

William Seymour:

Archetypal Hero Holy Spirit Used to Lead Azusa Street

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“...the story of Christianity is simply a true myth...but with this tremendous difference that *it really happened*...the Pagan stories are God expressing himself through the minds of poets...while Christianity is God expressing himself through what we call ‘real things.’ Therefore, it is *true*... in the sense of being the way God choose to (or can) appear to our faculties.”¹

-C.S. Lewis

“By becoming fact it does not cease to be myth: that is the miracle.... To be truly Christian we must both assent to the historical fact and also receive the myth (fact thought it has become) with the same imaginative embrace which we accord to all myths. The one is hardly more necessary than the other.”²

-C.S. Lewis

¹ W.H. Lewis and Walter Hooper, *Letters of C.S. Lewis* (New York: HarperOne, 2017), 368.

² Lesley Walmsley, ed., “Myth Became Fact,” *C.S. Lewis Essay Collection: Faith, Christianity and the Church* (London: HarperCollins, 2002), 141.

Abstract

In early 1906, in the midst of Jim Crow segregation, a one-eyed black preacher named William Seymour arrived in Los Angeles, California (United States) where he began holding interracial prayer meetings at the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry. After the crowds became so large that they collapsed the Asberry's porch, Seymour moved the meetings to 312 Azusa Street. Today, millions of Pentecostals trace their roots back to Azusa Street. Yet, despite how important understanding the dynamics of Azusa Street is to the Pentecostal movement, surprisingly little has been written about Seymour's leadership. Only recently have scholars begun to acknowledge Seymour's leadership contribution. This thesis builds upon this trend by revisiting the Azusa Street story, in an attempt to better understand how Seymour partnered with the Holy Spirit to lead the Azusa Street Revival. This aspect of charismatic leadership is not addressed by secular analyses of charismatic leadership, yet it is vitally important to understanding how leaders partner with the Holy Spirit to carry out God's purposes on the earth.

To accomplish this task, Chapter 1 contends that Seymour's story should be revisited because many scholars in the 20th Century downplayed Seymour's leadership. Chapter 2 explains the narrative methodologies used in this thesis and why they might be better than existing methodologies at highlighting Seymour's leadership contribution. Chapters 3 & 4 outline why viewing Seymour as a hero on a heroic journey is important to understanding Seymour, his theology and the central conflict of the Azusa Street story. Chapter 5 examines the theology of central conflict in greater detail, and Chapter 6 compares Seymour's strategy to Martin Luther King, Jr., and suggests that Seymour is a leader in the same way Civil Rights leaders were leaders. Hopefully understanding Seymour's story and theology in this way will benefit contemporary charismatic leaders.

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William Seymour Standing
Holding a Bible, Circa 1912.
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Chapter 1

Revisiting the Azusa Street Story

1.1 What is the Azusa Street Revival?

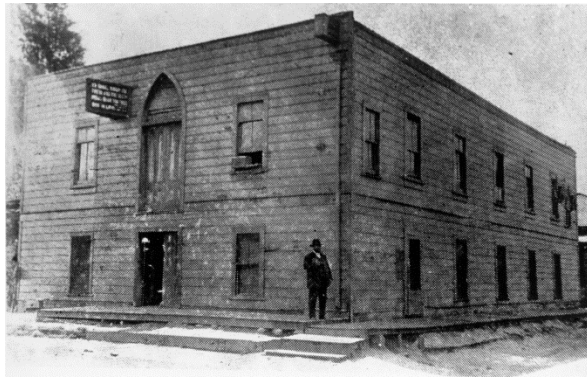
In early 1906, in the midst of Jim Crow segregation, a one-eyed black preacher named William Seymour arrived in Los Angeles, California (United States).³ After getting kicked out of the church he was invited to preach at (for preaching about the baptism in the Holy Spirit), Seymour began holding interracial prayer meetings at the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry, at 216 North Bonnie Brae Street.⁴ One of the main purposes of these prayer meetings was to pray to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. After approximately five weeks (and three days into a ten day fast), attendee Edward S. Lee spoke in tongues for the very first time. Soon afterward others, including Seymour, began speaking in tongues.⁵ Word spread throughout the city and crowds began forming at the Asberry house. The crowds became so large that the weight of all the people caused the front porch of the Asberry's home to collapse. Shortly thereafter, the growing

³ Cf. Larry E. Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William J. Seymour* (Pensacola: Christian Life Books, 2006). On page 31, he points out how William Seymour was born not long after General Lee's surrender at Appomattox, which ended the US Civil War. Since a more nuanced and extensively cited history of William Seymour is given later in this thesis, Section 1.1 does not offer detailed footnotes as they would be duplicious.

⁴ As we will see, the Azusa Street Revival was known for racial harmony and racial reconciliation. Frank Bartleman said that, "There were far more white people than black people," in attendance, and that "the 'color line' was washed away in the blood of Christ." Cf. Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington: Whitaker, 1982), 51. However, the revival started with a handful of African Americans on Bonnie Brae Street (mostly black female household workers, according to Estrela Alexander). Cf. Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 118. As the Spirit moved, the meetings became more interracial, until the revival ended, when it became a primarily African American congregation once again, under Jennie Moore (partly due to white people attempting on several occasions to take over, and, ultimately, dividing the congregation once more near the end). By the end, the meetings had been moved to Jennie Moore's house on Bonnie Brae Street, directly across from the Asbury home. Cf. Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William Seymour*, 333. The purpose of this footnote is to put the interracial aspects of the revival in context and to note that these early meetings on Bonnie Brae street were primarily composed of African Americans, but shortly thereafter attracted whites.

⁵ The main theological term for speaking in tongues is "glossolalia." When the person speaking in tongues is speaking an actual language that others can understand, some theologians will still refer to this as "glossolalia," but others may refer to this as "xenolalia," which is the proper, more technical term.

congregation found an available space for rent at 312 Azusa Street, in downtown Los Angeles. The congregation moved there, and from 1906-1909, the Azusa Street Revival spread the message of Pentecost around the world. Today, millions of Pentecostals trace their roots back to Azusa Street. Yet, despite how important understanding the dynamics of Azusa Street is to the Pentecostal movement, surprisingly little has been written about Seymour's leadership.⁶



William Seymour Standing in Front of the Azusa Street Mission, Circa 1910.
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Azusa Street Mission with Cars in Front, 1928.
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⁶ As of 2001, there were over 523 million Pentecostals and Charismatics in the world. (Cf. David D. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2003," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27, no. 1 (2003): 24-25.) The Pew Research Center (which is a very well-respected research center in the United States), states that as of 2011, there were approximately 584 million Pentecostals and Charismatics in the world, which equates to approximately 25% of the world's two billion Christians. (Cf. Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (December 19, 2011), *Global Christianity: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population*, p. 67.) Footnote continues on next page.

A significant number of Pentecostals trace their roots back to Azusa Street. Some of those Pentecostals wrongly trace their roots back to Azusa Street, but in spite of that historical error, the Azusa Street Revival was arguably one of the most historically significant North American Pentecostal events that has ever occurred.

Also, it should be noted that the term "Pentecostal" was not necessarily in use during the period of the Azusa Street Revival—it is a term historians ascribed to that worldview at a future date. In addition, for this particular statistical claim concerning the number of Pentecostals, it is important to note that Pentecostals are often grouped with Charismatics. Charismatics are normally defined as individuals who attend congregations that have historically been defined as "mainstream," but have adopted beliefs and practices more commonly associated with Pentecostalism. In the United States, "mainstream" usually refers to Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and most Protestant churches. In some parts of the world, Anglican and other Christian groups can be "mainstream" as well. "Mainstream" is often defined as those churches that subscribe to the Nicene Creed. The Nicene Creed is a doctrinal statement dating back to 325 AD that many Christian churches have professed over the centuries, even to today.

Early American Pentecostals left behind many writings including books, diaries, tracts, pamphlets, sermon notes, newspaper testimonials and the many periodicals which they frequently mailed throughout the United States and around the world.⁸ However, since most of those early American Pentecostals were not academics, early American Pentecostal writings were often testimonial and devotional in nature.⁹ It was not until nearly a decade after the height of the Azusa Street Revival, in 1919, that Charles William Shumway published a PhD dissertation titled, “A Critical History of Glossolalia.” This dissertation became one of the earliest pieces of formal academic writing about American Pentecostalism. The bibliography of Shumway’s thesis states, “The sources for the chapter dealing with Parham and with the revival of glossolalia in Los Angeles in 1906 were personal and first-hand, the writer becoming acquainted with almost all of the persons and places concerned.”¹⁰

⁷ For this thesis, the term “race” refers to phenotype, which is an individual’s observable traits (which includes skin color). Ethnicity refers to shared cultural characteristics such as ancestry, language, history, practices, beliefs, etc. Cf. The National Human Genome Research Institute, “Phenotype.” <https://www.genome.gov/genetics-glossary/Phenotype#:~:text=A%20phenotype%20is%20an%20individual's,largely%20determined%20by%20environmental%20factors>.

⁸ The main periodical from the Azusa Street Revival was titled *The Apostolic Faith*. Also, The use of “American” in this thesis is not intended to be ethnocentric; it is intended as a literary device, to keep the text and train of thought flowing for the reader, since referring to the “United States” every time can result in awkward English. Sentences usually flow more smoothly with the word “American,” even though the word “American” is imprecise because can refer to North America, Central America (which is part of North America), South America, etc. Again, this is not to minimize the diversity of the Americas, it is simply a literary device and in this thesis, “America” refers to the United States, unless otherwise stated.

⁹ According to Allan Anderson, some of these early Pentecostal periodicals give a distorted view of Pentecostal history because occasionally the writings were embellished and sometimes they were written for the purpose of raising financial and prayer support. Cf. Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007), 9. Joe Newman takes a slightly more neutral approach when he suggests, “Objectivity was not the goal of these early personal accounts. Their primary purpose was to promote the Pentecostal message,” cf. Joe Newman *Race and the Assemblies of God Church* (New York: Cambria, 2007), 4.

¹⁰ Charles William Shumway, “A Critical History of Glossolalia,” PhD Dissertation, Boston University, 1919, 118. (The PDF version of this thesis contains this quote on p. 270). Since Boston University passed this thesis, and since some Pentecostal historians quote Shumway, this source appears to be reliable. However, due to the uncorroborated nature of these letters, this thesis relies sparingly on Shumway. It should also be noted that some scholars cite earlier works from Shumway (such as a bachelor’s dissertation he may have written). However, for this thesis, I have favored doctoral level research or higher, when possible.

However, with the exception of rare scholars like Shumway, most early American Pentecostals and religious scholars had little interest in the academic study of Pentecostalism or in its historical artifacts.¹¹ Yes, educated people sometimes wrote about Pentecostal topics during this time period, but writing about Pentecostal topics is not the same thing as writing academically or writing for academic publication.¹² During the early years of American Pentecostalism, the primary audiences for Pentecostal publications included parishioners, lay leaders and Pentecostal ministers (many of whom lacked formal university or seminary training).

In the United States, this pattern continued through much of the first two-thirds of the 20th Century. For example, consider Assemblies of God (AG) minister and author Carl Brumback, who wrote several books about Pentecostalism in the middle of the 20th Century (some 50 years after Azusa Street). By that time, the Assemblies of God had become one of several influential Pentecostal denominations operating in the United States. Although Brumback was not an academic, his writings were influential due to his respectable standing in the AG and due to the AG's influence and reach (which in part was due to the AG having its own publishing house).

¹¹ In addition to the theological skepticism by mainstream theologians, one only has to read the titles of public newspapers to grasp the disdain shown towards Azusa Street. Cf. "Scenes Wild and Weird," *The Los Angeles Daily Times*, August 11, 1907, p. 6.; "Negro Evangelist to Hold Tent Meetings," *Los Angeles Herald*, August 14, 1907, p. 3. The characterization of Azusa Street as "slave religion" sums up the attitudes and beliefs many in the ruling class had towards Azusa Street.

According to Larry Martin, in 1931, the building that housed the Azusa Street Revival was offered to the Assemblies of God (a Pentecostal denomination that traces its roots to Azusa Street). But the Assemblies of God rejected the offer, claiming they had no interest in "relics." Cf. Larry E. Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William Seymour* (Joplin: Christian Life Books, 1999), 333. As a result, the City of Los Angeles condemned the building as a fire hazard and demolished it. Cf. Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William Seymour*, 333. Douglas Nelson states that during the demolition, Frank Bartleman (a journalist and early Pentecostal leader/preacher), arrived at the demolition site and rescued the Azusa Street address numbers "312" and mounted them on a wall inside his home. Cf. Douglas J. Nelson, *For Such a Time As This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, England, 1981), 273.

¹² Some of the educated people writing about early American Pentecostalism were secular journalists who had an unfavorable view of Pentecostalism and/or the interracial and intergender nature of the meetings. Some of their newspaper articles are referenced throughout this thesis.

But Brumback's lack of critical analysis (and possible lack of exposure to black Pentecostalism), resulted in Brumback making some assumptions that potentially minimized Seymour's leadership role at Azusa Street.¹³ The fact that the Assemblies of God never issued corrections to some of Brumback's claims either means that no researchers existed at the time who could notice the error, or it means that Brumback's assumptions reflected the current understanding of William Seymour at the time.¹⁴

One example of this occurs when Brumback seemingly minimizes Seymour's leadership role at Azusa Street when he suggests that early American Pentecostalism had no earthly founder (implying the Holy Spirit was the true leader of Azusa Street, not William Seymour).¹⁵ The fact that Brumback completely dismissed Seymour's contribution and instead favored Seymour's white mentor, Charles Parham, is suspicious. Allan Anderson confirms this potential bias against

¹³ In the United States, the Assemblies of God (AG) is known as one of the largest predominantly "white" Pentecostal denominations. Overseas, the AG has a very diverse presence, but in the United States, the AG has primarily consisted of white adherents. As we will see later in this thesis, the AG traces its roots back to Azusa Street. The AG was formed around a doctrine of the "initial physical" evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the proof, or evidence, that someone was baptized in the Holy Spirit was that they spoke in tongues. Academically, the term for speaking in tongues is "glossolalia" when individuals do not know what is being spoken, and "xenolalia" which is the ability to speak in a language that the speaker did not previously know, but that the hearers (and sometimes the speaker) will understand.

¹⁴ After analyzing the AG periodical *The Pentecostal Evangel* from 1919 through the 1940's, Joe Newman observes a tendency to characterize African Americans as uneducated and simple minded. Newman also notes the "deliberate actions," taken by AG leadership to prevent African Americans from becoming ordained in the AG. Cf. Newman, *Race and the Assemblies of God Church*, 9.

¹⁵ Carl Brumback, *Suddenly ... from Heaven* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 57-63. As the title suggests, Brumback's point is that Pentecostalism's origins were supernaturally initiated by the Holy Spirit and not by man. After arguing Pentecostalism began in a mansion, and not a back alley (a reference to Parham's Topeka Bible School which was known by locals as, "Stone's Mansion"), Brumback goes on to argue Seymour was in over his head and states that Seymour needed Parham to discern between true and false manifestations at Azusa Street.

In Brumback's defense, eyewitness reporter and Azusa Street participant/chronicler, Frank Bartleman, famously observed how, "Seymour generally sat behind two empty boxes, one on top of the other. He usually kept his head inside the top one during the meeting, in prayer...the meeting did not depend on the human leader." Although Bartleman seemed to say something similar concerning Pastor Smale, a white pastor, when Bartleman said, "The meeting seemed to run itself as far as human guidance was concerned," Bartleman's depiction of Seymour has caused some white historians to overlook Seymour's contribution and leadership. Cf. Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington: Whitaker, 1982), 55-56, 21. Later, this thesis will examine Estrelida Alexander's observation that Seymour's leadership was evident. Cf. Estrelida Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 127-131.

African Americans when he states, “Historians of Pentecostalism have often interpreted this story from a predominantly white American perspective, adding their own particular biases of denomination, ideology, race and gender.”¹⁶ Douglas Nelson so strongly disagrees with Brumback’s conclusions that Nelson suggests Brumback, on at least one occasion, retold history 100% backwards from what the historical record shows in an attempt to cast Seymour in a negative light, and Seymour’s white mentor, Charles Parham, in a positive light.¹⁷ It is unclear if Brumback did this intentionally, or if Brumback was simply a product of his time, citing the best available research.¹⁸ However, if Pentecostal history was as dominated by the white perspective as Allan Anderson suggests, then Brumback most likely represented the prevailing beliefs concerning Pentecostal history in the 1950s and 1960s.

However, the tide began to shift in the 1960s and 1970s when scholars such as Walter Hollenweger, Vinson Synan, Klaude Kendrick and William Menzies began presenting a more

¹⁶ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 5. It should be noted that Anderson is not the scholar who perceives the tendency of white scholars to emphasize Parham and diminish Seymour. Cf. Cecil M. Robeck, “Historical Roots of Racial Unity and Division in American Pentecostalism (paper presented at the Memphis Colloquy of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America, Memphis, October 17-19, 1994, Race Relations File, Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center; Howard Kenyon, “An Analysis of Ethical Issues in the History of the Assemblies of God” (PhD Thesis, Baylor University, 1988); and Nelson, “For Such a Time As This.” It should also be noted that Azusa Street began as a predominantly African American gathering. Cf. “The Same Old Way,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 3.; “Bible Pentecost,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906); number 1, p. 1.; “Religious Fanaticism Creates Wild Scenes,” *Los Angeles Record* (July 14, 1906), number 1. In the United States today, it is common to reexamine historical documents and events through the lenses of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc., so revisiting Azusa Street and reexamining it through fresh lenses is not uncommon.

¹⁷ Nelson, *For Such a Time As This*, 19. Nelson is quoting from: Carl Brumback, *A Sound from Heaven* (Springfield, 1961), 58.

¹⁸ In Brumback’s defense, “restorationists” (or those who believed God was using this outpouring to restore what had happened in the New Testament Book of Acts), sometimes argued that, “There is no man at the head of the movement,” and that, “God Himself is speaking in the earth.” Cf. “A Crisis at Hand,” *Household of God*, May 1909, 5. In addition, it is worth noting how Frank Bartleman, a white journalist and early Pentecostal preacher who attended Azusa Street and who was sympathetic to the Pentecostal message, emphasized how the work of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street was so obviously divine that it was clear the reason the Spirit could not move like that in other congregations was because all the other congregations were in the hands of men, thus preventing the Spirit from working this deeply. Cf. Frank Bartleman, “Memoirs of the Azusa Street Revival,” in Wayne Warner, ed., *Touched by the Fire: Patriarchs of Pentecost, Eyewitness Accounts of the Early Twentieth Century Pentecostal Revival* (Plainfield: Logos, 1978), 65. So, it is possible Brumback was acting in good faith, but that he did not have all the information he needed to arrive at a more historically accurate conclusion.

balanced historical record of early Pentecostal history at an academic level.¹⁹ Although many of these writings were relegated to academia, their impact over the coming years both inside and outside academia was significant. Equally as significant was the fact that, even though many of those early Pentecostal academic writings were initially from white scholars, by the 1970s, black Pentecostal scholarship also began to emerge.²⁰ Unfortunately, many of these early writings by black Pentecostal scholars were labeled as, “black Pentecostalism,” as opposed to, “Pentecostalism.” This meant that as a “subset” of Pentecostalism, little of the black scholarship produced became integrated into mainstream Pentecostal studies or white Pentecostal university curriculum. Often, black Pentecostal scholarship was primarily studied by black Pentecostals and was merely a footnote to the dominant narrative. Many white scholars did not seriously consider the hermeneutics associated with the black oral root or with African storytelling and how this might have affected the Azusa Street narrative until later.²¹

Yet, despite this racial divide in early Pentecostal scholarship, by the 1980s, a few authors and scholars began wrestling with some of the core historical, theological and social issues at the heart of early American Pentecostalism. One example of this was Edith Blumhofer who, in 1988,

¹⁹ The Society for Pentecostal Studies was formed in 1970 to provide a scholarly forum for the study of Pentecostalism.

²⁰ Unfortunately, black Pentecostal scholarship was sometimes designated as a subcategory of Pentecostalism. For example, there is no such thing as “white Pentecostalism,” but there is “black Pentecostalism. The closest thing to “white Pentecostalism,” is what would be referred to as, “North American Pentecostalism,” which sometimes includes Canadian Pentecostalism, or “American Pentecostalism,” which often just includes the United States. “North American” and “American” are geographic terms, as opposed to racial terms. Unfortunately, when people think of these terms, they often think of the volume of works produced and endorsed by organizations like the Society for Pentecostal Studies, as opposed to the volume of literature produced by historically black scholars.

In spite of this, black scholarship flourished within predominantly black institutions. But the lack of integration of black scholarship into predominantly white institutions resulted in many of the established versions of Azusa Street omitting key interpretations of historical events.

²¹ Cf. Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997); A. Anderson, *Spreading Fires*; William Menzies, “The Non-Wesleyan Origins of the Pentecostal Movement,” in Vinson Synan, ed., *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins* (Plainfield: Logos International, 1975), 81-98; A personal e-mail received from Glen Menzies on June 22, 2009; and Leonard Lovett, “Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement,” in Vinson Synan, ed., *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins* (Plainfield: Logos International, 1975), 123-42.

attempted to correct some of those early misconceptions concerning Seymour when she repudiated Brumback's assumption that Azusa Street had no earthly leader and instead highlighted Seymour's contribution.²² Since that time, other scholars have reexamined both Azusa Street story and Seymour's role at Azusa Street. One example of this is Estrelida Alexander who has a section in her book titled, "Seymour's Leadership" where she suggests Seymour's leadership was evident.²³ Although brief, Alexander's assembling of basic, accepted historical facts highlighting Seymour's leadership activities creates a compelling case that suggests Seymour held an active leadership role at Azusa Street.²⁴ Blumhofer and Alexander are two examples of how, Pentecostal scholars have continually wrestled with the early Pentecostal narrative over the past four or five decades. In part, this wrestling was due to the fact that during this time, Pentecostal archives were continually unearthing and/or digitizing early Pentecostal writings and making them accessible to scholars. But part of this rereading of early American Pentecostalism had to do with the fact that the Pentecostal narrative was surprisingly simple and complex all at the same time because the characters, settings and circumstances created layers of complexity and meaning. Adding to this complexity was the fact that Pentecostal scholars themselves began studying early American Pentecostalism through the lenses of their academic

²² Edith Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1989). Blumhofer's section on Seymour is brief, but Chapter 4 emphasizes some of Seymour's leadership attributes and briefly analyzes some of this theological similarities and differences with Parham. Obviously Nelson's PhD thesis is much more robust (and was written earlier), but Nelson's thesis was unpublished whereas Blumhofer's work had a wider audience since it was published by Gospel Publishing House (AG). Cf. Douglas J. Nelson, *For Such a Time As This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, England, 1981).

²³ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 127-131.

²⁴ This is an example of Allan Anderson's belief that, "Historians select, sift and arrange their evidence according to criteria or biases predetermined by their particular ideological, cultural and religious values and personal attitudes." Cf. Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007), 5. This is also an example of how arranging and sifting the story of Azusa Street to accentuate certain elements is an acceptable way of scholarly analysing Azusa Street.

specializations.²⁵ This is why over the past fifty years, a deluge of Pentecostal literature has been published from the perspectives of history, sociology, race, gender, biblical studies, theology, ecumenics, ethics, intercultural studies, narrative theology, global Pentecostalism and a host of other specializations.²⁶

However, despite these many scholarly advances, this thesis observes several challenges. One of those challenges is that a racial divide still exists in both the historical and theological interpretation of Azusa Street. Joe Newman highlights this in his book *Race and the Assemblies of God Church* when he observes how white Pentecostals often consider the white Charles Parham and his Topeka, Kansas Bible School to be the origin of American Pentecostalism, whereas black Pentecostals often consider William Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival to be the origin of American Pentecostalism.²⁷ Further complicating this impasse is Allan Anderson's 21st Century writings which, after extensive archival research, concluded that Pentecostal phenomena in the United States and around the world occurred prior to both Seymour and Parham's ministries, which suggests neither one of them is the true "originator" of Pentecostalism.²⁸ In an attempt to better understand Seymour's leadership and theology, this

²⁵ Consider some of the early Pentecostal scholars who began approaching Pentecostal Studies from more of a sociological or cultural perspective. Cf. Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1979); Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); James R. Goff, Jr., *Fields White Unto Harvest* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 1988).

²⁶ There are so many examples of the diversity of Pentecostal literature published during this time that it is difficult to list just one. As just one example of the amount of publication diversity that exists, consider this article by Leah Payne about how fashion may have enhanced religious representation and may have fostered gender construction in the lives of several prominent late 19th and early 20th Century female American revivalist preachers. Cf. Leah Payne. 2015. "Pants Don't Make Preachers': Fashion and Gender Construction in Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century American Revivalism." *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 19, (1): 83-113. It is also worth noting that even a *New York Times* writer is now viewing famed early Pentecostal minister, Pandita Ramabai, as a scholar, a feminist and an educator. Cf. Alisha Khan, "Overlooked No More: Pandita Ramabai, Indian Scholar, Feminist and Educator," *The New York Times* (November 14, 2018). <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/14/obituaries/pandita-ramabai-overlooked.html>

²⁷ Newman, *Race and the Assemblies of God Church*, 7.

²⁸ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*.

thesis highlights the leadership and theological implications associated with how the historical record is read and interpreted. The reason for this is because Seymour's leadership and theology are inseparable. By minimizing Seymour's leadership, people could minimize Seymour's theology. This allowed whites to segregate and restrict the Pentecostal experience to speaking in tongues (which was more closely aligned to Parham's understanding), as opposed to Seymour's concepts of community, unity, divine love, racial reconciliation, fanaticism (which was really Holy Spirit manifestations), etc. After Seymour saw racist whites speaking in tongues, he renounced speaking in tongues as the baptism in the Holy Spirit. His theological thinking on this topic is evidenced by comparing Seymour's early writings, such as the first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* which states very clearly that Seymour believed speaking in tongues was the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, with his later writings, such as the 1915 *Doctrines and Disciplines* where he states, "The baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire means to be flooded with the love of God and power for service, and a love for the truth as it is in God's word.... For the Holy Spirit gives us a sound mind, faith, love and power (2 Tim. 1:7)."²⁹ After witnessing his utopian community of community, unity and divine love be destroyed by divisions, Seymour died thinking he was a failure.³⁰

Part of the present racial divide that exists today amongst various American Pentecostal denominations stems from how the historical and theological record of early American Pentecostalism is read and interpreted. These different readings are used to justify theological distinctives. This is not a condemnation directed towards any group because many of these theological distinctives are deeply held and sincere. The purpose of this thesis is to highlight how

²⁹ "Pentecost Has Come," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1; William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission* (Joplin: Christian Life, 2000), 42-43.

³⁰ Nelson, *For Such a Time As This*, 271-272.

a fresh reading of the Azusa Street story might help facilitate reconciliation and provide a path forward for charismatic leaders who have interest in experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in the unique way Seymour did. Granted, every revival is unique and a fresh outpouring from God. But in John 13:35, Jesus says people would know who His disciples were because of their love for one another. Even though people might have different views on speaking in tongues, this thesis proposes that all Bible-believing Christians who have a healthy trinitarian view of the Christian life could benefit from what the Holy Spirit brings to the inter-trinitarian love relationship. This is because the Holy Spirit manifests that same love in our lives as one of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). For Seymour, Holy Spirit empowerment (which he directly linked to love), was key to the racial reconciliation experienced at Azusa Street. This is because the racial reconciliation went beyond what most thought was humanly possible. Throughout the Bible, one of the ways to go beyond what is humanly possible is to welcome and rely on God's Holy Spirit. And Seymour did this by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. This thesis proposes that we have access to this same Spirit and to this same superhuman love and reconciliation today because the Bible mandates it and because the same Holy Spirit exists today to empower us to manifest the fruit of love. All we have to do is seek and ask, like Seymour did.

Although this very brief overview has omitted many details in the historical and theological development of Azusa Street, the purpose of this section was to highlight: a) the early tendency to minimize Seymour's role at Azusa Street, b) the tendency for the "established" version of Azusa Street to be told from a predominantly white perspective, c) the over 30-year attempt to revise some of those early misconceptions surrounding William Seymour, and d) the failure to integrate many of those revisions into the established version of the story (which results in Seymour remaining marginalized despite evidence to the contrary). Evidence of this is that,

despite Blumhofer's contributions over 30 years ago that suggested William Seymour may have played more of a prominent leadership role than initially expected, the established view still dominates, and that view is written from a primarily white perspective and it tends to minimize Seymour's leadership contribution at Azusa Street. Depending on who is telling the established version, they might highlight Charles Parham's leadership role, or the role of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street, but rarely will they fully value Seymour's leadership role.

This thesis argues that, given how important the Azusa Street story is to contemporary Pentecostalism, the Azusa Street story we tell, and how we tell it, is vitally important to communicating the theology, identity and praxis of Pentecostalism. Yet, despite the fact that for the past 115 years the Azusa Street story has been, and continues to be, communicated orally, few have taken the time to analyze the Azusa Street story from a story perspective even though story analysis has the potential to more clearly highlight the imagery, symbolism and meaning embedded in the oral tradition present at Azusa Street. This thesis argues that a more robust analysis of the Azusa Street story is beneficial not only because it has the potential to highlight certain story elements (such as Seymour's role), and certain theological perspectives (such as Seymour's favoring of theological concepts other than speaking in tongues), but also because story analysis can provide a commentary about the role charismatic leadership has played in both historical and contemporary revivals. This is why, after spending several chapters analyzing Seymour's leadership role at Azusa Street, this thesis concludes with a sort of "applied history" which explores how this re-reading of Azusa Street through the lens of story can enhance our understanding of charismatic leadership in contemporary revivals, how these revivals function (in relation to charismatic leadership), and how charismatic leadership impacts Pentecostal communities today. In other words, this thesis spends most of its time analyzing Seymour and

Azusa Street through the lenses of story analysis and character analysis, and then it concludes by examining how the insights gleaned might benefit our understanding of charismatic leadership in contemporary revival movements.

1.3 U g { o q w t ø u E j c t k u o c v k e N g c f g t u j k r

In the United States, discussions about charismatic leadership often include a discussion of Max Weber who, in 1947, defined charisma this way:

It is a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader.³¹

As of the writing of this thesis, an internet and library database search of “charismatic leadership” returns many popular writings and some academic writings from a secular perspective, but few academic writings that analyze charismatic leadership through the lens of Holy Spirit empowerment.³² One of the few academic books that has analyzed charismatic leadership from a Pentecostal perspective is Truls Akerlund’s *A Phenomenology of Pentecostal Leadership*.³³ Akerlund highlights the aforementioned literature gap and then sets out a case for why Pentecostal leadership should be examined on its own terms, instead of through non-

³¹ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: The Free Press, 1947), 358-359. Max Weber was also known for concepts such as the “Protestant Ethic.” This was obviously a unique concept because it inverts Marxism by arguing that religion may have contributed to an economic system. However, some people have now begun to challenge Weber’s methods and conclusions. Cf. Solomon Stein, and Virgil Henry Storr, “Reconsidering Weber’s The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.” *Independent Review* 24, no. 4 (Spring 2020): 521–32.

³² One example of a popular article is: Ronald E. Riggio, “What is Charismatic Leadership?: Is Charisma Born or Made? What Makes Leaders Charismatic?” *Psychology Today*. October 07, 2012, www.psychologytoday.com.

³³ Truls Akerlund, *A Phenomenology of Pentecostal Leadership* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2018).

Pentecostal constructs that are imposed on it (including Weber’s notions of charisma).³⁴ What is ironic is that, despite Pentecostalism’s influence on the church and culture, and despite an increased interest in spiritual leadership, little has been done to understand charismatic leadership beyond the writings of Max Weber (and Joachim Wachs).³⁵ This is a significant literature gap, given that in a little over 120 years Pentecostalism has grown from a handful of adherents to hundreds of millions of adherents.³⁶ This rapid growth, and the subsequent global impact Pentecostalism has had on Christianity and culture, makes charismatic leadership worth studying.³⁷

This thesis revisits Seymour’s leadership, in an attempt to better understand how he partnered with the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street. Although this process has some limitations by virtue of analyzing Seymour’s leadership practices from 1906 through the lens of 21st Century leadership concepts, recent leadership scholarship may prove useful to understanding Seymour. For example, consider Jim Collin’s concept of “Level 5 Leadership.”³⁸ Collins analyzed mid-to-late 20th Century business leaders from the United States and discovered the most successful leaders (who display what he calls “Level 5 leadership”) were all humble, yet had fierce resolve.

³⁴ Concerning this topic, Akerlund references Mark Cartledge, “Practical Theology” in Allan Anderson, *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (Berkeley: University of CA Press, 2010), 282.

³⁵ Gillian Lindt, “Leadership,” in Lindsay Jones, *Encyclopedia of Religion* (Detroit: Macmillan, 2005), 5383.

³⁶ “120 Years” is used here because the first person spoke in tongues at Parham’s Bible school was Agnes Ozman on January 1, 1901. The Azusa Street Revival started about six years later (which is why “115 years” is used elsewhere in this thesis). However, as Allan Anderson notes, speaking in tongues occurred prior to 1901, both in the United States and in other countries. Cf. Anderson, *Spreading Fires*.

³⁷ Allan Anderson links Pentecostalism’s rapid growth to the entrepreneurial spirit of its early leaders. Grant Wacker concurs when he concludes that the strength, determination and leadership of early Pentecostal leaders was essential to Pentecostalism’s sudden growth. Cf. Allan Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 224; Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 141.

A spiritual approach to charismatic leadership might also benefit the broader field of management studies because in recent years spirituality has become a topic of interest in organizational and management theory. Cf. Laszlo Zsolnai, *Spirituality and Ethics in Management* (London: Kluwer, 2011).

³⁸ Jim Collins. 2001. “Level 5 Leadership.” *Harvard Business Review* 79 (1): 66–76.

Collins argues these leaders are rare, they rarely took credit for their success, and they often displayed counterintuitive leadership traits. This sounds a little like Seymour.³⁹ Compared to other ministers of the time, Seymour's success was unparalleled.⁴⁰ Yet, Seymour never took credit for that success, nor did he brag about himself. To some, Seymour appeared to display little leadership because during the meetings at Azusa Street, he would sit behind two boxes stacked on top of one another and put his head in the top crate and pray for hours at a time.⁴¹ This sharply contrasts with some of the more bombastic images of highly entertaining and energetic charismatic television preachers. But instead of speaking out himself or drawing attention to how great he was, Seymour primarily spoke about the Holy Spirit, the blood of Christ, the Bible, healing, prayer, the end times and other topics which glorified Christ.⁴² Yet, in spite of his humility, Seymour demonstrated fierce resolve when he confronted his racist mentor, Charles Parham, after Parham attempted to divide the congregation along racial lines.⁴³ Like a Level 5 Leader, Seymour was humble, yet he had a fierce resolve to establish a congregation which reflected the example he saw set forth in the New Testament (which involved things like reconciliation, unity, community, divine love and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit). Collins describes Level 5 Leaders as "shy and fearless." No better descriptors could be used to

³⁹ Estrelida Alexander talks about this when she notes how Seymour was the clear leader of Azusa Street and possessed the inner strength necessary to deal with a variety of difficult situations. Yet because of his humility and low profile, some mistook his leadership style and personality for weakness. Cf. Alexander, *Black Fire*, 127.

⁴⁰ As we will see in Chapter Two, author Richard Foster argues Seymour's problem was that he was too successful. Cf. Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water* (HarperCollins: New York, 2001), 124.

⁴¹ Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, 56. Glenn Cook, Seymour's business manager, stated how confusion and accusation did not seem to bother Seymour. "He would sit behind that packing case and smile at us until we were all condemned by our own activities." Cf. Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 195. Faupel also cites Parham, when he notes that Seymour was so humble and, "so deeply interested in the study of the Word that Mr. Parham could not refuse him." Ibid. 197.

⁴² This becomes clear when reading the official Azusa Street publication, *The Apostolic Faith*.

⁴³ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission & Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 127; Sarah E. Parham, *The Life of Charles F. Parham* (Birmingham: Commercial Printing, 1977), 246, 302.

describe Seymour, the man who was known for praying with his head inside a stack of boxes. But leadership qualities like “shy” and “humble” are not the typical ways leaders are described in the United States. This possibly could have contributed, in part, to why writers like Brumback presumed Seymour was not the true leader of Azusa Street. But if what Collins says is true, these unique qualities might help explain why Seymour saw levels of success that ministers today could only dream of (just like the handful of other “Level 5 Leaders” Collins writes about). Seymour demonstrated Level 5 Leadership traits in his personality, his character and in the unprecedented and sustained levels of transformation his congregation experienced. But many throughout the 20th Century did not acknowledge this because they were not looking for the traits Jim Collins says the most elite leaders possess. Although some could reasonably debate whether Seymour should be interpreted through Collin’s Level 5 framework, Collins at least provides a starting point to have a discussion about how Seymour saw unprecedented success. Later, this thesis examines other leadership styles, such as transformational leadership and servant leadership. Seymour’s leadership style can be analyzed through those lenses as well. But what makes Collins unique is that he provides a methodologically sound starting point to make a connection between Seymour’s leadership style and his exponential results. Of course, we always have the option of suggesting the Holy Spirit was the leader because Seymour humbled himself and got out of the Holy Spirit’s way. But the purpose of this thesis is to glean insights from Seymour’s partnership with the Holy Spirit, which is a unique research contribution to the study of William Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival.

Although Seymour’s leadership will be analyzed more in detail later, it is worth briefly noting that Seymour’s leadership style is consistent with the concept of “transformational and charismatic leadership” as defined by Bruce Avolio and Francis Yammarino, and

transformational and servant leadership, as defined by Justin Irving and Mark Strauss.⁴⁴ For Irving and Strauss, transformational leadership often involves leader-follower engagement whereas servant leadership is more other-centered (meaning that the leader enables others to “fulfill their calling before God, [and] to be all that God wants them to be.”)⁴⁵ Seymour’s unique leadership style incorporated many of these qualities. This resulted in so many congregants being equipped, empowered and sent out as missionaries that Allan Anderson wrote an entire book arguing for why Azusa Street should be viewed primarily as a missions movement.⁴⁶

In light of these facts, this thesis considers the possibility that Seymour’s leadership might have been wrongly overlooked in the past because scholars did not know how to reconcile Seymour’s humility with the unprecedented results of Azusa Street. Surely a leader generating those kinds of results would not just sit with his head inside a stack of boxes praying, would he? Due to this paradox and the inability to make a correlation between Seymour’s leadership style and Azusa Street’s highly transformative results, some scholars decided it made more sense to attribute the success of Azusa Street to the Holy Spirit. This thesis does not want to minimize the role of the Holy Spirit because one of Seymour’s secrets was his partnership with the Holy Spirit. Rather, this thesis suggests that a more careful analysis of Seymour’s leadership and how he partnered with the Holy Spirit could be beneficial to contemporary charismatic leaders.

Due to the large volume of primary and secondary sources available, it is now possible to more carefully analyze Seymour’s leadership role at Azusa Street. If Seymour were a business

⁴⁴ Cf. Bruce Avolio and Francis Yammarino, *Transformational and Charismatic Leadership: The Road Ahead* (Bingley: Emerald Group, 2008), xvii;

⁴⁵ Justin Irving and Mark Strauss, *Leadership in Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019), 4, 11.

⁴⁶ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*. However, despite early Pentecostalism’s early success, it should be noted that when some of those missionaries arrived in a foreign field, they discovered their gift of tongues was useless, either because it was the wrong language, because it was unintelligible, or because the words that were spoken were not clearly communicating the gospel. Cf. Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 68. This resulted in some adjusting their theology concerning the correlation between speaking in tongues and clearly communicating the gospel to those who spoke foreign languages.

person, libraries would likely be full of books about Seymour, and business schools would likely teach classes about how Seymour garnered hundreds of millions of follows by transforming an organization and exporting Pentecostalism around the world.⁴⁷ This is because leadership experts tend to be interested in organizations like Azusa Street because few organizations ever achieve that level of influence or “greatness.”⁴⁸ Jim Collins believes this so strongly that he argues most businesses are mediocre which is why organizations in the social sector, including churches, should not model themselves after businesses.⁴⁹ Instead, Azusa Street should be evaluated on its own merits because its impact was far greater than what most businesses ever achieve and because its impact went beyond what could be measured or quantified. For example, Seymour served as an example of how God can partner with someone, and even an entire congregation, to point people to Christ. Ephesians 3:10 says that God’s “intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.” This is also evidenced by how God used Peter’s shadow to heal people (Acts 5:15), or how God healed people through clothing that had touched Paul’s skin (Acts 19:12). God could have healed those people Himself, or sent an angel. But instead, God chose to work through people. Likewise, God appears to have used Seymour, even though God could have ran Azusa Street Himself. This is because ever since Jesus ascended unto Heaven, God tends to prefer to

⁴⁷ David Housholder states Pentecostalism is arguably one of America’s most influential exports of any kind. <http://www.charismanews.com/opinion/44242-10-things-you-didn-t-know-about-pentecostals>; cf. A. Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 68, where Anderson describes the early twentieth-century Pentecostal explosion as “arguably the most significant global expansion of a Christian movement in the entire history of Christianity.”

⁴⁸ An additional benefit of this thesis to churches is that churches that have plateaued could potentially experience renewal as a result of the Holy Spirit, as opposed to entering decline, which is what most plateaued organizations do.

⁴⁹ Jim Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: Why Business Thinking Is Not the Answer: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 1.

work through the church.⁵⁰ In light of this Biblical precedent, and in light of Seymour's significance to global Pentecostalism, this thesis attempts to rediscover Seymour's often overlooked, yet important leadership role. To accomplish this, this thesis will begin by analyzing Seymour's theology and leadership from the already established Azusa Street narrative and then reexamine that narrative, to see if any meaningful leadership insights can be gleaned.

⁵⁰ This does not mean God cannot or will not do things on His own. God can do whatever He wants. Even today, we actively see Jesus revealing Himself to Muslims in their dreams. But God makes it clear that it was His intention to work through human beings who are submitted to Him.

Chapter 2

Pentecostal Narrative Hermeneutics

2.1 Rereading the Existing Literature

One of the challenges with writing anything about Azusa Street is that some believe the topic has already been covered in great detail, possibly even ad nauseum.⁵¹ Barring any new earth-shattering primary documents that emerge, some could reasonably argue that the Azusa Street story likely will not change much. However, I disagree, because current trends in scholarship do not limit history to dates or historical “facts.” Today, history is a space of debate and contestation.⁵² As Allan Anderson states, “Historians select, sift and arrange their evidence according to criteria or biases predetermined by their particular ideological, cultural and religious values and personal attitudes.”⁵³ Anderson goes on to state how this may account for discrepancies between written history and the actual past. However, Anderson is careful to

⁵¹ Personal Conversation with Dr. Allan Anderson via Skype, September 16, 2019. This conversation was in the context of having a unique angle, or a methodology, given the extensive literature that has already been published on Azusa Street. However, critical thinking suggests we should always consider the source of the information. Here, it is not the narrative theologians or the sociologists or the black theologians who are suggesting everything has already been written about Azusa Street. Rather, it is some historians (like Anderson) who suggest that since all the historical documents have been examined, and an established, chronological history has been developed, that there is not much left to say. This is because historians have already said what they have to say, which is why no one has challenged Mel Robeck’s Azusa Street history since its 2006 publication. However, others suggest that even though the historical record might be established, how we interpret that historical record is still up for debate. This is why other Pentecostal scholars are still writing about Azusa Street and reinterpreting the existing history through different lenses long after 2006. Cf. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission & Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

⁵² However, this concept has existed in academia for some time. It is sometimes summed up in the German word *Wirkungsgeschichte*, which acknowledges the history of the influence of the [Biblical] text and how tradition colors one’s ability to interpret a text today. Theologians sometimes define this term as the part of English Reception History/Theory that studies of how [Biblical] passages have been interpreted over the years. Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013); Markus Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word* (Ada: Baker Academic, 2006). The original publications of both of these works were in the 1960s.

