 15–16.
55. *Ibid.*, 15.
56. *Ibid.*, 14–15.
57. *Ibid.*, 60.
58. *Ibid.*, 50.
59. *Ibid.*, 16.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*, 16, 50.
62. Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und theologie*, 348.
63. Olsson, “Coherentist Theories,” pt. 3.
64. As suggested by Asle Eikrem in Eikrem, “Mer korsteologi.”
65. Olsson, “Coherentist Theories,” pt. 3.
66. Puntel, *Structure and Being*, 475–76.
67. *Ibid.*, 408–9.
68. *Ibid.*, 439, 464, 476.

Disclosure statement

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