

# **Turning Crisis into Opportunity: Stanley J. Grenz's "Postmodern Non-foundationalist Evangelical Theology"**

(An abstract)

**Andres S. K. Tang**

Associate Professor of Christian Thought  
Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

This paper aims to introduce the theological response to postmodernism as proposed by Stanley J. Grenz, the Baptist theologian who passed away suddenly, earlier in this year. For Grenz, the crisis of evangelical theology has to do with the change of culture from modernity to postmodernity. The former response of evangelical theology to the Enlightenment was based on the metaphysics of realism, and a kind of epistemology characterized by foundationalism. However, these two have been attacked by the ideas of constructivism which advocates non-foundationalist epistemology. Grenz draws out the most significant elements from non-foundationalism and renews evangelical theology with these elements. He outlines a methodology for his postmodern evangelical theology with the concepts of "belief-mosaic" and "conversation," which he develops from the imagery "community." While the church as a community is always a community with a specific tradition, it is this tradition that offers "the specifically Christian-experience-facilitating interpretative framework," the belief-mosaic, within which we experience, investigate and construct the world. For Grenz, the way of doing theology lies in maintaining an ongoing conversation with the Spirit, with

tradition, and with one's cultural context, which corresponds to the three motifs of theology he establishes, namely, the Trinity, the community, and eschatology. It is these motifs that determine the non-foundational feature of evangelical theology. Non-foundational evangelical theological thinking should not depart from the Trinity, the community and eschatology, but should be done and developed within the interwoven network of these three.