⁵³ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 5.

observe that this is not always bad. Rather, “When historians thoroughly seek evidence to support their own beliefs, the value of their written histories is sometimes enhanced.”⁵⁴

If Anderson is correct, an argument can be made that the existing historiographies concerning Azusa Street may have been influenced by scholars’ cultural and methodological biases. Evidence supporting Anderson’s contention is that the methodologies commonly used by scholars writing the established version of Azusa Street are not necessarily conducive to analyzing the black oral root.⁵⁵ The fact that black Pentecostal scholarship sometimes arrives at different conclusions from the same story is problematic for those who have written the established version. How can this be? If the Azusa Street history is one, cohesive, 100% truthful narrative, how can black scholars and white scholars sometimes arrive at different interpretations? The answer is because a) the methodology white scholars use may not be conducive to analyzing the black oral root, and b) like all history, there is room for variations in interpretation.⁵⁶ Knowing this gives us permission to deconstruct the existing narratives and look at the primary sources afresh, through different lenses. And, as Anderson suggests, maybe the

⁵⁴ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 5.

⁵⁵ Azusa Street’s roots are not only in black culture, but more specifically, black oral culture (as opposed to written culture). Not only could many of the blacks not read and write, but their stories were communicated orally (much like how stories were communicated in the Bible). Many books on Azusa Street reference the black oral root. Here is a small sampling of some of the selected works this thesis references regarding the black oral root: Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997); A. Anderson, *Spreading Fires*; William Menzies, “The Non-Wesleyan Origins of the Pentecostal Movement,” in Vinson Synan, ed., *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins* (Plainfield: Logos International, 1975), 81-98; and Leonard Lovett, “Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement,” in Vinson Synan, ed., *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins* (Plainfield: Logos International, 1975), 123-42.

⁵⁶ Although many of the scholars writing the academically established version of Azusa Street most likely were good people, acting in good faith, Anderson may be right in suggesting their classical training may have caused them to miss the mark. Given how the established academic version of Azusa Street was primarily written by Anglo scholars who were mainly trained at Western universities (or who practice the research methods taught at Western universities), a possibility exists that the entire Azusa Street story is tainted. In American criminal law, there is a concept known as the “fruit of the poisonous tree doctrine.” This means that if evidence was obtained illegally, it is inadmissible because if the evidence “tree” is tainted, so is its fruit. cf. Brian A. Garner, ed., *Black’s Law Dictionary* (St. Paul: Thompson West, 2004), 693. Although the “fruit of the poisonous tree doctrine” is not a direct analogy, the concept remains—if the evidence presented and conclusions drawn are a result of methodological bias, then all the fruit, or research, derived from such bias is tainted.

historical and theological revisions proposed in this thesis will contribute to, and maybe even advance, the current historical narrative.

2.1.1 Contemporary Academic Trendsô Postmodernism

Contemporary academic trends, particularly the emphasis on postmodernism, often reject traditional historical academic structural tendencies in favor of deconstructionism (which began as a literary theory and then developed into a philosophical movement).⁵⁷ The essence of deconstructionism is to expose the underlying assumptions upon which our structures of meaning depend. Although French Philosopher Jacques Derrida is most often credited as the father of modern deconstructionism, Hans-Georg Gadamer is sometimes credited with the idea that a text's meaning is not necessarily inherent itself; rather, meaning only develops as the reader dialogues with the text because the meaning is dependent on the perspective of the reader. Therefore, a text could have a different meaning for every reader.⁵⁸ This is one of the reasons why Nietzsche was so critical of the self-imposed limitations inherent in professional historiography and the so-called historical method.⁵⁹ And this is why Keith Jenkins argues history is not the same as the past—the two, “float free of each other, they are ages and miles

⁵⁷ Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 5. Also, since this thesis is not specifically a philosophical work, certain terms are not parsed, or deconstructed, to ad nauseum. An example of this is the word “deconstructionism” which could also be termed poststructuralism. This thesis does not overly emphasize the etymological origins and philology of certain terms and concepts that do not advance its purpose.

⁵⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 261. Cf. James Proctor, *Stuart Hall*, Rutledge Critical Thinkers, 59-61. When analyzing Hall, Proctor suggests that for Hall, the audience is not merely a passive recipient of the meaning. This means that readers and/or listeners often ascribe at least some sort of meaning to a text, even if this meaning is something as small as interpreting a text through their own cultural lens or their own personal experiences. Further complicating things is Hall's contention that a text can have more than one meaning. Cf. Stuart Hall, “Encoding/decoding,” in *Culture, Media, Language*. (London: Hutchinson, 1980). This also ties into Hall's concept of audience reception.

⁵⁹ Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 126-127.

apart.”⁶⁰ For Jenkins, history is a narrative discourse because history is what is written about the past, which is distinct from the past itself.⁶¹

The notion that professional historiographies often depend on assumptions, and the notion that the text can mean different things to different readers who do not subscribe to those assumptions, might help explain why white and black Pentecostals interpret the Azusa Street story differently. Given that these interpretations have resulted in over 100 years of division in the Pentecostal church, this thesis suggests that there might be value in deconstructing the existing historiographies concerning Azusa Street and reading the story from a fresh perspective. Even Allan Anderson’s historiography might benefit from deconstruction. Although this thesis has been fairly neutral towards Allan Anderson’s contentions that Azusa Street has already been written about in great detail, and although this thesis has been grateful for Anderson’s uncovering of previously unknown primary sources, a postmodern reader of Anderson’s work could reasonably dispute the assumptions and structures on which Anderson relied upon (including the structures imbedded in his historical methodology), the way in which Anderson assembled his work, the narrative he created and the conclusions he drew. This is because other scholars could reasonably arrange or interpret the primary sources Anderson used differently. Jenkins would argue that, when reading Anderson’s works, we are not reading Pentecostal history, we are reading Allan Anderson’s reading of history.⁶² The problem with this, according to Jenkins, is that Anderson is a professional historian with certain epistemological and methodological assumptions.⁶³ These assumptions can have serious consequences during the interpretation phase because a professional historian who relies on assumptions, or who favors a

⁶⁰ Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 7.

⁶¹ Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 7.

⁶² Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 9.

⁶³ Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 25ff.

particular historical methodology, could easily misinterpret the historical facts or formulate an incorrect meaning from those facts.⁶⁴ This thesis argues the existing Azusa Street narrative could benefit from more diverse methodological approaches, including approaches that deconstruct existing assumptions. Given that black and white Pentecostal scholars can read the same Azusa Street story and arrive at different interpretations and conclusions suggests we do not merely read Pentecostal history as a set of facts. Often, the historical facts are filtered through a set of assumptions or methodological structures which can inaccurately alter the interpretation of those facts. Even if the historian attempts to limit or highlight assumptions, the reader might interpret the story through his or her own set of assumptions. This happens because readers are never passive readers or recipients of history. All of us tend to be active readers who read history through the lens of our own history, assumptions and experiences. This is why we often see ourselves in the stories we hear or read. Both children and adults tend to identify with certain themes or characters and they often visualize or place themselves within the story they are hearing or reading. Jesus capitalized on this fact which is one of the reasons why His parables were so effective. His hearers often saw themselves somewhere in the story and they were either encouraged or offended at some point in the story.

One could possibly take this one step further and argue that the timelessness of the Bible is due, in part, to the fact that it contains universal stories about the human condition that can be applied across time and culture. C.S. Lewis goes so far as to suggest that there is a universal “law of human nature” which is why, across time, culture and religion, moral teaching appears strikingly similar.⁶⁵ On its surface, a discussion about universal human experiences may not

⁶⁴ Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 40ff.

⁶⁵ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 17-21. Cf. the appendix to Lewis’s *The Abolition of Man* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2017). In Romans 1:20, the Apostle Paul goes so far as to suggest

appear very postmodern, especially since postmodernism rejects overarching universal narratives (commonly known as metanarratives), in favor of more localized narratives. But French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard notes that the “post” in postmodernism refers to “back again” or a form of recollection or a reappropriation of memory.⁶⁶ In this sense, interpreting the universal human condition and universal human experiences through the lens of local experiences is important to this thesis because existing historiographies which applied traditional historical Western methodologies and metanarratives to the African American experience at Azusa Street may not have necessarily produced the best results. Instead, it might be better to read the Azusa Street story through the lens of a more localized experience. Joseph Campbell’s work provides a framework for doing this because he relies on Jungian psychology to explore how universal human symbols, images and archetypes form a “collective unconscious” that all humans across space and time identify with.⁶⁷ One advantage of incorporating Campbell’s work into this thesis is that some argue Campbell is post-postmodern because he was so far ahead of his time that he anticipated and avoided some of the common pitfalls associated with postmodern philosophy.⁶⁸

It is also worth noting that sometimes a text can have a different meaning because history tends to be written by people who were victorious in some manner (such as in war) or who have a vested interest in a topic. In some cases, histories can be written by those who have a vested interest in sparing their reputations. This happens most obviously with national histories, but this

that creation is such a powerful manifestation of God’s eternal power that those who are able to observe creation are universally without excuse to knowing and glorifying God.

⁶⁶ Jean-Francois Lyotard, "Une Note sur le *Post*", in *Le Postmoderne*, aris: Galilee (1986), p. 125.

⁶⁷ Philosophy students might understand this more in terms of Plato’s theory of Forms or Kant’s categories or Schopenhauer’s prototypes.

⁶⁸ Joseph Felser, 1996. “Was Joseph Campbell a Postmodernist?” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64 (2): 395.

happens daily in insurance adjusters' offices, or in courtrooms, where one side has a vested interest to present the facts in a manner that benefits their perspective.

And sometimes, as a practical matter, history can be revised due to contemporary need. One example of this is women in ministry. As more women felt called into the ministry, some scholars revisited the scriptures to reexamine what the Bible said about women in ministry and they examined narratives in the Bible which told stories of women in ministry. Jenkins makes a similar observation when he notes how, "millions of women have lived in the past...few of them appear in history."⁶⁹ Jenkins goes on to note how some feminists (and some historians in general) are attempting to write women back into history. A similar reexamination happened as the United States became more ethnically diverse. Some scholars reexamined the multiracial and multiethnic world in which Jesus lived. Another example of contemporary need involves medical advances that cause us to question morality and ethics. All of these examples are instances that caused scholars to revisit the historical or theological record and to read it in a particular way. This practice is so common amongst theologians and Biblical scholars that there is a name for this process: hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the art of interpretation. The hermeneutical process considers things like the historical and culture context, language, the interpretative tradition, what the text meant to the original audience and how we might apply the text to today.⁷⁰

The purpose of this thesis is not to suggest that we cannot know anything objective about Azusa Street. Nor is it to suggest existing Azusa Street historiographies have conspired together to create some deeply suspicious dark plot to twist the story. Rather, the purpose is to suggest that there are academically valid reasons to critically re-examine, or deconstruct, certain aspects

⁶⁹ Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 9.

⁷⁰ The hermeneutical process is more complex than this, but these are just some of the things hermeneutics considers. For a more detailed explanation of the hermeneutical process, see: Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991).

of the established historical record of Azusa Street and to read it in a different way. In true postmodern fashion, this thesis observes that the “established” historical record was primarily written by white males who used primarily Western academic methods to analyze Azusa Street.⁷¹ Acknowledging author bias and structural assumptions forms a hermeneutic of suspicion that most academics filter their research through. Part of the purpose of academia, and critical thinking in general, is to question established narratives, not for the purpose of tearing them down, but for the purpose of making them stronger through corrections (or through deconstruction and a subsequent construction).

This thesis observes these academic biases because in the United States, observing research bias is a classic tool of both critical thinking and research methodology. However, observing bias does not need to be a moral problem. Rather, research “bias” can simply reflect the basic idea that all points of view have been advanced or entertained for a particular purpose. One might conjure other “histories” for other purposes. In this sense, new histories present an opportunity to shed light on certain historical aspects which might have previously been overlooked. Reading history a slightly different way is sort of like visiting different churches and hearing different preachers present things from a slightly different angle. For example, is the parable Jesus tells about the prodigal son a story about the prodigal son, the elder brother or the father?⁷² Preachers choose different elements of the story to highlight different elements about the nature of God, or of the Kingdom of Heaven. The same preacher might present a sermon series that explores multiple different angles on a topic. This frequently happens at Christmas and Easter, when a

⁷¹ This thesis has already given examples of where certain aspects of the established Azusa Street record were “deconstructed.” However, theological “deconstruction” is often more a form of theological criticism or revisionism, as opposed to philosophical deconstructionism.

⁷² Cf. Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

preacher might spend several weeks using the same texts to focus on different aspects of the story, or to bring about different perspectives or theological points.⁷³

Historians, narrative theologians and preachers often have reasons for why it is important to read the story from their point of view. This thesis, which focuses on reading the Azusa Street through the lens of story, is unique because it highlights some of the oral and storytelling elements which have been present in the Pentecostal tradition since its inception, but which have not been fully explored academically. In short, this thesis argues that narrative analytic tools might better interpret the characters, images and symbols of the oral tradition present at Azusa Street than traditional historical structures.

Contemporary scholarly trends (including postmodernism) can possibly help us approach Azusa Street with fresh eyes because some of these trends embrace non-dominant ways of analyzing narratives. For example, postmodern narrative psychology provides for new ways of analyzing client discourses and new ways of viewing the power of language in stories. This is somewhat similar to certain feminist postmodern critiques of social and historical discourse which suggests dominant groups cause society to favor the narratives of the powerful over the competing discourses of gender, racial and ethnic minorities.⁷⁴ Postmodern approaches suggest there is not just one view of history or of the world. Rather, there are many viewpoints—arguably as many viewpoints as there are people because all of our experiences are slightly different.

⁷³ This is why Jenkins argues that historical narratives can be read differently across culture, space and time. Partly this is due to different cultures having different insights, but partly this is because some texts, especially the Bible, can have a “fresh” meaning to new generations as the Holy Spirit breathes life on those texts. Cf. Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 10.

⁷⁴ Cf. Rachel T. Hare-Mustin, 1994. “Discourses in the Mirrored Room: A Postmodern Analysis of Therapy.” *Journal of Family Process* 33, (1): 19-35.

The purpose of this section on postmodern approaches to history is not to suggest this thesis embraces or denounces postmodern philosophy any more than this thesis embraces or denounces modern philosophy or the philosophies of the Epicureans or Stoics the Apostle Paul addresses in Acts 17. Rather, this thesis takes a more neutral approach and simply observes that across time and culture, scholars sometimes favor certain patterns of thinking. Understanding these patterns of thinking can allow us to deconstruct and break free from some of those dominant patterns and approach history from a non-dominant viewpoint.

2.1.2 Contemporary Academic Trendsô Narrative

But why reread the story of Seymour? One could ask the same question about rereading any aspect of history. For example, feminist scholars argue feminist history is valuable because it illuminates female viewpoints throughout history.⁷⁵ As a result, feminist history attempts to address the marginalization, exclusion and mischaracterization of women in the historical record. Feminist history differs slightly from women's history because women's history emphasizes the role of women in historical events.⁷⁶ However, both feminist history and women's history highlight important reasons for why we can justifiably reexamine Seymour's viewpoints and role (both of which have been marginalized throughout much of the 20th Century).⁷⁷ This thesis

⁷⁵ Cf. Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Barbara Laslett, et al., *History and Theory: Feminist Research, Debates, Contestations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); William E. Cain, ed., *Making Feminist History: The Literary Scholarship of Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar* (New York: Garland, 1994).

⁷⁶ Some scholars would prefer a more nuanced definition of these terms, but for this thesis, the point is to make a comparison within the field of history where scholars have already established the importance of rereading history.

⁷⁷ Cf. John Petersen, *Reading Women's Stories: Female Characters in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004). In Biblical Studies, understanding literary form and structure, the historical and cultural background and the theological context is often important to understanding the story. As scholars have reexamined women's stories, it has become apparent that understanding the themes and theology of women in the Pentateuch (such as Eve, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah or Miriam) is different from say how we interpret the themes and theology of women in the historical books (such as Hannah), or the writings (such as Ruth or Esther). The purpose of this thesis is not

suggests that telling the Azusa Street story differently can lead to a positive conclusion, similar to how feminist history has retold certain historical narratives which have brought about positive conclusions concerning the role of women. Given academia's emphasis on primary sources, it seems ironic that Azusa Street scholars have spent so little time examining Azusa Street from Seymour's perspective, especially since many of Seymour's perspectives are contained in his original writings and in the historical record of his interactions with other people. Yes, much has been written about Seymour, but many of those writings were written by professional historians who wrote historiographies about Azusa Street from the dominant perspective. This thesis attempts to revisit the story of William Seymour and, in true postmodern and feminist fashion, attempts to retell the story from Seymour's non-dominant perspective. Examples of this include examining Seymour's story and theology through the lens of the African American experience at the time (which is often not considered by the dominant perspective), or through the lens of premodernism (which is very important for understanding Seymour and Pentecostalism in general). Understanding Seymour's story through the lens of cultural philosophies like premodernism can help us make sense of Seymour's reality and how he functioned and operated within that reality. To accomplish this, this thesis employs certain methodologies of feminist scholarship because feminist scholars helped establish academically acceptable methodologies for reexamining marginalized perspectives. Even though this thesis is not specifically about feminism, it applies some certain feminist research methodologies to Seymour's story, theology and leadership to see if any new historical, theological or leadership insights can be gleaned which could benefit contemporary charismatic leaders.

propose some sort of radical agenda, as much as it is to employ already established interpretive methodologies to reexamine Seymour's story from more of a marginalized perspective.

But this retelling is not something that is fabricated. Rather, this retelling is done through the lens of primary and secondary sources. Although this thesis does not directly address discourse analysis, this thesis really is an analysis of the language and writings of Azusa Street, in an attempt to establish a relationship between language, context, drama and the Azusa Street community.⁷⁸ For example, when analyzing the relationship between discourse and academic writing, Brian Paltridge notes how in the United States and Britain, an extensive analysis of the introduction of research articles reveals a common pattern of research authors introducing their subject, showing how the topic is important and/or relevant in some way, revealing a gap in previous research and then indicating how this article attempts to fill that research gap.⁷⁹ This pattern is so common that some publishers almost expect this format. But what about the patterns in the Azusa Street story? Can we analyze the Azusa Street discourse and identify patterns in the language and the story? This thesis suggests we might.⁸⁰

Just as how Leland Ryken wrote the book titled, *How to Read the Bible as Literature...and get more out of it*, this thesis is really about how to read the story of William Seymour and Azusa Street as literature... and get more out of it.⁸¹ But what does it mean to “get more out of it?” For Ryken, getting more out of the Bible means taking note of story elements contained in the Biblical narrative. For example, when reading narrative, Ryken suggests we should pay attention to physical setting, picture, image, symbol, structure, simile and metaphor, paradox, the structure

⁷⁸ Cf. Brian Paltridge, *Discourse Analysis* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012).

⁷⁹ Paltridge, *Discourse Analysis*, 74-75.

⁸⁰ Even a PhD thesis such as this is examined according to certain patterns and expectations. So why not analyze the story patterns and expectations in the Azusa Street story?

⁸¹ Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature...and get more out of it* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

Narrative theology and narrative interpretive methods have existed for many decades in the United States. This thesis is simply taking many of those established narrative concepts and applying them to the Azusa Street story.

of opposites, culture, character, dialogue, plot, genre, motif, theme, action, conflict, the protagonist and antagonist, suspense, tests, choices, heroic acts, heroic narrative, literary heroes, archetypes, characterization, foils, irony, satire, tone, repetition, simplicity, realism, fantasy, supernatural agents and strange creatures, visionary literature, drama, poetry, types of poetry, poetic justice, point of view, hyperbole, figures of speech, parallelism, analogy, contrast, dream structure, pageant structure, concrete and abstract elements, literary unity, the ending of the story, the effect the story has on the listener or reader, etc.⁸²

Since addressing all those issues is not possible in one thesis, this thesis will focus on “getting more out” of the Azusa Street narrative by focusing on several key elements as they pertain to the character and story of William Seymour.⁸³ Specifically, this thesis focuses on the hero motif, archetypes, characterization, conflict, plot, genre, points of view, repetition, theme, literary unity, foils, protagonists and antagonists.⁸⁴ Not only is this methodology consistent with narrative hermeneutics and Pentecostal narrative hermeneutics, but it is also consistent with the postmodern notion that there might be more narratives than just the established Azusa Street metanarrative.⁸⁵

⁸² Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*.

⁸³ It should be noted that for this thesis, “character” is mostly used in the literary sense of character, as opposed to moral character.

⁸⁴ It should be noted that due to the large amount of material already written on Pentecostal symbolism and imagery (like wind, water and fire), this thesis does not spend a whole lot of time discussing those images.

⁸⁵ Much has been discussed and written about postmodern cinema. When discussing postmodern filmmaker Quentin Tarantino, M. Keith Booker opines how he does not believe Tarantino “burst” onto the scene with something new and different with the release of his 1992 film *Reservoir Dogs*. Rather, Booker argues that the audience’s shock was not the shock of the new, but rather, “the shock of being bombarded with more recycled materials than they had ever before seen assembled in one place.” Yes, Tarantino follows many of the conventions of postmodern filmmakers, and in some ways, Tarantino is the quintessential postmodern filmmaker. However, Tarantino’s genius lies not only in his use of postmodern filmmaking techniques, but his ability to borrow and repurpose materials from others in his own unique way. In Tarantino’s subsequent films, we do see him assembling and repackaging preexisting cultural and artistic materials. Tarantino does this to such an extent that he is commonly accused of “stealing” existing materials. But because this is art, and because Tarantino “steals” in such brilliant ways, he is viewed not as a thief, but as a cultural icon. In many ways, this thesis follows Tarantino’s pattern of reworking and repurposing the past for a new purpose. Part of that purpose is to use history in an ahistorical way to better understand William Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival. To do that, this thesis does not necessarily create

But what value is this? One could respond by asking, “What value is there to studying the Bible as literature?”⁸⁶ The answer is that different methodologies can highlight previously unseen details that shape our understanding of the narrative, of God, and ultimately, our theology. Just as our theology of the Bible is shaped by how we read the narrative, our theology of Azusa Street (and ultimately Pentecostalism), is shaped by how we read the Pentecostal stories.⁸⁷ Walter Hollenweger noted the significance of the narrative portions of scripture to Pentecostals when he concluded that mainline Protestants tend to read the New Testament through Pauline eyes while Pentecostals tend to read the New Testament through Lukan eyes—primarily through the narrative lenses of Luke and Acts.⁸⁸ Donald Dayton concurred when he noted that, “to turn from the Pauline texts to the Lukan ones is to shift from one genre of literature to another, from didactic to narrative material.”⁸⁹ This means that Pentecostal theology is deeply impacted by both the genre of the narrative and the Pentecostal interpretation of that genre. This Pentecostal hermeneutic ultimately shapes both Pentecostal teaching and praxis because how Pentecostals interpret God working through the narrative portions of scripture is similar to how they interpret God working in the people and events around them.

anything new, but it utilizes existing academic methodologies that often fall outside the scope of Pentecostal Studies and it shocks and bombards the audience with more outside forms of analysis than they are used to. This author experienced this firsthand when sharing this material at the Society for Pentecostal Studies. Pentecostal scholars who were classically trained were unusually silent, whereas Pentecostal scholars trained in film and the arts engaged in exuberant discussions. Cf. M. Keith Booker, *Postmodern Hollywood: What’s New in Film And Why It Makes Us Feel So Strange* (Westport: Praeger, 2007), 91.

⁸⁶ C.S. Lewis criticized Bible scholars who failed to read each distinct part of the Bible in light of its appropriate genre. Cf. Kevin Vanhoozer, “On Scripture,” in Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to C.S. Lewis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 76; C.S. Lewis, “Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism,” in Walter Hooper, ed., *Christian Reflections* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 154-57.

⁸⁷ As a practical matter, it does seem strange that some people ask why the Bible should be read as literature because it is literature. This reveals the questioner’s assumptions and potential blind spots.

⁸⁸ Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), 336.

⁸⁹ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 23.

Pentecostals tend to see themselves as part of God’s larger “theodrama.”⁹⁰ Cardinal Hans Urs von Balthasar is just one of many theologians who have written on this topic.⁹¹ Part of Balthasar’s contention is that Greek philosophy does not have all the necessary categories to understand the depth of God’s mysterious salvation. In an attempt to better understand the deep mysteries of God, Balthasar uses analogies and categories from the dramatic arts, in an attempt to find better categories to explain the mysteries of God and His relationship with the world. Kevin Vanhoozer has also written and lectured about God’s larger theodrama and what he calls “Gospel Theater.” This concept is important to this thesis because early Pentecostal periodicals demonstrate how Pentecostals often interpreted the Bible in light of current events. Many early Pentecostals believed they were living in the “last days” before Christ would return and they often believed the prophetic and apocalyptic Biblical texts were literally playing out before their eyes. As such, many early American Pentecostals viewed themselves as part of the theodrama playing out before them. Given these realities, this thesis argues that established historical methodologies might not have all the necessary tools or categories to understand the layers, depths and complexities of the Azusa Street story. But instead of inventing a new hermeneutical methodology to analyze the Azusa Street story, this thesis builds upon academically accepted methodologies that already exist in the fields of Pentecostal narrative hermeneutics and story analysis. This way, even if a critic initially disagrees with this approach, how can they disagree with the idea of using Pentecostal narrative hermeneutics to analyze a Pentecostal story? What gives someone the right to say only dominant methodologies of the powerful may be used to analyze the discourse of minorities or of the oppressed?⁹²

⁹⁰ Also known as Theological Dramatic Theory.

⁹¹ Cardinal Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory, Vol. 1: Prologomena* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988).

⁹² Cf. The previous discussion of postmodern narrative psychology.

Given how much has been written about narrative analysis, chapter two of this thesis is devoted entirely to narrative. The reason this thesis devotes so much time to analyzing the narrative of Azusa Street is because few have engaged in a “close reading” of the story. But this is not unique to Azusa Street. Grant Osborne notes how many who grew up hearing the stories of the Bible seldom sat down and read those stories for the purpose of catching the drama and power of those stories and how they, “fit together to form a holistic panorama.”⁹³ Osborne goes on to note how literary critics already developed many of the techniques to analyze the stories of the Bible. These techniques include analyzing, “plot and character tension, point of view, dialogue, narrative time, setting,” and other tools which allow the reader to understand the flow of the text and to see God’s hand in the development of the story.⁹⁴ This thesis employs many of these same methodologies to better understand the Azusa Street story.

But what if someone completely disagrees with this methodology or approach? In his book, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Timothy Corrigan addresses a similar question when he asks, “Why write about film?”⁹⁵ His main point is that commentary about film adds to, rather than subtracts, to our understanding of the story and our ability to explain the story.⁹⁶ Increased understanding and critical awareness of the subject matter refines and elaborates our discussions.⁹⁷ Our ability to engage with the material with critical intelligence increases both our entertainment and understanding of the subject matter and allows us to articulate subtleties and nuance with a more refined and measured communication.⁹⁸ But more importantly, writing about

⁹³ Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991), 154.

⁹⁴ Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 154.

⁹⁵ Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film* (New York: Pearson, 2015).

⁹⁶ Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, 1-2.

⁹⁷ Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, 2.

⁹⁸ Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, 2-4.

film allows us to clarify and think carefully about what we experienced and why we had the emotional or intellectual reaction that we did.⁹⁹ Corrigan’s argument is relevant to this thesis because this thesis adds to our understanding and critical awareness of Azusa Street by carefully analyzing the Azusa Street story and by using language to articulate subtleties and nuances in the story. The end goal is to refine and elaborate our discussion of Azusa Street and to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by more critically examining what really happened at Azusa Street and what that means to the original participants, charismatic leadership and to our lives. In the end, this thesis is a sort of commentary that hopefully adds to, rather than subtracts, to our understanding of the Azusa Street story and our ability to explain that story. If that happens, this thesis will have contributed to the existing body of knowledge available.¹⁰⁰

2.2 Revisionism and Azusa Street

Reading Azusa Street in a new way could result in a revising of some of the common 20th Century assumptions which downplayed Seymour’s leadership role.¹⁰¹ In some senses, this is a form of “revisionism.” In academic terms, “revisionism” can refer to revising historical facts, or it can refer to revising our interpretation of the existing historical facts. An example of revising the facts would be the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (which occurred in the late 1940s and early 1950s). This discovery was so archeologically and historically significant that some historical facts were revised.¹⁰² An example of revising our interpretation of the existing

⁹⁹ Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Or, to use a film idiom, “This alone is worth the price of admission.”

¹⁰¹ In the United States, each new generation of historians often finds (and sometimes even prides themselves) in finding aspects of history (especially US history) that should be revised, or reinterpreted based on new facts, or their new understanding or interpretation of the existing facts.

¹⁰² It is also worth noting that even with the Dead Sea Scrolls, there was politics involved because some of the scholars controlling access to the documents did not want other scholars examining certain fragments because the scholars in control contended there was nothing interesting in those remaining, unpublished scrolls. Yet, when scholars were given access, so many interesting things were discovered that Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise

historical facts can be seen with how the history of Christopher Columbus has been reinterpreted in the United States. In a little over four decades (beginning in the late 1970s), 15th Century explorer Christopher Columbus went from being a hero who discovered America, to an anti-hero (because some people started observing that Columbus may have had a dark side, or impure motives), to a villain, because he maybe did not actually discover America, because he owned slaves and because some records indicate indigenous people may have suffered under him.¹⁰³ And this entire revisionist progression from hero to villain all happened in about four decades.¹⁰⁴

published an entire book on their findings of just the scrolls uncovered in Cave 4 at Qumran. Cf. Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered: The First Complete Translation and Interpretation of 50 Key Documents Withheld For Over 35 Years* (Rockport: Element, 1992).

It is also worth noting that this process of historical revisionism is not limited to Biblical studies. Another example of historical revisionism is contained in the *Journal of General Psychology* which published an article titled, “An Archival Study of Eyewitness Memory of the *Titanic’s* Final Plunge.” This article observed how 15 passengers who testified at either the United States hearings or the British hearings in 1912 claimed the *Titanic* was breaking apart as it was sinking into the ocean. But the politicians did not believe those eye witnesses and sided with other evidence and a surviving *Titanic* officer who suggested the *Titanic* sank in one piece. But 73 years later, when the *Titanic* was discovered, the bow had settled about 1,970 feet from the stern. This, combined with other forensic evidence of the metal at the point of rupture, suggested that the *Titanic* had in fact been breaking apart as it made its final plunge into the ocean. This caused historians and scholars to revisit the historical record, paying special attention to those 15 eyewitness accounts who claimed the *Titanic* was breaking apart as it was sinking into the ocean. The end result was a classic case of historical revisionism. Cf. Todd C. Riniolo, et al. 2003. “An Archival Study of Eyewitness Memory of the *Titanic’s* Final Plunge.” *Journal of General Psychology* 130, (1): 89.

¹⁰³ Holly Yan, “Across the US, More Cities Ditch Columbus Day to Honor Those Who Really Discovered America.” <https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/08/us/columbus-day-vs-indigenous-peoples-day/index.html>

¹⁰⁴ In an article titled, “The Legend of Christopher Columbus” in *American Scholar*, Grace Marmor Spruch notes that, “the way ‘history’ alters with time is rather shocking to non-historians.” Her article details how the telling of the legend of Christopher Columbus has evolved and changed over hundreds of years. One example of this is how even the ancient Greeks knew the earth was round. The concern many had with Columbus’s voyage was not that he would fall off the end of a flat earth. Rather, given how large the earth is, and given that we do not know how big the ocean is, the main concern was running out of supplies on such a large voyage. The secondary concern was sea monsters. Yet, today, school children all across the United States are taught that 15th Century “experts” thought the earth was flat, and that Columbus set out on his voyage to prove the earth was round. (The reality was probably the opposite—everyone else knew the earth was round, and they knew how big it was. Columbus was the only one crazy enough to think the earth might actually be pear shaped, which would allow him to succeed on his voyage.) Cf. Grace Marmor Spruch. 2002. “The Legend of Christopher Columbus.” *American Scholar* 71 (4): 61.

As I write this section of my thesis in the year 2020, some people in the United States are tearing down statutes of famous leaders who used to own slaves. In some senses, this is a form of revisionism because it is a declaration that these people who were once heroes are now villains. Although academic debates over some of these leaders have been simmering for decades, in the current political and cultural climate, certain famous statutes are being vandalized or destroyed daily.

Given that the historical facts concerning Azusa Street are, for the most part, undisputed, this thesis generally accepts the established version of the historical facts. However, this thesis also builds upon the recent 30-year tradition of Azusa Street revisionism and suggests that our interpretation of the historical facts could benefit from another interpretation. Recent Pentecostal scholarly publications (in both academic books and journals) highlight how Pentecostal hermeneutics has expanded its methodological and interdisciplinary parameters over the past several decades. Some of this expansion is due to general trends in the field of Pentecostal Studies and some of this expansion is due to the emergence of Pentecostal scholars who have academic backgrounds in fields outside of history and theology. This trajectory suggests Pentecostal hermeneutics is open to new hermeneutical approaches and varieties of interpretation.¹⁰⁵ This thesis builds upon this recent tradition of scholarly diversity by suggesting that developments in the field of narrative hermeneutics have laid the foundation to read the story of William Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival through a narrative lens.¹⁰⁶

In that sense, this thesis might incorporate some revisionism, but any revisionism would be the result of reading the Azusa Street story through a narrative lens. This is akin to the type of revisionism that occurs when a scholar attempts to read a Bible narrative through a narrative lens, as opposed to an analytical lens. This thesis proposes that we might be able to gain a more complete picture of the Azusa Street story if we utilize academic research methodologies that are

¹⁰⁵ Today, Pentecostal scholars have very diverse backgrounds, but in the 1970s and 1980s, when Pentecostal Studies was trying to get a foothold in academia, many of the scholars primarily had historical and/or theological backgrounds, with a few having social science backgrounds.

¹⁰⁶ Some scholars have already examined the connection between Pentecostal testimony and the narrative portions of scripture. For example, Scott Ellington has explored the connection between lament and testimony and the connection between worship and testimony. Cf. Scott Ellington. 2011. ““Can I Get a Witness’: The Myth of Pentecostal Orality and the Process of Traditioning in the Psalms.” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20, (1): 54-67; or: Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 58-69. There are many other examples of Pentecostal scholars analyzing testimony. These are just two short examples.

more closely aligned with the oral culture and worldview of William Seymour and his predominantly black congregation. The problem with many of the existing historical interpretations of Azusa Street is that existing interpretations tend to utilize primarily Western, analytical academic methodologies to dissect a historical event that was led by a one-eyed black man, with little formal education, and whose worldview incorporated imagery, symbolism and story. Why not use other academic methodologies that are more closely aligned to the Azusa Street worldview, such as Pentecostal narrative hermeneutics, analytical psychology, cultural anthropology or story analysis to interpret the story, imagery and symbolism of Azusa Street?

The answer is that we can use those academic methodologies because even though they are different from the methodologies Azusa Street scholars have traditionally used, they are academically accepted and frequently used in other academic disciplines. This thesis essentially uses methodologies that are already used in Pentecostal Studies, (such as Pentecostal narrative hermeneutics), and it uses methodologies that are already used in other disciplines (such as analytical psychology, literature, story analysis, theology and film, cultural anthropology, etc.), and it applies those methodologies to Azusa Street.¹⁰⁷ Or, in simpler terms, as was mentioned

¹⁰⁷ Some may be unaware of the tumultuous history Pentecostals have had with academia. Today, the situation has improved so much that Pentecostal scholarship is even accepted in some circles outside Pentecostalism. But for much of the 20th Century, Pentecostals viewed academics with skepticism some of those academics favored Western, rational hermeneutical methodologies, as opposed to the oral interpretations Pentecostals were used to. This thesis briefly explores the history of Pentecostal narrative hermeneutics when discussing, and building upon the works of Ken Archer and Kevin Vanhoozer. For more information about early pre-critical Pentecostal hermeneutics, see Christopher Adam Stephenson's PhD thesis. Cf. Christopher Adam Stephenson, "Pentecostal Theology According to the Theologians: An Introduction to the Theological Methods of Pentecostal Systematic Theologians," PhD Dissertation, Marquette University, 2009, 2.

And why not use research methodologies more closely aligned to the stories of an oral, pre-critical black culture? Given the similarities between the black oral root and the oral culture of the Bible, this thesis suggests this can be done via narrative theology (which is already used to interpret the oral culture of the Bible. One could even argue that this approach could give us a more accurate interpretation of Azusa Street. For example, one of the challenges students face in seminary level hermeneutics and gospels classes is that Jesus often does not interpret Old Testament scripture the same way, or arrive at the same meaning, as someone who uses proper exegetical messages. Historically, this has sometimes been laughed off in seminary classes if the professor teaching is not familiar with narrative exegetical methods, but this does raise an interesting point: why use hermeneutical or exegetical methods which may not fully grasp the meaning? After all, hermeneutics is the art of interpretation. Why favor an inferior

previously, just as Leland Ryken wrote the book titled, *How to Read the Bible as Literature...and get more out of it*, this thesis is really about how to read the story of William Seymour and Azusa Street as literature... and get more out of it.¹⁰⁸

Just like some of the philosophies mentioned earlier, revisionism is neither good nor bad; it is merely one academic tool historians can use to correct inaccuracies or to refine the historical record. However, given the 30-year history regarding revisionism and the Azusa Street story, a strong case can be made that revisionism can be a good thing because it allows us to correct inaccuracies in the Azusa Street story. This has been especially helpful over the past several decades as more primary sources have emerged, giving us a clearer picture of Azusa Street.

However, even though revisionism can allow us to correct inaccuracies, some people have justifiable concerns about historical “activists” who use new research “evidence” or “research methodologies” to justify changing a firmly established belief just because the researcher has a political bias, or because the researcher overemphasizes one aspect of the historical record to the point where the entire historical record becomes tainted or distorted. This is a valid concern. And in all fairness, anytime historians reevaluate the historical record, there is always the potential that the entire record could be affected because of how interconnected people, places and events are. This thesis is mindful of those concerns and proposes that the historical record not be changed since this thesis does not propose any new primary sources that challenge the existing historical record. Rather, this thesis assembles historical and hermeneutical data together to see

exegetical method just because it is popular among academics in a particular country? What is the point of doing all that work, or paying all that money for a class, only to arrive at interpretations and meanings different from Jesus? That only should be enough motivation to cause someone to pause and ask if their entire methodological approach is flawed. (See footnote above that discusses the “fruit of the poisonous tree.”)

¹⁰⁸ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*.

Seymour in a particular way (i.e., as a charismatic leader).¹⁰⁹ Although this thesis is not historical per se, it does enter into the historical debate of who William Seymour was, and it attempts to wrestle with written history of William Seymour and the actual person of William Seymour himself. The end goal, as Anderson suggests, is to use these story techniques to help us get more out of the written history of William Seymour.¹¹⁰

2.3 Religious Fictionalism

In the United States, legal pleadings sometimes contain “affirmative defenses” which is when someone raises a defense or a set of facts other than those they are being charged with, or when someone raises every plausible argument to help their case, including reasons as to why they should win, even if the charges against them are true. This section acts as sort of an affirmative defense because scholars who propose a rereading of historical documents are sometimes accused of either revisionist history, fictionalism or both. This section will address fictionalism. But rather than disagreeing with any potential critics, this section explores ways in which this thesis could agree with any potential critics, thus nullifying the objection. For example, although fictionalism is a philosophical term, this thesis could reasonably be construed as religious fictionalism because of how it uses story methodologies to interpret historical accounts. Since this thesis does not present itself as a historical work, it could reasonably be construed as religious fictionalism.

¹⁰⁹ According to Allan Anderson, this is consistent with how historians operate because, as was quoted earlier, Anderson argues, “Historians select, sift and arrange their evidence according to criteria or biases predetermined by their particular ideological, cultural and religious values and personal attitudes,” cf. Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 5.

¹¹⁰ This thesis is really about the protagonist, William Seymour. Given Parham’s role in the story as the antagonist, his role is secondary. For this thesis, Parham is viewed as a foil to William Seymour, and as someone who ultimately helps Seymour become the person and the leader Seymour was meant to be.

This is because fictionalism occurs across many academic disciplines, such as metaphysics, literature, mathematics, law, hermeneutics and religion.¹¹¹ Across those disciplines, a consistent definition of fictionalism is that fictionalism is useful, but not necessarily true.¹¹² For example, in the philosophy of mathematics, the number one does not exist in space or time like a three-dimensional object such as the Swiss Alps. Rather, the number one is an abstract object that is nonphysical, nonmental, nonspatial, nontemporal, noncausal and it does not enter into relationship with other objects.¹¹³ Yet, the number one is useful to us, and it serves a useful purpose, even though it is not real.¹¹⁴ The same could be said of legal fictions. Courts routinely accept something to be true, regardless of truth or accuracy, and until proven false, in order to apply a legal rule or reach a decision. Examples of legal fictions might be the concept of the “reasonable person,” the concept of the “probate estate” or the determination that the parents who legally adopt a child are legally that child’s parents instead of the child’s biological parents. In all these cases, common law courts will assume those legal fictions until someone challenges them. A similar concept exists with regards to religious fictionalism. At its core, religious fictionalism suggests that once someone accepts a religion’s stories as true, those stories can form the basis for powerful moral choices.¹¹⁵ An example of this would be the parables of Jesus. Although these parables are most likely non-factual and non-historical stories, they have

¹¹¹ There is also moral fictionalism. For more information about moral fictionalism, cf. Mark Eli Kalderon, *Moral Fictionalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For more information on mathematical or metaphysical fictionalism, cf. Frederick Kroon et al., *A Critical Introduction to Fictionalism* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019).

¹¹² <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195396577/obo-9780195396577-0034.xml>

¹¹³ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/fictionalism-mathematics/>

¹¹⁴ Collectively, most of humanity has agreed to fictionalize the number one, meaning humanity has agreed on number one’s usefulness, even though the number one is not real. But in order for the number one to be useful to all of us collectively, we all must accept the fact that the number one is real (even though it is not). Essentially, the philosophy of the academic disciplines that utilize fictionalism concede that there are convenient fictions, like the number one, that help us function in life.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Robin Le Poidevin, *Religious Fictionalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 24-26.

meaning, and they form the basis for powerful moral choices because of the meaning and value people ascribe to those stories. These religious stories sometimes present exemplary moral ideals, not unlike the imaginary concept of the ideal person, or the “ideal self” in psychology that humans aspire to become like.¹¹⁶

But what does fictionalism have to do with this thesis? Fictionalism is hardly referenced in this thesis, yet the concept is ever-present because this thesis interfaces subjective story elements and historical fact. To that end, this thesis is not historically accurate, nor is it necessarily true. But it is useful because the selective highlighting of certain historical facts allows us to better analyze and understand the characters and conflicts, which in turn, potentially helps us better understand the meaning of the Azusa Street story. This is because stimulating our imagination through good story enables us to understand (and imagine) God and His workings in ways straight pose or empirical data might not allow.¹¹⁷ This is similar to how Ryken suggests that a better understanding of the characters and conflicts of the Bible can lead to a better understanding of the meaning of Biblical texts.¹¹⁸ This is also consistent with Allan Anderson’s suggestion that the rearrangement of historical facts can enhance the historical narrative.¹¹⁹ Literature even has a phrase for true, historical stories which include varying degrees of narration, analysis and interpretation: narrative history.¹²⁰ In short, this thesis is useful to

¹¹⁶ Personal Conversation with Ray Anderson, Fall, 2007. Anderson went so far as to state that he believed Jesus was the only truly authentic human being who ever lived and that Jesus was the ideal human person that psychologists were unknowingly aspiring to become like.

¹¹⁷ C.S. Lewis often wrote like this. By using both reason and story, C.S. Lewis was able to engage both sides of people’s brains. The benefit of this is that if someone had an abusive early and now has difficulty relating to God as their Heavenly Father, their imagination can allow them to imagine what that might look like. For Lewis, Aslan (the lion in Narnia) could help stimulate someone’s imagination in such a way that they can relate to God as a good Father.

