The aim of this thesis is to contribute with suggestions for how the church should navigate the challenges of a secular age. This is done by exploring the following research problem: **How can a particularistic ecclesiology help the church in navigating the challenges of a secular age?** Being one of the most prolific and influential proponents of a particularistic ecclesiology, I have chosen the central works of Stanley Hauerwas as my primary material. Charles Taylor offers the theoretical framework for understanding a secular age, and how it challenges the church. Also, I deploy the foundational pneumatology of Amos Yong in order to reconstruct Hauerwas’s ecclesiology with regards to the secular challenges.

The thesis is divided into four main parts. **Part I** outlines Taylor’s framework for understanding the altered conditions for religious faith in a secular age. In sketching out the social imaginary of a secular age, central terms and concepts for the remaining thesis discussion are defined. This part concludes with three challenges that the church in a secular age must navigate, related to: 1) the deconstruction of truth; 2) the detachment of self; and 3) the disembodiment of belief.

**Part II** presents three central features of Hauerwas’s ecclesiology: 1) Church as a storied community; 2) Church as a defining community; and 3) Church as a performative community. Connecting Hauerwas to the challenges outlined above, I contend that his ecclesiology circumvents them in the following way: 1) Church as storied community navigates the challenge of deconstructed truth; 2) Church as defining community navigates the challenge of the detached self; and 3) Church as performative community navigates the challenge of disembodied beliefs.

**Part III** of the thesis is my constructive contribution, starting with a critical discussion of Hauerwas’s ecclesiology, which engages his most prominent interlocutors. Having attended to the charges of fideism, sectarianism, and pragmatism, I suggest that a pneumatological reconstruction might sharpen the ecclesiological contribution to be gained from Hauerwas’s work, while also accommodating some of the critical charges. Thus, reading Hauerwas’s ecclesiological features through Yong’s pneumatological categories of Spirit as rationality, relationality, and *dunamis* offers the following pneumatologically reconstructed ecclesiological features: 1) Church as storied by the Spirit of rationality; 2) Church as defining by the Spirit of relationality; and 3) Church as performance by the Spirit of *dunamis*.

**Part IV** of the thesis is a more tentative venture seeking to operationalize the pneumatologically reconstructed ecclesiology, by considering three concrete church practices: 1) by practicing *religious dialogue*, as a storied community by the Spirit of rationality, the church navigates the secular challenge of deconstructed truth; 2) the church which practices *meeting the marginalized*, as a defining community by the Spirit of relationality, navigates the challenge of the secular detached self; and 3) the church, as a performative community by the Spirit of *dunamis*, must practice *liturgical living* in order to navigate the secular challenge of disembodied beliefs.
Abstract

Outline Illustration

Religious Dialogue — Church as Storied by the Spirit of Rationality — Deconstruction of Truth

Meeting the Marginalized — Church as Defining by the Spirit of Relationality — Detachment of Self

Liturgical Living — Church as Performance by the Spirit of Dunamis — Disembodiment of Belief

P IV: Practicing Church in a Secular Age


P II: Hauerwas’s Church Community

P I: Taylor’s Secular Challenges

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