¹¹⁸ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*.

¹¹⁹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 5.

¹²⁰ Michael Payne and Jessica Rae Barbera, eds., *A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 90. This is just one example, but other literary dictionaries suggest similar things. Cf. Peter Childs and Roger Fowler, *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (London: Routledge, 2006), 148-151. In

understanding the person of William Seymour, his leadership role at Azusa Street, how the ecclesiastical culture at Azusa Street flows directly from the person of William Seymour and what this means to charismatic leadership today, even if this thesis does not claim to be historically or factually accurate. To that end, this thesis could reasonably be construed as religious fictionalism because it is useful, even if it is not true.

For example, consider what screenwriters might call the “ordeal” or the “central conflict” of Azusa Street. After the Azusa Street Revival had been going strong for about seven months and began spreading throughout Los Angeles, William Seymour eagerly wrote to his white mentor, Charles Parham, inviting him to come to Los Angeles.¹²¹ However, Seymour’s excitement quickly faded after Parham arrived because Parham expressed disgust with the racial integration at Azusa Street, Parham did not like some of the people Seymour put in leadership and Parham felt Seymour was engaging in “fanaticism.”¹²² Parham went so far as to try to wrestle control of the Azusa Street mission away from Seymour and to stop the work of some of Seymour’s leaders. But rather than submitting to Parham, whom *The Apostolic Faith* previously said was the leader of the movement, Seymour confronted and excommunicated Parham.¹²³ In response, Parham went up the street and established, “a small, competing congregation just blocks from the [Azusa Street] mission. He appealed to the [newspapers] not to pay further attention to Seymour’s work, but to turn their eyes to [Parham] as the true leader of the Apostolic

some ways, narrative history is related to literary non-fiction which is based on fact, but written in a creative way. This thesis is based on historical fact, but it interprets the written record via academic methodologies more commonly associated with different academic disciplines.

¹²¹ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission & Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 127.

¹²² Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 127; Sarah E. Parham, *The Life of Charles F. Parham* (Birmingham: Commercial Printing, 1977), 246, 302.

¹²³ “Letter from Bro. Parham,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1.

Faith Movement.”¹²⁴ Azusa Street historian Mel Robeck describes his event as, “the most significant and far-reaching challenge to William J. Seymour’s leadership.”¹²⁵ In the end, the official Azusa Street publication, *The Apostolic Faith*, offered a correction that read, “Some are asking if Dr. Chas. F. Parham is the leader of this movement. We can answer, no, he is not the leader of this movement of Azusa Mission. We thought of him having to be our leader and so stated in our paper, before waiting on the Lord.”¹²⁶

Although this story is fairly straight forward, by sifting and rearranging the evidence, we can more clearly observe contrast and nuance within the story.¹²⁷ For instance, earlier this thesis highlighted how eye-witnesses would say Seymour sat in front of the Azusa Street congregation for extended periods of time, praying with his head inside a stack of boxes.¹²⁸ Seymour’s humility was so legendary that authors like Carl Brumback espoused the belief that the Holy Spirit was the leader of Azusa Street and that there was no earthly leader.¹²⁹ But how does someone who is known for picturesque humility rise up to confront and excommunicate their mentor? What caused Seymour to transform from a gentle dove to a ferocious lion willing to risk everything for his congregation? To answer this, we must ask a very important story analysis question that helps us determine what the story is really about: “Who fights whom over

¹²⁴ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 127.

¹²⁵ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 127.

¹²⁶ “Pentecost With Signs Following: Seven Months of Pentecostal Showers. Jesus, Our Projector and Great Shepherd,” *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906), number 4, p. 1. This contrasts with the article titled, “Letter From Bro. Parham,” in the September, 1906 issue which introduces Parham as, “God’s leader in the Apostolic Faith Movement...” Cf. “Letter from Bro. Parham,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1. That article does not distinguish between The Apostolic Faith Movement and *The Apostolic Faith* newspaper.

¹²⁷ Cf. Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 5.

¹²⁸ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington: Whitaker, 1982), 56.

¹²⁹ Carl Brumback, *Suddenly ... from Heaven* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 57-63. As the title suggests, Brumback’s point is that Pentecostalism’s origins were supernaturally initiated by the Holy Spirit and not by man. After arguing Pentecostalism began in a mansion, and not a back alley (a reference to Parham’s Topeka Bible School which was known by locals as, “Stone’s Mansion”), Brumback goes on to argue Seymour was in over his head and states that Seymour needed Parham to discern between true and false manifestations at Azusa Street.

what?”¹³⁰ The answer is: Seymour fights Parham over the control and identity of the Azusa Street congregation.¹³¹ We know this because Parham and Seymour both believed in speaking in tongues. This is why the fight is not over glossolalia and this is why speaking in tongues is not really what Azusa Street is about. The fight is over whose vision will prevail—Parham’s dystopian, racist, segregationist vision, or Seymour’s utopian vision where people from all classes and races could worship together (Revelation 7:9-10). Douglas Nelson sums up one of the main differences between Parham and Seymour when he observes:

Parham thought glossolalia was proof of an experience. Seymour saw it as the means to a restored community...offering not some special doctrine unknown to previous history and based on white racial attitudes, but a community of apostolic life together restored and formed on the doctrine of human equality in Christ.”¹³²

Nelson continues by stating how white leaders would humble themselves in the spiritual intoxication at Azusa Street, but the next morning, when they awoke, they decided they could live with glossolalia, but not with fellowship beyond the color line. And that was the doctrine Seymour championed above all others: in Christ, there must be no color line because God is not a respecter of persons. Unfortunately, those white leaders rejected Seymour and his fellowship beyond the color line, resulting in the nascent movement splitting along ideological and racial lines.

¹³⁰ John Truby, *The Anatomy of Story: 22 Steps to Becoming a Master Storyteller* (New York: Farrer, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 30.

¹³¹ From a story perspective, Seymour was confronted with an external obstacle (Parham) as well as whatever internal obstacles that were preventing him from crossing the threshold into his destiny as the true leader of Azusa Street.

¹³² Douglas J. Nelson, *For Such a Time As This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, England, 1981), 11-12.

The primary sources confirm this because in the first issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, Seymour reiterates how the baptism in the Holy Spirit fills people with divine love.¹³³ Although Seymour also appears to have added speaking in tongues in to his existing theology in that same issue, by 1915, after the revival had subsided and suffered splits, we discover Seymour's official doctrinal statement is that, "The baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire means to be flooded with the love of God and power for service, and a love for the truth as it is in God's word."¹³⁴ This official position was later amended to read that speaking in tongues was, "one of the 'signs following' the baptized believers," along with other evidences listed in the Bible, such as, "casting out devils, healing the sick," and with the fruits of the Spirit as accompanying signs.¹³⁵ Since the first fruit of the Spirit is love, Seymour never seems to deviate from love. Some scholars speculate Seymour's 1915 official position deemphasizing speaking in tongues as the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit may have been in response to witnessing racist whites speaking in tongues.¹³⁶

This is a good example of religious fictionalism because it begins with the central conflict, strips away all the details that do not pertain to the central conflict, and then sifts and arranges the remaining details in a way that emphasizes contrast and nuance.¹³⁷ Just as Douglas Nelson

¹³³ "The Old-Time Pentecost," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1.

¹³⁴ "Bro. Seymour's Call," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1.; William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission* (Joplin: Christian Life, 2000), 42-43.

¹³⁵ William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission* (Joplin: Christian Life, 2000), 48.

¹³⁶ Curtiss DeYoung, et al. *United By Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 59.

¹³⁷ It is also worth noting that Bible translators sometimes deal with similar issues. This is because words cannot always be translated literally without losing their meaning or effectiveness. As such, translators sometimes have to wrestle with whether they should translate a word literally (even if that means some of the meaning is lost), or if they should translate the meaning or idea behind the original text (even if that means they are no longer translating the word literally). This is important because the final translation can influence the reader's relationship with the text and it can impact Christian behavior. For example, literal translations sometimes lose some of the idioms, jokes and layers of meaning contained in the original text. Losing some of these textual dynamics can result in a depressed or angry Jesus with no life or personality. Literal translations can also affect Christian behavior,

emphasized the theological contrast between Parham and Seymour, this thesis emphasizes theological and character contrast in an attempt to identify nuance. This is because, “Each time you compare a character to your hero, you force yourself to distinguish the hero in new ways.”¹³⁸ What makes this story unique is that Parham begins as Seymour’s mentor, but he ultimately becomes Seymour’s main opponent, or antagonist. It is through this conflict and the open contrast between Parham and Seymour that Seymour’s theology becomes more clear to us. As Seymour rises up to overcome his mentor, Seymour follows the path of many heroes who had to overcome their father or their mentor to establish their own separate identity and to firmly establish their rightful place in the world. Overcoming, or surpassing, the father and/or the mentor is often required for heroes to come into their destiny.¹³⁹ This framing of Seymour through the lens of character is a unique contribution to thought because of how it allows us to understand and track theological development and changes in the Azusa Street story.

This story analysis approach might seem unconventional to some, but the irony is that many of the conclusions reached are similar to the conclusions some black scholars have been reaching since at least the 1970s. This thesis fleshes this, and many other ideas out in the coming

especially if those translations do not adequately capture the cultural context of the text. This is partly why some translators argue it is better to translate things like jokes, idioms and character’s personalities in ways that give the reader a better relationship with the text. The upside of translating things in more literal way is that translators do not have to provide a modern equivalent to some of the sexual material, insults or profanities in the Bible. Although this can result in a less offensive translation, it can also result in certain texts become less understandable, or characters and stories that are not as interesting as some of the original texts. The problem with this is that some people stop reading the Bible because they do not understand it, or because they perceive it as boring.

¹³⁸ Truby, *The Anatomy of Story*, 57.

¹³⁹ We see this concept in literature, mythology and the Bible. In the Bible, the mentor sometimes has to be removed before the successor can take their rightful place. For example, it is not until Elijah gets taken up to Heaven that Elijah is able to step into the fullness of his ministry. Like some heroes, Elisha’s ministry is actually more powerful than his mentor’s, but he is unable to actualize that until after Elijah is removed from the earth. Jesus tells his disciples he must go to Heaven so that the Holy Spirit can empower them to do greater works (John 14:12). At Azusa Street, Parham cannot be the leader because his dystopian theology concerning what the community of God should look like is inconsistent with Seymour’s utopian vision of community, unity and divine love. As a result, the obstacle, Parham, has to be removed in order for Seymour to rise to his true potential and actualize his utopian vision.

chapters, along with an increased emphasis on charismatic leadership. One brief example of how this thesis applies to charismatic leadership is when William Seymour appears to potentially have a personal, romantic relationship with a white parishioner named Clara Lum. At the time this would have been illegal because California's anti-miscegenation statutes, specifically Civil Code Sections 60 and 69, essentially banned interracial marriage since 1850. Although it is unclear exactly what type of relationship Seymour had with Lum, what is clear is that Seymour married Jennie Moore and Lum, who was the Azusa Street Mission's secretary, denounced Seymour's marriage and left her post at the mission, taking the nearly 50,000 member mailing list with her to Portland.¹⁴⁰ The loss of this mailing list resulted in Seymour losing his messaging and his money (because the donations were now being sent to the new Portland address). What makes this thesis slightly different from a historical thesis is that this thesis traces Azusa Street's disastrous financial end back to this event and suggests that Seymour potentially contributed to this disastrous situation because of how he seemingly mishandled his personal relationships.¹⁴¹ Seymour appears to have thought more carefully about professional ethics later in life because in 1915, he wrote that the third rule regarding a preacher's conduct is to "Converse sparingly, and conduct yourself prudently with women."¹⁴² Telling the story in a way which highlights Seymour's successes and failures is a unique approach because the tendency amongst Azusa Street scholars is to either minimize Seymour's role at Azusa Street or to mythologize him into a

¹⁴⁰ Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 144.

¹⁴¹ In my opinion, losing a 50,000 member mailing list that is a main source of global messaging and income constitutes some form of mismanagement, negligence or both.

¹⁴² Seymour, *Doctrines and Discipline*, 104. Although this extreme approach might have been labelled sexist several years ago, in light of the #metoo movement, a Google search for "Men Not Mentoring Women" reveals shocking statistics from the United Kingdom and the United States about men taking an approach similar to William Seymour (although this approach today is often called the "Mike Pence Rule"). Cf. Kemberlee, Kaye, "After #MeToo Hysteria, Men Just Saying No to Mentoring Women," <https://legalinsurrection.com/2018/02/after-metoo-hysteria-men-just-saying-no-to-mentoring-women/>

“bigger than life” figure who could do no wrong. Another tendency is to avoid discussing details which might be speculative. It is true that we do now know exactly what happened between Seymour and Lum. But it is also true that we do not know exactly what happened in nearly every Bible story. Yet, that does not stop scholars from exegeting the Bible or writing commentaries that are hundreds of pages long. Just like the Bible, the established Azusa Street story omits some of the gossip, tense conversations and lurid details. The purpose of this thesis is not to create untrue historical details where they do not exist, but rather, to reasonably assemble the historical details in ways that might better explain the story and theology of Azusa Street. To that end, this thesis is not historical, but it is useful.

2.4 The Kingdom of God

One additional way in which retelling the Azusa Street story is useful is that by combining storytelling, theology and philosophy, this thesis is able to connect Azusa Street’s eschatology with a theology of the Kingdom of God. Much has been written about Pentecostal eschatology because a significant amount of Azusa Street’s theology and mission stemmed from a sense of urgency of the soon coming King.¹⁴³ But this Pentecostal eschatology also meant that hermeneutically, Azusa Street participants saw themselves as active participants in these end times prophecies. As a result, Azusa Street participants were open to, and even seeking prophetic promises from the Bible which foretold what the fulness of this Kingdom would look like.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ One example of this is: Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought*.

¹⁴⁴ Pannenberg believed Jesus was using the concept of the coming “Kingdom” from Jewish tradition, but that He was arguing that that Kingdom was not somewhere in the future, but was imminent. Certain Azusa Street manifestations, like physical healing, divine love, prophecy and unity with that imminent Kingdom is based on Old Testament prophecies that described what that Kingdom would look like. Hermeneutically, some might argue this is not what the Old Testament writers had in mind. However, Jesus challenged many Old Testament assumptions and fulfilled them in unexpected ways. Since this thesis focuses on Pentecostal hermeneutics, it uses primary source documents to demonstrate that Azusa Street participants believed they were living in the last days and were

One outgrowth of analyzing Seymour's theology is that it becomes apparent he believes he is witnessing the fulness of the Kingdom. This is potentially significant for all of Christian theology because it was not that many years ago that theologians like Wolfhart Pannenberg and George Eldon Ladd suggested more work could be done theologically to understand and actualize the Kingdom eschatologically. Pannenberg viewed the imminent Kingdom as "key to the whole of Christian theology" because the message of Jesus is that God's Kingdom does not lie in the distant future, but rather, it is imminent and manifest now in the lives of those who love God, love one another and obey God's commands.¹⁴⁵ Given Pannenberg's suggestion that God's Kingdom is marked by unity and actualized in terms of love, Seymour's theology of unity, community and divine love, combined with his eschatology, could serve as a case study to understand and develop a 21st Century theology of the Kingdom of God. This is especially true today, when many in the United States are seeking the eschatological ideal of racial harmony and unity.¹⁴⁶ This theological approach could not only serve as a Pentecostal apologetic, but it could also further develop an area of theology that Pannenberg felt was not fully developed. Since this development flows naturally out of the Azusa Street story, this thesis proposes that maybe Seymour's theology should be taken more seriously, both inside and outside Pentecostal circles, because Azusa Street is arguably one of the few modern examples of a community that came remotely close to actualizing the eschatological vision of mid-20th Century theologians like

experiencing the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies like Joel 2:28. This hermeneutic is consistent with how composition and literature is often taught in the United States. It is not uncommon for some literature professors to require students to write their essays in present tense because literature never "ends" and is always available for the next reader. This is not unlike how theologians read the Bible as having two audiences—the original audience, and the audience who is reading the Bible at any moment throughout history. For example, David Tracy suggests the text and the reader "are never static realities but realities-in-process demanding the interaction of genuine conversation." David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 105.

¹⁴⁵ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 51-71.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Frederick Buechner, *Telling The Truth: The Gospel As Tragedy, Comedy & Fairy Tale* (New York: HarperCollins, 1977).

Wolfhart Pannenberg or George Eldon Ladd.¹⁴⁷ The reason this is significant for all of Christian theology is because passages like Acts 2:17-21 suggest that the outpouring and work of the Spirit will increase near the end of the age. This is the exact opposite of some who teach that the gifts and working of the Spirit decreased (or even permanently ceased) after the time of the Apostles. It also runs counterintuitive to Jesus's teachings which suggest Christians can, and should, know the seasons, including the season when Christ will return. Seymour and his leadership team looked at the world around them, and based on empirical evidence (such as newspapers and other socio-political events), concluded that Christ's return was imminent (not unlike how some people sensed the season of Christ's birth was imminent). As a result, Seymour's theology, and its potential linking to a theology of the Kingdom has implications for all of theology, the entire global church and 21st Century charismatic leaders.

2.5 Integration¹⁴⁸

It is not uncommon for graduate schools and seminaries in the United States to include some sort of integration or capstone class into their curriculum. One purpose of these classes is to integrate the insights gleaned from multiple disciplines into key concepts which can benefit one's own theological development and faith practice. Another purpose of these classes is to benefit the broader culture by helping students integrate theological insights into their professional leadership practice in a way that speaks meaningfully and powerfully to that culture. Although this thesis does not specifically focus on integration, this thesis does attempt to integrate some of the insights gleaned from Seymour's story, his African American experience

¹⁴⁷ George Eldon Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

¹⁴⁸ Some of the language in this "Integration" section was crafted as a result of a series of personal conversations with Dr. David Clark from Bethel Seminary during the Spring of 2021.

and his theology into two specific areas which can provide a Biblical alternative to 21st Century North American culture in a way that speaks meaningfully and powerfully to that culture.¹⁴⁹

First, Seymour's views on equality flowing from one's identity in Christ are somewhat aligned with Martin Luther King Jr.'s theology and call for unity. King is famously known for his "I Have a Dream" speech where he dreamt that one day, people would, "not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."¹⁵⁰ This thesis contends that Seymour and King shared certain theological and philosophical beliefs which led to practical results (such as unity), and which stand in contrast to today's identity politics where one's identity is defined by their tribal identity instead of their identity in Christ. Examples of this would include similarities between Seymour's and King's beliefs that all humans are equal because they are created in God's image, and that African Americans should always demonstrate love (and never hate or bitterness), towards all people, including their oppressors and enemies.¹⁵¹ This thesis contends that these beliefs are similar to Martin Luther King Jr.'s non-violent approach which emphasized love, integration and immediate action, and they are in contrast to someone like Malcolm X who spurned integration.¹⁵² This thesis observes that Seymour never blamed white

¹⁴⁹ A third purpose of integration, which applies to this thesis, is that anytime academics engage in deconstruction, sometimes a reconstruction is necessary, or the reader can be left with hopelessness. In philosophy, postmodern philosophers like Derrida and Foucault arguably took things too far. Some believe this resulted in the implosion of philosophical postmodernism in less than 60 years. As a result, applied postmodernism and metamodernism emerged, which attempted to reconstruct postmodernism (and certain elements of modernism). Since this thesis deconstructs parts of the Azusa Street story, it would be theologically and practically helpful if the story was reconstructed in a beneficial way.

¹⁵⁰ Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream," speech presented in front of the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Washington, DC, August 28, 1963.

¹⁵¹ Due to word limits, this thesis does not fully consider all the socio-political aspects which may have contributed to Seymour's and King's successes. For example, the United States Declaration of Independence declares that all humans are created equal and this freedom and equality comes from God. Despite the challenges Seymour and King faced, they both benefitted from certain socio-political events of their time and their geographic location. This thesis does not have the space to consider all the socio-historical elements in California and Los Angeles which may have contributed to Seymour's success.

¹⁵² David Howard-Pitney, *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004), 2.

people or labeled them as oppressors, nor did Seymour ever display bitterness or hatred towards whites, even though his grandparents were slaves, and even though Seymour himself faced difficulties under Jim Crow segregation.¹⁵³ Instead, Seymour loved his enemies (Matthew 5:44), and he emphasized unity (Galatians 3:28). Even when people accused Seymour, he had such control over his spirit that, “He would just sit behind that packing case and smile at us until we were all condemned by our own activities.... It was the wonderful character of the man whom God had chosen that attracted the people to keep coming to this humble meeting.”¹⁵⁴ Eye-witness Frank Bartleman commented about the sea of divine love that was felt in the Azusa Street meetings and how no one would allow unkind words to be spoken, not even about their oppressors.¹⁵⁵ This is such a contrast to the [unsuccessful] methodologies employed by many involved in social justice today. But Seymour provides an alternative, which is love. But this is not any kind of love, it is a divine love that at times can seem to go beyond human limits of loving. Like Jesus, Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi and other reformers, Seymour advocated not for violence, but for love and unity, despite our differences. For Seymour, glorifying Christ meant that the New Testament teaches of love and unity were celebrated alongside God’s marvelous diversity.

Based on the Bible’s teaching, and Seymour’s success, this thesis rejects the postmodern notion that knowledge, language and institutions are merely masked power plays for oppressive systems because neither Jesus nor Seymour approached transformation in that way. Rather, given that racial tensions in the United States are currently running high, and given that Azusa Street is

¹⁵³ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 19. If you look for what makes you different from others, you will find it; if you focus on peoples’ skin color, you will see it. Seymour focused on unity, instead of differences. The United States is arguably stronger when people and politicians emphasize the “united” part.

¹⁵⁴ D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 195.

¹⁵⁵ Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, 51.

arguably one of the best examples of racial harmony and unity in United States history, this thesis transcends premodernism, modernism, postmodernism and metamodernism (because all those cultural philosophies have pitfalls), by integrating Seymour's story, theology and leadership into a Biblical alternative that can speak meaningfully, powerfully and transformatively to culture.¹⁵⁶ This is a significant contribution to both charismatic leadership and public theology because no other institution or entity seems able to bring about the level of unity and racial harmony displayed at Azusa Street. Arguably the two most powerful examples of unity in the 20th Century were the voices of two black preachers, William Seymour and Martin Luther King, Jr. By looking to those two examples, we see the Biblical answer is not to hate one another or divide along racial lines. The Biblical answer is to love one another until hatred and division no longer exist. This suggests that the church is arguably the best hope for racial reconciliation and unity in the United States because the level of love required to achieve this level of reconciliation and unity can only come from God. Although this thesis is mainly about William Seymour, given how meaningfully and powerfully his theology and example can speak to contemporary challenges, this thesis concludes by exploring ways charismatic leaders can apply Seymour's theology and example to contemporary culture.

Second, this thesis indirectly lays a foundation for a Pentecostal apologetic which can serve as a Biblical alternative to modern, rational North American Christianity. This approach is unique because Azusa Street was primarily known for the work of the Holy Spirit. Azusa Street has not historically been associated with intellectualism. As a matter of fact, intellectual objections often dissipated at Azusa Street once people encountered God's love. However, the

¹⁵⁶ Good stories often contain wisdom or philosophy conveyed through a plot. This thesis borrows this idea and suggests that we can glean practical and theological insights from Seymour's story which can speak meaningfully, powerfully and transformatively to culture today.

field of Christian apologetics has advanced to the point where Pentecostals can not only provide a robust apologetic (i.e. a defense) to Pentecostalism, but to where Pentecostals can proactively use apologetics as a means of advancing the Pentecostal message through evangelism and by providing solutions to critical, pressing social issues (such as the issue of racial unity). In his book *Urban Apologetics*, Christopher Brooks suggests that for too long, apologetic thought has been dominated by white, suburban authors far removed from the urban context.¹⁵⁷ Brooks contends that, just as the Christian communities in the New Testament directly addressed issues such as race, equality, justice, sexuality, money and economics, the 21st Century urban church should follow that pattern by acting as a transforming community that is able to present the gospel and the Christian worldview in an attractive and culturally transforming manner.

In keeping with apologetics' intellectual leanings, as this thesis examines William Seymour's story, it briefly examines some of Seymour's philosophical assumptions and relates those assumptions to contemporary philosophical trends. This brief journey is a practical way to integrate and reconstruct the various aspects of Seymour's story this thesis previously deconstructed. This integrative process fits well with apologetics because apologetics itself tends to be integrative and interdisciplinary since it is not one single academic discipline, but rather, a practice that incorporates many perspectives and disciplines (not unlike the practice of medicine or law). After analyzing Seymour's integration of premodern beliefs with Christian theology, it becomes clearer why Pentecostalism tends to incorporate certain premodern, supernatural

¹⁵⁷ Christopher W. Brooks, *Urban Apologetics: Why the Gospel is Good News for the City* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), back cover.

perspectives and manifestations into its theology (as opposed to some mainline Christian denominations which do not incorporate premodern, supernatural beliefs into their theology).¹⁵⁸

For example, since Parham was opposed to some of the “fanaticism” at Azusa Street, an analysis of Seymour’s theology, in light of Parham’s opposition, also requires an analysis of Seymour’s underlying assumptions, particularly his metaphysics, ontology and epistemology. Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of reality. Ontology is the branch of metaphysics which explores the nature and essential characteristics of things that exist. Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that analyzes knowledge, and how humans know the things they know. In practical terms, epistemology helps one gain true beliefs and reject false beliefs. Understanding Seymour’s metaphysics, ontology and epistemology is important because those who attack Pentecostalism often do so primarily on philosophical grounds. This is because those critics cannot scripturally defend their position since the Bible contains supernatural acts from Genesis to Revelation, and because one of the ways the God of the Bible distinguishes Himself from other gods by engaging with His people directly, via personal relationship. The Bible never says supernatural acts would stop after the time of the New Testament. Rather, the Bible suggests the opposite when it says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever,” (Hebrews 13:8). In a strange twist, Pentecostal critics somehow argue that God suddenly changed after the New Testament and He stopped acting supernaturally and speaking to people directly. But then those same critics appeal to God’s nature in the Bible when defending some of their other theological positions. The only way those critics are able to accomplish that is by imposing their philosophical reasoning onto their theology, or by relying on church tradition.

¹⁵⁸ These premodern perspectives might resonate with cultures which still hold premodern beliefs. This might also explain why global Pentecostalism has grown exponentially over the past 115 years, especially in non-Western contexts.

However, most Pentecostals view scripture as the final authority for Christian faith and practice, as opposed to the church. As a result, some Pentecostals feel uncomfortable with allowing philosophy and church tradition to make assumptions about God's nature which are not found in the Bible. But despite this discomfort, since Pentecostal critics rely on philosophical reasoning, in order for Pentecostals to effectively engage with their critics, they often have to address the philosophical issues their critics raise. This thesis suggests an analysis of William Seymour's underlying assumptions and philosophies may reveal some insights Pentecostals can use when apologetically engaging with their critics.¹⁵⁹

For example, premodernism begins with the underlying assumption that the spiritual world is real and that the physical world is dependent on the spiritual world.¹⁶⁰ Plato famously outlined this in his Theory of Forms where he suggested that ideas are ultimately the "real" world and the physical world is a reflection of those timeless ideas.¹⁶¹ Hence, a physical chair will deteriorate over time due to the law of entropy, but the idea of a chair will exist indefinitely. The Bible, which was written entirely in the premodern world, also assumes that there is an eternal, spiritual reality (i.e. God) that is more real than the physical world. This is because,

¹⁵⁹ Some of these insights are not directly from Seymour as much as they are the byproduct of an analysis of Seymour's underlying assumptions, philosophy and worldview.

¹⁶⁰ This thesis generally views premodernism, modernism, postmodernism and metamodernism as cultural philosophies, as opposed to worldviews, because worldviews tend to provide specific answer to existential questions in a way that cultural philosophies generally do not.

¹⁶¹ Plato began what became known as rationalism. Plato's student, Aristotle, believed our knowing comes primarily through data gleaned from the external world. Since this data is mostly gleaned via our senses, Aristotle's view became known as empiricism. Immanuel Kant attempted to synthesize these two views by suggesting that without experience there can be no knowledge, however, experience alone, without concepts, does not constitute knowledge. This thesis emphasizes Kant more than most, if not all, other philosophers because of his influence on philosophy in the United States and because the United States now finds itself in a post-Kantian world (for arguably the first time). For example, the surge of random violence, the rise of "cancel culture" and the politicization of academia, government institutions and law enforcement in the United States suggests ethical conduct is no longer based on universal a priori moral laws based on reason. This philosophical shift greatly impacts charismatic leadership in the 21st Century, especially in a postmodern context where knowledge is viewed as impossible, unattainable, and possibly even oppressive. Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 73.

according to the Bible, the physical world is dependent on an eternal God who created it. Therefore the spiritual, or the supernatural, world is the most fundamental and most basic form of reality. In the premodern world, experience, rather than modern rules of evidence, form a significant portion of one's epistemology.¹⁶² This is why in the Bible, people often knew the truth, knew God and knew one another because they had personal, experiential knowledge of those things. However, in the modern world, some theologians, and some Christians, reject the premodern notion of spiritual experience as the primary means to know God, and instead favor a more rational, evidential approach.¹⁶³ This modern view favors knowing God primarily through intellectual and natural means, as opposed to direct experience of God. Hence, in the West, supernatural experiences are sometimes viewed with suspicion.¹⁶⁴ Christians who view supernatural experiences with suspicion sometimes adhere to modern philosophy which suggests God rarely heals today, or that God only speaks through the Bible (which is God's Word and a historical, evidentiary book), as opposed to speaking to someone via direct revelation.¹⁶⁵ This is

¹⁶² This thesis does not have time to explore every philosophical opportunity that presents itself, but it is worth noting that even some Reformed Theologians, like Friedrich Schleiermacher, will emphasize the experiential side over the doctrinal side. However, Pentecostals often do not associate with Schleiermacher because he was the father of modern liberalism. The purpose of this brief section is to suggest the resources exist to create a sound Pentecostal apologetic concerning the nature of religious experience.

¹⁶³ This is also why someone can graduate from business school without ever having run a business. Many schools in the United States (except for maybe trade schools), tend to value intellectual knowledge over practical experience. But even trade schools value the number of training hours completed, as opposed to competence.

¹⁶⁴ This is not to say all moderns are opposed to the supernatural. Søren Kierkegaard became famous for existentialism and Alvan Plantinga was instrumental in developing Reformed Epistemology. Also, this thesis does not specifically address philosophical pragmatism, but Seymour was pragmatic, and some argue pragmatism is also a reaction against modernism.

¹⁶⁵ Sometimes this critique also gets raised concerning whether or not God speaks prophetically today, or if God speaks through modern-day "prophets." Part of this disagreement stems from whether someone believes the Bible or the church is the final authority for Christian faith and practice, some of this disagreement stems from hermeneutical differences (which is how we interpret the Bible and determine what parts are relevant for today), and some of this disagreement is philosophical and theological. Concerning the latter, philosophy of religion (and maybe more specifically, theology and science), explores topics like God's relationship to the temporal world. For example, someone's beliefs on physical healing often intersect with their views of God's relationship to the temporal world, and how God interacts with temporality. This is also true concerning God's relationship with time (for those who believe time exists). Seymour's ontology (which contained non-Western influences), possibly shaped his beliefs concerning how God interacted with the material world (which would include healing), God's relationship to what humans call time (which would include prophecy), and God's relationship to the future (which is eschatology).

because modernism favors knowing God through the natural world. These underlying philosophical assumptions help explain why some modern Christians reject Pentecostalism's emphasis on the supernatural and why apologetics in the United States (which is often heavily influenced by white, middle class theologians), is primarily intellectual, as opposed to experiential. In contrast, in some non-Western countries, missionaries might share the gospel via power encounters where God reveals Himself by being more spiritually powerful than the other gods.¹⁶⁶ In those cases, apologetics tends to be more experiential, as opposed to intellectual. (For this thesis, "intellectual" includes using historical documents or evidentiary reasoning to rationally and philosophically explain the gospel.) How do you explain the gospel to a people who did not experience the Enlightenment, Kantian moral philosophy or Cartesian rationalism?¹⁶⁷ In those contexts, someone often encounters the gospel through more experiential, or cultural means. Being the descendant of slaves, and coming from an oral culture, Seymour appears to have found himself primarily knowing God through experience. But how did Seymour interpret those experiences, and did he know which experiences were from God?

Although Seymour's metaphysics, ontology and epistemology are not the main focus of this thesis, understanding Seymour's story, theology and leadership requires an examination of the assumptions and beliefs which led Parham to accuse Seymour of engaging in "fanaticism" at Azusa Street. Since these philosophical issues arise throughout Seymour's story, they are worth exploring because they possibly shed light on why Seymour allowed, and maybe even

Later, this thesis will explore the possibility that existence is possibly cyclical, as opposed to linear (sort of like Ecclesiastes 3:20 which suggests humans come from the dust, and they return to the dust).

¹⁶⁶ An example of this would be missionary and anthropologist Charles Kraft, who taught classes on power encounters for many years at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA. Cf. Charles Kraft, *Confronting Powerless Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 2002); Charles Kraft, *I Give You Authority: Practicing the Authority Jesus Gave Us* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 1997), etc.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 73.

encouraged, so many supernatural manifestations at Azusa Street. After analyzing these things, this thesis suggests that some of the conflict between Parham and Seymour stems from Seymour's worldview. Although the main goal of analyzing Parham and Seymour's character conflict is to better understand William Seymour and the Azusa Street story, this analysis spills over to modern Pentecostalism because, without Seymour's metaphysical, ontological and epistemological influence on early Pentecostalism, Pentecostalism would arguably not look the same today. Had Parham prevailed at Azusa Street, much of the "fanaticism" and many of the supernatural experiences would have ceased. Given that Seymour's theology prevailed at Azusa Street, Pentecostalism was forever linked to the supernatural in a way that it would not have, had Parham prevailed at Azusa Street.¹⁶⁸ This incidentally leads to, and explains, at least part of the philosophical conflict some Pentecostals experience in the United States. Even today, some Christians who favor modern philosophy vehemently reject certain Pentecostal practices like inner healing and deliverance, in favor of modern psychotherapy. But this clash is arguably more philosophical than it is theological because it deals with the nature of reality and how humans know which reality is true.¹⁶⁹ Since modernity starts many of its endeavors with the physical world, modern psychotherapy tends to begin its endeavors with the mind, as opposed to spiritual

¹⁶⁸ This thesis has made repeated references to Allan Anderson's book, *Spreading Fires*. By showing many isolated incidents of speaking in tongues (including instances prior to Azusa Street), Anderson argues that Pentecostalism had polycentric origins. This is true. But this thesis considers the fact that Azusa Street was arguably the biggest catalyst for early Pentecostalism. As such, Azusa Street significantly shaped Pentecostalism's identity and what practices would be normative. Given the significance Azusa Street had on early Pentecostalism, including early global Pentecostalism, this thesis argues that the theology of Azusa Street's leader would not only shape early Pentecostalism's identity, but that it would ultimately shape what Pentecostalism would look like for many years, and possibly many centuries, to come.

¹⁶⁹ Although Pentecostalism has become more open to psychology in recent years, some Pentecostals still oppose the modern, secular, humanist worldview often contained in psychotherapy. In non-Western contexts, some Pentecostals feel using psychotherapy to address spiritual bondage is like using a screwdriver to pound a nail. However, topics like this to spill over into philosophy of religion and philosophical theology, so some might argue these issues are theological. This is a categorical distinction. This thesis categorizes the use of philosophical principles to address theological concerns, or the incorporation of philosophy into theology, as either philosophy of religion or philosophical theology.

influences which could be affecting the mind.¹⁷⁰ Is someone's problem mental, spiritual, or both, and how do we determine that? Given the importance and relevance of the nature of reality to Pentecostalism, the chapter on Charismatic Leadership builds upon Seymour's metaphysics, ontology and epistemology to help lay the foundation for an apologetic that briefly addresses the nature of reality and why Pentecostals believe that reality is true. Although this thesis cannot fully answer that question, or give account for all the diversity within Pentecostalism, this thesis can explore how Seymour understood reality and what relevance that has to Pentecostals who face criticism from those who do not share that same supernatural view of reality. The ultimate goal is to understand why Seymour saw the world the way he did, how that influenced Pentecostalism, and how contemporary charismatic leaders can use that understanding to Biblically and theologically articulate why the Pentecostal worldview is not only sound, but possibly even advantageous to the church and society.¹⁷¹

2.6 Pentecostal Narrative Hermeneutics

How far removed is this new rereading of the Azusa Street narrative from existing approaches? Although studying heroic narratives might seem new to some, narrative theology, narrative preaching and Pentecostal narrative hermeneutics are academically acceptable ways of engaging with the Biblical texts.¹⁷² Even within Pentecostalism, similar hermeneutical

¹⁷⁰ Psychobiology considers the relationship between the mind and the physical body. This is because someone's mental and emotional health can affect their body. When someone comes to a Pentecostal church asking for prayer for physical healing, it is not uncommon for Pentecostal prayer leaders to ask if there is anyone someone needs to forgive, or if they have bitterness towards someone. Globally, Pentecostals who believe in physical healing often also believe in the relationship between spiritual issues and physical issues. Psychology and spirituality tend to share the common belief that not all physical symptoms and infirmities have physical causes.

¹⁷¹ As noted previously, one advantage to a more proactive apologetic is that Seymour's linking of the baptism in the Holy Spirit to divine love and unity could prove beneficial to those seeking racial unity in the 21st Century.

¹⁷² Many scholars have written about the use of narrative as it relates to scripture and theology. For example, Robert Johnston's concept of, "play theology," or Kevin Vanhoozer's concept of us being part of God's

techniques have been used since modern Pentecostalism's inception. One scholar who specifically analyzes early Pentecostal narrative and literary hermeneutics is Ken Archer.

Although Archer's work is not the only work on this subject, his work sheds light on the use of narrative hermeneutics within Pentecostalism.

Archer believes the early American Pentecostal hermeneutic centered around a Pentecostal version of the, "Bible Reading Method," which was a popular exegetical method used in the Holiness communities. This method, "involved looking up a specific word in an English Bible concordance, compiling an exhaustive list of its occurrences, and deducing a biblical truth based on the reading of the texts."¹⁷³ After this was done, the data was synthesized and developed into a doctrinal statement.¹⁷⁴ Analysing the verses in their original historical context was only done if there was a difficulty in understanding the passage.¹⁷⁵ Three strengths of this methodology were its grounding in scripture, its willingness to allow scripture to speak meaningfully today and its ability to allow Pentecostals, "to push theological boundaries and make interpretive connections within the Scriptures that had not been previously noticed."¹⁷⁶ However, two weaknesses of this method were that two people could use the same interpretive method to arrive at different

broader, "theodrama," could also be helpful in understanding our stories and how they intersect with God's story. Cf. Robert K. Johnston, *The Christian at Play* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005); Robert K. Johnston, ed., *Reframing Theology and Film: New Focus For An Emerging Discipline* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007). There are also many other works available that utilize narrative hermeneutic methodologies which may be helpful. Two examples of this include: Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), and James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005). Over the past several decades, narrative preaching has become more popular in the United States, both inside and outside the Pentecostal church. One of the more famous preachers who popularized this in the United States was Hadden Robinson. Cf. Kent Edwards and Hadden Robinson, *Effective First-Person Biblical Preaching: The Steps from Text to Narrative Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

¹⁷³ Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2009), 101-102.

¹⁷⁴ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 102.

¹⁷⁵ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 125.

¹⁷⁶ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 96, 126.

theological conclusions, and early American Pentecostals believed the biblical stories actually had to have happened if they were to be considered, “true.”¹⁷⁷

Archer believes the distinctive of the “Pentecostal version,” of the Bible Reading Method versus the Holiness version was not that the method was different (because the method was the same), but because the Pentecostal version had a distinct narrative. “The Pentecostal hermeneutical strategy at the foundational interpretative level was a unique story.”¹⁷⁸ The Pentecostal community has a distinct coherent narrative tradition within Christianity and all the unique Pentecostal communities around the globe are bound together by their shared charismatic experiences and shared story.¹⁷⁹ As a restorationist movement, the Pentecostal community tends to view itself as the best representation of Christianity in the world, because, like all restorationist narrative traditions, the Pentecostal community desires to be, “an authentic continuation of New Testament Christianity.”¹⁸⁰ Since the early American Pentecostal understanding of authentic Christianity stemmed from the narrative tradition of those particular Pentecostal communities, when they engaged in the Bible Reading Method, they naturally engaged the Bible from the perspective of the own community and their own tradition.¹⁸¹ Hence, if the community believed speaking in tongues was the initial physical evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, they naturally arrived at that doctrinal conclusion after synthesizing all the occurrences in the New Testament when someone was baptized in the Spirit and seeing that it was often accompanied by glossolalia. As an illustration of this very point, Archer considers the article titled, “Tongues as a Sign,” from *The Apostolic Faith* (1.1, p.2).¹⁸² His conclusion is that

¹⁷⁷ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 96, 112.

¹⁷⁸ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 128.

¹⁷⁹ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 133.

¹⁸⁰ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 133.

¹⁸¹ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 133-134.

¹⁸² “Tongues as a Sign,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 2.

the Bible Reading Method is what led the author to trace the theme of, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit,” through Acts Chapters 2, 8, 10 (by implication) and 19. The author then synthesized these Biblical accounts into a doctrinal statement.¹⁸³ This hermeneutic methodology relied on one’s belief, experience and practice to be in harmony, with praxis being the goal.¹⁸⁴

For Archer, early American Pentecostal hermeneutics is not necessarily an individual endeavour. Rather, due to the, “inescapable relationship between the community to which one belongs and how one explains past religious history...the community becomes an essential part of the hermeneutical strategy, for the making and explaining of meaning is inherently communal.”¹⁸⁵

At Azusa Street, everything was grounded in the community—the worship, the ministry, the theology, etc.

Archer continues:

The Pentecostal story is the primary hermeneutical context for the reading of Scripture, hence providing the context for the production of meaning. The Pentecostal narrative tradition provides the Pentecostals with an experiential, conceptual hermeneutical narrative that enables them to interpret Scripture and their experience of reality....

The Pentecostal community’s identity is forged from its reading of the Biblical narratives of Acts and the Gospels. Pentecostals desire to live as the eschatological people of God. They are caught up in the final drama of God’s redemptive activity. The redemptive activity of God is channeled through Jesus and manifested in the community by the Holy Spirit. The full Gospel is enthusiastically embraced and proclaimed. This places Jesus at the heart of God’s dramatic story, which in turn emphasizes the missionary role of the community.

The Pentecostal community reads Scripture from a Pentecostal perspective. Thus, like all readings, there will be a transaction between the Biblical text and the community which results in the production of meaning. Therefore, there exists a dialectic encounter between two poles, the biblical text and the community. This encounter is possible because within the Biblical story and the Pentecostal community there is a working plot....

...there is a dialogical and dialectical encounter between making of meaning and the validation of that meaning will take place primarily within the community, thus meaning rests in the pragmatic

¹⁸³ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 105-107.

¹⁸⁴ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 108.

¹⁸⁵ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 129-131.

decision of the community. The community must discern what the text means and how that meaning is to be lived out in the community. The decision making process is imperative for Pentecostals because Pentecostal interpretation includes an act of willful obedient response to the Scripture's meaning. . . .

Archer's assessment of early American Pentecostal hermeneutics is interesting because it identifies how the hermeneutic of story relies on both the context of scripture as well as the community. Some scholars, such as Dr. Benny Aker, argue that in the Early Church (which was over 1,000 years before the printing press), Bibles were not available (and many people could not read).¹⁸⁶ As a result, people often had to hear directly from God and confirm what they heard with the community of believers and whatever scripture(s) they had available.

This is relevant to the discussions in this thesis concerning Seymour's theology of community, unity and divine love because the community of believers at Azusa Street collectively played a role in interpreting and applying the scriptures. They actively engaged the scriptures and the scriptures informed their understanding and identity and their experience within the Christian community informed their understanding of scripture. For them, the Bible was literally a living and active document that they engaged with. This is very different from churches where the top leaders make all the hermeneutical decisions and the congregation is not involved in the process.¹⁸⁷

Archer continues:

Pentecostals used typology, inductive reasoning and even dispensational schemes. Yet, what distinguished the early Pentecostal hermeneutic from their Holiness sisters was the *distinct*

¹⁸⁶ Dr. Benny Aker, Personal Conversation, May 21, 2001. Even today, there are people who do not have Bibles in their language, or where they have to rely on the Holy Spirit to tell them where to meet every week for church because church is illegal (so the meeting time and location can only be discussed with God, not humans).

¹⁸⁷ This concept will be addressed later, in a different way, during the discussion about how the physical layout of Azusa Street contributed to the revival. The physical layout was important because it did not elevate the leadership. Everyone was at the same level.

narrative that held these similar methods together. This distinct story encouraged them to interpret Scripture from a new angle: they were the marginalized people of the ‘Latter Rain’. The ‘Latter Rain’ motif provided the early Pentecostals with an experiential conceptual framework. It also enabled them to offer a persuasive explanation for their movement. It provided the hermeneutical lens for the interpretation of Scripture and their present experience of reality....

Pentecostals had an intuitive ability to grasp narrative features of the Bible, such as repetitive themes, aspects of narrated time, plot development and characterization. Pentecostals were comfortable with narrative. This was due to their primary reliance upon oral means of communication.... Hollenweger [says], “The Pentecostal poor are oral nonconceptual peoples who are often masters of story....”

Pentecostals interpreted their contemporary events through the stories of Scripture; their testimonies echoed and were patterned after Biblical stories. Yet they also interpreted Scripture through their life experiences. From modernity’s perspective, Pentecostals constantly blurred the exegetical boundaries of what the text meant to its original readers and what the text meant to contemporary readers.¹⁸⁸

Here, Archer confirms that early American Pentecostals actively engaged in some of the story techniques this thesis suggests we employ when analysing Azusa Street. The idea of using typology, theme, narrative time, plot development, motif scheme is similar to how this thesis uses archetype and probability; inductive techniques and distinct narratives are not unlike how this thesis utilizes the hero’s journey; interpreting the Azusa Street story through the lens of contemporary events is not unlike how this thesis uses contemporary story methods to analyse the story.... This thesis merely updated how those techniques are used today, with an emphasis on contemporary Hollywood storytelling techniques since that is what is currently used in the vicinity of Azusa Street.

Archer goes on to specifically address the Azusa Street Revival. He begins by noting the allegorical comparisons between the Azusa Street Revival taking place in a humble stable and Christ’s birth taking place in a humble stable. Archer believes Pentecostals often paralleled their life experiences with the Bible and they emphasized the immediate meaning of a Biblical text to

¹⁸⁸ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 134-163.

their life. Anything that happened in the Bible could happen today, because God was the same in the Bible as He was at Azusa Street.¹⁸⁹ “The Azusa Street Revival serves as another example of how Pentecostals incorporated scriptural themes and stories into their testimonies and explanations of the significance of their experienced events.”¹⁹⁰

In summary, this section established the idea that early American Pentecostals utilized many techniques of story analysis when reading of scripture and making sense of what God was doing in their lives. More importantly, those techniques are not unlike modern storytelling techniques. The next chapter builds upon this idea by suggesting that contemporary storytelling techniques might shed more light on the Azusa Street story. This is, in part, due to the fact that narrative theology provides a more methodological framework from which we can analyze stories and dig deeper into underlying themes, assumptions and archetypes.

2.7 Soft Rationalism

Those unfamiliar with story analysis might not feel entirely comfortable with the conclusions reached via such an analysis. To help ease those concerns, this thesis tends to utilize a sort of soft rationalism proposed by William J. Abraham. Soft rationalism suggests religious beliefs should be subject to some sort of rational assessment, but they are not, and should not, be held to the absolute certitude of mathematics or the strict proof or disproof of hard rationalism. Abraham’s paper titled, “The Epistemological Significance of the Inner Witness of the Holy

¹⁸⁹ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 165-168. Cf. Hebrews 13:8.

¹⁹⁰ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 165. Walter Hollenweger noted a general tendency for mainline Protestants to read the New Testament through Pauline eyes while Pentecostals tend to read the New Testament through Luke’s eyes (i.e. Luke and Acts). Cf. Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), 336. Donald Dayton adds that, “to turn from the Pauline texts to the Lukan ones is to shift from one genre of literature to another, from didactic to narrative material.” Cf. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 23. Since Pentecostals tend to read the New Testament through the lens of narrative, it only makes sense then, to use a comparable hermeneutical methodology to understand their theology and experiences.

Spirit” suggests that we can rationally evaluate the “work and experience of the Holy Spirit” as well as the beliefs of William Seymour in a meaningful way.¹⁹¹ In practice, the conclusions drawn from this thesis are verified by the historical record, the overall themes and probabilities. For example, a religious experience from 100 years ago might not be proven to the point of mathematical certitude, but based on themes, theology and the historical record, we might be able to understand the situation or story as probable or not likely. This is a sort of rational assessment that considers the individual parts of the story in light of the whole and assessing how likely events are to have occurred, based on the facts we have. This may come as a welcomed relief for contemporary charismatic leaders seeking to integrate the Pentecostal experience with sound intellectual reasoning because today, critics sometimes dismiss Pentecostal religious experiences. The benefit of soft rationalism is that it can potentially help contemporary charismatic leaders assess spiritual phenomena.

2.8 Conclusion

In summary, the purpose of this thesis is to reexamine Seymour’s theology and leadership role at Azusa Street and to glean any insights that could apply to 21st Century charismatic leaders. To that end, a reexamination of Seymour’s story could lay the foundation for a Pentecostal apologetic which is not only defensive, but offensive in the sense that it can help the church address pressing 21st Century cultural issues.

¹⁹¹ William J. Abraham. 2003. “The Epistemological Significance of the Inner Witness of the Holy Spirit.” *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 7, (4): 434-450.

Chapter 3

The Hero Archetype

3.1 Overview

Chapter one of this thesis briefly examined how, throughout much of the 20th Century, some writers did not properly emphasized William Seymour’s role at Azusa Street.¹⁹² This thesis takes a new angle and suggests Seymour’s role should be emphasized more, possibly to the point where we might want to consider him the archetypal hero the Holy Spirit raised up to lead Azusa Street.¹⁹³ Yes, Seymour was known for his humility.¹⁹⁴ However, other Bible characters and exemplars throughout Church history were also known for their humility, yet historians do not minimize the contribution of those “heroes” in the same way Seymour’s contribution is sometimes minimized. In nearly every instance, these “heroes of the faith,” were men and women who had flaws, yet were used by God. This is especially true of the kings in the Bible that God handpicked because even though they were chosen, they were not perfect.

¹⁹² As noted in Chapter One, some suggest Seymour’s contribution was marginalized because the early historians writing the established Azusa Street account were white, while Seymour was black. It is unclear what role this played, but it is possible white historians may have intentionally minimized Seymour, or they may have unintentionally minimized Seymour simply because they did not understand his leadership style, African American theology or the leadership culture of Azusa Street. It is also possible that early Pentecostal historians meant well, but they were ethnocentric, or unable to see Seymour’s contribution because of Seymour’s personality or African American heritage.

¹⁹³ Eyewitness reporter and Azusa Street participant/chronicler, Frank Bartleman, opined, “God found His Moses, in the person of [Pastor] Brother Smale, to lead us to the Jordan crossing. But He chose Brother Seymour, for our Joshua, to lead us over.” Cf. Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (South Plainfield: Logos, 1980), 46.

¹⁹⁴ Frank Bartleman famously observed how, “Seymour generally sat behind two empty boxes, one on top of the other. He usually kept his head inside the top one during the meeting, in prayer...the meeting did not depend on the human leader.” This may have been typical of other leaders at the time because Bartleman seemed to say something similar concerning Pastor Smale, a white pastor, when Bartleman said, “The meeting seemed to run itself as far as human guidance was concerned.” However, depictions like this may have caused some white historians to overlook Seymour’s contribution and leadership. Cf. Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington: Whitaker, 1982), 55-56, 21. In contrast, scholars like Estrela Alexander suggest Seymour’s leadership was evident. Cf. Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 127-131.

In the United States, children are often taught about “heroes” of the faith because acknowledging someone as a “hero” of the faith and looking to them as exemplars does not minimize the Holy Spirit’s role. To the contrary, these “heroes” are often examples of how to properly partner with the Holy Spirit to carry out God’s purposes on the earth. This is why we teach children to model their lives after successful Christians who have gone before them while simultaneously discovering God’s unique purposes for their own lives (just as our heroes did). Pentecostal leaders are not different which is why Pentecostal leaders sometimes refer to certain charismatic leaders as “heroes.”¹⁹⁵ These heroes are often exemplars of how to successfully partner with the Holy Spirit.

Although “hero” is a Greek word that has been in existence for thousands of years, the concept of a hero appears in Biblical texts as well. The Bible uses both heroic and poetic language to describe individuals who, in faith, accomplished great exploits for God. One example of this is the adolescent David who became a hero when he slayed the “champion,” Goliath of Gath, but then became a fallen hero as a king, when he committed murder and adultery. In that sense, David is an exemplar, and most scholars do not have a problem acknowledging what God did through David, they do not have a problem affirming I Samuel 13:14 which states David was a man after God’s own heart, and they do not have a problem accepting that David sinned and repented. As a matter of fact, David is often viewed as an exemplar, despite his flaws.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Even as recently as 2021, Charisma Magazine published an article by Dean Merrill titled, “These 21 Heroes of Pentecost Built the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement,” <https://charismamag.com/spirit/spiritual-growth/48607-21-heroes-of-pentecost>. In that article, Seymour is listed as one of the heroes. It is also worth noting that Pentecostals use other words which imply heroic qualities. For example, Roberts Liardon writes about Seymour and other Pentecostal leaders throughout his *God’s Generals* series. Cf. Roberts Liardon, *God’s Generals: Why They Succeeded and Why Some Fail* (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 2000).

¹⁹⁶ Honestly evaluating a hero’s strengths and weaknesses has become common in character analysis, including religious heroes. When analyzing religious “classics,” David Clairmont expanded David Tracy’s concept of the “classic” and argued that a “classic” is not a perfect exemplar, but rather, an individual who is in the midst of

Likewise, this thesis suggests we more honestly acknowledge Seymour's leadership contribution as well as his personal and professional shortcomings, similar to how we acknowledge the contributions and shortcomings of other heroes throughout Biblical and church history. The problem with existing Azusa Street historiographies is that it is questionable how honest some historians have been when addressing both Seymour's strengths and weaknesses. Chapter one addressed how some of Seymour's leadership contributions may have been overlooked. But Seymour's leadership weaknesses also appear to have been overlooked because historians have either minimized Seymour's leadership role (thus minimizing his accountability for any shortcomings at Azusa Street), or because they viewed Seymour as somewhat of a mythological hero who had few, if any, flaws. This creates a polarity where Seymour is either minimized or mythologized. But by only viewing Seymour through the lens of extremes, it becomes difficult to accurately assess his strengths and weaknesses or to accurately evaluate his contribution to the Azusa Street community. Conversely, when we apply the same hermeneutical principles to Seymour that we apply to other heroes, we can gain a clearer understanding of how the Holy Spirit used Seymour and how Seymour's personality and theology influenced Azusa Street.

some sort of intellectual or moral struggle. Cf. David A. Clairmont, "Persons as Religious Classics: Comparative Ethics and the Theology of Bridge Concepts." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 3 (2010): 687–720; David A. Clairmont, *Moral Struggle and Religious Ethics* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). This hermeneutical approach begins by analyzing what makes someone a "classic" in their historical context, and then analyzes what moral function that classic has to the contemporary audience. In that sense, Biblical heroes like David could be analyzed through the lens of a "classic" because none of those heroes (except for Jesus) was a perfect example. Rather, many classics have elements which are noble and should be modeled and elements which should be avoided. David's faith and pursuit of God should be modeled. His murder and adultery should not (because these serve as examples of what not to do).

3.1.1 U g { o q w t ø u N g c f g t u j k r

As noted in chapter one, throughout the 20th Century some authors possibly minimized Seymour's leadership contribution. But in the 21st Century, some scholars revisited the Azusa Street texts and proposed Seymour may have played more of a leadership role at Azusa Street than previously thought.¹⁹⁷ For example, Estrela Alexander has a section in one of her books titled, "Seymour's Leadership" where she succinctly examines historical evidence that suggests Seymour's leadership, influence and theology developed as the revival progressed.¹⁹⁸ Although brief, Alexander's assembling of basic, accepted historical facts highlighting Seymour's leadership activities creates a compelling case that suggests Seymour held an active leadership role at Azusa Street.¹⁹⁹ Author Richard Foster goes so far as to say Seymour's problem was that "his leadership was too effective" and "too successful" because his "all-inclusive community [which loved people] beyond the color line" and his elimination of the gender divide directly confronted and contradicted the Jim Crow segregation laws and gender divisions that many in society and the church had ascribed to.²⁰⁰ Foster believes this was too much social change for some to handle, which is part of the reason why some Pentecostals left Azusa Street and formed

¹⁹⁷ As noted in Chapter One, some of the authors minimizing Seymour's role were not what we would consider "scholars" today because they did not write critically about Seymour and they did not have the academic training to make a solid academic argument supporting their position.

¹⁹⁸ Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 127-131. This thesis also proposes that Seymour's theology developed as he traveled across the country. In other words, Seymour's theology had developed over many years and any additional theological development Seymour experienced at Azusa Street would have been a continuation of years of his many years of theological development. And, as noted in chapter one, Seymour's theology continues to develop after the revival began to subside because in 1915 he published *Doctrines and Discipline* which seems to suggest a shift in his view on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Cf. William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission* (Joplin: Christian Life, 2000), 42, 43 & 48.

¹⁹⁹ This is an example of Allan Anderson's belief that, "Historians select, sift and arrange their evidence according to criteria or biases predetermined by their particular ideological, cultural and religious values and personal attitudes." Cf. Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007), 5. This is also an example of how arranging and sifting the story of Azusa Street to accentuate certain elements is an acceptable way of scholarly analysing Azusa Street.

²⁰⁰ Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water* (HarperCollins: New York, 2001), 124.

their own congregations primarily along racial lines.²⁰¹ This disruption of the established social order might also be part of the reason why some throughout the 20th Century minimized Seymour's role and his theology.²⁰² Given how difficult some pastors find it difficult to develop multicultural congregations, Foster may have a point about Seymour being too successful.²⁰³

The primary sources and eyewitness accounts of Seymour contain varied perspectives as to how active Seymour's leadership was. On the one hand, you have Frank Bartleman who famously observed how, "Seymour generally sat behind two empty boxes, one on top of the other. He usually kept his head inside the top one during the meeting, in prayer...the meeting did not depend on the human leader."²⁰⁴ Even the official Azusa Street publication, *The Apostolic Faith*, at one point admits that, "the Holy Ghost is the leader."²⁰⁵ On the other hand, you have eyewitnesses such as Glenn Cook who stated, "[Seymour] would sit behind that packing case and smile at us until we were all condemned by our own activities."²⁰⁶ Florence Crawford

²⁰¹ Ironically, prior to arriving at Azusa Street, Charles Parham wrote to William Seymour and the Azusa Street congregation, rejoicing over them because "we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body," and admonishing them to "keep together in unity." But upon his arrival, the visual of blacks and whites and men and women worshipping together and leading one another in an egalitarian manner was a little more unity than he could stomach. Cf. "Letter from Bro. Parham," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1.

²⁰² Although this thesis cautiously makes connections between Seymour and Martin Luther King, Jr., one can't help but note some of the similarities. For example, King traveled to Memphis, TN (where he was assassinated) because he was supporting African American sanitation workers who were striking for better working conditions. In a broader sense, this goes beyond King to broader African American theology which has historically linked theological truth with social action.

²⁰³ It is worth noting that in many hermeneutics courses, context is often taught as being one of the most important factors in determining meaning. So, even if people disagree with Foster, Alexander or the approach taken in this thesis, interpreting Azusa Street in light of its broader context is a valid hermeneutical approach.

²⁰⁴ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington: Whitaker, 1982), 55-56, 21.

²⁰⁵ "Bible Pentecost," *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906); number 3, p. 1. At other times, they said the Lord was the leader. Cf. "Pentecost With Signs Following: Seven Months of Pentecostal Showers. Jesus, Our Projector and Great Shepherd," *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906), number 4, p. 1. This contrasts with the article titled, "Letter From Bro. Parham," in the September, 1906 issue which introduces Parham as, "God's leader in the Apostolic Faith Movement..." Cf. "Letter from Bro. Parham," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1. That article does not distinguish between The Apostolic Faith Movement and *The Apostolic Faith* newspaper.

It is also worth noting that Seymour's emphasis on equality and raising up other leaders was key to the Azusa Street work. But raising up other leaders had the potential to minimize Seymour's leadership role since Seymour was not doing all of the ministry.

²⁰⁶ Glenn Cook, *The Azusa Street Meeting: Some Highlights of This Outpouring* (Belvedere: Glenn Cook, n.d.), 2. This small publication is available online at: http://seeking4truth.com/glenn_a_cook.htm.

testified to how the Holy Spirit flowed through Seymour when she said that the first time she arrived at Azusa Street, she was not particularly moved by the worship or prayer. It was not until Seymour shouted, “Hallelujah!” that her soul was so stirred she thought she heard a voice from Heaven.²⁰⁷ Cook seems to confirm this inner work of the Spirit in Seymour’s life when he observed that it was Seymour’s incredible control over his spirit, his sanctified life and wonderful character that God used to attract people to the Azusa Street meetings.²⁰⁸ Other eyewitnesses would highlight Seymour’s deep prayer, his wisdom or his gift of discernment.²⁰⁹ But no matter what descriptors eyewitnesses used to describe Seymour, they all seem to indicate that Seymour was mightily used by God, but in a way that was different from other leaders. Douglas Nelson appears to confirm this because, in his analysis of numerous primary sources and eyewitness testimonies, Nelson concluded that Seymour’s leadership was, “unobtrusive and gentle but decisive and crucial.”²¹⁰ Nelson goes on to describe Seymour’s “unusual pastoral skill” and how much his life impacted others.²¹¹ Nelson suggests that Seymour’s unconventional leadership style and unusual meetings may have given the impression that God was the leader, but in reality, the revival existed because of how the Holy Spirit was flowing through Seymour.²¹² Nelson backs this suggestion up with numerous eyewitness accounts of people who either came because they were seeking more of God or who came to criticize the movement, but

²⁰⁷ Nelson, *For Such a Time As This*, 200.

²⁰⁸ Glenn Cook, *The Azusa Street Meeting*, 2. This small publication is available online at: http://seeking4truth.com/glenn_a_cook.htm.

²⁰⁹ Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 190-193; “The Temple,” *Word and Work* (May 1933), number 12, p. 1-2. Some would emphasize Seymour’s holiness and his ability to usher in and help others sense God’s divine presence.

²¹⁰ Douglas J. Nelson, *For Such a Time As This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, England, 1981), 200.

²¹¹ Nelson, *For Such a Time As This*, 200-201. Glenn Cook goes into great detail about how much Seymour’s life impacted him.

²¹² Nelson, *For Such a Time As This*, 198-201.

when they met Seymour, the power of God flowed through Seymour and transformed their hearts and lives. This transformation was so powerful that segregationists who arrived at Azusa Street returned home, telling their congregations how they were worshipping and seeking the same blessing with black believers.²¹³

However, *The Apostolic Faith* appears to change its position on who exactly the leader is at Azusa Street. The September 1906 issue introduces Parham as, “God’s leader in the Apostolic Faith Movement....”²¹⁴ That same issue states that the work at Azusa street began about five years prior, under the leadership of Charles Parham.²¹⁵ But after Parham’s confrontation with Seymour, the editors said they mistakenly thought of Parham as their leader before seeking the Lord.²¹⁶ That same issue claims the Lord was the leader of the revival and that the Holy Spirit made Seymour the overseer.²¹⁷ But what does this mean? *The Apostolic Faith* does not expound on the distinction between Seymour’s role and God’s role at the revival. Presumably, if the Lord was the leader and Seymour the overseer, then Seymour at least had a managerial role. However, when we compare Seymour to Bible heroes and other heroes throughout church history, Seymour has qualities which are often labeled “heroic.” This creates confusion because Seymour demonstrates heroic leadership qualities, yet his role has sometimes been minimized to a managerial position. This thesis attempts to revisit the historical record in an attempt to better

²¹³ Nelson, *For Such a Time As This*, 198-201; Cashwell, G.B. “Came 3,000 Miles for His Pentecost.” *The Apostolic Faith*, Dec. 1906.

²¹⁴ “Letter from Bro. Parham,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1.

²¹⁵ “The Old-Time Pentecost,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1.

²¹⁶ “Pentecost With Signs Following: Seven Months of Pentecostal Showers. Jesus, Our Projector and Great Shepherd,” *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906), number 4, p. 1. This contrasts with the article titled, “Letter From Bro. Parham,” in the September, 1906 issue which introduces Parham as, “God’s leader in the Apostolic Faith Movement....”

²¹⁷ “Pentecost With Signs Following: Seven Months of Pentecostal Showers. Jesus, Our Projector and Great Shepherd,” *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906), number 4, p. 1.

understand exactly what Seymour's role was. Hopefully this analysis will also contribute to our understanding of charismatic leadership and what it means to partner with the Holy Spirit.

From a story perspective, one could reasonably argue that after the confrontation with Parham, Seymour firmly establishes himself as the leader. This analysis would be consistent with how heroic narratives are often interpreted.²¹⁸ And if there was any doubt about this, one just has to fast forward several years after Seymour's death to discover that the Azusa Street Mission closed. Saying the Holy Spirit was the leader (implying the Holy Spirit was the main leader, or possibly even the only leader) is potentially problematic given how tragically the Azusa Street story ends. This is evidenced by the November 1906 issue *The Apostolic Faith* that said, "the Holy Ghost is the leader," and how some expected the Azusa Street meetings to continue, "till Jesus comes."²¹⁹ In November 1906, it appeared inconceivable that 25 years later, infighting and litigation would ultimately end with the City of Los Angeles condemning the 312 Azusa Street building as a fire hazard and having it razed.²²⁰ The intent of this thesis is not to downplay the role of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street. Rather, the intent is to better understand the story. If the Azusa Street story is analysed from the end towards the beginning, it becomes clear that some of Seymour's decisions may have contributed to Azusa Street's demise. This implies Seymour's leadership did in fact impact the outcome of the revival and the fate of the Azusa Street Mission. It is also important to remember that when those articles were written in the November 1906 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, it appears as though the presence of the Holy Spirit had caused a sort of utopian hope that resulted in early participants having a distorted view of what was actually happening at

²¹⁸ Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature...and get more out of it* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 75.

²¹⁹ *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906), number 3, p. 1.

²²⁰ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 320; Larry E. Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William Seymour* (Joplin: Christian Life Books, 1999), 333.

Azusa Street (or at least a distorted view of the bigger picture, or the role Azusa Street would play in global Pentecostalism). Although speculative, the reality may have been that the Holy Spirit was moving more through Seymour than even the early Azusa Street participants realized.²²¹ In a broader theological sense, God tends to carry out His purposes through humans in the Bible (including those who worship God and those who do not).²²²

As a result, this thesis attempts to better understand the qualities of charismatic leadership and the relationship between the leader's contribution and the Holy Spirit's contribution to successful charismatic leadership. To accomplish this, this chapter explores Seymour through the lens of the hero archetype because this is a common trope through which Biblical texts, literary texts and contemporary historical figures are viewed. For example, in his book *How to Read the Bible as Literature...and get more out of it*, Leland Ryken has a chapter titled, "Types of Biblical Stories." In this chapter, Ryken argues, "The largest branch of narrative [in the Bible] is heroic narrative."²²³ And, as noted previously, the hero trope is a common way to view "heroes of the faith." In light of this, this chapter analyses Seymour through the same lenses other Bible heroes and other "heroes of the faith" are analysed. The purpose is to find a consistent and accepted methodology to evaluate Seymour.²²⁴ Throughout this chapter and the rest of this thesis,

²²¹ To better understand Azusa Street's tragic ending, this thesis started working backwards and discovered Seymour's leadership failures may have contributed to that tragic ending. By going backwards in time even further, it became apparent that an early unwillingness to fully acknowledge Seymour as the leader may have contributed to the congregation not realizing or accepting the fact that Seymour's faults and failures would one day doom the revival. Seymour's leadership problems appear to be a blind spot that no one acknowledges (at least not in the written record we have). In a strange way, Seymour's failures were sort of like the iceberg that sank the Titanic because by the time anyone saw them, it was too late.

²²² God also works through animals, inanimate objects and various other spiritual and temporal realities. God is not limited in any way. But the point here is that God most often works through humans, as opposed to doing everything Himself.

²²³ Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature...and get more out of it* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 75.

²²⁴ As a disclaimer, not all scholars feel Bible characters or church history leaders should be viewed as heroes. For example, Fee and Stuart believe that, "God is the hero of all Biblical narratives." Cf. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 111. Part of their argument for this is that the Bible narratives are about individuals who often had both positive and negative

references to contemporary leadership styles will be referenced (such as: charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, spiritual leadership, etc.)

3.2 What Makes Someone a Hero?

The word “hero” is a Greek word. However, given its widespread use over thousands of years across cultures and continents, its meaning has changed over time. Classic uses of the term “hero” often conjure up references to divinity, a race between gods and men, or someone with special strength.²²⁵ However, modern internet searches frequently include fewer divine definitions, such as “protector” or “defender.” *Webster’s Dictionary* references a range of definitions including, “distinguished courage or ability, admired for...brave deeds and noble qualities... [someone who] has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model or ideal....”²²⁶

Surprisingly, the Bible has a lot to say about heroes. Some translations of the Bible actually use the word “hero” in the text.²²⁷ For example, in the *New International Version* (NIV), the word “hero” is used to describe King David in II Samuel 23:1 as, “the hero of Israel’s songs.” In a more classical sense, it is interesting to note that the translators used the word “hero” to describe the Nephilim who were the children born of supernatural beings who had intercourse

characteristics. However, such a narrow definition of heroes does not fully account for the fact that God loves telling us stories about people who pleased Him. In the Bible, God does not steal the show. Jesus, our ultimate exemplar, directed His focus on others while He was on this earth. This is evidenced by the narrative and Jesus’ own words in Matthew 20:24-28.

²²⁵ Cf. *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 309.

²²⁶ *Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1996), 895. In Los Angeles, police vehicles often have the phrase “to protect and to serve” printed on the side. Although I can find no official reference to this, I have personally heard public figures say this is the definition of a hero and that it represents the self-sacrifice of a shepherd.

²²⁷ Websites like www.biblegateway.com offer an easy way to search for words like “hero” across many Bible translations.

with human women. Genesis 6:4 states, “They were the heroes of old, men of renown.” The *New Living Translation* (NLT) says the Nephilim, “became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times,” (Genesis 6:4). The NLT uses the word “hero” more frequently than the NIV. Examples of this include describing Nimrod as, “the first heroic warrior on earth,” because he was, “the greatest hunter in the world,” in Genesis 10:8-9; having the angel of the Lord tell Gideon, “Mighty hero, the Lord is with you,” in Judges 6:12; the Psalmist referring to the people of God as his heroes in Psalm 16:3, the Lord Himself being compared to a mighty hero in Isaiah 42:13, a bunch of references to heroes in II Samuel and several other references.

But the more classic way of alluding to heroes in the Bible is by using words like, “mighty,” or “valor,” or “wise.” Some Bible software and internet searches suggest the word “mighty” is used more than 500 times in the Bible.²²⁸ Other words used to describe heroes are “strong,” or “courageous,” or, “bold.” The King James Version uses the phrase, “Be of good courage,” or, “Be strong and of a good courage,” on several occasions. In Proverbs, we are told, “the righteous are bold as a lion,” and in Acts, people full of the Holy Spirit often spoke boldly. The Bible admonishes people not to be fearful and it admires those who have courage and boldness.²²⁹ The writers of the Bible seem to have no problem extoling the virtues of godly men and women who take risks and actively live out their faith. These same writers also have no trouble contrasting heroes with cowards. Revelation 21:8 lumps the cowards in with the unbelieving, the murderers, the sexually immoral, the sorcerers, the idolaters and the liars when

²²⁸ The Hebrew word most often used for “mighty” is “Gibbor,” Strong’s #1368. Cf. James Strong, *The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 704-707.

²²⁹ Sometimes Pentecostals like to emphasize the courage and boldness that comes upon those who are filled with the Holy Spirit.

it gives a list of those whose eternal fate will be the fiery lake of burning sulfur.²³⁰ These texts may not explicitly use the word “hero,” but they clearly distinguish between those who walk with God and those who do not. Those who walk with God and are favored of God are often full of the Holy Spirit, bold, courageous and righteous. These are the exemplars God gave us.

In their book, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, Scott Allison and George Goethals seem to confirm much of what has been said thus far. They begin their analysis by noting that human beings often have mental ideals of what a hero is (and what a villain is). In psychology, these ideals are known as schemas or archetypes.²³¹ Just as most human beings have mental images of what an engineer looks like, what a beauty queen looks like, or what a “jock,” (i.e., a star male college athlete) looks like, they often have images of what a “hero” looks like. Although these schemas may vary from culture to culture, most people in any given culture quickly recognize these schemas. The reason billboards, television commercials and radio advertising are so effective is because most audiences can quickly understand a story via the images or voices. These are examples of archetypes which are “familiar” characters along the journey. Jesus even relied on “familiar” characters in the stories he used to teach mere mortals about the Kingdom of Heaven. Some people got really upset when they identified with certain characters in Jesus’ stories. Bible stories are so powerful that the Holy Spirit can even help people living in the 21st Century to identify with certain characters in stories that were told

²³⁰ Some English translations use the word “fearful” instead of “cowardly,” but most English translations use the word cowardly. These individuals are contrasted with those in Revelation 12:11 who overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony and who did not love their lives, even unto death.

²³¹ Scott Allison and George Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7. Humans sometimes have archetypes of romantic partners (which Jung calls anima and animus). This is why early on in relationships, people sometimes project their idealizations onto someone which results in them becoming attracted to what they think is their ideal person. But when the other person does not live up that ideal, the relationship sometimes falls apart (unless both parties agree to love and accept one another for who they are, despite their flaws). This is an example of archetype in everyday life. Another example of archetype in everyday life would be when someone has the characteristics of a heroic archetype and then they actually do something heroic. An example of this might be a firefighter who runs into a burning building to save someone.

thousands of years ago. For people who find Bible stories boring, the Holy Spirit might speak through a riveting modern-day parable about the sins of the father being passed down the son, otherwise known as *The Godfather* (1972). This is because movies are like modern mythologies. And the reasons why audiences often identify with the film's archetypes is because many of those films portray famous movie stars walking the same, "Hero's Journey," that Odysseys walked in Homer's *Odyssey*.²³² Many film schools in Los Angeles teach mythic structure and the concept of the "Hero's Journey" because Hollywood realized that audiences can easily identify with the archetypes (or familiar characters) along the journey.²³³

The concept of the hero is so global and so universal that, after a lifetime of studying myths, mythologist Joseph Campbell discovered certain common patterns that kept running through hero myths (stories involving heroes) throughout the world. Despite the fact that there are thousands of different hero myths around the globe and throughout time, hero myths tend to follow the same basic story line, which Campbell calls "the monomyth."²³⁴ Since "mono" means one, the idea of a monomyth is that there is one basic storyline to hero stories throughout time and culture, even if those cultures never came into contact with other cultures. This is because the hero archetype and the other character archetypes the hero meets along the journey are so universal to the human experience that nearly all humans, across space and time, can recognize them.²³⁵

²³² This is, in part, due to the fact that film schools teach this—especially in screenwriting programs. It is difficult, if not impossible, to study screenwriting in Los Angeles without learning about the hero's journey. Cf. Christopher Vogler, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure For Writers* (Studio City: Michael Wiese, 2007).

²³³ I know this from experience because I received a Certificate in Feature Film Writing from the UCLA Extension. I have also taken film courses at several other colleges in Los Angeles.

²³⁴ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (Novato: New World Library, 2008).

²³⁵ Hollywood recognizes this because, not only do most film schools teach screenwriters about the hero's journey and the monomyth, but also because many of the most successful Hollywood films are the ones that utilize and develop universal stories.

Although the archetypal concept of the hero has existed for thousands of years, many students are first consciously exposed to archetypes either through film, literature or Jungian Psychology (also known as Analytical Psychology). Jung believed that profound dreams contained archetypal imagery that extend and connect an individual to the experiences of all humanity.²³⁶ In that lecture, Jung mentions the hero myth and mythological dreams and the universal significance of a dream when one finds themselves on a mythical journey. Jung starts sounding like a Pentecostal when he talks about how that general connection with humanity connects us with the stories of other humans. He states how modern medicine does not understand what the ancient Egyptians, ancient Greeks or specialists in Eastern Medicine understand, and that is how someone can be healed just by hearing a story about healing.²³⁷ Of course, Christians call that faith. And at Azusa Street, and in churches today which share a lot of testimonies, stories of healing often stir faith in others for their healing.²³⁸ Some might feel that interpretation of Jung goes beyond his intention. However, in a more general sense, Jung's ideas of a universal consciousness sound like C.S. Lewis's concept of the Law of Human Nature.²³⁹ The notion that God created universal truths that are recognizable by humans across time and culture forms the basis of the famous missiology book, *Eternity in Their Hearts: Startling Evidence of Belief in the One True God in Hundreds of Cultures Throughout the World*.²⁴⁰

²³⁶ C.G. Jung, *Analytical Psychology: Its Theory & Practice* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 114. "Whenever archetypal figures appear in dreams...[one's] psychology is approaching a level which is universally human," p. 117.

²³⁷ Jung, *Analytical Psychology*, 115.

²³⁸ Or, as Jung puts it, "Modern spiritual therapy uses the same principle: pain or illness is compared with the sufferings of Christ, and this gives consolation," Jung, *Analytical Psychology*, 116.

²³⁹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Touchstone, 1980), 17-21.

²⁴⁰ Don Richardson, *Eternity in Their Hearts: Startling Evidence of Belief in the One True God in Hundreds of Cultures Throughout the World* (Bloomington: Bethany, 1981).

Given all the varied definitions of hero, and the discussion of archetype, it might be helpful to have a simple, working definition of a hero. In a PBS Series, the hero expert himself, Joseph Campbell, states that a hero is, “Someone who has done or achieved something beyond normal human experience.”²⁴¹ According to that definition, most reasonable readers could understand how some might believe a one-eyed black preacher with little formal education, leading one of the world’s greatest Pentecostal revivals when Jim Crow laws were still in effect, qualifies for achieving something beyond normal human experience.

But is this going too far? Was the humble William Seymour really a hero? Why not interpret Seymour like other leaders? The answer to these questions is that many leaders existed at Azusa Street, yet Seymour was distinct, just like how many leaders existed in the Bible, yet some were distinct. Moses and the Apostles both delegated leadership duties, but we often only consider Moses and the Apostles “heroes of the faith” as opposed to the lesser-known leaders. This does not mean the lesser-known leaders were unimportant, it just means we do not view them as heroes in the same way we view hero protagonists. This is why Leland Ryken proposes that within the narrative genres of the Bible, “The largest branch of narrative is heroic narrative,” which is a narrative that is, “built around the life and exploits of a protagonist.”²⁴² When analysing the Azusa Street narrative, it makes sense to start with established academic principles for analysing narratives. After identifying things like genre, historical setting, and context, one of the basic starting points for analysis begins with understanding who the main character, or the protagonist is. For Ryken, this person embodies the experience of others by embodying accepted norms, experiencing the important conflicts of the community and representing the struggles of

²⁴¹ <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/powerofmyth/>

²⁴² Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, 75.

the story.²⁴³ In the Azusa Street story Seymour represents the African American experience, which is why Azusa Street storytellers will often concentrate their attention on Seymour when conveying the meaning they are trying to get across.²⁴⁴ By focusing on the protagonist William Seymour when interpreting the story, Seymour could arguably be classified as a literary hero.

For Ryken, hero stories in the Bible serve as models or paradigms and they merge with our own experiences to form “bridges” between our stories and theirs.²⁴⁵ As such, heroes are, “exemplary of some ideal,” even though they might have weaknesses and not be perfect.²⁴⁶ But nonetheless, these heroes, or their exploits, are things we can look up to and emulate.²⁴⁷ But for Ryken, hero stories are more important than mere fables, which is why they can be complex and contain mystery which is why the whole story forms the meaning.²⁴⁸ In short, Ryken believes hero stories focus on the trial and triumphs of the protagonist, that the hero is representative of a larger group and that the hero serves as an exemplary character.²⁴⁹

But Ryken is not the only scholar who values the usefulness of hero narratives. C.S. Lewis also used narrative as a way to “remythologize” his audience’s worldview and aid their human understanding. Lewis crafted his writing, including his fictional writing, as sort of imaginative apologetics.²⁵⁰ Martindale discusses this when he highlights C.S. Lewis’s emphasis on Heaven being our permanent true home way we can tap into eternity’s “true reality” is through our

²⁴³ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, 75.

²⁴⁴ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, 76. However, it should be noted that when discussing the African American experience in the United States in the early 20th Century, this thesis notes that Seymour transcends the traditional African American experience in many ways.

²⁴⁵ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, 76.

²⁴⁶ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, 76.

²⁴⁷ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, 76.

²⁴⁸ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, 77.

²⁴⁹ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, 78.

²⁵⁰ Cf. Wayne Martindale, *Beyond the Shadowlands: C.S. Lewis on Heaven and Hell* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005).

imagination.²⁵¹ For Lewis, fact and information might satisfy the rational part of our brain, but it is stories and the imagination that transform us.²⁵² In his own writing, Lewis often uses story to engage the audience's imagination and help them see, feel and experience things like sin, righteousness and Christ's redemption (possibly for the first time). Lewis does not view story as inferior to reason. Rather, Lewis pits faith and reason on one side and imagination and emotions on the opposite side.²⁵³ For Lewis, we put faith in things our minds already have some sort of understanding of. For example, most humans routinely walk across bridges. We put our faith in the bridge because our mind tells us we will not fall. But it is the imagination and emotions that work against our faith and reason because of the way in which the imagination and emotions mount their attack. All someone has to do is install a glass bottom on a bridge and some people might become so afraid that they cannot cross, even though they may have seen hundreds of other people cross or read a sign telling their rational mind that the bridge is perfectly safe. For Lewis, both reason and the imagination serve truth together, sort of like a "critical imagination."²⁵⁴ This is because through stories, people are able to imagine, and possibly even experience, the reality of God. This is why some people have deep spiritual experiences while reading the Bible, worshipping, partaking of communion, praying, or watching a movie about the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

The New Testament also seems to recognize the importance of both rational belief and imagination. Most Christians are familiar with the portions of the New Testament that deal with reason and belief, but the Bible also addresses our imagination because it encourages us to be

²⁵¹ Martindale, *Beyond the Shadowlands*, 15-16.

²⁵² C.S. Lewis, "Bluspels and Flalansferes," in *Rehabilitations and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 157.

²⁵³ Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 124.

²⁵⁴ Holyer, Robert. "C.S. Lewis on the Epistemic Significance of the Imagination," *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 74, no. 1/2 (1991): 215-41. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41178597>.

transformed by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2), it defines faith as being certain in things we do not see with our natural eyes (Hebrews 11:1), and it paints imaginary pictures of Jesus, the Christian life, the end of the world, and our future home in Heaven.²⁵⁵ Can someone really believe Jesus lived on this earth, was crucified and raised on the third day without imagining that in their mind? This use of imagination stands in contrast to modernism and Enlightenment thinking which often downplays the imagination and limits our understanding to the natural, material, observable world. But in order to truly grasp eternal spiritual realities that exist beyond the material world, our imagination is often necessary. In addition to using our imagination to grasp nonmaterial spiritual realities, Kevin Vanhoozer suggests imagination is also important for living a fulfilling Christian life on this earth when he states, “Disciples need imagination to stay awake to the reality of what is in Christ. Explore how to live as people with eyes of the heart enlightened and alert to the mystery in the mundane, to see the extraordinary in the ordinary. Learn from Lewis how to live in the shadowlands yet ‘walk as children of light’ (Eph. 5:8).”²⁵⁶ This is pertinent to this thesis because as we read the Azusa Street story, our imagination is necessary because so few of us have experienced divine love or racial harmony at the level that existed at Azusa Street. We often have to use our imaginations to imagine Revelation 7:9 or Azusa Street, and then imagine what divine love and racial reconciliation might look like today in our cities. According to Martindale, one day we will experience Heaven where our full potential will be fulfilled.²⁵⁷ But we can also use some of that imagination now to

²⁵⁵ The whole Bible, especially the New Testament, introduces us to a worldview whereby spiritual forces are always at work, even though we cannot see them.

²⁵⁶ C.S. Lewis Institute. <https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/node/3707>.

²⁵⁷ Martindale, *Beyond the Shadowlands*, 17.

call forth and establish God's imminent kingdom here on earth now, in the present.²⁵⁸ Somehow Seymour managed to do that when he established God's future Kingdom reality at Azusa Street.

In summary, the main story focus at Azusa Street is the trials and triumphs of William Seymour who stands as a representative for African Americans and early Pentecostals. Seymour is also an inspiration and exemplar to millions of Pentecostals around the globe. By those standards, Seymour is a hero and his story contains many elements of a classic heroic narrative. As we will see later in this chapter, understanding the story in this way also answers some of the mysteries and supposed contradictions in the Azusa Street story.

3.3 Contemporary Understandings of Hero

Why is Seymour a hero? The answer is because of how we define real-life heroes today. Allison and Goethals note that human beings often have mental lists (also known as schemas or archetypes) which conjure up images of heroes and villains.²⁵⁹ One of the most important aspects of heroism is that heroes often make moral choices.²⁶⁰ They often do the right thing at a critical moment, even when doing the right thing is difficult or causes great personal sacrifice.²⁶¹ As we will see later, Seymour made the ultimate moral choice when he decided to confront his white mentor, Charles Parham. This could have resulted in Seymour losing his leadership position, being accused of not submitting to authority, or worse, given Jim Crow segregation laws.²⁶² But

²⁵⁸ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 51-71. See Chapter One for a more detailed analysis of this.

²⁵⁹ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 7.

²⁶⁰ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 7.

²⁶¹ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 8-11.

²⁶² Just a few short decades prior, a black man confronting a white man could have led to even more disastrous consequences.

his willingness to potentially sacrifice his own leadership position so that others could benefit was heroic.²⁶³

Doing something exceptional, like establishing a multiracial congregation during Jim Crow segregation that changed the face of global Christianity makes Seymour an exceptional leader. This accomplishment could also make Seymour a hero because he displayed high levels of competence, skill or ability. In the United States, athletes, doctors, firefighters, nurses, whistleblowers, and just about anyone else who demonstrates a high skill level at a critical moment can be considered a hero.²⁶⁴ One of the clearest examples in recent history of someone doing something so heroic that they became a household name in one day is Captain Sully Sullenberger, the pilot who successfully landed US Airways Flight 1549 on the Hudson River. His high skill level and ability to function at a high level while under stress, and his willingness to stay on the plane until every person got off, resulted in many people calling him a hero. Sullenberger overcame the challenging obstacle of completing a successful forced water landing, which some thought was impossible.²⁶⁵

Another factor that makes Seymour a hero is his ability to overcome daunting challenges on his journey to achieving a worthy and socially admirable goal.²⁶⁶ Like many heroes, Seymour overcame adversity and was selfless.²⁶⁷ Many heroes, including many superheroes, experienced great pain and hardship in their origin story, and they suffered deeply to accomplish something

²⁶³ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 11-13.

²⁶⁴ During the COVID-19 pandemic, doctors and nurses were sometimes called heroes. On 9/11, police and firefighters were considered heroes because of their sacrifice and altruism (p. 118). Athletes can also become national heroes, such as Eric Liddell (whose life the film *Chariots of Fire* is based upon), or the 1980 US Olympic men's hockey team. Ironically, some of those same people who were heroes during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic became villains in 2021 for not conforming to the current establishment narrative.

²⁶⁵ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 12.

²⁶⁶ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 111-112, 117. Without adversity, we would not have a hero (p. 133).

²⁶⁷ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 116.

moral and great.²⁶⁸ In the coming sections, Seymour’s hellish dystopian childhood will be contrasted with the heavenly utopia he created at Azusa Street. And, like all heroes, Seymour encountered a villain in the form of his white mentor, Charles Parham, whom he successfully defeated.²⁶⁹ Finally, Seymour is an underdog, which touches something deep in the human psyche because we have all experienced struggle or situations where we have felt small and powerless.²⁷⁰ This causes us to want Seymour to succeed.

3.4 The Hero Myth

In addition to understanding contemporary understandings of a hero, in order to gain a more robust understanding of heroism it might be helpful to briefly examine the notion of the hero myth since the concept of a “hero” is often linked to the concept of the “hero myth.” Although various academic disciplines might define “myth” slightly differently, many definitions often allude to “sacred stories” or “foundational” stories on which societies are built.²⁷¹ In the United States, some seminary professors will even refer to the creation narrative in Genesis as the “Creation Myth,” not because they believe it is false, but because it is a sacred story upon which the foundations of some religious belief systems and practices are built. This academic tradition dates back to at least Wilhem M.L. de Wette’s 1805 dissertation which compares the Genesis origin stories to other stories and concludes the literary genre used in

²⁶⁸ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 118-119.

²⁶⁹ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 119.

²⁷⁰ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 128-129.

²⁷¹ Rebecca and Philip Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 32-35. When anthropologists study religion, some of them start by analyzing a culture’s myths, or sacred stories.

Genesis appears to be mythical, therefore, we cannot construct, or preserve, an actual history from those early traditions within the Pentateuch.²⁷²

As anthropologists, Rebecca and Philip Stein further hone the definition of myth by distinguishing it from folktales and legends, which are two other main types of stories that influence culture.²⁷³ For the Steins, folktales are non-sacred stories which may contain morals or have supernatural elements, but these stories take place in a fictional world independent of time and space, and the purpose is clearly entertainment. Legends, on the other hand, often represent events that have taken place, even though these stories may have been embellished over time. Myths, as previously mentioned, are sacred stories. Categorically, the Steins note that, “Many societies distinguish between true stories (myths and legends) and stories that are a lie or a joke (folktales).” A chart in the Stein’s book details the following:²⁷⁴

²⁷² The “Pentateuch” is the Greek word for the Torah, which is the law, and consists of first five books of the Old Testament. The Old Testament is composed of the law, the prophets and the writings.

Given that de Wette’s dissertation was not written in English, here is a link to an English translation: <https://scholarsphere.psu.edu/downloads/djh343s422>. It should be noted that de Wette did not exist in a void; he was continuing a tradition of critical scholarship that had been raging throughout the 18th Century. And, in spite of Old Testament scholar Brevard Childs referring to de Wette’s thesis as “epoch making,” throughout his book, Childs himself acknowledges the academic challenges many of the critical approaches faced in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Cf. Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Fortress: Philadelphia, 1979), 205.

When one compares the Biblical “Creation Myth” to other ancient mythologies, it becomes increasingly clear that the God of the Bible is different because, instead of being angry at creation, God loves creation. This theme of God creating humanity out of love is a thread that runs from Genesis, through John 3:16, and all the way to the end of Revelation, when God wants to spend eternity with His creation. Robert Alter goes so far as to describe the two Genesis creation myths as, “compelling in its archetypal character, its adaptation of myth to monotheistic ends.” In other words, the Biblical writers were confronting the “Darwins” of their day, but this confrontation meant painting a picture of a monotheistic God who loved creation and wanted a healthy relationship with creation, as opposed to other Creation Myths which espoused the opposite. Cf. Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), xii. Reading the biblical flood story in light of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (which was written prior to the Biblical flood story), is equally enlightening, because the stories share so many similarities.

²⁷³ Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*, 34-35.

²⁷⁴ Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*, 35.

Folktales: regarded as fiction; not considered to be sacred; meant to entertain; include supernatural elements, yet are secular; characters are human and/or nonhuman; exist independent of time and place.

Legends: based on real people, places or events and are considered to be factual; include few if any supernatural elements; can be sacred or secular; characters are generally human; take place in the present or recent past; in the modern world.

Myths: regarded as fact; accepted on faith; source of authority on moral and ethical issues; include a great many supernatural elements; are considered to be sacred; characters are human and nonhuman; take place in the remote past in another world or in an earlier manifestation of today's world.

According to these definitions, the story of William Seymour would technically be considered a legend, because he was a real historical figure who experienced some supernatural elements, the characters are primarily human, the story takes place in the recent past, and the story takes place in the modern world of Los Angeles, CA. And, in true legendary form, Seymour's story has been embellished because his story contains primarily positive elements because his failures are downplayed and minimized. If these thesis emphasized an anthropological methodology, the title would have been, "The Legend of William Seymour."

However, even though this thesis is a study of people and culture, this thesis does not use a purely anthropological methodology. As a theological work, this thesis considers the rich theological tradition of engaging with the sacred stories of the Bible and church history. Part of that tradition is the use of interpretative techniques like archetypes and story analysis when studying the Bible and historical stories.²⁷⁵ This thesis builds upon that rich tradition and looks at

²⁷⁵ This concept was explained in detail in Chapter 1, when discussing ho

William Seymour through the lens of the archetypal hero (which is how we often view Bible characters and other significant figures throughout church history).

As such, it is worth further exploring the notion of the archetypal hero. Some literature and film scholars believe the modern archetypal hero actually has its roots in Odysseus, who was the hero of Home's *Odyssey*.²⁷⁶ Anthropologists, such as the Steins, seem to concur, because they have noted that many cultures (past and present), have one or more of the following types of myths: origin myths, apocalyptic myths and hero myths.²⁷⁷ Mythologist Joseph Campbell seems to agree. After a lifetime of studying myths, mythologist Joseph Campbell discovered common patterns that kept running through hero myths (stories involving heroes) throughout the world. Despite the fact that there are thousands of different hero myths (hence the title of his book *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*), hero myths tend to follow the same basic story line, which Campbell calls "the monomyth."²⁷⁸

In *How to Read the Bible as Literature...and get more out of it*, Leland Ryken suggests that in the Bible, the heroic narrative is a more specialized category, or subtype, of the narrative genre and that it has its own procedures and rules of interpretation. Ryken goes on to note that the largest, "branch of heroic narrative [in the Bible] is heroic narrative. These stories are built around the life and exploits of a protagonist."²⁷⁹ Ryken argues the purpose of those stories is to

w this thesis plans on using: Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature...and get more out of it* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

²⁷⁶ It is difficult to list just one source here because so many film sources allude to this and so many film schools teach this.

²⁷⁷ Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*, 48-54. Origin myths tell of the origin of the world and humanity, and they often describe the existence of spiritual realities, the order of the universe and the nature of illness and death. These myths often articulate society's values and norms. Some story analysts and mythologists say cosmogonic myths describe the creation of the world, whereas origin myths describe the origin of natural phenomena and human institutions within nature. These differences in opinion have zero impact on this thesis because this thesis is about the hero myth.

²⁷⁸ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (Novato: New World Library, 2008).

²⁷⁹ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible*, 75.

display, “accepted norms of behavior,” and to demonstrate a character’s struggles in a way that is typically universal to all people.²⁸⁰ Although Ryken’s work is talking specifically about the Bible, his definition and concept of the heroic narrative is fairly universal to literature in general. As evidence of this, Ryken himself quotes a book on Victorian poetry when he outlines how a hero is more than a mere protagonist because all the action in the story and the meaning(s) the storyteller ascribes to those actions will all be concentrated on the central hero.²⁸¹ It is the hero’s conflicts and actions that compose the story’s plot, and our understanding and discussion of the story revolves around the hero.²⁸² Ryken believes these hero stories exist to serve as models and paradigms for religious experience.²⁸³ To better understand Seymour’s conflicts and actions, the next chapter analyzes Seymour’s hero’s journey.

²⁸⁰ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible*, 75.

²⁸¹ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible*, 76.

²⁸² Ryken, *How to Read the Bible*, 76. It is also important to note that Bible heroes often make a conscious choice to follow God and rely on His strength. Humans are not robots. Rather, they choose to follow God’s calling and leading out of their own volition.

²⁸³ Ryken, *How to Read the Bible*, 76.

Chapter 4

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4.1 V j g J g t q ø u L q w t p g {

The hero's journey is a popular mythic structure used in many Hollywood films today.²⁸⁴

This structure is deeply rooted in the depth psychology of Carl G. Jung and the literary and cultural analysis of mythologist Joseph Campbell. After studying myths, stories and legends from all over the world, Joseph Campbell discovered heroes and heroines from nearly every time period, and from nearly every corner of the earth, often took the same basic journey.²⁸⁵

Christopher Vogler, who has analyzed and synthesized Campbell's and Jung's work for Hollywood screenwriters, notes that, in many instances, these myths, whether from crude jokes to high British literature, are, "basically the same story, retold endlessly in infinite variation," with allowances made for time, gender and culture.²⁸⁶ Vogler believes the hero's journey is a universal story because:

The hero's journey is not an invention, but an observation. It is a recognition of a beautiful design, a set of principles that govern the conduct of life and the world of storytelling the way physics and chemistry govern the physical world. It's difficult to avoid the sensation that the hero's journey exists somewhere, somehow, as an eternal reality, a Platonic ideal form, a divine model. From this model, infinite and highly varied copies can be produced, each resonating with the essential spirit of the form.... The hero's journey is a pattern that seems to extend in many dimensions, describing more than one reality....[Myths] are not abstract theories or the quaint beliefs of ancient peoples, but practical models for understanding how to live.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ This is just one example of classification, but others exist. For example, in literature, the Arne-Thompson classification system is used to index fairytales by type and motif.

²⁸⁵ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (Novato: New World Library, 2008).

²⁸⁶ Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, 4.

²⁸⁷ Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, xiii-xiv.

Seymour's life is unique because it is a true, historical story. Yet it mirrors the hero's journey in ways few other historical biographies do. It should be noted that Campbell's hero's journey and Vogler's writer's journey are not the only templates in existence. Another example of a more classic hero's journey template would be David Adams Leeming's template. Leeming's template is more appropriate for ancient mythology, or deities, including Jesus Christ. Here is Leeming's template: 1) The Miraculous Conception and Birth and the Hiding of the Child, 2) Childhood, Initiation and Divine Signs 3) Preparation, Meditation, Withdrawal and Refusal, 4) Trial and Quest, 5) Death and the Scapegoat, 6) The Descent to the Underworld, 7) Resurrection and Rebirth, 8) Ascension, Apotheosis and Atonement.²⁸⁸

This thesis relies on Joseph Campbell's hero's journey, but incorporates Vogler's material (which was adapted for screenwriters) because the patterns are so familiar to those who watch film that Seymour's story will make more sense. As the diagrams on the following pages depict, the hero's journey is really cyclical because it is a cycle of rebirths (birth-death-rebirth). This is because the hero's journey does not have to be a physical journey; it can be a journey which ultimately leads to oneself as a result of the hero overcoming internal obstacles. This is important to keep in mind because at every stage of William Seymour's journey, he is generally overcoming both internal and external obstacles.

²⁸⁸ David Adams Leeming, *Mythology: The Voyage of the Hero* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Also, it should be noted that Leeming's work does look at people like Moses, Abraham, Mary, Joan of Arc, etc., in certain chapters. It should also be noted that Leeming emphasizes the miraculous conception more than the other mythological teachers referenced throughout this thesis. In Hollywood, the miraculous conception does sometimes show up in regards to heroes. In *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace*, Anakin Skywalker's mother says Anakin has no father—she just woke up pregnant one day (although later we find someone may have manipulated that to happen). Anakin also has supernatural abilities at a young age. (As a point of reference, it is interesting to note that *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas* has Jesus performing miracles as a child as well. However, Jesus performing miracles as a child is not commonly accepted amongst Christian theologians. Speaking of the Bible, it is also interesting how the miraculous conception sometimes takes on a twist, because conception is sometimes caused by God as part of His divine plan, or in response to someone's prayers—an example of the latter would be the miraculous conception of the Prophet Samuel. In the Bible, God is often the source of things, including miraculous conceptions.)

The Writer's Journey vs. The Hero's Journey²⁸⁹

THE WRITER'S JOURNEY ~ THIRD EDITION

Christopher Vogler

TABLE ONE

COMPARISON OF OUTLINES AND TERMINOLOGY

<i>The Writer's Journey</i>	<i>The Hero with a Thousand Faces</i>
ACT ONE	DEPARTURE, SEPARATION
Ordinary World	World of Common Day
Call to Adventure	Call to Adventure
Refusal of the Call	Refusal of the Call
Meeting with the Mentor	Supernatural Aid
Crossing the First Threshold	Crossing the First Threshold
	Belly of the Whale
ACT TWO	DESCENT, INITIATION, PENETRATION
Tests, Allies, Enemies	Road of Trials
Approach to the Inmost Cave	
Ordeal	Meeting with the Goddess
	Woman as Temptress
	Atonement with the Father
	Apotheosis
Reward	The Ultimate Boon
ACT THREE	RETURN
The Road Back	Refusal of the Return
	The Magic Flight
	Rescue from Within
	Crossing the Threshold
	Return
Resurrection	Master of the Two Worlds
Return with the Elixir	Freedom to Live

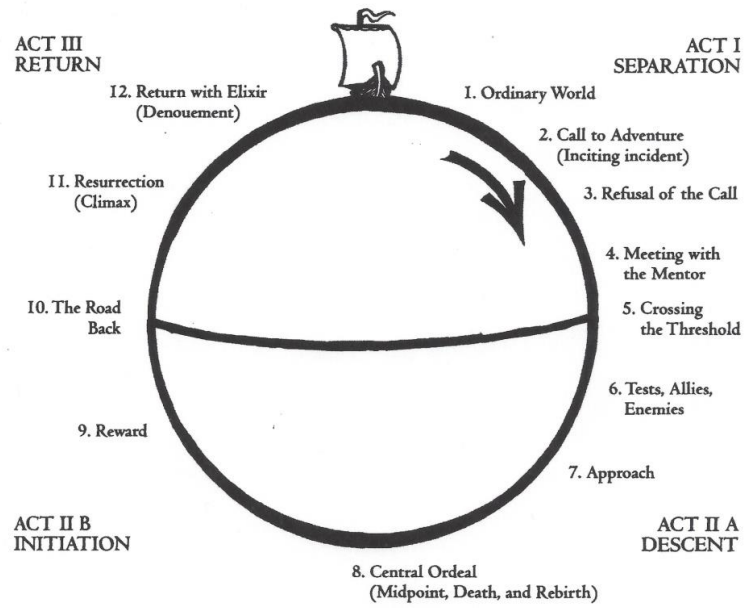
6

²⁸⁹ Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, 6. Image published with Permission by Michael Wiese Productions www.mwp.com.

The Hero's Journey Illustrated as a Circle²⁹⁰

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

THE HERO'S JOURNEY



9

²⁹⁰ Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, 9. Image published with Permission by Michael Wiese Productions www mwp.com.

Here is what Seymour's story looks like when plugged into the Hero's Journey. Vogler's Writer's Journey headings are on the left and underlined. Campbell's equivalent is in parentheses.

4.2 The Ordinary World

Act One (What Campbell calls: Departure, Separation).

Ordinary World (What Campbell calls: World of Common Day). Heroes usually begin in their ordinary world. For Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, the ordinary world was Kansas. For Frodo Baggins in *The Lord of the Rings*, the ordinary world was the Shire. For Luke Skywalker, the ordinary world was Tatooine. For William Seymour, the ordinary world was Centerville and Verdunville, Louisiana.²⁹¹

Below is just a small sampling of the many given circumstances Mel Robeck, one of the most authoritative Azusa Street historians, lists for Seymour and his ordinary world:²⁹²

²⁹¹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 17. This section lists facts from Mel Robeck's book because he is one of the most authoritative Azusa Street historians. Not only is work authoritative, but he is also one of the few people who possess some of the primary sources from which this information was gleaned. As of the writing of this thesis, he has been unwilling to share those primary sources with others. Although it is not best practice to rely on a secondary source so frequently for historical data, in this instance, Mel Robeck's work is the most authoritative source. In this instance, quoting Robeck would be considered academically acceptable.

²⁹² "Given circumstances is the term used in acting for everything the writer tells you in the script about your character and the situation they find themselves in. Given circumstances are the *facts*; they are the information that is not subject to debate. In other words, given circumstances are irrefutable. They are the ground on which you build your creative choices, the *only* place you can begin." Cf. Larry Moss, *The Intent to Live: Achieving Your True Potential As An Actor* (New York: Bantam Books, 2005), 8.

1. William Seymour was born to Simon and Phillis Seymour on Monday, May 2, 1870, in Centerville, Louisiana.²⁹³
2. Seymour grew up as an African American in the American South during the period of Reconstruction (the period immediately following the Civil War of 1861-1865).²⁹⁴
3. William Seymour's parents and grandparents were slaves.²⁹⁵
4. Slaves with darker skin were designed as "blacks." Those with lighter skin were designated as "mulatto."²⁹⁶
5. Seymour's father was described as "mulatto" and his mother as "black" in census reports.²⁹⁷
6. Mr. Adelard Carlin, one of the wealthiest plantation owners in St. Mary Parish, owned Seymour's mother. We do not know who owned his father.²⁹⁸
7. Seymour's mother and her family were probably listed among the 112 slaves Mr. Carlin declared in the report he filed with the US Government in 1860. Since the 112 slaves were listed alongside 80 horses, 30 milk cows, 16 oxen, 150 sheep, 150 pigs and 150 other cattle, Robeck suggests these 112 slaves were probably, "nameless pieces of property that could be bought and sold without any consideration of their desires."²⁹⁹
8. These slaves, "provided the back breaking labor that produced Mr. Carlin's crops and made him rich."³⁰⁰

²⁹³ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 17.

²⁹⁴ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 17.

²⁹⁵ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 19.

²⁹⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 18.

²⁹⁷ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 19.

²⁹⁸ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 19.

²⁹⁹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 19.

³⁰⁰ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 20.

9. Seymour's father was one of 15,000 African American volunteers who joined the Union army. "On October 10, 1863, he became an infantryman in the famous *Corps d'Afrique*, later called the US Colored infantry. He served for three years in Louisiana and in Florida and was honorably discharged September 7, 1866."³⁰¹
10. As of their wedding day, July 27, 1867, Seymour's parents could not write. They signed their wedding license with an "x."³⁰²
11. In 1724, the mayor of New Orleans issued "The Black Code" which required slave owners to "instruct and baptize their slaves in the Roman Catholic faith...or forfeit their slaves."³⁰³
12. Understandably, many slaves converted under duress and practiced Catholicism only as a means of appeasing their masters. In actuality, they often gave the Christian ritual and form double meaning, much like how they told the tales of Uncle Remus with Frer Bear, Brer Fox and Brer Rabbit. Although these tales entertained their masters, the owners did not know, "Brer Rabbit represented the clever slave, while, while Brer Bear and Brer Fox represented what the slaves thought of their masters." These stories entertained and ridiculed whites while entertaining and empowering blacks.³⁰⁴
13. Many of the blacks who came to Louisiana in the 18th and 19th centuries came via the Caribbean, and many of them engaged in syncretism, such as Voodoo, which, "took Catholic forms and rituals and wedded them to the religious realities that the slaves had brought with them from Africa." Oftentimes this meant giving their African gods new names that corresponded with those of the saints. "Thus, when it appeared that

³⁰¹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 21.

³⁰² Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 23.

³⁰³ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 21.

³⁰⁴ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 22.

- they were venerating Christian saints, they were actually worshipping their African gods, all under the guise of being good Catholics.”³⁰⁵
14. The version of Voodoo most slaves practiced was a popular variation known as “Hoodoo,” which was a way for the slaves to retain some of the beliefs and practices from their African past. This worldview had some similarities with the Christian worldview, such as, “they believed in a Divine spirit, [they believed] in the supernatural including the empowerment of individuals, signs and wonders, miracles and healings, invisible spirits, trances, spiritual possession, visions and dreams as a means of Divine communication, as well as other phenomena described in the Bible.” As part of their spiritual practice, “they sang, clapped, trembled, shouted, danced, played drums and developed a “call and response” preaching style.”³⁰⁶
15. William Seymour was baptized at 4 months old, on September 4, 1870.³⁰⁷
16. In Seymour’s formative years, he was raised in a context where, “the supernatural was taken for granted, where spirits, both ‘good’ and ‘evil’ were commonly discussed, and where dreams and visions were understood to contain messages that sometimes foretold the future.”³⁰⁸
17. Centerville was a small community, surrounded by farmland. “In 1883, when Seymour was thirteen, his parents purchased a little over four acres of land in nearby Verdunville, about a mile and a half east of Centerville.” Next to the Seymour home, the Baptists had started a church.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁵ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 22-23.

³⁰⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 23.

³⁰⁷ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 24.

³⁰⁸ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 24.

³⁰⁹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 24.

18. Most slave owners prohibited their slaves to write because they feared such communication tools could lead to rebellion. However, Seymour's parents enrolled him and younger brother in a school where they received basic literacy skills. This school was most likely started by either the Methodists or Baptists, who were sending evangelists and teachers throughout the South, "to establish schools for the children of former slaves."³¹⁰
19. When Seymour and his brother were not in school, they worked as farm laborers.³¹¹
20. By the summer of 1891, Seymour's father became, "chronically ill with intestinal problems while serving in the Union army. Although his problems became acute, his permanent disability application was denied."³¹²
21. Seymour's father returned home and died several months later, on November 14, 1891 and was buried next door, at the Baptist church cemetery. At age twenty-one, Seymour became the primary provider for the family. Although the family managed to keep the property, over the next few years, they essentially existed at the poverty level.³¹³
22. Although we do not know exactly why William Seymour left Louisiana, we know that by 1895, Seymour had made his way to Indianapolis.³¹⁴
23. However, in 1895, it was not yet common for former slaves or their children to leave the South. African American immigration from the South to urban centers (such as Los Angeles), "would not really take place until the 1920's." In the 1890s, a belief

³¹⁰ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 24-25.

³¹¹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 25.

³¹² Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 25.

³¹³ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 25.

³¹⁴ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 25.

persisted amongst many African Americans that it was too risky to travel to unknown parts of the country. Although there were exceptions to this, for the most part, “Black Codes” and “Jim Crow” segregation tended to inhibit movement in the late 1800s.³¹⁵

24. However, of the men around Seymour’s age who did leave the South, the primary motive tended to be economic opportunity.³¹⁶

Seymour’s ordinary world was nothing short of hell on earth. For Seymour, it is the equivalent of Dante’s *Inferno*. Louisiana is known for being hot, muggy, swampy, full of bugs (including fire ants and brown recluse spiders), and it even experiences hurricanes. Politically, although slaves had just become freed shortly before Seymour’s birth, segregation laws and lack of both education and opportunities for African Americans did not give them much of a future. Combine that with poverty, destruction from the Civil War and possibly a lack of sufficient medical care, and you have a sort of hell on earth.

In mythical terms, Seymour’s ordinary world would be one of dystopia. Northrop Frye describes this as the, “world that desire totally rejects: the world of the nightmare and the scapegoat, of bondage and pain and confusion....”³¹⁷ John Truby describes this dystopia as:

Hell on earth. This is the world of slavery. If those three major elements of land, people and technology are out of balance, then everybody is out for himself. We have what is known as a state of nature. And in this nasty world, each character is reduced to an animal, clawing for scarce resources. Or, a character is reduced to a cog, working for the greater good of the machine. In this world, we reduce characters to an animal or a machine. Dystopia also has structural meaning. It represents the failure, perversion (or opposition) to desire.³¹⁸

³¹⁵ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 25-26.

³¹⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 25.

³¹⁷ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 147.

³¹⁸ John Truby, “Myth Audio Class.” Truby’s Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

Seymour's family literally came from a world of slavery, and Seymour was living in the broken aftermath of that world where slaves, as Mel Robeck pointed out, were equal with animals. Seymour's ordinary world was one where land, people and technology were out of balance. In terms of mythic structure, the land was out of balance due to war, insects and slave labor. An example of this from myth is when the vegetable world is a sinister forest.³¹⁹ For Seymour's family, cotton was possibly the most sinister of God's creations. The people were out of balance due to slavery and Jim Crow segregation. The technology was out of balance because the North was more industrialized, which is part of the reason why some have even argued the Civil War was really about money. The technology was also out of balance because it required slave labor and thus, became associated with suffering and hardship. Frye further states that the, "demonic human world is a society held together by a kind of molecular tension of egos, a loyalty to the group or the leader which diminishes the individual, or, at best, contrasts his pleasure with his duty or honor."³²⁰ Frye continues by observing how this dystopian world is often governed by a tyrant-leader (think: slave owner).³²¹ However, in the utopian world (described below) we find three kinds of fulfillment: individual, sexual and social.³²² William Seymour finds all three kinds of fulfillment in his utopia, which was Azusa Street.

Understanding Seymour's ordinary world as dystopia is key to understanding the utopia he was trying to foster at Azusa Street. At Azusa Street, Seymour's goal is to establish an egalitarian spirit-filled community that manifests unity and divine love. Parham's vision for Azusa Street was one of racial division, segregation and blacks being subjected to white leadership. For Seymour, Parham's vision may have reminded him of the dystopia he fled in

³¹⁹ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 149.

³²⁰ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 147.

³²¹ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 148.

³²² Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 148.

Louisiana. Seymour's struggle with Parham could be construed as a struggle over Seymour's utopian vision for Azusa Street. For Seymour, Louisiana was hell and Azusa Street was heaven.

But what is utopia? John Truby understands utopia this way:

Heaven on earth. It is a world of freedom. If the 3 major elements of land, people and technology are in balance, as unified, you have a community. The concept of community is the key to utopia. In this community, individuals can grow in their own unique way, but they are not just on their own. They are also supported by other people who help them on their way. When taken to its extreme, we have a utopia, or heaven on earth. There is also a story structure definition of utopia. Utopia represents first of all, the revelation of heaven; second, the success of desire and; third, fulfillment of the hero's greatest potential. Utopia is an extreme expression of character change.³²³

Myth always moves from one kingdom to the other.³²⁴ Throughout Seymour's journey, he is moving from the dystopia of Louisiana to the utopia of Azusa Street. This is why when Parham shows up at Azusa Street and attempts to dismantle the utopia and turn it into a segregated dystopia, the humble seemingly non-confrontational Seymour rises up like a mother bear protecting her cubs. It is then that Seymour has his personal and leadership breakthrough and takes his rightful place as leader of the revival. A significant part of the hero's journey is when the hero discovers what was already deep inside. During his confrontation with Parham, Seymour discovers his leadership potential and leaves his old preconceptions of himself behind. In the Azusa Street utopia, land, people and technology are in balance. The Azusa Street community has land to worship on, they are unified as equals and even the technology (such as instruments, the ability to print a newsletter, etc.) are all in harmony. As a result, the Azusa Street worshippers exist as a very powerful, united community. This utopia becomes both an expression of heaven and a fulfillment of the hero's greatest potential. One example of a

³²³ John Truby, "Myth Audio Class." Truby's Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

³²⁴ John Truby, "Myth Audio Class." Truby's Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

manifestation of this balance and harmony is the “heavenly choir” which became one of the hallmarks of the Azusa Street revival. The heavenly choir at Azusa Street is reminiscent of the places of utopia in *The Lord of the Rings* films—all the subworld utopias seem to have choir music, and worlds which are in perfect harmony. The heavenly choir is a sharp contrast to the dissonant metal sounds and screams of slavery. In *The Lord of the Rings*, two cultures exist: the culture of sacrifice, love and growth, versus the culture of absolute power, hatred and death.³²⁵ In a sense, this parallels the utopia versus the dystopia in Seymour’s life.

The Bible is another good example of utopia versus dystopia.³²⁶ In the Bible, utopia is represented by things like the straight path, Christ, a lamb, the tree of life, the heavenly Jerusalem....³²⁷ Dystopia in the Bible is represented by a path that is a labyrinth, the divine is angry, human is a tyrannical antichrist, the predator is a lion, the plant is an evil force, the city is 1984....³²⁸ The Bible is a compilation of 66 books, written by approximately 40 authors over a span of roughly 1,500 years. Yet, Truby observes that, “as vast and detailed as the Bible is, this schema works throughout.”³²⁹

Likewise, the utopia/dystopia schema works throughout Seymour’s life. In addition to the aforementioned physical “hell” Seymour and his family experienced in Louisiana, we also see a spiritual utopia/dystopia scheme. One example of this was mentioned under #14 above, under the given circumstances drawn from Robeck’s work. This paragraph highlighted certain elements of the Hoodoo worldview, including supernatural manifestations.³³⁰ However, Hoodoo did not

³²⁵ John Truby, “Myth Audio Class.” Truby’s Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

³²⁶ John Truby, “Myth Audio Class.” Truby’s Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

³²⁷ John Truby, “Myth Audio Class.” Truby’s Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

³²⁸ John Truby, “Myth Audio Class.” Truby’s Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

³²⁹ John Truby, “Myth Audio Class.” Truby’s Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

³³⁰ Charles Kraft, an anthropologist and missiologist, suggests one of the main differences between supernatural manifestations from Christ versus other religions has to deal with the power source. This is also true in the Bible, such as when Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh’s wise men, sorcerers and magicians, or when the

comprise all of Seymour's "supernatural" experiences. There are also reports that Seymour himself had visions and some fairly strong eschatological beliefs as a child.³³¹ Estrela Alexander highlights how both Louisiana and Seymour were strongly influenced by a wide variety of Afro-spiritual sects who combined traditional religion and Catholicism, creating a blended spirituality of Christian liturgical tradition and African understandings of reality, "including engagement with the supernatural and heavy doses of music and dance."³³² Some might call that syncretism, but others might call that a blending of the American Christian liturgical tradition with an understanding of reality more closely associated with 1st Century Christianity. Clearly, the African reality and the 1st Century Christian realities were different, however, some similarities possibly existed because both acknowledged spirit beings and forces at work that the natural eye could not see, as opposed to a more rational, enlightened materialistic ontology which became prevalent in the United States.

What else can we learn from the previously mentioned given circumstances? First, we know Seymour was born approximately 5 years after the end of the Civil War. This means Seymour never directly experienced slavery, and that the earliest stories he probably remembered hearing about slavery would have probably been nearly 10 years after the end of the Civil War. What Seymour would have been familiar with was Jim Crow and the aftermath of slavery he would have witnessed as a result of his family being enslaved. We also know his

Apostle Paul confronted Elymas the sorcerer. In those two cases, there is what Kraft would call a "power encounter," or an encounter between two different power sources. Likewise, in Seymour's life, the dystopia of Hoodoo and the utopia of Azusa Street may share certain spiritual practices and physical manifestations, but the power source is completely different. This journey from hell to heaven is significant and possibly helps give us a better understanding of the utopia Seymour was trying to actualize. Cf. Charles Kraft, *I Give You Authority* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 1997).

³³¹ Charles William Shumway, "A Critical Study of the Gift of Tongues," A.B. Dissertation, University of Southern California, 1914, 173.

³³² Alexander, *Black Fire*, 111-112.

school most likely would have been run by either the Methodists or the Baptists.³³³ So, in addition to Hoodoo practices Seymour would have witnessed, he may have also become familiar with the Bible and certain tenets of Christianity. Seymour would have most likely also had a view about money. As previously mentioned, his mother worked for a wealthy slave owner, and his father owned property (which Seymour received a 10% interest in when his father died.)³³⁴ Yet, the Seymour family probably subsisted in poverty.³³⁵ At this point in Seymour's life, we do not yet know his relationship with money, nor do we know for certain how much money factored into Seymour's decision to leave Louisiana. We also know that Seymour's father fought in the Union army. However, it is not clear if he did this out of a moral obligation, financial need or because freedom was promised, "to those slaves who would willingly join the Union army and take up arms against the South."³³⁶ Seymour's father taking up arms against the South potentially has two implications for Seymour's life. First, the notion of associating justice with taking action may have influenced Seymour's understanding of the relationship between righteousness and justice. Second, it generally takes a certain type of passion to risk one's life for. In this case, Seymour's father not only risked his life in war, but if he somehow miraculously survived and the South won, there is a strong chance Seymour's father could have been executed. We do not know why he joined the Union army, if his joining was willful, or if he did it out of financial necessity. But whatever the reason, to basically join the other side takes a tremendous amount of passion and courage. Hence, the second way Seymour's father taking up arms against the South may have possibly influenced Seymour is because Seymour may have picked upon his father's

³³³ Vinson Synan uses the phrase, "Raised a Baptist," in reference to William Seymour. Cf. Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1997), 93.

³³⁴ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 25.

³³⁵ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 25.

³³⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 20.

passion and willingness to take risks. Seymour clearly took risks. “According to the US Census of 1900, only 10% of the black race had ever left the South.”³³⁷ Robeck suggests this may have been due to the risks associated with leaving the South.³³⁸ Seymour also took risks theologically (such as believing in Spirit Baptism), financially (such as travelling to Los Angeles on a one-way ticket, with no money to get home) and relationally (such as holding interracial meetings).³³⁹ Finally, we know Seymour worked as a farm labourer. This could have possibly influenced his understanding of working conditions, instilled within him a work ethic and maybe even taught him how to plant, nurture and develop.

Why did Seymour leave the original world of Louisiana? Robeck suggests financial opportunities as one possibility.³⁴⁰ Robeck analyzes Seymour’s future this way:

The fact that Seymour, fresh from the fields of southern Louisiana found employment in the restaurants of such posh [Indianapolis] hotels strongly suggests that he had help in getting those jobs. It also says something about Seymour’s willingness to adapt, to learn and to serve.³⁴¹

In short, we may never know why exactly Seymour left Louisiana, but his willingness to take risks and his desire to escape the dystopia of Louisiana may have influenced him later, when Parham wanted to turn the Azusa Street utopia into a hellish Louisiana dystopia.

³³⁷ Roberts Liardon, *The Great Azusa Street Revival: The Life and Sermons of William Seymour* (Fort Lauderdale: Wilmington, 2006), 3.

³³⁸ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 26.

³³⁹ In *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo does not just impulsively decide he is going to join Juliet in death. No, as Lajos Egri points out, early in the play, Romeo, in an effort to steal a glance of Rosalind, his beloved, is willing to risk death, just to get a glance of his beloved. So it should come as no surprise then, that Romeo is likewise willing to risk death for his beloved. This is a powerful example of how we can see threads early in one’s story that connect to threads later in one’s story. Seymour took a severe risk by confronting Parham. But what causes a humble person like Seymour to rise up and confront Parham? The answer possibly lies in his childhood and young adulthood where he saw his father take risks and he himself took risks by leaving Louisiana. Cf. Lajos Egri, *The Art of Dramatic Writing: Its Basis in the Creative Interpretation of Human Motives* (New York: Touchstone, 2004), 73.

³⁴⁰ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 25.

³⁴¹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 27.

4.3 Call to Adventure

Call to Adventure (Vogler and Campbell both use this term). The second step of the hero's journey is the call to adventure. Like many heroes, Seymour's story has some unique elements. Here, Seymour leaves Louisiana for Indianapolis and returns five years later and gets counted in the 1900 Census along with his family.³⁴² According to Mel Robeck, sometime after Seymour returns home to Louisiana in 1900, he eventually leaves again and makes his way to Cincinnati. While in Cincinnati, Seymour contracted smallpox, which at that time was a very deadly disease. Seymour, "lost one eye and it was replaced with an artificial one."³⁴³ Upon reflection, Seymour believed God, "had called him into ministry and he had been slow to respond."³⁴⁴ Consequently, Seymour felt God sent smallpox as a form of chastisement.³⁴⁵ When Seymour left Cincinnati in 1903, he left, "intent upon fulfilling that call."³⁴⁶

Given this information, for the most part, Seymour follows the hero's journey, with the exception of a detour to Indianapolis. Although this paragraph includes the next several steps of the hero's journey, to avoid confusion, it might be helpful to briefly summarize the timeline: Seymour began in the ordinary world of Louisiana. Due to his personality (or financial need), he left for Indianapolis and worked in some posh hotels. While in Indianapolis, Seymour had a conversion experience in a "colored Methodist Episcopal Church."³⁴⁷ He returns to Louisiana and is counted in the 1900 Census as a farm labourer.³⁴⁸ In the fall of 1900, Seymour moved to Cincinnati, presumably to attend Martin Wells Knapp's Bible School.³⁴⁹ Somewhere between his

³⁴² Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 31.

³⁴³ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 35.

³⁴⁴ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 35.

³⁴⁵ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 35.

³⁴⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 35.

³⁴⁷ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 28.

³⁴⁸ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 31.

³⁴⁹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 34.

conversion and contracting smallpox, Seymour experienced a call to ministry (which, for this thesis, is the Call to Adventure). Seymour refuses the call, contracts smallpox, receives divine healing (which, for this thesis, is Supernatural Aid) and then he experiences the next step in the hero's journey, the Meeting with the Mentor, Charles Parham.

For this thesis, Seymour's Call to Adventure could have been his call from Louisiana, or it could have been his call to the ministry (which he initially refused). This analysis considers both Seymour's physical journey as well as his inward journey. This will become important in Seymour's life because his theology develops as he travels across the country. And in terms of the African American experience, Seymour left the South over a decade before the Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the North (which occurred in several waves). As we will see later, this impacted Seymour's African American Experience and made him a forerunner.

Due to the lack of detail, Seymour's call to ministry remains shrouded in mystery. Robeck does not give specific details about this call, nor do we know if the call was gradual, in the sense that Seymour had a growing awareness, or if it occurred at a specific time. All we know is that it most likely occurred sometime between his conversion and his contraction of smallpox, since, upon his own reflection, Seymour believed (whether rightly or wrongly) that the smallpox was chastisement, reminding him of his call to ministry.³⁵⁰

4.4 Refusal of the Call

Refusal of the Call (Vogler and Campbell both use this term). After the ordinary world is established and the hero has a call to adventure, nearly always, the hero will refuse the call. The

³⁵⁰ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 35.

Bible has many examples of people who refused the call to adventure. One of the most famous examples is when God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and called Moses to represent God before Pharaoh. But Moses refused, citing his lack of reputation (Exodus 3:11), his fear that people would not believe God appeared to him (Exodus 4:1) and his speech impediment (Exodus 4:10). Luke Skywalker initially rejects Obi-Wan Kenobi's offer to travel to Alderaan and receive training in the Force. Bilbo Baggins famously rejects Gandalf's call to adventure when he says, "We are plain quiet folk and have no use for adventures. Nasty disturbing uncomfortable things! Make you late for dinner! I can't think what anybody sees in them."³⁵¹ After Gandalf would not leave, Bilbo continues, "We don't want any adventures here, thank you! You might try over the Hill or across the Water."³⁵²

By William Seymour's own admission, he refused the call to ministry. But his motive for refusing that call is not clear. Sometimes people refuse calls for emotional reasons (i.e. fear, anxiety, insecurity, doubt, etc.) Sometimes people refuse calls for rational reasons (i.e. financial costs, risks to family or health, sick family members, legal issues, insurmountable odds, disability, etc.) And sometimes people refuse calls for a combination of both emotional and rational reasons. As we will see later, during a more detailed character analysis of Seymour, he possibly refused the call for a combination of reasons. But for now, no matter Seymour's reason(s) for initially rejecting his ministry call, like so many other heroes, Seymour initially rejected the call to adventure.

Joseph Campbell observes:

The myths and folktales of the whole world make clear that the refusal is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interest. The future is regarded not in terms of an

³⁵¹ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (New York: Ballantine, 1997), 4.

³⁵² Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, 5.

unremitting series of deaths and births, but as though one's present system of ideals, virtues, goals and advantages were to be fixed and made secure.³⁵³

Based on Campbell's observation, Seymour's refusal, and ultimate acceptance, of the call demonstrates a certain amount of character change and growth. In spiritual terms, Pentecostals might refer to this as, "dying to self," "surrender," or something having to do with the cross. In psychological terms, Campbell insinuates the refusal demonstrates an inability of the hero to emerge from the walls of childhood and become birthed into, "the world without."³⁵⁴ All we know is that Seymour felt God sent smallpox as a form of chastisement for not entering the ministry.³⁵⁵ When Seymour left Cincinnati in 1903, he left, "intent upon fulfilling that call."³⁵⁶

4.5 Meeting with the Mentor

Meeting with the Mentor (What Campbell calls: Supernatural Aid). After accepting the call to adventure, Vogler states the hero has a meeting with the mentor, which Campbell describes as supernatural aid. Despite the differing nomenclature, Vogler's and Campbell's descriptions of what happens at this stage are surprisingly similar. Vogler says this:

The relationship between hero and mentor is one of the most common themes in mythology, and one of the richest in its symbolic value. It stands for the bond between parent and child, teacher and student, doctor and patient, god and man.... The function of mentors is to prepare the hero to face the unknown. They may give advice, guidance or magical equipment.... However, the mentor can only go so far with the hero. Eventually the hero must face the unknown alone. Sometimes the mentor is required to give the hero a swift kick in the pants to get the adventure going.³⁵⁷

³⁵³ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 49.

³⁵⁴ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 52.

³⁵⁵ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 35.

³⁵⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 35.

³⁵⁷ Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, 12.

Concerning, “supernatural aid” Campbell writes:

For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass.³⁵⁸

In Seymour’s story, when he meets with his mentor, Charles Parham, the “amulet” Parham gives Seymour is the teaching on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Joseph Campbell says this about the mentor:

In fairy lore, [the mentor] may be some little fellow of the wood, some wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith, who appears, to supply the amulets and advice that the hero will require. The higher mythologies develop the role in the great figure of the guide, the teacher, the ferryman, the conductor of souls to the afterworld. In classic myth this is Hermes-Mercury; in Egyptian, usually Thoth (the ibis god, the baboon god); in Christian, the Holy Ghost.³⁵⁹

Although Campbell admits the supernatural helper is often in masculine form, sometimes this being is a helpful crone or fairy godmother (especially in European lore); “in Christian saints’ legends the role is commonly played by the Virgin. The Virgin by her intercession can win the mercy of the Father.”³⁶⁰

According to Vogler, the word “mentor” comes from *The Odyssey* where, “a character named Mentor guides the young hero, Telemachus, on his hero’s journey.”³⁶¹ Vogler says this about the mentor:

An archetype found frequently in dreams, myths and stories is the mentor, usually a positive figure who aids or trains the hero.... This archetype is expressed in all those characters who teach

³⁵⁸ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 57.

³⁵⁹ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 59-60.

³⁶⁰ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 59.

³⁶¹ Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, 39.

and protect heroes and give them gifts. Whether it's God walking with Adam in the Garden of Eden, Merlin guiding King Arthur, the Fairy Godmother helping Cinderella or a veteran sergeant giving advice to a rookie cop, the relationship between hero and mentor is one of the richest sources of entertainment in literature and film.... Mentors often speak in the voice of a god, or are inspired by divine wisdom.

Mentor figures...stand for the hero's highest aspirations. They are what the hero may become if she persists on the Road of Heroes. Mentors are often former heroes who have survived life's early trials and are now passing on the gift of their knowledge and wisdom.... The mentor archetype is closely related to the image of the parent....³⁶²

Vogler continues by noting the "dramatic functions" of a mentor. The most obvious dramatic function of the mentor is teaching. A second mythological function of the mentor is as the gift-giver. "Many heroes received gifts from their mentors, the gods. Pandora, whose name means, "all-gifted," was showered with presents, including Zeus' vindictive gift of the box.... Heroes such as Hercules [received gifts], but [one of] the most gifted of these heroes was Perseus."³⁶³ Vogler gives a varied list of additional dramatic functions of mentors as well as a list of the types of mentors, none of which are relevant to this thesis. However, Vogler highlights how, "Like the other archetypes, the mentor or donor is not a rigid character type, but rather a function, a job which several different characters might perform in the course of a story."³⁶⁴ For this thesis, Parham fulfills the role as mentor. He is a primarily a teaching mentor, but he also gives Seymour "supernatural aid" by giving him the doctrine of initial physical evidence.

Supernatural Aid. In *Star Wars*, Luke Skywalker has a meeting with Obi-Wan Kenobi, and he receives the supernatural aid of his father's light-saber. In *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy has a meeting with Glinda the Good Witch and she receives the supernatural aid of the ruby slippers. Although Glinda quickly kisses Dorothy on the forehead in the film, in the original book, *The*

³⁶² Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, 39-40.

³⁶³ Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, 41.

³⁶⁴ Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, 47.

Wonderful Wizard of Oz, the kiss Glinda gives Dorothy magically protects her from harm. For William Seymour, Charles Parham gives him the teaching that the speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This gift is unique to this story which is consistent with how the hero's journey allows for variation. The best authors (including Tolkien, for example), bend the archetypes and mythic structure in new and creative ways. One possible variation in Seymour's story is his healing from smallpox. Although Vogler and Campbell appear to use "meeting with the mentor" and "supernatural aid" as different terms to describe essentially the same event, here, Seymour meets with his mentor Charles Parham and he receives supernatural aid directly from God in the form of healing from small pox. By receiving his healing from God prior to his meeting with Parham, Seymour possibly developed a unique relationship to God because throughout his writings, Seymour looks to God, and not Parham, as his source. This becomes important later in Seymour's life because theologically, the amulet of the doctrine of glossolalia which Parham gave Seymour appears to be something Seymour added to his existing theology. This explains why later in life Seymour rejected the notion that "speaking in tongues" was the physical evidence of Holy Spirit baptism after he saw racist whites speaking in tongues.³⁶⁵ For Seymour, his theology developed to the point where the evidence of Spirit baptism was linked more directly to his concepts of community, unity and divine love than it was to speaking in tongues.³⁶⁶

It is unclear whether Seymour's healing was instantaneous or if it occurred over a period of time. Martin says:

³⁶⁵ Curtiss DeYoung, et al. *United By Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 58-59.

³⁶⁶ "Pentecost Has Come," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1; William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission* (Joplin: Christian Life, 2000), 42-43.

A severe case of smallpox left Seymour blind in his left eye. His face was so scarred by the disease that he wore a beard through the remainder of his life. Contemplating on the ravages of the disease, Seymour yielded to what he felt was a divine call to the ministry. A call that he had resisted until afflicted and near death.³⁶⁷

Robeck states this about Seymour's smallpox event:

As Seymour later reflected on this event, he saw the Lord's hand in it. He came to believe that the Lord had called him into ministry and he had been too slow to respond. The result was that God had sent this plague upon him as a form of chastisement, a reminder of his call to ministry.³⁶⁸

Although neither account provides too much detail regarding the physical healing, these accounts reveal much about Seymour's worldview and theology. For example, Seymour's ontology appears to accept the fact that there are forces at work beyond what the natural eye can see. This is possibly a reflection of his exposure to Hoodoo as a child, but it is also a reflection of his theological development which occurred in Indianapolis and Cincinnati because in Indianapolis Seymour left the Methodist church because he believed in Premillennialism and "special revelations."³⁶⁹ This worldview was carried to Azusa Street because the May 1907 issue of *The Apostolic Faith* says this:

We know that some look with disfavor upon falling under the power, and many regard with suspicion visions and revelations. But how can any, who really believe in the Bible, doubt the genuineness of that which fully bears the marks of being of God, and which is also in fulfillment of the prophecies and promises of His Word?³⁷⁰

³⁶⁷ Larry Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William J. Seymour and a history of the Azusa Street Revival* (Pensacola: Christian Life Books, 2006), 80.

³⁶⁸ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 35.

³⁶⁹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 28-29.

³⁷⁰ "In a Divine Trance," *The Apostolic Faith* (May 1907), number 8, p. 3.

Seymour's acceptance of supernatural phenomena went beyond his mentor Parham's acceptance of the supernatural because Parham accused Seymour of "fanaticism."³⁷¹ This distinction is important because it highlights Seymour's distinct theological development (and theological reasoning), and it possibly challenges assumptions by scholars like Ken Archer who argue that Pentecostalism should not be viewed as premodern because it was born in the modernistic age and used modern language and beliefs to articulate its theology and praxis.³⁷² One possible reason why American Pentecostalism became more closely linked to modernity (which is a cultural worldview) is because the predominantly white Pentecostal denominations that split from Azusa Street abandoned some of the more fanatical elements of Pentecostalism. Since scholars from those denominations dominated much of the academic discussion concerning Pentecostal Studies throughout the 20th Century, Pentecostalism became more closely linked to their worldview than Seymour's. Globally, it is sometimes difficult to link Pentecostalism so strongly to modern cultural philosophies, especially in cultural contexts which have not experienced modern philosophy the same way the United States has. Seymour's healing and his theology of divine healing may be one example of how his premodern worldview may have influenced global Pentecostalism because, according to Allan Anderson, one of the few common threads amongst Pentecostals of various cultures over the last 100 years has been their seemingly universal acceptance of the doctrine of divine healing.³⁷³

³⁷¹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 127.

³⁷² Ken Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2009), 38-45.

³⁷³ Personal Conversation with Dr. Alan Anderson in his office at the University of Birmingham, UK. January 23, 2008.

4.6 Crossing the First Threshold

Crossing the First Threshold (Vogler and Campbell both use this term). In traditional mythology, once the hero decides to proceed on the journey, they generally meet a “threshold guardian” at the limits of the hero’s, “present sphere, or life horizon.”³⁷⁴ This usually occurs at the edge of the zone of the known and the unknown. The known world was described above, as the ordinary world. The unknown represents darkness and danger. This is where the normal person stops, content, and sometimes even proud, of their avoidance of the unknown.³⁷⁵

Campbell has this to say about crossing this threshold:

Beyond them is darkness, the unknown, and danger; just as beyond the parental watch is danger to the infant and beyond the protection of his society danger to the member of the tribe.... Thus the sailors of the bold vessels of Columbus, breaking the horizon of the medieval mind—sailing, as they thought, into the boundless ocean of immortal being that surrounds the cosmos, like an endless mythological serpent biting its tail—had to be cozened and urged on like children, because of their fear of the fabled leviathans, mermaids, dragon kings and other monsters of the deep.³⁷⁶

Vogler describes crossing the first threshold with this language:

Now the hero finally commits to the adventure and fully enters the Special World of the story for the first time by Crossing the First Threshold. He agrees to face the consequences of dealing with the problem or challenge posed in the Call to Adventure. This is the moment when the story takes off and the adventure really gets going.... The hero, having overcome fear, has decided to confront the problem and take action. She is now committed to the journey and there’s no turning back.³⁷⁷

In *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy crosses the threshold by taking a step down the yellow brick road, which is filled with danger and the unknown. But before she embarks on that journey, she meets

³⁷⁴ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 64.

³⁷⁵ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 64.

³⁷⁶ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 64.

³⁷⁷ Vogler, *The Writer’s Journey*, 12-13.

the Wicked Witch of the West who makes Dorothy want to leave Oz altogether. The Wicked Witch of the West is like a threshold guardian because she makes Dorothy want to leave Oz. Once Dorothy realizes the only way to leave is to follow the yellow brick road and speak with the wizard, she embarks on her journey.

In the Azusa Street story, Seymour crosses many thresholds on his journey from Louisiana to Houston. However, those thresholds may have been crossed out of his desire to improve his life financially, his desire to escape the dystopia he experienced in the South, or due to his wanderlust temperament. But in terms of story analysis, crossing the first threshold relates to the protagonist's journey and it gets the story going. Up to this point, none of William Seymour's prior journeying related directly to Azusa Street. This does not mean those events were not important. To the contrary, mythic adventures often have a slow start because they often begin fairly early in the hero's life (often with the birth of the hero).³⁷⁸ But what event causes Seymour to seemingly reach a point of no return in the Azusa Street story? Arguably, this occurs when Seymour leaves Houston with his doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and heads to Los Angeles without enough money for return train fare.³⁷⁹ No matter how you tell Seymour's story, the decision to leave Houston, contrary to the advice of his mentor, Charles Parham, is what kicks the Azusa Street story off.³⁸⁰

Like a mythic hero, Seymour ventured to a strange land called Los Angeles, unaware of what lay ahead. And in true mythic fashion, Seymour faced a threshold guardian because,

³⁷⁸ John Truby, "Myth Audio Class." Truby's Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>. As a point of reference, it takes nearly 19 minutes before Dorothy steps foot in Oz, and much longer before *The Lord of the Rings* gets going.

³⁷⁹ Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 117.

³⁸⁰ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 51.

“Parham made it clear to Seymour just how ‘disappointed’ he was in [Seymour’s] decision.”³⁸¹

By not giving his blessing, Parham was standing at the threshold of Seymour’s journey. This makes Parham a mentor, a threshold guardian and an ally (because of how Parham helped Seymour and equipped him for the ministry). A threshold guardian is an archetype of someone who appears at various thresholds along the journey—especially those narrow, dangerous passages. Heroes must defeat these various threshold guardians or learn to outwit them or absorb their energy (without the Hero being destroyed), if the hero wants to cross the threshold into the next leg of their journey.³⁸² Vogler says this about the threshold guardian:

All heroes encounter obstacles on the road to adventure. At each gateway to a new world there are powerful guardians at the threshold, placed to keep the unworthy from entering. They present a menacing face to the hero, but if properly understood, they can be overcome, bypassed or even turned into allies.... Threshold guardians are usually not the main villains or antagonists in stories.... They may also be neutral figures who are simply part of the landscape of the special world.... These guardians may represent the ordinary obstacles we all face in the world around us: bad weather, bad luck, prejudice, oppression or hostile people.... It seems that every time you try to make a major change in your life, these inner demons rise up to their full force, not necessarily to stop you, but to test if you are really determined to accept the challenge of change. Testing the hero is the primary dramatic function of the threshold guardian. When heroes confront one of these figures, they must solve a puzzle or pass a test.... How to deal with these apparent obstacles? Heroes have a range of options. They can turn around and run, attack the opponent head-on, use craft or deceit...bribe or appease the guardian, or make an ally of a presumed enemy.... Successful heroes learn to recognize threshold guardians not as threatening enemies, but as useful allies and early indicators that new power or success is coming. Threshold guardians who appear to be attacking may in fact be doing the hero a huge favor.³⁸³

The reason Parham functions as both a mentor and a threshold guardian is because archetypes are not rigid characters. Rather, they are functions certain characters play at various stages of the story. This is why the mentor, Parham, call suddenly take on the function of the threshold guardian when Seymour suggests something outside Parham’s plan. Later, Parham will become

³⁸¹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 51.

³⁸² John Truby said this during a private lecture in Los Angeles, CA.

³⁸³ Vogler, *The Writer’s Journey*, 12-13.

an antagonist, or a villain, because he will try to stop what is happening at Azusa Street. This future confrontation is the climax of the Azusa Street story and Seymour's ultimate test will be to overcome Parham.

From a story perspective, it is important to note Seymour's ability to reason and make his own decisions. This may just be a continuation of his existing independence (which may have contributed to him leaving Louisiana), but later in the story, Seymour will have to make many decisions that are not popular with whites, or with Parham. It is also worth noting that while in Houston, Parham perceived Seymour as a "seasoned worker" and he had plans to send Seymour to, "the African population of Texas."³⁸⁴ However, at Azusa Street Parham does not accept Seymour's vision, nor does Parham accept Seymour's leadership team.³⁸⁵ After Parham cannot wrestle the Azusa Street mission away from Seymour, Parham, "stayed in town long enough to establish a small, competing congregation just blocks from the mission."³⁸⁶ This contrast highlights how Parham desired to help Seymour early on, but once Seymour became influential and once Seymour incorporated Africanisms into his Pentecostal services, Parham appears to have viewed Seymour as a threat.

What is important with regards to crossing the first threshold is that Seymour successfully overcame any obstacles he may have encountered in Houston and he took a one-way train ticket to Los Angeles, without enough money to return home. This is not only a significant part of Seymour's journey, but it also highlights Seymour's emotional intelligence and how he was able to get Parham to not only train him, but to later claim he donated to Seymour's travel expenses to Los Angeles.³⁸⁷ During Jim Crow segregation, it was quite an

³⁸⁴ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 49-50.

³⁸⁵ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 127.

³⁸⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 127.

³⁸⁷ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 51.

accomplishment to get a white person to train Seymour and fund him. But this likely was not the only time Seymour was able to get white people to like him and support him because he managed to travel across the country by himself, as a black man during Jim Crow Segregation. This is possibly a foreshadow of the leader William Seymour would become, and a foreshadow of his superb ability to deal with criticism and pressure at levels most people never experience.

4.7 Belly of the Whale

Belly of the Whale (Only found in Campbell. Vogler has a similar section later called, “Approach to the Inmost Cave”). After the crossing of the first threshold, Vogler ends what he calls Act One.³⁸⁸ However, before Campbell takes this act break, he includes what he calls the, “belly of the whale.”

The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown....

This popular motif gives emphasis to the lesson that the passage of the threshold [in some cases] is a form of self-annihilation.... [H]ere, instead of passing outward, beyond the confines of the visible world, the hero goes inward, to be born again. The disappearance corresponds to the passing of a worshipper into the temple—where he is to be quickened by the recollection of who and what he is, namely dust and ashes unless immortal. The temple interior, the belly of the whale, and the heavenly land beyond, above and below the confines of the world, are one and the same.... Allegorically, then, the passage into a temple and the hero-dive through the jaws of the whale are identical adventures, both denoting, in the picture language, the life-centering, life-renewing act....³⁸⁹

In Seymour’s case, getting a one-way train ticket from Houston to Los Angeles, leaving behind everyone he knew and branching out from his mentor was a form of rebirth. One could argue

³⁸⁸ Act One is a remnant of the act break found in theater. These breaks used to play more of an important role in film than they do now. Many screenwriters today write with different styles. The exception to this rule is television writing, which still often structures itself around act breaks because that’s where the commercials go.

³⁸⁹ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 74-77.

Seymour was beginning a process of rebirth, where he would reinvent himself and emerge as a new person in Los Angeles. Just as the hero's journey is filled with symbolism, Seymour's moving from Houston to Los Angeles symbolically involved a leaving behind of the old and an anticipation of new beginnings. In Los Angeles, Seymour speaks in tongues for the first time, he solidifies his theology and he prevails over his mentor.

When Seymour arrived in Los Angeles, he began preaching at Julia Hutchins's church. Robeck suggests Seymour, "was now ready to begin his ministry in earnest.... He had come 'to take charge'—that is, to become the permanent pastor," of Hutchins's little congregation.³⁹⁰ Everything was going fine at Hutchins's church until Seymour introduced Parham's doctrine of initial physical evidence which linked speaking in tongues to spirit baptism. Some were also concerned that Seymour was preaching something he himself had not yet experienced (because he had not yet spoken in tongues at this point). This resulted in Hutchins becoming upset and locking Seymour out of the church. She called Seymour before a special meeting of the Holiness Association which asked Seymour to defend his doctrinal position.³⁹¹ Although the president of the Holiness Association told Seymour he could no longer preach his doctrine of initial physical evidence in the Holiness Church, the president told Seymour to let him know when Seymour received his baptism, because he wanted it too.³⁹² Without a job, nowhere to preach and not knowing what to do, Seymour stayed with a family who had also showed up to the church that evening.

Like Jonah in the belly of the fish, Seymour's loss of his pastorate and no money to get home resulted was sort of like being swallowed into the unknown, almost like a sort of

³⁹⁰ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 62.

³⁹¹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 63.

³⁹² Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 63-64.

metaphorical death. Or, since Vogler skips this step and proceeds directly into the road of trials, one could also consider these unfortunate circumstances to be the beginning of a road of trials Seymour would experience while in Los Angeles. Either way, these adverse events form the beginning of a journey that would result in Seymour's rebirth as a premier leader of early American Pentecostalism.

This pattern of great leaders beginning their journeys with difficult "death" experiences appears in various forms throughout the Bible. These patterns are so common that some pastors make it a point to talk about "desert" experiences or "dark nights of the soul" that most people mightily used by God experience. For example, Joseph in the Bible gets falsely accused of attempted rape and goes to prison; after being anointed king, David ends up hiding in caves and running for his life because King Saul is out to kill him; Jonah ends up in the Belly of a large fish because of his disobedience; and the list goes on.... This dying to self might cause some to lose their faith, but in the Bible, heroes who overcome these "death" experiences are often reborn and used mightily by God. Seymour appears to be no different because in the next chapter, we will explore how Seymour's theology and leadership developed as a result of many of these "death" experiences.

4.8 Tests, Allies, Enemies

Act Two (What Campbell calls: Descent, Initiation, Penetration).

Tests, Allies, Enemies (What Campbell calls: Road of Trials). This begins Act Two. However, Vogler might end Act One on a high note, with Seymour crossing the threshold and heading to Los Angeles, and begin Act Two with Seymour getting locked out of Julia Hutchins's church. Campbell would probably end Act One in the belly of the whale and begin Act Two with

the road of trials. Again, this categorical distinction is minor, in terms of the real issue, which is the fact that the hero goes through a period of testing. Plus, as stated previously, mythic structure, or myth-based stories, do not require the hero to follow the hero's journey rigidly. Rather, the hero's journey highlights the basic story many hero's travel. Each hero hits certain beats of the story, and a few heroes hit all of the beats. And, like many heroes, now that Seymour has accepted the call and crossed the first threshold, he is now encountering a whole new set of trials, enemies and alliances.

Seymour's first major trial (that we are aware of) when he first arrived in Los Angeles was being locked out of Julia Hutchins's church and having to defend himself before the Holiness Association. At the same time, he needed a place to stay. Given how little money Seymour had when he arrived, he may have faced tests and trials regarding his basic needs. However, Seymour picks up allies because Edward Lee allows Seymour to stay in his home and Richard and Ruth Asberry allow Seymour to hold prayer meetings at their house. Seymour's ability to make friends and develop allies appears to be one of Seymour's strengths. Throughout Seymour's life, he is able to develop friendships with people of different races, genders and beliefs. From all appearances, he had a pleasant personality and demeanor. This appears to have served him well and may have contributed to his success. One example of this is how Seymour appears to have leveraged contacts within his congregation to negotiate a lease at 312 Azusa Street.³⁹³ While pastoring at Azusa Street, Seymour had countless allies. One of the more iconic photos of Azusa Street is of William Seymour sitting next to John G. Lake, with Mr. Adams, F.F. Bosworth and Tom Hezmalhalch standing behind them (left to right). Back when Seymour was living in Houston, he traveled to Chicago where he met John G. Lake.³⁹⁴ The friendship

³⁹³ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 70.

³⁹⁴ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 35.

Seymour fostered with Lake continued to Azusa Street. Seymour had many similar relationships he built along his journey, with remained throughout his time at Azusa Street.



Circa 1907
Photo Used With Permission By:
Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center

However, not everyone liked Seymour. When Seymour stopped in Denver on his way to Los Angeles from Houston, Alma White (founder of the “Pillar of Fire Training School”) described him as untidy in his appearance, and when he prayed for the evening meal, she felt, “that serpents and other slimy creatures were creeping all around me.”³⁹⁵ White felt God was showing her, “the person that the devil was going to use” in Los Angeles.³⁹⁶ This was just one of many enemies Seymour had. His enemies came from the press, visitors to the mission and from ministry leaders who opposed his teaching and practice. And sometimes the enemies came from within his own organization. For example, Clara Lum, the Azusa Street Mission’s secretary

³⁹⁵ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 52.

³⁹⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 52. However, Robeck thinks White may have been biased because she divorced her husband because he became baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. On the same page, Robeck states, “Mrs. White would not tolerate such doctrine or practice either in her home or in her church.”

denounced Seymour's marriage and left her post at the mission, taking the nearly 50,000 member mailing list with her to Portland.³⁹⁷

For Joseph Campbell, this road of trials symbolizes something much deeper:

And so it happens that if anyone—in whatever society—undertakes for himself the perilous journey into the darkness by descending, either intentionally or unintentionally, into the crooked lanes of his own spiritual labyrinth, he soon finds himself in a landscape of symbolic figures (any one of which may swallow him).... In the vocabulary of the mystics this is the second stage of the Way, that of the “purification of the self,” when the senses are, “cleansed and humbled,” and the energies and interests, “concentrated upon transcendental thing;” or in the vocabulary of the more modern turn: this is the process of dissolving, transcending or transmuting the infantile images of our personal past.³⁹⁸

For Campbell, the road of trials symbolizes the emotional, psychological and spiritual journey the hero takes. Although the entire journey represents transformation and a deeper awareness of what lies within, this part of the journey seems to have a special emphasis on spiritual formation. In spiritual formation terms, this place symbolizes a death to self and a new birth in Christ; not in a salvation sense, but in a spiritual formation sense. It is often here where the individual ceases to rely so much on their own strength and instead, relies more on the power of Christ living within them. It is less of me and more of Thee.

4.9 Approach to the Inmost Cave

Approach to the Inmost Cave (Campbell calls this, “The Belly of the Whale,” which was discussed earlier.) Here, Vogler has the hero approaching the edge of a dangerous place, or deep

³⁹⁷ Alexander suggests that Seymour and Lum entertained marriage. However, C.H. Mason discouraged it because Lum was white and such an interracial marriage could be controversial and disastrous for the ministry. This, combined with the fact that Jennie Moore, Seymour's wife, gained more power and prominence after their marriage, may have contributed to Lum's leaving. Lum apparently held the theological notion that the imminent return of Christ made it unwise to marry, given the large task of world evangelism. It appears as though she may have adopted this theology after Seymour's marriage. Lum never married. Alexander, *Black Fire*, 144.

³⁹⁸ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 84.

underground.³⁹⁹ “Often it’s the headquarters of the hero’s greatest enemy, the most dangerous spot in the Special World.”⁴⁰⁰ Vogler says this about the inmost cave:

In mythology the inmost cave may represent the land of the dead. The hero may have to descend into hell to rescue a loved one (Orpheus), into a cave to fight a dragon and win a treasure (Sigurd in Norse myth) or into a labyrinth to confront a monster (Theseus and the Minotaur).

In the Arthurian stories the inmost cave is the Chapel Perilous, the dangerous chamber where the seeker may find the Grail....

In the modern mythology of *Star Wars* the approach to the inmost cave is Luke Skywalker and company being sucked into the Death star where they face Darth Vader.... In *The Wizard of Oz*, it’s Dorothy being kidnapped to the Wicked Witch’s baleful castle.... Approach covers all the preparations for entering the Inmost Cave and confronting death or supreme danger.⁴⁰¹

In some ways, Campbell’s belly of the whale and Vogler’s approach to the inmost cave are similar, but in some ways, they are different. Rather than parsing the minutia, it might be helpful to highlight how Seymour went very deep spiritually at this point in his life, in an attempt to win the “treasure” of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. John Lake says that when he met Seymour in Chicago (this was when Seymour lived in Houston and travelled to Chicago), that, “Seymour told him that for two and a half years he had been praying for five hours a day because he had such a hunger for God.”⁴⁰² But it is in Los Angeles where Robeck observes how Seymour is no longer praying alone, or for more of God (in a generic sense). Rather, Seymour was leading others in interracial prayer meetings, specifically praying for the baptism in the Holy Spirit:

On Friday, April 6, the members of the prayer meeting decided to take the issue one step further by adding fasting to their discipline of regular prayer. They planned a ten-day fast, during which

³⁹⁹ Vogler, *The Writer’s Journey*, 14.

⁴⁰⁰ Vogler, *The Writer’s Journey*, 14.

⁴⁰¹ Vogler, *The Writer’s Journey*, 14.

⁴⁰² Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 35.

they would study Acts 2:1-4 and pray each evening until they had the same experience described in this text. They meant business!⁴⁰³

Fasting is a form of denying oneself, for the purpose of focusing one's attention on God. As Vogler suggests, Seymour really is embracing a form of death, that is "death to oneself," for the purpose of obtaining the "treasure" of the baptism in the Spirit.

4.10 The Meeting with the Goddess

The Meeting with the Goddess (Only found in Campbell). Vogler moves directly from the approach to the inmost cave to the ordeal (which will be discussed later). Campbell, however, includes a few extra steps, the first of which is the meeting with the goddess. After the hero triumphs the belly of the whale and the road of trials, "when all the barriers and ogres have been overcome," the reward tends to be a "mystical marriage" with either a goddess or a woman.⁴⁰⁴ This being can be supernatural or human, and usually represents bonding, unity or some sort of wholeness/completeness. In terms of archetypes, Carl Jung would refer to this as anima/animus. Christians may use phrases like: unconditional love or perfect love, to describe this union. The idea is that in this sacred union, the two become stronger together than the hero was when he was alone. This union can bring up childhood issues for the hero regarding his relationship with his mother. Campbell says:

There exists a close and obvious correspondence between the attitude of the young child towards its mother and that of the adult toward the surrounding material world. But there has been also, in numerous religious traditions, a consciously controlled pedagogical utilization of this archetypal image for the purpose of the purging, balancing and initiation of the mind into the nature of the invisible world....

⁴⁰³ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 65. This is not to say that Seymour never prayed with others concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Rather, this is just one of the first times where we see Seymour's private spiritual hunger translating into a corporate spiritual hunger where Seymour is leading others down the same path.

⁴⁰⁴ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 91.

Woman, in the picture language of mythology, represents the totality of what can be known. The hero is the one who comes to know.... She lures, she guides, she bids him burst his fetters. And if he can match her import, the two, the known and the unknown, will be released from every limitation. Woman is the guide to the sublime acme of sensuous adventure.... The hero who can take her as she is, without undue commotion but with the kindness and assurance she requires, is potentially the king, the incarnate god, of her created world.⁴⁰⁵

In his book, Campbell's analysis of the woman in mythology is quite detailed, as the woman encompasses life and death, and she has a profound effect on the emotional, psychological and spiritual development of the hero.

As noted previously, the meeting with the goddess happens at the beginning of Act Two. Since many film schools in Los Angeles teach mythic structure as part of their screenwriting curriculum, it is probably not a coincidence that in classic Three Act screenwriting structure, the hero often meets the love interest in the beginning of Act Two.⁴⁰⁶ Ironically, this is the point where Seymour meets his future wife, Jennie Evans Moore. According to Robeck, Seymour meets Moore shortly after being locked out of Julia Hutchins's church. After that event, Seymour begins having prayer meetings with the Lee's and Asbury's. Moore lived directly across the street from the Asbury's and was one of the original attendees of the prayer meeting.⁴⁰⁷ One of the reasons this thesis argues Seymour is an archetypal hero is because few, if any, other historical figures' lives match the hero's journey at so many points. If someone did not know Seymour was a historical figure, they might think they were reading a myth, or reading a screenplay turned into a novel because they would have recognized the story and the characters because of how Hollywood has adopted the hero's journey, mythic structure and archetype.

⁴⁰⁵ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 94, 97.

⁴⁰⁶ Classically, Act Two was the "B Story" and one of the most common "B story" subplots was the love story. Several decades ago, Hollywood adopted the Three Act structure from theater. Today, however, not all Hollywood movies follow the classic Three Act structure.

⁴⁰⁷ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 65.

4.11 Woman as the Temptress

Woman as the Temptress (Only found in Campbell). As a prelude to “woman as temptress,” Campbell once again highlights how the hero’s journey is formulated in the broadest terms, meaning that the journey is, “a general pattern for men and women.”⁴⁰⁸ For Campbell, part of this general pattern generally involves a testing whether or not the hero is, “capable of enduring the full possession of the mother-destroyer, his inevitable bride.”⁴⁰⁹ Often, the temptress is in the form of a woman (especially for male heroes in ancient mythology), but in a broader sense, the temptation can be anything that derails the hero from his journey. Campbell mentions to the word, “pure,” indicating this section of the hero’s journey deals with rejecting temptation and distraction for a purity of heart and call.

For Seymour, one potential distraction given by Robeck is Seymour’s relationship with Clara Lum. Although this relationship occurred before Seymour married Jennie Moore, Lum appears to be the only obvious female “temptress” Seymour had. Lum was not a “temptress” in the traditional sense, but she became an obstacle when she relocated to Portland with the *Apostolic Faith*’s nearly 50,000 member mailing list.⁴¹⁰ The loss of this mailing list resulted in Seymour losing his messaging and his money (because the donations were now being sent to the new Portland address). This marked the beginning of the end of the revival. By not handling this personal (and possibly romantic) relationship properly, Seymour lost the two most powerful things Azusa Street had: its mailing list and its donations. Although this is not how the

⁴⁰⁸ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 101.

⁴⁰⁹ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 101.

⁴¹⁰ Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 144.

“temptress” is traditionally viewed, like many heroes, Seymour’s influence was permanently diminished as a result of the failure of this relationship.

4.12 Atonement with the Father

Atonement with the Father (Only found in Campbell). Atonement with the Father can be a literal atonement with one’s father, it can be an overcoming or persuading of a father figure, or it can refer to a broader overcoming of the main obstacle or whatever holds the power over the hero’s life.

By the time Seymour gets to Azusa Street, he has a well-established father figure in his life: Charles Parham. According to John Truby, the king, or the father, is an archetype. Truby says:

[One of the ways] that characters connect and contrast in a story is through archetype. Archetypes are fundamental psychological patterns within a person; they are roles a person may play in society, essential ways of interacting with others. Because they are basic to all human beings, they cross cultural boundaries and have universal appeal.⁴¹¹

One of the archetypes Truby discusses is the king, or father, archetype. The strength of this archetype is they lead with, “wisdom, foresight and resolve.”⁴¹² It is important to note that the reason Vogler does not list this as part of the writer’s journey is because Vogler considers this section (and the previous two sections) as leading up to the “Ordeal” which is the climax. When does Seymour confront and overcome the main obstacle in his life? The answer is when he confronts Parham. That is the point where Seymour not only confronts Parham who wants to take over Azusa Street, but Seymour also becomes transformed into the true leader of Azusa

⁴¹¹ John Truby, *The Anatomy of Story: 22 Steps to Becoming a Master Storyteller* (New York: Farrer, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 67.

⁴¹² Truby, *The Anatomy of Story*, 67.

Street. Seymour firmly establishes his leadership and theology by expelling Parham from Azusa Street and having the *Apostolic Faith* issue a correction that stated Parham was never the leader. As quoted previously from *The Apostolic Faith*, “Some are asking if Dr. Chas. F. Parham is the leader of this movement. We can answer, no, he is not the leader of this movement of Azusa Mission. We thought of him having to be our leader and so stated in our paper, before waiting on the Lord.”⁴¹³

This will be discussed more in the section about the “Ordeal.” The reason it is listed here is because the person the hero is trying to overcome at this point can force, “people to act according to a strict and oppressive set of rules, can remove himself entirely from the emotional realm of his family and kingdom, or may insist that his family and people live solely for his pleasure and benefit,” which is exactly what Parham tried to do at this point in the story.⁴¹⁴ The reason the conflict between Seymour and Parham is so important is because it clarifies the theological and leadership differences between Parham and Seymour. John Truby seems to echo this when he states the opponent, “is the most important character after your hero and, in many ways, is the key to defining your hero.... Each time you compare a character to your hero, you force yourself to distinguish the hero in new ways.”⁴¹⁵ Truby believes this happens in four major ways: “by story function, archetype, theme and opposition.”⁴¹⁶ By analyzing the story in this way, Parham becomes a sort of foil to Seymour. It is through these differences that we are better able to understand the person and leadership of William Seymour. If Parham was the father,

⁴¹³ “Pentecost With Signs Following: Seven Months of Pentecostal Showers. Jesus, Our Projector and Great Shepherd,” *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906), number 4, p. 1.

⁴¹⁴ Truby, *The Anatomy of Story*, 67-68.

⁴¹⁵ Truby, *The Anatomy of Story*, 57.

⁴¹⁶ Truby, *The Anatomy of Story*, 57.

Seymour was the nurturer. But like a mother willing to risk her life for her offspring, when Parham threatens the flock, Seymour rises up, risking everything for his utopian community.⁴¹⁷

4.13 Apotheosis

Apotheosis (Only found in Campbell). Before getting to what Vogler calls the “Ordeal,” Campbell has one final addition, the apotheosis. Campbell defines the apotheosis as a, “pattern of the divine state to which the human hero attains.... This is the release potential within us all, and which anyone can attain—through heroism.”⁴¹⁸ After surviving tests, trials and tribulations, and after defeating their foe, the hero enters into a state of higher consciousness of either doing something he or she previously could not, or doing something which other mere mortals cannot.

For Seymour, this occurs when he confronts Parham and becomes transformed from a follower to a leader. After this event, Seymour is firmly in control of Azusa Street. Whatever was stopping Seymour from rising up and taking his place as the true leader of Azusa Street was now gone.

4.14 Ordeal

Ordeal (Only found in Vogler). As stated previously, Vogler simplifies the hero’s journey into what he calls the writer’s journey. Act Two for Vogler consists of tests/allies/enemies, approach to the inmost cave, ordeal and reward. For Vogler, “ordeal” encompasses what Campbell separates into: meeting with the goddess, woman as temptress, atonement with the

⁴¹⁷ In both mythology and in many great writings, such as that of Shakespeare, a character can have both masculine and feminine energy (and in mythology, the character can have both male and female anatomy). Cf. Dennis Krausnick, *Shakespeare & Company Los Angeles Weekend Intensive*, Brentwood, CA. September 18-20, 2009; Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 131. According to Krausnick, the female energy is sometimes more embracing whereas the masculine energy is sometimes more driving.

⁴¹⁸ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 127.

father and apotheosis. This means that this section goes backwards in time, and revisits the confrontation between Seymour and Parham. The reason this thesis does this is because Vogler combines several of Campbell's categories to get to what he believes is the climax of the entire story, which is the "Ordeal," or the central conflict. Analyzing the central conflict between Seymour and Parham from Vogler's perspective is important because this conflict reveals what Seymour thought Azusa Street was really about (which is different from how predominantly white Pentecostal denominations interpret Azusa Street). Clarifying these theological distinctives potentially provides value to contemporary charismatic leaders who desire to glean a deeper understanding of the link between the baptism in the Holy Spirit and racial harmony in Seymour's theology.

For Vogler, the ordeal is where:

The fortunes of the hero hit bottom in a direct confrontation with his greatest fear. He faces the possibility of death and is brought to the brink in a battle with a hostile force. The...audience [does not know] if he will live or die.

This is a critical moment in any story, an ordeal in which the hero must die or appear to die so that she can be born again. It's a major source of the magic of the heroic myth. The experiences of the preceding stages have led us, the audience, to identify with the hero and her fate. What happens to the hero happens to us. We are encouraged to experience the brink of death moment with her. Our emotions are temporarily depressed so that they can be revived by the hero's return from death.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁹ Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, 15. Also, it is worth noting that Vogler talks about heroes in a general sense, which means "hero" can apply to any gender. I personally prefer to refer to male heroes as "heroes" and female heroes as "heroines" because the heroine's journey is not always the same as the hero's journey. (However, some argue that some of the most compelling female heroes in film are those whose roles were written for a man, but played by a woman. When this happens, audiences see a female hero going on the hero's journey.) John Truby is one of several people who highlight the distinctives of female myth (which often include one or more birth stories, especially if she gives birth physically and spiritually). Cf. John Truby, "Myth Audio Class." Truby's Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

When Parham shows up at Azusa Street, he expressed disgust with the racial integration, he did not like some of the people Seymour put in leadership and he felt Seymour was engaging in “fanaticism.”⁴²⁰ Although speculative, confronting Parham could have been risky for Seymour, especially since just one generation before, when his parents were slaves, confronting a white person in this way could have resulted in severe consequences. Given that Jim Crow segregation was in place, Seymour could have still faced significant consequences, even if those consequences were limited to social consequences (such as loss of ministry reputation). Had Parham prevailed in this confrontation, Seymour’s utopian community would have devolved into a segregated dystopia (which would have been a form of death because Seymour’s vision would have died). Without doubt, Seymour’s confrontation with Parham was the most significant threat to the nascent Azusa Street community up to this point. Although Seymour does not literally appear to die, this experience does cause him to become reborn in a sense because this is the first time we see Seymour exhibit fierce leadership traits. After this experience, Seymour is firmly established as the leader at Azusa Street (as opposed to looking to Parham as the leader), and Seymour goes on to develop and articulate his own theology. Without this confrontation with Parham, Seymour’s leadership and theological development might not have become clarified as sharply as it was. The next chapter examines some of Seymour’s theological distinctives more in-depth.

What was the ordeal, or central conflict at Azusa Street really about? It was really about power. Parham would like us to think it was about egalitarianism and fanaticism. But the ordeal was really a power struggle over the identity of the community of believers that had gathered and who would “control” that identity. In story analysis, a very important question is, “Who fights

⁴²⁰ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 127; Sarah E. Parham, *The Life of Charles F. Parham* (Birmingham: Commercial Printing, 1977), 246, 302.

whom over what?”⁴²¹ The answer is: Seymour fights Parham over control of the Azusa Street Community. Whoever wins control gets to determine the identity of the nascent community. If Seymour wins, Azusa Street will reflect his egalitarian vision. If Parham wins, Azusa Street will likely descend into the segregated Southern dystopia Seymour attempted to flee. In addition, if Seymour prevails, his existing theology which allows for special revelation and more diverse manifestations of the Spirit will also prevail. In the end, Seymour did prevail over Parham.⁴²²

4.15 Reward (Seizing the Sword)

Reward (What Campbell calls: The Ultimate Boon). Vogler describes the reward like this:

Having survived death, beaten the dragon or slain the Minotaur, hero and audience have cause to celebrate. The hero now takes possession of the treasure she has come seeking, her Reward.... Sometimes the “sword” is knowledge and experience that leads to greater understanding and a reconciliation with hostile forces. In *Star Wars*, Luke rescues Princess Leia and captures the plans of the Death Star, keys to defeating Darth Vader. Dorothy escapes from the Wicked Witch’s castle with the Witch’s broomstick and the ruby slippers, keys to getting back home.... [The hero] has earned the title of, “hero,” by having taken the supreme risk on behalf of the community.⁴²³

As part of his description of “The Ultimate Boon,” Campbell has this to say:

The agony of breaking through personal limitations is the agony of spiritual growth. Art, literature, myth and cult, philosophy and ascetic disciplines are instruments to help the individual past his limiting horizons into spheres of ever-expanding realization. As he crosses threshold after threshold, conquering dragon after dragon, the stature of divinity that he summons to his highest wish increases, until it subsumes the cosmos....⁴²⁴

⁴²¹ Truby, *The Anatomy of Story*, 30.

⁴²² Although Seymour faced various tests and trials after that, the next significant test that once again threatened the very existence of the Azusa Street community did not come until February, 1911, when William Durham came to preach during Seymour’s absence, but decided, on his own, become the new pastor of the mission. Cf. Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 315-316. Durham attempted a hostile takeover, but Seymour responded by conferring with his duly elected board and padlocking the door (p. 317). In response, Durham railed at Seymour and others who did not see things his way, he made exaggerated claims (i.e. that Seymour played the race card), and he retaliated by opening the Full Gospel Assembly not very far from the Azusa Street Mission.

⁴²³ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 148-165.

⁴²⁴ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 148-165.

By winning the ordeal, Seymour achieved the ability to further establish his utopian vision at Azusa Street. According to Allison and Goethals, “one of the defining traits of heroes is that they put the common good...ahead of their personal concerns.”⁴²⁵ In his confrontation with Parham, Seymour risked everything on behalf of, and for the benefit of, the Azusa Street community. Seymour could arguably be considered a hero for this reason alone.⁴²⁶ After winning the ordeal, Seymour’s reward is that he is the true leader of Azusa Street and he is able to further develop and publish his own theology (which is distinct from Parham’s). One example of this is when, in *Doctrines and Disciplines*, he states, “The baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire means to be flooded with the love of God and power for service, and a love for the truth as it is in God’s word.... For the Holy Spirit gives us a sound mind, faith, love and power (2 Tim. 1:7).”⁴²⁷ This theological interpretation was distinct from Parham’s.

In terms of format, the reward/the ultimate boon generally symbolizes the end of Act II. In *The Lord of the Rings*, this is the point where the ring is finally cast into the volcanic pit of Mount Doom. In *Star Wars*, this is where Luke destroys the Death Star. It is shortly after the reward that the hero begins the road back.

4.16 The Road Back

Act Three (What Campbell calls: Return).

⁴²⁵ Scott Allison and George Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5.

⁴²⁶ A contemporary example of this was referenced earlier in this thesis when Captain Sully Sullenberger made personal sacrifices for the benefit of all those aboard Flight 1549.

⁴²⁷ “Pentecost Has Come,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1; William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission* (Joplin: Christian Life, 2000), 42-43.

The Road Back (Campbell divides this up into seven categories: Refusal of the Return, The Magic Flight, Rescue from Within, Crossing the Threshold and Return). According to Vogler, this begins Act Three. This is what Vogler says about the road back:

The hero's not out of the woods yet. We're crossing into Act Three now as the hero begins to deal with the consequences of confronting the dark forces of the ordeal. If she has not yet managed to reconcile with the parent, the gods or the hostile forces, they may come raging after her. Some of the best chase scenes spring up at this point, as the hero is pursued on the road back by the vengeful forces she has disturbed by seizing the sword, the elixir or the treasure.

Thus, Luke and Leia are furiously pursued by Darth Vader as they escape the Death Star. The road back in E.T. is the moonlight bicycle flight of Elliott and E.T. as they escape from, "Keys," (Peter Coyote), who represents repressive governmental authority.

This stage marks the decision to return to the ordinary world. The hero realizes that the special world must eventually be left behind, and there are still dangers, temptations and tests ahead.⁴²⁸

After winning the ordeal, Seymour did not reconcile with Parham. Consequently, Parham spoke ill of Seymour in the press and held competing meetings down the street. In allegorical terms, this attack on Seymour was reminiscent of Pharaoh chasing Moses through the parted Red Sea. In the end, Parham's efforts failed and he left town.

4.17 Refusal of the Return

Vogler simplifies the first five of the seven steps of Campbell's "Return" into the single heading of, "The Road Back." Not all heroes experience all seven steps (which is why Vogler simplifies the steps), but in fairness to Campbell's monumental work, and in an effort to better understand the life of William Seymour, this thesis shall briefly explore all seven steps, beginning with the refusal of the return.

⁴²⁸Vogler, *The Writer's Journey*, 17.

The refusal of the return often involves the refusal to return to the original world (which for Seymour was Louisiana). Seymour never returns to Louisiana which means he cannot take the reward he obtained when he prevailed over Parham back to Louisiana. This is not unlike some heroes who do not return. For example, Luke Skywalker cannot return to his home on Tatooine because it was destroyed; cowboys often ride off into the sunset instead of returning home, etc. However, heroes often return, either literally or symbolically. After defeating Parham, Seymour returned to his new home at Azusa Street, bringing back his newfound leadership and theology. Arranging steps in the hero's journey like this is not uncommon in mythic structure. One of the hallmarks of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is his twisting of certain mythic elements and archetypes. Likewise, in Seymour's journey, certain elements become uniquely rearranged. Like Tolkien, this originality is part of what makes Seymour's journey fresh and enduring through the test of time.⁴²⁹ Campbell says this about the refusal of the return:

When the hero-quest has been accomplished...the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy. The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom, the golden fleece, or his sleeping princess back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet or the ten thousand worlds.

But the responsibility has been frequently refused. Even the Buddha, after his triumph, doubted whether the message of realization could be communicated, and saints are reported to have passed away while in the supernal ecstasy. Numerous indeed are the heroes fabled to have taken up residence forever in the blessed isle of the unaging Goddess of Immortal Being.⁴³⁰

For Seymour, his trophy is having the leadership authority and the theological freedom to actualize his utopian vision. As noted previously, this vision was an egalitarian vision which in many ways mirrored the unity we will experience in Heaven. Seymour was just actualizing that

⁴²⁹ As noted previously, one of the things that is unique about Seymour's journey is that it is biographical, yet it mirrors the hero's journey so closely.

⁴³⁰ Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 167.

ahead of time. Theologically, this thesis previously considered Pannenberg's understanding of the imminent Kingdom. For Seymour, the secret to actualizing God's imminent Kingdom (as outlined by Jesus) was to utilize the power of the Holy Spirit. This is one of Seymour's theological distinctives and one of the things that set him apart from the theology of many of the white Pentecostal denominations that split from Azusa Street. Those white denominations emphasized speaking in tongues as the baptism in the Holy Spirit as opposed to the unity Seymour practiced and preached.

4.18 The Magic Flight

The second of the five sub-elements Campbell includes but Vogler does not, is the magic flight:

If the hero in his triumph wins the blessing of the goddess or the god and is then explicitly commissioned to return to the world with some elixir for the restoration of society, the final stage of his adventure is supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron. On the other hand, if the trophy has been attained against the opposition of its guardian, or if the hero's wish to return to the world has been resented by the gods or demons, then the last stage of the mythological round becomes a lively, often comical, pursuit. This flight may be complicated by marvels of magical obstruction and evasion....

The myths of failure touch us with the tragedy of life, but those of success only with their own incredibility. And yet, if the monomyth is to fulfill its promise, not human failure or superhuman success but human success is what we shall have to be shown. That is the problem of the crisis of the threshold of the return. We shall first consider it in the superhuman symbols and then seek the practical teaching for historic man.⁴³¹

Here, Seymour does return to Azusa Street and continues using his elixir (the Holy Spirit) to firmly actualize unity in the Spirit (which is how Seymour restores society). The American Civil War ended on April 9, 1865. The Azusa Street Revival began 41 years later, on April 9, 1906, during the period of Jim Crow Segregation. The chaos, disharmony and dystopia African

⁴³¹Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 170-178.

Americans had experienced cannot be overstated. But Seymour had a solution when no one else had an answer. His solution was to link the baptism in the Spirit with unity. This makes sense, given that unity aligns with what one might expect as a result of the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23. This was Seymour's answer, and after returning from his victory over Parham, Seymour's elixir was the leadership authority needed to implement his theology and to implement his utopian vision of unity, community and divine love.

4.19 Rescue from Without

Campbell says this about the rescue from without:

The hero may have to be brought back from his supernatural adventure by assistance from without. That is to say, the world may have to come and get him. For the bliss of the deep abode is not lightly abandoned in favor of the self-scattering of the wakened state. "Who having cast off the world," we read, "would desire to return again? He would be only *there*." And yet, in so far as one is alive, life will call. And yet, in so far as one is alive, life will call. Society is jealous of those who remain away from it, and will come knocking at the door. If the hero—like Muchukunda—is unwilling, the disturber suffers an ugly shock; but on the other hand, if the summoned one is only delayed—sealed in by the beatitude of the state of perfect being (which resembles death)—an apparent rescue is effected, and the adventurer returns.⁴³²

Part of what makes Seymour's journey unique is that he never fully returns from being proverbially "seated with Christ in Heavenly places," (Ephesians 2:6). Unlike most heroes, Seymour seamlessly operates in two different worlds—the spiritual world and the earthly world. As a result, Seymour ushered in Heaven's atmosphere to earth. In that sense, Seymour does not have external assistance to "bring him back to earth," so to speak, but rather, he has assistance from without (namely, the Holy Spirit), to help him escort Heaven's atmosphere to earth. However, Campbell's observation that society is generally jealous of those who remain away

⁴³²Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 178-179. Quote from: *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, 3.28.5.

from it (especially those who have some sort of gift or reward), applies to Seymour in the sense that had, and still has, plenty of critics. Even Parham himself railed against these excesses, and the local newspapers mocked those excesses (both the spiritual excesses and the egalitarian excesses). However, there were those who visited Azusa Street from all around the United States (and even other countries), because the opposite was true—they wanted to rise up, and experience the special world Seymour was a part of. This turns the rescue from without on its head, because Seymour is essentially rescuing those stuck within the ordinary world and inviting them up into the special world. This creates a push-pull effect. Like crabs in a bucket, some people want nothing more than to pull Seymour back down into the ordinary world. But Seymour, through the power of the Holy Spirit, invited people up to the higher, special world. Somehow, Seymour manages to successfully live and minister with one foot in the original world of Azusa Street and one foot in the new special world of the realm of Heaven. Today, some Pentecostals look to Seymour as an exemplar for his ability to simultaneously live in the ordinary world of earth and the special world of Heaven.

4.20 Crossing of the Return Threshold

Campbell says this about crossing the return threshold:

The two worlds, the divine and the human, can be pictured only as distinct from each other—different as life and death, as day and night. The hero adventures out of the land we know into darkness; there accomplishes his adventure, or again is simply lost to us, imprisoned, or in danger; and his return is described as a coming back out of that yonder zone. Nevertheless—and here is a great key to the understanding of myth and symbol—the two kingdoms are actually one. The realm of the gods is a forgotten dimension of the world we know. And the exploration of that dimension, either willingly or unwillingly, is the whole sense of the deed of the hero. The values and distinctions that in normal life seem important disappear with the terrifying assimilation of the self into what formerly was only otherness....

How to teach again, however, what has been taught correctly and incorrectly learned a thousand times, through the millennia of mankind's prudent folly? That is the hero's ultimate difficult

task... How communicate to people who insist on the existence of exclusive evidence of their senses the message of the all-generating void?⁴³³

As a result of praying and seeking the Lord, Seymour ventured into a realm that was foreign to many of his contemporaries. Yet, this spiritual realm and the earthly realm were really one because Jesus made that future realm imminent through his death and resurrection. This was the realm of the Garden of Eden, it was the realm of the Book of Acts and it will be the realm of Heaven.⁴³⁴ Seymour “brought back” what was lost (which is why Pentecostalism is often referred to as a “Restoration” movement). This type of cyclical theology, where the cosmos ends where it begins, will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 3. As Campbell suggests, Seymour’s task was to teach correctly what had been taught incorrectly for over a thousand years.

This is the last section under what Campbell calls the, “Return,” that differs from Vogler. Only two steps remain in what Vogler calls, “Act III,” and what Campbell calls, “Return.”

4.21 Resurrection

Resurrection (What Campbell calls, “Master of the Two Worlds”). Vogler says this about the resurrection:

In ancient times, hunters and warriors had to be purified before they returned to their communities, because they had blood on their hands. The hero who has been to the realm of the dead must be reborn and cleansed in one last ordeal of death and resurrection before returning to the ordinary world of the living.

This is often a second life-and-death moment, almost a replay of the death and rebirth of the ordeal. Death and darkness get in one last, desperate shot before being finally defeated. It’s kind of a final exam for the hero, who must be tested once more to see if he has really learned the lessons of the ordeal.

⁴³³Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 188-189.

⁴³⁴ And the realm of the millennial reign of Christ, for premillennialists.

The hero is transformed by these moments of death-and-rebirth, and is now able to return to ordinary life reborn as a new being with new insights.

The *Star Wars* films play with this element constantly. The films of the “original trilogy” feature a final battle scene in which Luke is almost killed, appears to be dead for a moment, and then miraculously survives. Each ordeal wins him new knowledge and command over the Force. He is transformed into a new being by his experience.⁴³⁵

As briefly alluded to in a previous footnote, Seymour experiences a similar ordeal to the one he had with Parham in February, 1911, when William Durham came to preach during Seymour’s absence, but decided, on his own, become the new pastor of the mission.⁴³⁶ Durham attempted a hostile takeover, but Seymour responded by conferring with his duly elected board and padlocking the door (which is what happened to Seymour when Seymour got locked out of Hutchins’s church).⁴³⁷ In response, Durham railed at Seymour and others who did not see things his way, he made exaggerated claims (i.e. that Seymour played the race card), and he retaliated by opening the Full Gospel Assembly not very far from the Azusa Street Mission. The seasoned Seymour once again prevailed.

However, what is more interesting for this thesis is Campbell’s description of the master of the two worlds. Campbell says this about the master of the two worlds:

Freedom to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the causal deep and back—not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other, yet permitting the mind to know the one by virtue of the other—is the talent of the master....

The myths do not often display in a single image the mystery of the ready transit. Where they do, the moment is a precious symbol, full of import, to be treasured and contemplated. Such a moment was that of the Transfiguration of the Christ.

[Quote of Matthew 17:1-9].

⁴³⁵ Vogler, *The Writer’s Journey*, 17-18.

⁴³⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 315-316.

⁴³⁷ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 317.

Here is the whole myth in a moment: Jesus the guide, the way, the vision and the companion of the return. The disciples are his initiates, not themselves masters of the mystery, yet introduced to the full experience of the paradox of the two worlds in one. Peter was so frightened he babbled. Flesh had dissolved before their eyes to reveal the Word. They fell upon their faces, and when they arose the door again had closed....

Symbols are only the *vehicles* of communication...no one should attempt to read or interpret [them] as the final thing. The problem of the theologian is to keep his symbol translucent, so that it may not block out the very light it is supposed to convey....⁴³⁸

Seymour mastered the two worlds of the natural and the supernatural. The Azusa Street Mission became a hub of supernatural activity—a slice of Heaven on earth. It was a place where natural people could receive supernatural guidance and assistance. Although imperfect, it was a place that in many ways mirrored both the Garden of Eden and the New Jerusalem. But again, Seymour bends the rules because he does not just master the two separate worlds—he tugs on the supernatural world so that it manifests here and now on earth where it can be molded with the natural world, to create one new world at Azusa Street. Like a train conductor, Seymour ferries willing souls daily, not to the underworld, but to the upper world—the world of Heaven, and back. Although Seymour at times appears to do nothing, but sit with his head in two creates, he is the link between the two worlds, and without his prayers, presence and energy, the circuit would not be complete, and the special world of Heaven would not integrate with, or comingle with, the special world of Azusa Street. The only way the circuit becomes complete is if Seymour masters both worlds, and stands as a conduit, with one foot in each world.

⁴³⁸Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 196-202.

4.22 Return with the Elixir

Return with the Elixir (What Campbell calls, “Freedom to Live”) is the final stage in the hero’s journey. This stage completes what Vogler calls, “Act Three,” and what Campbell calls, “Return.” Vogler says this about returning with the elixir:

The hero returns to the ordinary world, but the journey is meaningless unless she brings back some elixir, treasure or lesson from the special world. The elixir is a magic potion with the power to heal. It may be a great treasure like the grail that magically heals the wounded land, or it simply might be knowledge or experience that could be useful to the community somehow.

Dorothy returns to Kansas with the knowledge that she is loved and that, “There is no place like home.” E.T. returns home with the experience of friendship with humans. Luke Skywalker defeats Darth Vader (for the time being) and restores peace and order to the galaxy....

Sometimes the elixir is treasure won on the quest, but it may be love, freedom, wisdom or the knowledge that the special world exists and can be survived. Sometimes it’s just coming home with a good story to tell.

Unless something is brought back from the ordeal in the inmost cave, the hero is doomed to repeat the adventure. Many comedies use this ending, as a foolish character refuses to learn his lesson and embarks on the same folly that got him in trouble in the first place....

The hero’s journey is a skeletal framework that should be fleshed out with the details and surprises of the individual story. The structure should not call attention to itself, nor should it be followed too precisely. The order of stages given here is only one of many possible variations....⁴³⁹

Campbell says this about the freedom to live:

What, now, is the result of the miraculous passage and return?

The battlefield is symbolic of the field of life, where every creature lives on the death of another. A realization of the inevitable guilt of life may so sicken the heart that, like Hamlet or like Arjuna, one may refuse to go on with it. On the other hand, like most of the rest of us, one may invent a false, finally unjustified, image of oneself as an exceptional phenomenon in the world, not guilty as others are, but justified in one’s inevitable sinning because one represents the good. Such self-righteousness leads to a misunderstanding, not only of oneself but of the nature of both man and the cosmos. The goal of the myth is to dispel the need for such life ignorance by effecting a reconciliation of the individual consciousness with the universal will. And this is

⁴³⁹Vogler, *The Writer’s Journey*, 18-19.

effected through a realization of the true relationship of the passing phenomena of time to the imperishable life that lives and dies in all....

The hero is the champion of things becoming, not of things become, because he is. "Before Abraham was, I AM." He does not mistake apparent changelessness in time for the permanence of Being, nor is he fearful of the next moment (or of the "other thing"), as destroying the permanent with its change. "Nothing retains its own form; but Nature, the greater renewer, ever makes up forms from forms. Be sure there's nothing [that] perishes in the whole universe; it does but vary and renew its form...."⁴⁴⁰

Although Seymour does not physically return to Louisiana, this thesis already explored extensively how Seymour brought back an elixir to Azusa Street. His leadership, theology and utopian example are powerful spiritual insights and powerful rewards he received for prevailing in his ordeal over Parham. But like a cowboy riding off into the sunset, Seymour fades into obscurity that for a period of time in the twentieth century, few scholars knew where Seymour was buried.⁴⁴¹

4.23 U w o o c t { q h v j g J g t q ø u L q w t p g {

Seymour's story is still told today because his heroic journey is timeless, like the many heroes who have gone before him. Like all good stories, Seymour's story has adventure, conflict and love. But by putting the common good above his own desires, by making powerful moral choices and by accomplishing a level of racial harmony very few have been able to duplicate, Seymour is a particular type of modern hero, not unlike Captain Sully Sullenberger (as referenced previously).⁴⁴² This is because someone can become heroic by doing the right thing or by demonstrating a high degree of skill at a critical moment.⁴⁴³ Seymour stayed true to his

⁴⁴⁰Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, 205-209. The Bible quote Campbell gives is from John 8:58. The other quote he gives is from: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (London: W. Heinemann, 1933), 252-255.

⁴⁴¹ Seymour was buried at Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights, not far from the Azusa Street Mission. This author personally visited his gravesite and can testify to the location of his burial.

⁴⁴² Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 5-8.

⁴⁴³ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 8-9, 59.

utopian vision and sacrificed himself for the Azusa Street community even though Parham and Jim Crow Segregation suggested otherwise. Along the way, Seymour himself becomes transformed from a seemingly passive leader to someone who stands up to, and overcomes his mentor, Charles Parham. Story analysis John Truby suggests that mythic heroes are, “real people who have been many times,” they are heavily symbolic, and they often discover what was already deep inside them.⁴⁴⁴ And, like many myths, the Azusa Street story contains supernatural forces which create, “an entirely different set of forces by which the world operates.”⁴⁴⁵ The supernatural elements of unity, divine love and supernatural manifestations at Azusa Street contrast with the dystopia of absolute power, hatred and death Seymour came from in Louisiana and the dystopian vision Parham had for Azusa Street. Seymour’s story connects him to God’s Heavenly Kingdom and it does so through the talisman of speaking in tongues. But in the end, Seymour overcomes many obstacles and receives many special revelations from God that causes Seymour to develop his theology and rise up and accept his role as the true leader of Azusa Street. The revelations and victories Seymour achieves are not merely personal, but rather, are cosmic because they benefitted not only early 20th Century society, but today, those revelations benefit global Pentecostals who live in different cultures and different times than Seymour. This cosmic revelation, “is where the hero gains a vision for how an entire society should act differently in the future. The key point here is that the vision is always moral [and it is always detailed].... The classic examples of this are Moses and the Ten Commandments and Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. These are detailed moral visions....”⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁴ John Truby, “Myth Audio Class.” Truby’s Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

⁴⁴⁵ John Truby, “Myth Audio Class.” Truby’s Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

⁴⁴⁶ John Truby, “Myth Audio Class.” Truby’s Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

One other facet of Seymour's story that correlates with the hero's journey is the cyclical nature of the hero's journey (as demonstrated in previous images). By creating an eschatological community, Seymour ushered in an earthly foretaste of the Heavenly description found in Revelation 7:9, where everyone from every tribe and tongue was worshipping God. This connects to God's original plan for humanity in the very beginning, in the Garden of Eden, and it is an actualization of what Jesus put into motion when He claimed the Kingdom was imminent. Although Seymour himself never returned to the ordinary world of Louisiana, he did in fact help close the loop between God's beginning and ending plan for creation which was to have all creation of every tribe and tongue worship God in unity, community and divine love.

In a sense, what Seymour accomplished contains some elements of similarity with what Truby calls the "Rejuvenation Myth." In this myth, the hero "has a vision of how the entire city can be different, and he becomes the leader. Land, people and technology are in perfect balance, [and] the hero leads the people in creating a new community within the city."⁴⁴⁷ Truby concludes by noting that this "new community is a place of freedom and harmony."⁴⁴⁸ For Seymour, the physical property of Azusa Street, the people of Azusa Street and the technology of Azusa Street (i.e. *The Apostolic Faith* newspaper) were all in harmony at one point. This resulted in Azusa Street becoming a sacred place.

4.24 Archetypes

This thesis has referenced archetypes at various points. Archetypes are patterns of behavior or symbolic representations of universal patterns or principles of human behavior. These patterns are so fundamental to human nature that when a character is connected to an

⁴⁴⁷ John Truby, "Myth Audio Class." Truby's Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

⁴⁴⁸ John Truby, "Myth Audio Class." Truby's Writers Studio. <http://truby.com/store-2/>

archetype, that character has basic traits that are familiar to audiences around the world. The concept of archetypes is more closely aligned to Jungian psychology (also called analytical psychology) than it is to Freudian psychology. Since psychologists in the United States tend to favor Freudian psychology over Jungian psychology, archetypes tend to be discussed more in literature or film studies than in psychology or other academic disciplines. Biblical studies has followed the trend of academia largely dismissing archetypes. One example of this is how hermeneutical principles, such as typology, were taught more extensively in Bible Schools in the 20th Century than they are today.⁴⁴⁹ Pentecostal schools might still emphasize archetypes more than non-Pentecostal schools because of their emphasis on the archetypes of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher, and their emphasis on “spirits” (such as a “Spirit of Jezebel”) which has certain universal qualities which span time and culture. The use of archetypes in Pentecostal churches (which tend to be more conservative), often extends to other classic archetypes like mother or father, and good and evil. One of the clearest examples of this is how some Pentecostal churches will have clear definitions of the masculine and feminine archetype. These churches will often adhere to classic archetypes of gender and family, in contrast to broader academia which is currently deconstructing the concepts of motherhood, fatherhood and family which have existed since the beginning of time (or even before the beginning of time if you accept the fact that Jesus referred to God as “Father.”)

This minimization of archetypes is somewhat ironic given the role archetypes play in organizations, government agencies and counseling where standardized tests are often used to assess strengths, weaknesses and compatibility. Often this is done through a combination of

⁴⁴⁹ This statement is made based on the resources consulted for this thesis. Literature discussing hermeneutics or Bible Study Methods from the mid-20th Century tend to reference typology more, or spend more time discussing typology, than comparable literature written in the last 20 years.

spiritual, personality and leadership assessments which rely on statistics and group averages (which is one way of classifying archetypes). Many of the tests that are used have been heavily influenced by some form of personality trait theory which stems from Raymond Cattell's work.⁴⁵⁰ These tests often are often based on four to sixteen personality factors that tests how the test taker scored at a particular level and how that score compares with how others have scored at that particular level.⁴⁵¹ Although these tests are not an exact science, these tests are often accurate enough to identify strengths, weaknesses and potential points of conflict that some

⁴⁵⁰ William Revelle, 2009. "Personality Structure and Measurement: The Contributions of Raymond Cattell." *British Journal of Psychology* 100, (1a): 253-57.

⁴⁵¹ Astrology uses 12-types. One popular archetype assessment used in churches today is the Enneagram which, according to Richard Rohr and Andreas Ebert, assesses personality tendencies through the lens of spiritual formation. Although critics claim the Enneagram does not have Christian origins, Rohr and Ebert argue the Enneagram traces its roots, in part, "to the Christian desert monk Evagrius Ponticus (d. 399) and the Franciscan Blessed Ramón Lull (1236-1315)." Rohr and Ebert argue the Enneagram is based around the seven deadly sins and can be useful in helping Christians identify potential areas of weakness, sources of repeated relationship difficulty or areas of susceptibility to sin. Cf. Richard Rohr and Andreas Ebert, *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective* (New York: Crossroad, 2014), ix.

Depending on how far someone takes the archetype, according to Rohr & Ebert's work, Seymour is a seven on the Enneagram, and Parham an eight. For example, sevens create a carnival atmosphere which is exactly how the LA Times described the Azusa Street meetings; sevens struggle with gluttony which helps explain why Seymour was overweight and why Azusa Street was known for spiritual excess; sevens value idealism which is why Seymour tried creating a utopian community; sevens have a hard time seeing peoples' dark sides which might explain why Seymour was unable to foresee Clara Lum's betrayal; sevens love to travel and Seymour traveled across the country; sevens will smile at those who criticize them which is exactly what Seymour did; sevens love adrenaline and Seymour loved the presence of the Holy Spirit which was often accompanied by shouts of joy, spiritual "fire," feelings of ecstasy and feelings of electricity; sevens value egalitarianism and Seymour created utopian egalitarianism at Azusa Street; etc. Azusa Street was a place of excess and adrenaline. In light of this, Rohr and Ebert go so far as to say the charismatic movement is in danger of becoming a pure seven movement. But how can that be? The answer is because of Seymour's influence. Had Parham retained control over the Azusa Street congregation, Pentecostalism would look very different.

Some argue Parham was a racist, but when you understand Parham through the lens of other authoritarians, it is possible that Parham was trying to honor God by condemning excess and enforcing the existing rules (which involved segregation). Even today, Pentecostals often value adhering to existing rules and traditions and they sometimes perceive forces that attempt to undermine the existing standards as evil. To his credit, Parham did find ways to work around the law to mentor Seymour, but in the end, he was vilified for his inability to move beyond the black and white way in which he perceived justice and truth (which influenced how he interpreted the racial issues of his day and why he condemned interracial worship as sinful). One challenge for eights (Parham was an eight on the Enneagram), is that they can be shameless and engage in revenge (which Parham did when he opened up a competing Pentecostal mission several blocks from the Azusa Street Mission). Another prevalent vice for eights is lust (which can be sexual lust, a lust for power or any sort of exploitation of another person or that person's dignity). Interestingly, the newspapers report Parham was arrested for engaging in a homosexual relationship. Cf. Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 103n. Concerning Azusa Street being a carnival environment, cf. "Holy Kickers' Baffle Police: Hold High Carnival In Azusa Street Until Midnight," *Los Angeles Times* (1886-1922), July 12, 1906; ProQuest Historical Newspapers-Los Angeles Times (1886-1922), I13.

marriage counselors and employers (including the government) require some form of personality testing.⁴⁵² The reason these tests are accurate enough to justify their use is because these tests deal with probabilities and group averages (from thousands of tests). One of the most common assessments used in the United States is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. In some organizations, this test is used alone, and sometimes it is used in conjunction with other assessments.⁴⁵³ The significance of these tests for this thesis is to establish that the Pentecostal use of typology is not as unscientific as some might presume.⁴⁵⁴ Although Biblical typology is different from personality typology, the point is that analyzing types is within the realm of acceptable Pentecostal hermeneutics and is a common practice amongst both Charismatics and non-Charismatics.

In addition to becoming familiar with archetypes through cultural stories, people can also become familiar with archetype through film because many film schools teach mythic structure and archetype. These concepts are so prevalent that there is a screenwriting software called Character Writer 3.1 that helps writers develop characters that is based exclusively on the Enneagram archetype system. Plugging in what we know about Parham and Seymour into the software confirms much of what this thesis has concluded about Parham and Seymour.⁴⁵⁵ Even if someone is unfamiliar with screenwriting or mythic structure, they might be more familiar with archetypes used in advertising, especially commercials, billboards and print ads. A billboard with a picture of a doctor, athlete, lawyer, mother, student or military personnel immediately creates familiarity with the audience because we recognize those familiar characters. Likewise, the hero

⁴⁵² Tests such as Myers-Briggs are sometimes required by pastors as part of the premarital counseling process to assess compatibility.

⁴⁵³ The Myers-Briggs test is built on types. This is why the test is called the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

⁴⁵⁴ Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2009), 134-163.

⁴⁵⁵ Character Writer 3.1 Software.

encounters characters that are familiar to the audience. This is significant to this thesis because Seymour encountered many symbolic people on his journey. As Seymour traveled around the country and interacted with these different familiar characters, his theology developed until he was able to articulate his doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and why it was linked to community, unity and divine love.

4.25 The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy & Fairy Tale

One last element of Seymour's journey that is worth discussing is his tragic end. This thesis highlighted how some of Seymour's woes were possibly the result of his own leadership failures. Given all the millions of people who trace their roots back to Azusa Street, it is kind of ironic that Seymour died thinking he was a failure.⁴⁵⁶ But by its very definition, tragedy is often when something far worse happens to someone than what should happen (like Shakespeare's *Othello*). In his book *Telling The Truth: The Gospel As Tragedy, Comedy & Fairy Tale*, Frederick Buechner suggests the gospel itself contains elements of tragedy, comedy and fairytale.⁴⁵⁷

In addition to being a sacred place, Azusa Street was a place of great joy.⁴⁵⁸ Earlier, this thesis quoted eyewitnesses such as Frank Bartleman and local newspapers who described the

⁴⁵⁶ Nelson, *For Such a Time As This*, 271-272.

⁴⁵⁷ As noted elsewhere in this thesis, approximately 2/3 of the Bible is story. Matthew 22:1 says, "As was his custom, Jesus continued to teach the people by using allegories," (TPT).

⁴⁵⁸ C.S. Lewis has famously described joy as the "serious business of Heaven." Cf. C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer* (San Diego: Harvest, 1964), 92-93. But should Christians be this joyful? When renowned theologian Jürgen Moltmann was asked if it was appropriate for Christians to engage in sport when they could be focusing on solving problems in the world, Moltmann replied that yes, sport is important because it is a foreshadow of the coming age, when there will be no war or sin to corrupt goodness and delight. It is in God's future reign that all our childhood dreams of play, happiness and delight will come true... because the Christian life is ultimately about delight in God. Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Play* (New York: Harper & Row), 1, 19. Manifesting the fruit of joy at Azusa Street seems consistent with the nature of the Holy Spirit and humanity's purpose on earth. Rather than labeling critics "oppressors," they were loved into the Kingdom. To manifest this much love and joy in the midst of racism and segregation must have been an incredible testimony!

atmosphere of Azusa Street as one of shouting, joy and almost a carnival atmosphere.⁴⁵⁹ Due to space, this thesis omits much of the comedy of Azusa Street, but one form of myth is Epic Comedy. Seymour's contrast of culture and ethnicity with his white mentor Parham, creates a potential for comedy. To use a film expression, Seymour was a "fish out of water."⁴⁶⁰ Seymour's personality type is indicative of comedy, and we occasionally see some of his jokes.⁴⁶¹ But since the extent of Seymour's comedy is speculative, as part of a bridge from story to the next chapter on theology, this section will briefly explore Frederick Buechner's story hermeneutic as outlined in, *Telling The Truth: The Gospel As Tragedy, Comedy & Fairy Tale*.⁴⁶²

For Buechner, the Gospel is bad news before it is good news. It is the news that man is a sinner, and that is a tragedy that will lead to eternal death. But the good news is that that same sinner can be loved, cherished and forgiven (which is the comedy). The fairytale is that that same sinner can be forgiven and experience eternal pleasures forevermore in Heaven (which is a fairytale, indeed).

Seymour's story is clearly tragic. But it is also comedy because God decided to use a one-eyed black preacher during Jim Crow segregation to ignite one of the greatest moves of the

⁴⁵⁹ "'Holy Kickers' Baffle Police: Hold High Carnival In Azusa Street Until Midnight," *Los Angeles Times* (1886–1922), July 12, 1906; ProQuest Historical Newspapers–Los Angeles Times (1886–1922), I13; Douglas J. Nelson, *For Such a Time As This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, England, 1981), 200. Ken Archer suggests Azusa Street was like, "The travelling circus sideshows, living on the margins of society and presenting to those who ventured into their tents an electrifying vision of Pentecost revisited," Cf. Ken Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2009), 97.

Is it possible that this "carnival" atmosphere is the closest some nonbelievers would ever get to Heaven? Sometimes pastors in the United States will comment how life on earth is the closest nonbelievers will get to Heaven and the closest believers will ever get to hell.

⁴⁶⁰ One famous example of this was the film *Crocodile Dundee* (1986).

⁴⁶¹ Much of Seymour's miscues could easily be turned into comedy, especially since his personality type has a propensity for comedy. Those who accept this contention might be interested in a book often overlooked by scholars (because of its lack of corroboration). That book supposedly contains eye-witness accounts from children who attended Azusa Street. In that book, Seymour's comedy and jovial nature really shines through. Cf. Tommy Welchel (narrator) in J. Edward Morris, *Azusa Street: They Told Me Their Stories* (Dare2Dream, 2006), xiii.

⁴⁶² As noted elsewhere in this thesis, approximately 2/3 of the Bible is story. Matthew 22:1 says, "As was his custom, Jesus continued to teach the people by using allegories," (TPT).

Holy Spirit in human history. Seymour's story is also fairytale because he established a utopian community that others in his day could only dream of. Even today, some wonder if humanity will ever achieve community, unity and divine love this side of eternity.

4.26 Summary

In short, one of the reasons Seymour's story is so timeless might be because of how Seymour's story is a familiar story that global audiences recognize. Seymour also encounters familiar characters on his journey. But more importantly, Seymour demonstrates heroic traits by putting the common good above his own desires, by making powerful moral choices and by accomplishing a level of racial harmony very few have been able to duplicate. To that end, Seymour was a hero, and his leadership and theology are worth reconsidering because Seymour does appear to have made a more significant contribution to the success of Azusa Street than what some 20th Century scholars gave him credit for.

Chapter 5

William Seymourø u V j g q n q i { q h E q o o w p k v { . Wp k

5.1 Introduction

In the United States, some leadership experts suggest one of the best ways to measure leadership is to analyze how much influence a leader has.⁴⁶³ If that is true, Seymour's influence could be measured numerically by the millions of followers who trace their roots back to Azusa Street, or it could be measured by Seymour's unique theological contributions and how those contributions influenced Pentecostalism. This chapter continues the analysis of Seymour's leadership by exploring and analyzing Seymour's unique theological contributions. In some ways, Seymour's "unique" theological contributions are shared by other black scholars. This is evidenced by similarities between Seymour's theology and the theology of other black theologians. But in other ways, Seymour's theological contributions are unique to Seymour, especially his views of equality which are more in line with Martin Luther King Jr.'s views than they are with other black theologians who emphasize liberation theology.⁴⁶⁴ Some might suggest Seymour and Cone share ideologies because both emphasize the liberative nature of theology. This is certainly possible, but this thesis emphasizes Seymour's unique take on that, which is not the emphasis on liberation from white oppressors, but rather, the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing about unity and community with whites (which emphasizes equality, as opposed to oppression). Seymour does not use words like "oppression," nor does he emphasize black

⁴⁶³ Although this concept existed prior to John Maxwell, Maxwell popularized this notion in his writings and leadership seminars. Cf. John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 1.

⁴⁶⁴ The concept of liberation theology is most often attributed to black theologian James Cone (who is sometimes credited as being the "father" of black liberation theology).

victimhood or hatred for whites. Rather, Seymour emphasized a utopian form of community and equality which highlighted people's similarities rather than their differences.

Theologically, Seymour's concepts of community, unity and divine love became de facto Pentecostal distinctives because he renounced speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit after he saw racist whites speaking in tongues and instead favored the idea that people were truly baptized in the spirit when they demonstrated divine love for one another. This theology also formed the crux of the main conflict between Seymour and Parham because Parham preferred to enforce the existing laws, social norms and theological understandings of things like segregation. Understanding the theology behind that conflict reveals Seymour's utopian vision and what he thought Azusa Street was about (which a utopian vision of unity, community and divine love, as opposed to merely speaking in tongues). This understanding is important because as different Pentecostal groups split from Azusa Street (largely along racial lines), many of the predominantly white Pentecostal groups emphasized speaking in tongues and they often had a slightly different view of sanctification.⁴⁶⁵

Understanding Seymour's theological distinctives could enrich our understanding of Azusa Street and William Seymour, and it could possibly benefit contemporary charismatic leaders who desire to better understand and implement Seymour's theology of unity, community and divine love today. This chapter explores some of these theological issues and the next chapter explores how this understanding could benefit contemporary Pentecostal leaders.

⁴⁶⁵ Some early Pentecostal denominations believed in instantaneous sanctification while others, like the Assemblies of God, believed in a progressive sanctification which began at conversion and continued until the individual was fully sanctified in Heaven.

5.2. *The Apostolic Faith*

One of the best ways to understand Seymour's unique theology is to analyze primary sources. One such source is the official Azusa Street publication, *The Apostolic Faith*, which was published in September, 1906, roughly 5 months after the revival began.⁴⁶⁶ Below the title is a quote from Jude 3 which states, "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." This choice of scripture confirms the idea that Azusa Street was a restorationist movement with the purpose of connecting the present with the past, with the implication that the reader is to contend in modern times to once again see what God did long ago. The first issue states the date, "September, 1906," it lists the location as Los Angeles, CA, and it is labeled volume 1, number 1. All these details are important for understanding that this is a new publication, detailing a new work of the Holy Spirit, in the City of Los Angeles. This is significantly different than if the publication was volume 112, published in Mississippi.⁴⁶⁷ Volume 1, number 1 could be the first and last issue, or it could be the first of many issues. At the time of publication, this would not have been known. The date is also important because it tells us this issue was published during Jim Crow segregation and it was published prior to Azusa Street sending our missionaries which would result in millions of people tracing their spiritual heritage back to Azusa Street. Lastly, the publication says, "Subscription Free." This is different than having a financial supporter (or multiple financial supporters) who may have some sort of

⁴⁶⁶ *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1.

⁴⁶⁷ Los Angeles can imply the "Wild West," dreams (because CA is where people went to chase their dreams of finding gold), or it can imply angels and spirituality (because "Los Angeles" means "the angels," or the "City of Angels.") Even today, people go to Los Angeles to pursue their dreams (especially if they have film aspirations).

corporate or profiteering agenda, but it does not exclude the possibility that the donors may have some sort of agenda.⁴⁶⁸

5.2. Community, Unity and Divine Love in *The Apostolic Faith*

The utopian community Seymour created at Azusa Street does not appear to exist (nor was it readily accepted) outside the Azusa Street Mission. This is evidenced by Parham's attempt to destroy the utopian community, as well as the first line of the first article of *The Apostolic Faith* which states, "The power of God now has this city agitated as never before."⁴⁶⁹ The article does not elaborate on who is agitated, or exactly why they are agitated, but agitating the city implies something rogue.⁴⁷⁰ Apparently not everyone was happy with the little slice of Heaven Seymour created at Azusa Street.

Although Seymour's theology on the first page of the first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* reflects Parham's belief that the evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues (because Seymour has not yet seen racists whites speaking in tongues), we can see glimmers of Seymour's own unique theology because the first page says this about divine love:

A Nazarene brother who received the baptism with the Holy Ghost in his own home in family worship, in trying to tell about it, said, "It was a baptism of love. Such abounding love! Such compassion seemed to almost kill me with its sweetness! People do not know what they are doing when they stand out against it. The devil never gave me a sweet thing, he was always trying to get me to censure people. This baptism fills us with divine love."⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁸ However, the bottom of the first page of the first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* claims there is such a spirit of "Pentecostal giving" that there is no need to ask for money.

⁴⁶⁹ "Pentecost Has Come," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1. It is interesting how this is the first sentence of the first issue.

⁴⁷⁰ Later on that page it does say the secular papers have been, "stirred."

⁴⁷¹ *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1.

It is interesting how the Nazarene brother's testimony contrasts sweetness with censuring people. This stands in sharp contrast with some leaders who routinely attempt to censure others over political or theological differences rather than manifest divine love towards their enemies.⁴⁷² Others seem to express similar sentiments. For example, Frank Bartleman, an eyewitness to the Azusa Street Revival, mentions the word, "sweet," eight times in his 1925 tract titled, "How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles: As It Was in the Beginning."⁴⁷³ He uses the word, "sweet," to describe worship, an exhortation in tongues, someone's personality (the Lord kept them sweet when they had a dispute with the neighbour over whose turn it was to drop the quarter in the gas meter), the spirit of a meeting, holiness (as opposed to the "self") and the face of an old German lady. In that tract, Bartleman mentions the word "unity" nine times, the phrase "love and unity" four times and the phrase "purity and unity" once.⁴⁷⁴ Although this tract is separate from *The Apostolic Faith* and was written approximately 19 years later, Bartleman is reflecting on what he remembers from Azusa Street, and the love, unity and sweetness he experienced at Azusa Street still had an impression on Bartleman after nearly two decades.

But how should these eyewitness accounts be interpreted theologically? One way to interpret these eyewitness accounts is to examine I Corinthians 12-14. Chapters 12 & 14 address spiritual gifts. But sandwiched between those two chapters is Chapter 13, which is the famous "love chapter" of the Bible (which is often quoted at weddings in the United States). These chapters suggest God is the source of all spiritual gifts and that all these gifts are expressions of God's love. As such, we should always use these gifts in a way that expresses a high level of

⁴⁷² By definition, to censure someone is to express either a severe or formal disapproval.

⁴⁷³ Frank Bartleman, "How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles: As It Was in the Beginning," 1925.

⁴⁷⁴ The nine times he mentions the word unity includes when they are mentioned in the phrase "love and unity" and the phrase "purity and unity," meaning that the word "unity" is mentioned four times in addition to the five times it is used in those two phrases.

love for both God and the people we are ministering to. Consider these verses from I Corinthians 13:4-5, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.” Verse 7 says, “[Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” In many ways, this summarizes Seymour’s life and ministry. He did not boast about his greatness, was not proud, did not dishonor others, did not seek personal gain and he kept no record of wrongs. Unlike contemporary “cancel culture” which is often legalistic and judgmental, Seymour patiently waited for God to work in someone’s life, and then Seymour accepted people who repented and became part of the Azusa Street community without holding their prior racism against them. The goal was to be transformed into the image of Christ and to realize God’s eschatological, utopian vision on earth.⁴⁷⁵

The significance of the Bible’s broad list of ways love could be expressed is significant for a study of Azusa Street because, Biblically, divine love could express itself as racial reconciliation, kind words, and other descriptors. This is also in alignment with the Biblical notion that God reconciled Himself to us through Christ and has now given us the ministry of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18), and consistent with how the New Testament says Christians

⁴⁷⁵ Galatians 5:22-23, the famous passage that talks about the fruit of the Spirit, is also an interesting study because much spiritual fruit was manifest at Azusa Street. Examples of this include divine love, patience towards those who were overcoming racism, joy and shouting, etc. The classical way of interpreting this passage is to consider all the fruit as varied expressions of the Spirit. But some scholars note the word “fruit” is singular in the original Greek and that textual inferences might suggest that the fruit of the Spirit is love and all the other virtues mentioned in that passage are varied expressions of that love. Although this is not a common interpretation, the idea of one fruit (i.e. love) is consistent with the Great Commandment, the writings of John, the writings of Paul, the idea of connecting the inner work of God to outward behaviors in James 2:17, and the philosophical idea that the New Testament probably doesn’t contain all the marvelous fruit the Holy Spirit could possibly manifest in someone’s life. This is because the “agape” love in Galatians 5:22-23 implies a prioritization of the needs of others, even if that requires self-sacrifice (because the prioritization of others is often implied in the definition of “agape” love). The point here is that the New Testament prioritizes love, but it gives no restrictions as to how that love is manifest. For those interested in some of the ways the Bible utilizes textual inferences and nuance, cf. John Kaltner, et al., *The Uncensored Bible: The Bawdy and Naughty Bits of the Good Book* (New York: HarperOne, 2008). (As a disclaimer, it is worth noting that in American English, “fruit” is often used for both the singular and plural form when the number of fruit is not countable. The Greek text may or may not infer something different.)

are supposed to speak (such as in I Corinthians 13, II Timothy 2:14 & 24, etc.). *The Apostolic Faith* seems to take this hermeneutical approach in a May, 1908 article titled, “Character and Work of the Holy Ghost”:

His character is love. If you find people that get a harsh spirit, and even talk in tongues in a harsh spirit, it is not the Holy Ghost talking. His utterances are in power and glory and with blessing and sweetness.... He is a meek and humble Spirit—not a harsh Spirit.... How sweet it is to have the Holy Ghost come to you and show you Jesus through the Word....⁴⁷⁶

Here, the editors of *The Apostolic Faith* emphasized the diverse manifestations of the Spirit and the connection between the Holy Spirit working within and without at the same time. Based on the New Testament’s prioritization of love and the varied ways love is manifest throughout the New Testament, one could reasonably argue that divine love could express itself in diverse ways, from speech, to attitudes to actions.

One other diverse way the theological concepts of community, unity and divine love might manifest themselves could be through intergenerational harmony and equality. For instance, the first page of the September, 1906 issue of *The Apostolic Faith* lists testimonies from the young and the old. The second to last paragraph says both an 83-year-old man and an 8-year-old orphan girl received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷⁷ Azusa Street was an interracial, intergenerational congregation that valued the equality of everyone, regardless of age, race or

⁴⁷⁶ “Character and Work of the Holy Ghost,” *The Apostolic Faith* (May 1908), number 13, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁷ This appears to coincide with Acts 2:17 (which is a quote of Joel 2:28 and a popular Azusa Street Scripture reference), which states that in the last days, God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh, “and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” One of the hallmarks of the last days is God pouring out His Spirit on everyone, regardless of age or gender.

gender.⁴⁷⁸ This is significant because it appears as though Seymour valued egalitarianism in its truest sense because he chose leaders based on their spiritual maturity, not their demographics.⁴⁷⁹

Theologically, the leaders of Azusa Street appear to justify this theology of unity, community and divine love by looking to many of the scripture passages mentioned earlier that address diverse peoples simultaneously worshipping God together in unity. This potentially conflicts with Jim Crow segregation and social norms, but Seymour gets away with this, partly because the revival occurred in Los Angeles (as opposed to a less diverse place which might have more strictly enforced segregation laws), and partly because of his theology. Today, Pentecostalism is sometimes considered a “restoration movement,” which means that early Pentecostal revivals like Azusa Street restored the work of the Holy Spirit that was described in the Book of Acts (and throughout the New Testament) but was “lost” somewhere in church history.⁴⁸⁰

But restorationism is not a new theological concept. Page 2 of the September, 1906 issue of *The Apostolic Faith* begins by defining The Apostolic Faith Movement, which is claims, “Stands for the restoration of the faith once delivered unto the saints—the old time religion, camp meetings, revivals, missions, street and prison work and Christian Unity everywhere.”⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁸ Interracial here refers to more than just blacks and whites. The very first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* references God working through a poor Mexican Indian. We know Latin peoples were involved at Azusa Street from primary sources and because many of them left the Assemblies of God in the 1920’s because the white people had all the power. Cf. *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 2; “A Dedicated Ministry Among Hispanics: Demetrio and Nellie Bazan,” *A/G Heritage* (Fall 1989): 9. For more information on early American Latino Pentecostalism, cf. Daniel Ramirez, *Migrating Faith: Pentecostalism in the United States and Mexico in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

⁴⁷⁹ A book exists which claims to contain testimonies from children who attended the Azusa Street Revival. However, the book is not viewed as authoritative because it cannot be corroborated. Cf. Tommy Welchel (narrator) in J. Edward Morris, *Azusa Street: They Told Me Their Stories* (Dare2Dream, 2006).

⁴⁸⁰ Both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal theologians frequently refer to Pentecostalism as a “restoration movement.” However, in recent years, some authors have questioned this notion because there is evidence of the Holy Spirit moving through the entire 2,000 years of church history. One author who wrote a popular book (as opposed to an academic book) about this topic was John Crowder, *Miracle Workers, Reformers, and the New Mystics* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image, 2006).

⁴⁸¹ “The Apostolic Faith Movement,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 2.

That same article later states, “‘Love, Faith, Unity’ are our watchwords.”⁴⁸² Although this definition appears to primarily reference more recent moves of the Holy Spirit, early Pentecostals’ repeated references to Joel 2:28 and the Book of Acts further solidifies their tendency to look to the past to justify the present. Possibly one theological difference might be the emphasis in *The Apostolic Faith* on people being filled with divine love as a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament emphasizes love, and early Christian communion gatherings were known for their love and even called “agape feasts,” but the New Testament does not repeatedly link the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with divine love in the same way *The Apostolic Faith* does. On the first two pages of the September, 1906 issue we see someone being filled with divine love as a result of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, the declaration that “Faith, Unity, Love” are the watchwords of the revival and a description of an interracial, intergenerational community saturated with burning excitement, female leaders, manifestations of the Spirit and a heart for missions. The Azusa Street community was special, and these first two pages outline its heartbeat and reveal that love, faith and unity are the glue that holds everything and everyone together.

Page 2 of the September, 1906 issue also contains an article titled, “The Precious Atonement,” by William Seymour. This writing is essentially a 4-point sermon, complete with both doctrine and scripture references. Near the end of the third paragraph, Seymour writes, “We are permitted to sit in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”⁴⁸³ Two paragraphs later, Seymour references the Garden of Eden which was, “pure and happy and knew no sickness.”⁴⁸⁴ Although casting the utopian vision was not necessarily the main purpose of the piece, by virtue of

⁴⁸² “The Apostolic Faith Movement,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 2.

⁴⁸³ “The Precious Atonement,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁴ “The Precious Atonement,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 2.

describing, “The Precious Atonement,” Seymour uses utopian language and imagery. Like many of Seymour’s writings, he talks extensively about Christ and the atonement in his theology. In many ways, this first writing is important in the sense that it establishes his theology is very Christ centered. His writings appear to frequently link Christ, the atonement and the Holy Spirit. This link is important for this thesis as Ken Archer suggests, “narrative theology will emphasize the priority of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its significance for the Christian community and the world,” because Jesus is at the center of God’s dramatic redemptive story.⁴⁸⁵ Seymour probably did not think in terms of narrative theology, but his views concerning the Holy Spirit were frequently linked to Christ and Christ’s purposes on the earth. Given early American Pentecostals’ emphasis on eschatology, the role of the Holy Spirit was also often linked to the Great Commission and there tended to be a sense of urgency to evangelize because Jesus was returning soon. This is in alignment with Pannenberg’s contention that what people thought was God’s future Kingdom was (and is) imminent—it is here now, earlier than expected.⁴⁸⁶ If, in fact, there will be no more sickness in Heaven, and if, in fact, we will live in unity, community and divine love, then Seymour’s use of the Holy Spirit to facilitate God’s Kingdom here on earth was unique because it was about so much more than just speaking in tongues—it is about imminently actualizing the future utopian ecclesiological community now. And for Seymour, that community is distinctly charismatic because the last paragraph of his article reads, “We that are the messengers of this atonement ought to preach all of it, justification, sanctification, healing, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and signs following. God is now confirming His word by granting signs and wonders to follow the preaching of the full gospel in Los Angeles.”⁴⁸⁷ This is also

⁴⁸⁵ Kenneth J. Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2011), 14-15.

⁴⁸⁶ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 51-71.

⁴⁸⁷ “The Precious Atonement,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 2.

distinct because, as was mentioned earlier, one of Parham's complaints was that the community involved too much "fanaticism."⁴⁸⁸

But were these allegations true? On the one hand, Seymour did allow more Holy Spirit activity than Parham. But does that warrant a claim of fanaticism? By definition, "fanaticism" is subjective. Even more confusing is the fact that fanaticism is accepted for certain political causes or sporting events. The difference is that political fanatics are often called protestors and sports fanatics are often called "fans." Unfortunately, religious fanaticism does not have a comparable favorable term and American culture does not view religious fans as favorably as sports fans. Based on some of the charismatic activity in the New Testament, one could argue Seymour did not promote fanaticism because Azusa Street did not contain testimonies of the dead being raised (like people being raised from the dead in both the Old and New Testaments), or handkerchiefs healing people (Acts 19:12), or people being healed because Seymour's shadow fell on them (Acts 5:15). In many ways, Azusa Street was fairly mild compared to the New Testament.

Also, as noted previously, Azusa Street actualized the New Testament commands to love one another. Not only is this unique (because churches in the United States are rarely known for their love), but Seymour's theology is unique because he accomplishes this through the power of the Holy Spirit. Consider this testimony from the first issue of *The Apostolic Faith*:

During the preaching service, the Holy Ghost fell on a preacher and he jumped to his feet shouting, "Hallelujah!" and immediately spoke in tongues.... The Lord has since used him to stir a whole city. He is filled with divine love. His family were first afraid to see him speaking in tongues, thinking he had lost his mind, but when his wife and children felt the sympathy and divine love which the Holy Ghost puts in peoples' hearts, they said, "Papa was never so sane in his life."⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁸ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 127; Sarah E. Parham, *The Life of Charles F. Parham* (Birmingham: Commercial Printing, 1977), 246, 302.

⁴⁸⁹ *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 2.

Compared to the approximately 22 times the word, “tongues,” is used on these first two pages, three instances of, “divine love,” and eight total occurrences of the word, “love,” (which includes divine love), may not seem like much.⁴⁹⁰ But the reality is that anything found on the first two pages of the inaugural issue is probably significant, and these eight occurrences may be enough to place love in contention to be one of the pillars of the Azusa Street culture. The instances where divine love is mentioned specifically, it is mentioned in two separate testimonies as a by-product of the Baptism in the Spirit and once in reference to the fact that it will never cease to exist, unlike prophecy, tongue and knowledge which will cease on the Day of the Lord. The linking of divine love to Spirit baptism is significant because it identifies divine love as a direct result of Spirit baptism. The fact that on page one we read, “This baptism fills us with divine love,” and on page two we read, “His wife and children felt the sympathy and divine love which the Holy Ghost puts in peoples’ hearts,” means that this type of love was both normal and expected from someone who had received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

Although *The Apostolic Faith* does not explicitly define “divine love,” the following words listed near divine love in the first two pages of the inaugural issue may serve as descriptors: abounding love, compassion, sweetness, sympathy and sane. Presumably people knew what divine love was, either from common knowledge or experience, and the presumption appears to be that divine love originated from God and exceeded the capabilities of natural, human love.⁴⁹¹ In light of the Galatians passage above, and in light of the discernment writers

⁴⁹⁰ I say approximately because a search of the PDF reveals 22 occurrences of the word, “tongues.” However, a search for, “divine love,” only occurs twice on the first two pages, but it is obvious there is a third occurrence because the last paragraph on page 2 mentions, “divine love,” twice. Since “divine love” is mentioned once on the first page, there appears to be three occurrences of the phrase, “divine love,” on the first two pages.

⁴⁹¹ On page 2 of the December, 1906 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, a section titled, “Counterfeits,” the Azusa Street community sometimes judged manifestations, to determine if the fruit was really genuine and from the

like Frank Bartleman had, maybe the audience could sense when things were said or done out of love.⁴⁹²

On page 3, the phrase, “divine love,” is mentioned for the fourth and final time in this first issue. This occurrence of divine love on page 3 is in context of I Corinthians 13:8 which states, “Love never fails.” This paragraph of *The Apostolic Faith* suggests prophecies, tongues and knowledge will all fail and will eventually be done away with on the Day of the Lord. But the one thing that will remain is love. This is significant because much of early Pentecostal theology is rooted in eschatology. Here, the belief that love transcends the natural realm and will last forever is what causes early American Pentecostals at Azusa Street to prioritize love as a cornerstone of their theology.

Even supernatural experiences are interpreted through the lens of love. For example, on page 3 of the first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* is an article titled, “No Bottom.” This article contains a story about a woman who experienced spiritual oppression in the form of overwhelming thoughts that she committed the unpardonable sin, that God hated her and that she should drown herself in a river. She fell asleep and dreamt she was on a boat where everyone but her were rejoicing. The captain told the pilot to, “Sound the depths and compare it to the love of God.” The depths were sounded and the pilot called back, “No bottom! No bottom!” The woman claims to have awoken in an ocean of God’s love.⁴⁹³

Holy Spirit. Cf. “Counterfeits,” *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906), number 4, p. 2. This practice continues today in Argentina, where some pastors (like Claudio Freidzon) trace their roots back to Azusa Street. From personal interviews, I can testify that sometimes in Argentina, if a Pentecostal pastor is not 100% sure if a manifestation or activity is not of the Spirit, they will err on the side of allowing the manifestation or activity to continue so as not to grieve the Spirit, but will examine the fruit later, to see if in fact that practice or manifestation bore spiritual fruit.

⁴⁹² Today, some seminaries offer doctoral classes on emotional intelligence which teach how to become aware of emotions and nonverbal communication (such as sensing love). Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, MN (United States) is one of the schools that offer doctoral level classes on emotional intelligence. I know this because I audited that class in Fall, 2021.

⁴⁹³ “No Bottom,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 3.

At Azusa Street, divine love is also connected to unity (presumably because divine love affected one's personal relationships). One such way this unity was exemplified was through the heavenly choir, which was when the Holy Spirit moved upon the entire congregation at once and people would sing a new song in harmony and in the Spirit, even though no one had previously been taught that song.⁴⁹⁴ This manifestation of divine love for God and for one another resulted in the congregation becoming simultaneously united with heaven and earth and so in tune with the Holy Spirit that the Spirit could flow over vocal chords and create new harmonized singing as a result. *The Apostolic Faith* describes these events like this:

Many have received the gift of singing as well as speaking in the inspiration of the Spirit. The Lord is giving new voices, he translates old songs into new tongues, he gives the music that is being sung by the angels and has a heavenly choir all singing the same heavenly song in harmony. It is beautiful music, no instruments are needed in the meetings.⁴⁹⁵

Frank Bartleman says this type of singing was, “the very breath of God, playing on human heart strings, or human vocal chords. The notes were wonderful in sweetness.”⁴⁹⁶ Durham says, “I never felt the power and glory that I felt in Azusa Street Mission, and when about twenty persons joined in singing the, “Heavenly Chorus,” it was the most ravishing and unearthly music that ever fell on mortal ears.”⁴⁹⁷ Based on these eyewitness accounts, the “Heavenly Chorus” appears

⁴⁹⁴ This still happens today in some congregations.

⁴⁹⁵ *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1. The New Testament Book of James, Chapter 3, talks about taming the tongue as being a sign of spiritual maturity. Although the heavenly choir is not what James had in mind, I wonder if there is a connection between corporate singing in the Spirit and having a congregation whose tongues are submitted to God. It is also worth noting in James 3:11, he asks if a fountain can send forth both sweet and bitter water. Although this is just an analogy totally unrelated to Azusa Street, it is interesting how James uses an analogy involving “sweet,” when that word was used by people like Frank Bartleman to describe the atmosphere at Azusa Street and one of *The Apostolic Faith* testimonies about divine love to describe the compassion of God.

⁴⁹⁶ Frank Bartleman, “How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles: As It Was in the Beginning,” 1925.

⁴⁹⁷ “A Chicago Evangelist’s Pentecost,” *The Apostolic Faith* (February-March 1907), number 6, p. 4.

to have symbolized the divine unity each individual had with God, the unity people had with each another and the unity the congregation as a whole had as the eschatological bride of Christ.

The October, 1906 issue of *The Apostolic Faith* has a single reference to divine love:

Before another issue of this paper, we look for Bro. Parham in Los Angeles, a brother who is full of divine love and whom the Lord raised up five years ago to spread this truth. He, with other workers, will hold union revival meetings in Los Angeles and then expects to go on to other towns and cities, and will appoint workers to fill the calls that shall come in. So begin to pray right away for revival in your neighborhood or town or city. Perhaps you need one in your own closet or at your family altar first. But expect great things from God. Begin to prepare for a revival and a great and deep revival too, and believe for it. It may cost you money and it may cost you humbling processes, but prepare for the Lord's coming.⁴⁹⁸

Describing Parham as being full of divine love is interesting because in just a short time Seymour will confront Parham over his seeming lack of divine love for minorities. It is unclear who wrote the previous quote, but since Seymour oversaw the publication, and since Seymour was one of the few people who could testify to Parham's divine love, it is presumable Seymour in some way approved of this declaration. However, it is unclear if Seymour felt Parham demonstrated divine love because of Parham's willingness and openness to mentor Seymour, whether it was because of Parham's tendency to push against existing laws and include minorities in his ministry whenever possible, or if this is a reflection of Seymour's current understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit because at this point, Seymour had not renounced speaking in tongues as the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This would not come until later. For now, what is interesting is how these early issues of *The Apostolic Faith* lay a theological foundation for divine love and how that ultimately sets up what this thesis calls the central conflict or ordeal.

⁴⁹⁸ "Praying for the Holy Ghost," *The Apostolic Faith* (October 1906), number 2, p. 3.

Another example of the relationship between divine love and unity appears in the November, 1906 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*. Here, a description is given of one attendee coming up to another, embracing him and crying, “I love you, I love you, my brother.”⁴⁹⁹ Although this event appears to have occurred in Denver, it exemplifies the brotherly love, unity and deepening connections within the early Pentecostal community. This is affirmed through testimonies and through what *The Apostolic Faith* explicitly states are the watchwords of the revival:

The Pacific Apostolic Faith Movement stands for the restoration of the faith once delivered unto the saints—the old time religion, camp meeting, revivals, missions, street and prison work and Christian unity everywhere.

We are not fighting men or churches, but seeking to displace dead forms and creeds or wild fanaticisms with living, practical Christianity. “Love, Faith, Unity,” is our watchword, and, “Victory through the Atoning blood,” our battle cry.⁵⁰⁰

These watchwords were so powerful that *The Apostolic Faith* often reads love into the Biblical texts. For example, this same issue of *The Apostolic Faith* contains a writing attributed to William Seymour. It is unclear if Seymour wrote this himself, or if someone transcribed this from a sermon or dictation he gave. (The same could be said about some of Seymour’s other contributions. Robeck suggests Clara Lum, as editor of *The Apostolic Faith*, may have printed these as excerpts of Seymour’s sermons.)⁵⁰¹ This particular teaching is about the woman at the well in John 4. Seymour says that during her encounter with Jesus, she received, “the well of salvation in her heart.... Her heart was so filled with love that she felt she could take in a whole

⁴⁹⁹ “Pentecost in Denver,” *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906), number 3, p. 1. This same page also describes cartoons of the Azusa Street meetings being placed in the newspapers.

⁵⁰⁰ *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906), number 3, p. 2.

⁵⁰¹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 116.

lost world.”⁵⁰² The woman at the well does this, because she becomes (presumably) the first evangelist to Samaria. According to Seymour’s interpretation of these events, part of what moved her heart to compassion for a lost world was the love that filled her heart—possibly from the “well of salvation,” that bubbled forth from her heart. Near the end of his sermon he states, “Above all, let us honour the blood of Jesus Christ every moment of our lives, and we will be sweet in our souls.”⁵⁰³ Again, there is a linking of sweetness to spirituality, but this time it is in reference to honouring the blood of Jesus in every moment of one’s life, rather than tying “sweetness” directly to the Holy Spirit.

One interesting aspect of Azusa Street theology is that Seymour’s emphasis on the atonement and the Holy Spirit often results in both being mentioned near one another. This might be because of how speaking in tongues was sometimes perceived as a missionary tongue. The first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* says, “Many are speaking in new tongues, and some are on their way to the foreign fields, with the gift of the language.”⁵⁰⁴ The evidence for viewing early American Pentecostalism as a missions movement is so strong that Allan Anderson wrote an entire book on this very topic.⁵⁰⁵ If this is true, Seymour’s theology integrates Spirit Baptism (which includes divine love) with the work of Christ on the cross (the atonement) and eschatology (because like many early American Pentecostals, Seymour believed Jesus was returning soon). What does this look like? Answer: it looked like God was giving missionary tongues so that people filled with the Spirit could travel to foreign lands and share the message of Jesus with urgency because Jesus was returning soon. However, when some of those

⁵⁰² W.J. Seymour, “River of Living Water,” *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906), number 3, p. 2.

⁵⁰³ *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906), number 3, p. 2.

⁵⁰⁴ *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1.

⁵⁰⁵ Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007).

missionaries arrived in a foreign field, they discovered their gift of tongues was useless, either because it was the wrong language, because it was unintelligible, or because the words that were spoken were not clearly communicating the gospel.⁵⁰⁶ This resulted in some pastors and missionaries adjusting their theology concerning the correlation between speaking in tongues and communicating the gospel to those who spoke foreign languages.

The notion of connecting Spirit Baptism, love and God's divine plan of salvation through the ages appears again in the November issue:

The object and end of all the precious Scripture is that a definite work may be wrought out in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. God's design through the ages and through all His work with the children of men, has been to implant His own nature—love, in a fallen race. Oh how sweet to feel the tender thrills of that love, going through every part of our being. This is real Bible salvation—not a mere theory or contention over different passages of scripture.⁵⁰⁷

Here it is once again apparent that Seymour believes love forms the foundation of all theology, and that real Bible salvation is love that manifests itself in all its forms. Some of that manifestation includes living in unity, community and divine love, and other manifestations include expressing our love for God by obeying His command to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth (which is known as the Great Commission). Another passage on that same page seems to affirm the idea that love is more foundational, and should even precede, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit when it states, "If we are sanctified and have clean hearts, living pure, holy lives and having perfect love in our souls, O, let us receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost."⁵⁰⁸ However, it is unclear if the reference to "perfect love," is a generic reference to love (or what is referred to

⁵⁰⁶ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 68.

⁵⁰⁷ "Bible Salvation," *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906), number 3, p. 4.

⁵⁰⁸ "Sanctification and Power," *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906), number 3, p. 4. There is another reference to "perfect love" in the February-March 1907 issue. Cf. *The Apostolic Faith* (February-March 1907), number 6, p. 5.

below as “pure love,”) or if it is a Wesleyan reference with specific theological meaning. But what is clear is the fact that Seymour has developed, and is developing, his own unique theology which was distinct from Parham’s.

This same page also contains a testimony, translated from Spanish, that reads, in part, “Through the grace of Almighty God and faith in Jesus Christ, I can testify to sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire of love in my heart. How good He has been to me....”⁵⁰⁹

This testimony is then followed by a brief section titled, “The Character of Love” that reads, in part:

It is sweet to have the promise of Jesus and the character of Jesus wrought out in our lives and hearts by the power of the Blood and the Holy Ghost, and to have that same love and that same meekness and humility manifested in our lives, for His character is love. Jesus was a man of love.... Yes, He was a man of love. He was the express image of the Father, God manifest in the flesh.

Dear loved ones, we must have that pure love that comes down from heaven, love that is willing to suffer loss, love that is not puffed up, not easily provoked, but gentle, meek and humble....⁵¹⁰

These passages highlight several things. First, I John 4:8 says God is love. In the quote above, Jesus was a man of love and it is through the shed blood of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit that the readers too can presumably experience that love. Second, the love is referred to as a pure love that comes down from heaven, and is defined as a love, “that is willing to suffer loss, love that is not puffed up, not easily provoked, but gentle, meek and humble.”⁵¹¹ The fact that this love is said to come down from Heaven implies that it is other-worldly, or “superhuman” as this thesis describes it. It is not a love that could naturally be found upon the earth, apart from

⁵⁰⁹ “Preaching to the Spanish” *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906), number 3, p. 4.

⁵¹⁰ “The Character of Love,” *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906), number 3, p. 4.

⁵¹¹ “The Character of Love,” *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906), number 3, p. 4.

God. Once again, it is worth noting the many descriptions of Seymour that use words like gentle, meek and humble. This is also consistent with Seymour's personality because the iconic description of Seymour is of him sitting at Azusa Street, praying with his head inside a milk crate.⁵¹² If the Azusa Street community considered humility to be a by-product of love, Seymour manifested the very love *The Apostolic Faith* talked about. This could possibly help confirm the hypothesis that the culture at Azusa Street was an extension of Seymour's personality and temperament (which is often the case with leadership culture).⁵¹³

Another important theological insight is contained in the December, 1906 issue which has small quote from *The Apostolic Light*. This quote is significant because it is one of the earliest times that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is explicitly connected to love and decoupled from speaking in tongues.

Those who receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost and speak in tongues and backslide from this state may retain the speaking in tongues for a while after divine love is gone, but gradually this gift also will melt away. A very little harshness or a criticism suspicious statement about a brother will grieve the tender, sensitive Spirit. A careful and constant guard must be made, lest the flesh arise and destroy the fragrance and sweetness of this Spirit walk...⁵¹⁴

⁵¹² Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington: Whitaker, 1982), 56.

⁵¹³ However, it is worth noting that even though Seymour was often described as extremely humble, the Azusa Street atmosphere itself was diverse because eyewitnesses describe both stillness and shouting. Mel Robeck quotes a newspaper reporter who described Seymour's preaching as, "a jumble of Scripture and shouting," and another person describing Seymour's preaching as yelling defiantly." Cf. Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 115-116.

⁵¹⁴ *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906), number 4, p. 4. It is this December, 1906 issue that states Parham is not the leader of Azusa Street. Also, *The Apostolic Faith* does not appear to reconcile the lack of harshness with Jesus cleansing the temple and overthrowing the moneychangers' tables (Matthew 21:12), nor does it address the times when Jesus calls people a, "Brood of Vipers," (Matthew 12:34, Matthew 23:33), nor does it address other profanities, insults or dirty jokes found in the Bible.

Another fascinating insight from this passage is the idea that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is still connected to speech, but rather than speaking in tongues, it is connected more with a lack of harshness and criticism.

In this same issue, Florence Crawford reports about a visit she took to San Francisco where she describes a, “sweet unity of the Spirit—testimony, healing, singing in the Holy Ghost, praying for the sick” Spirit Baptism, no confusion and a bridled tongue.⁵¹⁵ It is interesting how Crawford associates a bridled tongue with unity and Frank Bartleman associates a bridled tongue with love. When describing Azusa Street, Bartleman states, “Divine love was wonderfully manifest in the meetings. The people would not even allow an unkind word said against their opposers or the churches. The message was the love of God.... We seemed to live in a divine love...a sea of pure divine love.”⁵¹⁶ But this divine love was also associated with unity and community because at Azusa Street, no one lorded their leadership over one another. No matter their race, gender or age, all genuine, Spirit-filled people had equal standing and anyone was allowed to share, as the Spirit moved.⁵¹⁷ There was such spontaneity that the congregation would wait on God, and when He moved, and anointed someone for the message, that person would get up, whether they be a man, woman, child, black, white, Hispanic...it did not matter...everyone rejoiced that God was working.⁵¹⁸ However, one of the reasons for this equality may have been the fact that, “The original Azusa board of directors was made up of seven women and five men. Five of the women were white and two were black. Of the three men, two were white and one,

⁵¹⁵ Florence Crawford, “Later—Dec. 6th,” *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906), number 4, p. 4.

⁵¹⁶ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington: Whitaker, 1982), 51.

⁵¹⁷ D. William Faupel says it best when he states that if people did not accept Seymour’s doctrine, many believed in his sincerity. Cf. D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 201.

⁵¹⁸ Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, 58. This concept of not lording a position over a weaker person may be a reflection of Seymour’s personality and archetype. Cf. Rohr and Ebert, *The Enneagram*, 147.

Pastor Seymour, was black.”⁵¹⁹ Although the original leadership did not represent the Latinos, Asians, children or other groups who attended, it appears as though the board was diverse enough that no one group thought more highly of themselves than they ought. Azusa Street was unique in that the people valued the Spirit of God on a person more than someone’s physical characteristics. If God approved of someone, so did they. It was almost like in 2 Corinthians 5:16 when the Apostle Paul said that those who are in Christ do not know one another after the flesh anymore [but after the Spirit].

This theology was so important that the January, 1907 issue of *The Apostolic Faith* suggests love and unity are actually precursors to God working in power. This is a slightly different take than has been presented thus far. Until now, this thesis emphasized how Spirit Baptism can manifest itself as divine love working in and through a person. But here, *The Apostolic Faith* suggests the opposite is also true because as a community decides to live in love and unity, God will move in power:

If you want to see God work in power, see a people that are living in love and unity and harmony; but if the devil can get in and divide the people of God and sow dissention among them, then God cannot work. I have five fingers on my hand. One is a little one, but if I cut this little one, it will hurt the whole body. So the least member in the body is just as necessary as the greatest. (The greatest member is the most humble one.) Every Blood-washed soul is a member of the body. We cannot reject one without hurting the whole body. If you cut the little finger, it goes right to the heart and every member suffers.⁵²⁰

Even today, many Pentecostals emphasize how the Spirit not only changes us, but as we change ourselves, we attract more of the Spirit (almost like an aphrodisiac). In other words, if you want more of God, you do not have to wait for God to miraculously show up; rather, you can repent

⁵¹⁹ Eddie Hyatt, *Eyewitness Reports from the Azusa Street Revival* (Lake Mary: Creation House, 2006), 9.

⁵²⁰ *The Apostolic Faith* (January 1907), number 5, p. 4.

and seek the Lord because God is a rewarder of those who passionately seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). In the Bible, we see God showing up unexpected at times and God showing up in response to people seeking Him or asking Him to show up. People seeking God and God responding is a mutual demonstration of love. For Seymour, this is important because Jesus embodied love, and he believed one of the principle roles of the Spirit was to glorify Jesus. This line of thinking is contained in an article titled, “The Church Question”:

We do not have time to preach anything else but Christ. The Holy Spirit has not time to magnify anything else but the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Standing between the living and the dead, we need to so bear the dying body of our Lord, that people will only see Christ in us, and never get a chance to see self. We are simply a voice shouting, “Behold the Lamb of God!” When we commence shouting something else, then Christ will die in us. If Christ be lifted up, He will draw all men unto Him.⁵²¹

Although this might sound radical, Jesus did not come to condemn the world (John 3:17), but to reconcile the world unto God (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). As a result, sinners often felt comfortable sharing Jesus’s personal space even though Jesus had some harsh things to say about the religious leaders of His day. As a result, the Azusa Street congregation did not judge or condemn others either. Instead, they continually sought God, they repented and lived lives of holiness, and they sought to carry out the ministry of reconciliation they were called to (2 Corinthians 5:18). For Seymour, this meant the congregation was to manifest unity, community and divine love. Seymour believed this so much that he wrote an article where he stated, “Charity means Divine

⁵²¹ “The Church Question,” *The Apostolic Faith* (January 1907), number 5, p. 2. There is also a quote on that same page of *The Apostolic Faith* that suggests God filled the individual because of His great love. It is interesting to note how on more than one occasion in *The Apostolic Faith*, people say God kept them from fanaticism—the very same charge Parham leveled against Seymour.

love without which we will never be able to enter heaven. Gifts all will fail, but Divine love will last through all eternity.”⁵²²

This issue has several additional references to love. One of those references reads, “He has put an abiding love in my heart for Him and for my fellow man.”⁵²³ There is also a reference to a marvellous outpouring, “of God’s love and power.”⁵²⁴ This word choice, combined with the other references to love, seems to imply a connection between love and power, suggesting the two often (or maybe even always) appear in tandem.

The combined February-March, 1907 issue of *The Apostolic Faith* states that the Apostolic Faith Mission purchased the lot and buildings at 312 Azusa Street for \$15,000.⁵²⁵ The Azusa Street Mission went from a lease to a mortgage.⁵²⁶ The fact that there is a sentence that states, “Any friends wishing to have a share in buying this Mission for the Lord may send offerings to Bro. Reuben Clark, who is secretary of the board of trustees,” is noteworthy because of previous statements made about money, juxtaposed against the fact that the Azusa Street Mission experiences financial distress and failure in the end.⁵²⁷ This thesis is not about the theology of money at Azusa Street, but due to the way money and power intersect with the community and unity of the Mission (because this was the place where community and unity

⁵²² W.J.S., “Gifts of the Spirit,” *The Apostolic Faith* (January 1907), number 5, p. 2. In the May, 1908 issue, the emphasis is more on sanctification. Seymour’s theology was still developing at this time, but this could indicate Seymour’s theological drift towards emphasizing sanctification being a result of Spirit Baptism (which would include divine love), more than speaking in tongues alone.

⁵²³ J.G. Bourman, “A Business Man’s Testimony of Pentecost,” *The Apostolic Faith* (January 1907), number 5, p. 4.

⁵²⁴ T. Hezmalhaich, “Pentecost in Pueblo, Colo.,” *The Apostolic Faith* (January 1907), number 5, p. 4.

⁵²⁵ “The Purchase of the Azusa Mission,” *The Apostolic Faith* (February-March 1907), number 6, p. 2.

⁵²⁶ I have not researched the state of commercial leases in early 20th Century Los Angeles, nor have I reviewed the actual Azusa Street Mission lease or mortgage, so it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusions as to which one was better for them. But what was better is irrelevant, given that the building was going to be sold. If the Mission wanted to stay there, they needed to enter into a mortgage or raise enough money to pay cash.

⁵²⁷ “The Purchase of the Azusa Mission,” *The Apostolic Faith* (February-March 1907), number 6, p. 2. Cf. Alexander, *Black Fire*, 156.

occurred), and how the intersection between disunity and financial failings contributed to the demise of the revival, a brief observation of this point could be useful. In the September, 1906 issue (the inaugural issue) of *The Apostolic Faith* we are told:

When Pentecostal lines are struck, Pentecostal giving commences. Hundreds of dollars have been laid down for the sending of missionaries and thousands will be laid down. No collections are taken for rent, no begging for money. No man's silver or gold is coveted. The silver and the gold are His own to carry on His own work. He can also publish His own papers without asking for money or subscription price.⁵²⁸

This same issue also contains an article about a man hearing God's voice to give some wood to a T.W. McConnell. After that individual gave the wood, he prospered as never before.⁵²⁹ This is just one of many examples of how unity, community and divine love manifested itself through giving. What is noteworthy is that this giving does not appear to be coerced. *The Apostolic Faith* says this:

We start with not a cent in sight, but in the little upper room office above the mission on Azusa Street, we dropped on our knees and asked Him to send the means to publish the paper. In a short time, the money began to be sent in. No debt will be incurred. The paper will only be published as the money comes in advance.⁵³⁰

By February-March 1907, there is a notice that says, "We send out papers free, but free will offerings have come in to enable us to publish and send to all that ask for them."⁵³¹ This thesis does not address in detail *The Apostolic Faith's* theology of money, but these few examples highlight just one of many ways in which the Azusa Street community practically blessed one

⁵²⁸ *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1.

⁵²⁹ T.W.M., "Experience in Trusting God for Needs," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 4.

⁵³⁰ "The Lord Leads," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 4.

⁵³¹ *The Apostolic Faith* (February-March 1907), number 6, p. 2.

another, their community and the world through the financial support of missionaries. Money played an often-overlooked role at the revival, from Seymour marrying into money, to Seymour being able to support himself as a self-employed person, to Seymour losing his influence as a result of the mailing list and offerings being redirected to Portland, to the very end when his wife, Jennie Moore mortgages her house to try to save the mission (which was ultimately lost as a result of litigation and the City of Los Angeles razing the mission because it was a fire hazard).⁵³²

But in spite of their acceptance of donations, *The Apostolic Faith* appears to not have pressured people to give. The October to January 1908 issue addressed the question of, “Must people give up their property and have all things in common, order to receive the Pentecost?”⁵³³ The short answer is, “no,” and the paper goes on to provide one of the longest answers in the Q&A section. The fact that this question was asked in the Q&A section, which has limited space, and was given a length answer, implies money played an important role in the communal life of Azusa Street. Keeping the harmony with such a diverse crowd must have been no easy feat. The question that was asked appears to be a reference to the Book of Acts (such as Acts 2:44) where the early Christian believers had everything in common (i.e., they shared their possessions). However, at Azusa Street, sharing possessions was not required (implying that people could give as the Spirit led them). The tone at Azusa Street sounded more like I Corinthians 11 where Christian believers were supposed to come together in unity, regardless of social class and that

⁵³² Cf. Alexander, *Black Fire*, 156; Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 320; Larry E. Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William Seymour* (Joplin: Christian Life Books, 1999), 333.

⁵³³ “Questions Answered,” *The Apostolic Faith* (October to January 1908), number 11, p. 2. On page 2, this issue also confirms Archer’s description of early American Pentecostal hermeneutics when it says, “...searched the Scriptures and compared scripture with scripture.”

all should be treated equally, with special attention being paid to ensure the poor were not mistreated.⁵³⁴

How *The Apostolic Faith* viewed unity with God is also worth examining. The February-March, 1907 issue has an article titled, “Rebecca: Type of the Bride of Christ—Gen. 24.”⁵³⁵ In the United States, typology used to be taught more in Bible Schools (especially in the 20th Century), but today, typology is not generally taught (other than in passing) in many Bible Schools and seminaries. However, typology is related to archetype, both of which were important to early Pentecostal hermeneutics.⁵³⁶ However, typology is not an isolated literary tool. Rather, *The Apostolic Faith* is full of imagery. Some examples of this in the first few issues include saying the Holy Spirit brings, “the well of salvation and rivers of living waters,” and references to, “the ocean of God’s love.”⁵³⁷ This imagery is in alignment with the imagery used to describe the revival, such as the image of fire. These descriptors impacted people’s understanding of God. For example, when describing his hunger for more, Durham says, “Like all holiness people I have met, I kept praying for love, power, etc.... The first thing that impressed me was the love and unity that prevailed in the meeting, and the heavenly sweetness that filled the very air that I breathed.”⁵³⁸ He continues by talking about the glory and the unearthly music that seemed to come directly from Heaven before describing this result:

⁵³⁴ In the October to January 1908 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, a search for the word, “love,” comes back with 45 hits. “Unity,” comes back with 2 hits.

⁵³⁵ W.J.S., “Rebecca: Type of the Bride of Christ—Gen. 24,” *The Apostolic Faith* (February-March 1907), number 6, p. 2.

⁵³⁶ For more information about this, see the works of Ken Archer (some of which are referenced throughout this thesis).

⁵³⁷ W.J.S., “Rebecca: Type of the Bride of Christ—Gen. 24,” *The Apostolic Faith* (February-March 1907), number 6, p. 2; G.A. Cook, “Pentecostal Power in Indianapolis,” *The Apostolic Faith* (February-March 1907), number 6, p. 3.

⁵³⁸ W.H. Durham, “A Chicago Evangelist’s Pentecost,” *The Apostolic Faith* (February-March 1907), number 6, p. 4.

I had a depth of love and sweetness in my soul that I had never even dreamed of before, and a holy calm possessed me, and a holy joy and peace, that is deep and sweet beyond anything I have ever experienced before, even in the sanctified life....

Now just a word concerning Bro. Seymour, who is the leader of the movement under God: He is the meekest man I ever met. He walks and talks with God. His power is in his weakness. He seems to maintain a helpless dependence on God and is as simple-hearted as a little child, and at the same time is so filled with God that you feel the love and power every time you get near him.⁵³⁹

Some of the same words Durham uses to describe Seymour are the same words people would use to describe The Azusa Street Mission. The fact that similar words can be used to describe both Seymour and The Azusa Street Mission suggests that the culture at Azusa Street was really a reflection of Seymour and what was inside him. The clearest example of this is this quote from Durham because just as others had described the sweetness and love they felt from the Azusa Street atmosphere, Durham felt love and power just by getting near Seymour. This suggests that Azusa Street really did reflect Seymour, and it seems unlikely Azusa Street would have had the same spiritual culture without Seymour.⁵⁴⁰

Future issues of *The Apostolic Faith* continue to emphasize divine love. The April issue uses the word, “love,” 24 times and the May issues 22 times (some of those times it was used as part of a song). In the June to September issue, the concept of divine love is explained this way:

⁵³⁹ W.H. Durham, “A Chicago Evangelist’s Pentecost,” *The Apostolic Faith* (February-March 1907), number 6, p. 4. In the next story below this, a woman named Maggie Geddis states that as she arose from the floor (she apparently received the gift of tongues on the floor), “love, joy and peace...flooded her being.” She stated she was indeed a new creature. On page 8, this issue also has a reference to God’s, “divine sympathy and tender love.” This issue uses the word, “love,” 58 times, including words that contain love, such as, “beloved,” or, “cloven.”

⁵⁴⁰ In many ways, this is consistent with other parts of this thesis which argue that the work of God begins on the inside and then extends to others on the outside. I personally witnessed this in Argentina, when I met Evangelist Carlos Annacondia (who is reported to have led over 1 million people to Christ). When I first met Annacondia, I felt a level of love and compassion emanating from him that I had ever felt before. One of my friends said that when he heard Annacondia preach, he could not understand what he was saying (because my friend spoke English and Annacondia spoke Spanish). But tears began flowing down my friend’s face and all he could think was, “This must have been the compassion Jesus had.”

Many may start in this salvation, and yet if they do not watch and keep under the Blood, they will lose the Spirit of Jesus which is divine love, and have only gifts which will be as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, and sooner or later these will be taken away. If you want to live in the Spirit, live in the fruits of the Spirit every day.⁵⁴¹

This quote once again associates divine love with the nature of Christ. The above quote also places love in a superior position to the other gifts, like the Apostle Paul does in I Corinthians 13. Clearly, the Azusa Street community valued love above all the other spiritual gifts. This quote also explicitly links the fruit of the Spirit to living in the Spirit.

Understanding Seymour's theology of community, unity and divine love is important because in a few short years, Azusa Street will begin splitting—primarily along racial lines. Of course, the excuse some gave for splitting from Azusa Street was because of “theological” reasons. But why would Seymour die in obscurity, feeling a failure if all these people left with the gift of tongues?⁵⁴² As noted earlier, Seymour felt like a failure because the utopian community was fractured. Theologically, this meant people disband what Seymour perceived was Christ's nature and the foundation of the Christian living, which was divine love.

However, it is worth noting that at the height of the revival, divine love was present at both the Azusa Street Mission and other local missions. For example, in the September, 1907 issue, a woman is said to be, “truly anointed with power and divine love.”⁵⁴³ But the Scandinavian Apostolic Faith Mission on Wall Street in Los Angeles was also, “one of the sweetest places you ever were in. The people there are filled with the Spirit praising God. They

⁵⁴¹ *The Apostolic Faith* (June-September 1907), number 9, p. 2.

⁵⁴² Nelson, *For Such a Time As This*, 271-272.

⁵⁴³ *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1907), number 10, p. 1.

seem so sincere and full of divine love. There are a number of young men and women there that God has cleansed and filled with the Spirit.”⁵⁴⁴

Interestingly, in the June to September, 1907 issue, there is an open letter addressed, “To the Baptized Saints,” that reads, in part:

Tongues are one of the signs that go with every baptized person, but it is not the real evidence of the baptism in the everyday life. Your life must measure with the fruits of the Spirit. If you get angry, or speak evil, or backbite, I care not how many tongues you may have, you have not the baptism with the Holy Spirit. You have lost your salvation. You need the Blood in your soul.⁵⁴⁵

The above quote does not deny the initial physical evidence because tongues is one of the signs that go with every baptized person. But this passage suggests that the real evidence of Spirit Baptism is the fruit the believer bears, not how many tongues he or she speaks. This is confirmed in the Question and Answer section of the October to January 1908 issue:

What is the real evidence that a man or woman has received the baptism with the Holy Ghost? Answer: Divine love, which is charity. Charity is the Spirit of Jesus. They will have the fruits of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” This is the real Bible evidence in their daily walk and conversion; and the outward manifestations; speaking in tongues and the signs following: casting out devils, laying hands on the sick and the sick being healed, and the love of God for souls increasing in their hearts.⁵⁴⁶

Here, *The Apostolic Faith* makes it explicitly clear that the real evidence that a man or woman has received the baptism with the Holy Spirit is divine love. However, this passage also links

⁵⁴⁴ *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1907), number 10, p. 1. “Love” and its variants is mentioned 47 times in this issue. Twice the word love is linked with “harmony.” There is also a bridal metaphor, or the notion that we are spiritually married with Christ. (This metaphor occurred previously.) There is a section titled, “The Love of Jesus,” and later, a condemnation of freeloivism—maybe Seymour would not have made a good hippie after all!

⁵⁴⁵ “To the Baptized Saints,” *The Apostolic Faith* (June-September 1907), number 9, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁶ “Questions Answered,” *The Apostolic Faith* (October-January 1908), number 11, p. 2.

divine love, the fruit of the Spirit, a sanctified life, speaking in tongues, signs and wonders, deliverance, healing and evangelism because the passage seems to suggest that this is how the Bible describes the Christian life. As a restoration movement, the Azusa Street Revival attempted to restore this New Testament model of Christian living which some have lost. This passage seems to also confirm an observation of this thesis which is that Seymour based much of his theology on his Christology (as opposed to his Pneumatology as some might presume).⁵⁴⁷

The Apostolic Faith further expounds on the link between Christology and Pneumatology in the May, 1908 issue under the title, “Character and Work of the Holy Ghost”:

His character is love. If you find people that get a harsh spirit, and even talk in tongues in a harsh spirit, it is not the Holy Ghost talking. His utterances are in power and glory and with blessing and sweetness.... He is a meek and humble Spirit—not a harsh Spirit.... How sweet it is to have the Holy Ghost come to you and show you Jesus through the Word....⁵⁴⁸

However, a further distinction is made under the article titled, “The Holy Ghost is Power”:

There is a great difference between a sanctified person and one that is baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire. A sanctified person is cleansed and filled with divine love, but the one that is baptized with the Holy Ghost has the power of God on his soul and has power with God and men, power over all the kingdoms of Satan and over all his emissaries....⁵⁴⁹

Here, Seymour seems to distinguish between sanctification and Spirit Baptism and he adds a “power” dynamic to speaking in tongues. However, this distinction may have not been as clear cut as the previous quote suggests because on page 3 we read:

⁵⁴⁷ On several occasions, Paul mentions how he emphasizes the work of Christ in his life and ministry (especially in I Corinthians).

⁵⁴⁸ “Character and Work of the Holy Ghost,” *The Apostolic Faith* (May 1908), number 13, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁹ “The Holy Ghost is Power,” *The Apostolic Faith* (May 1908), number 13, p. 3.

The Pentecostal power, when you sum it all up, is just more of God's love. If it does not bring more love, it is simply a counterfeit. Pentecost means to live right in the 13th chapter of the First Corinthians, which is the standard. When you live there, you have no trouble to keep salvation. This is Bible religion. It is not a manufactured religion. Pentecost makes us love Jesus more and love our brothers more. It brings us all into one common family....⁵⁵⁰

Here, Pentecostal power is clearly linked to God's love (which is manifest in Christ's work according to John 3:16 and is an outflow of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23).

According to *The Apostolic Faith*, Pentecostal power is like a superpower that helps us love more. It is interesting how pastors from certain historically white Pentecostal denominations sometimes refer to the "dunamis" power in Acts 1:8 as a sort of spiritual "dynamite" that equips people for evangelism or signs and wonders; but here, *The Apostolic Faith* connects Pentecostal power with love.

How does one get this power? According to an article titled, "Tarry in One Accord," one can seemingly accelerate receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit by becoming sanctified and being in one accord with other believers. The following quote suggests sanctification is separate from Spirit Baptism and that there are things people can do to facilitate Spirit Baptism:

O may every child of God seek his real personal Pentecost, stop quibbling and come to the standard that Jesus laid down for us in Acts 2: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Glory to God! O beloved, if you wait on God for this baptism of the Holy Ghost just now, and can get two or three people together that are sanctified through the Blood of Christ, and all get into one accord, God will send the baptism of the Holy Ghost upon your souls as the rain falls from heaven. You may not have a preacher to come to you and preach the doctrine of the Holy Ghost and fire, but you can obey Jesus' saying in the passage, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."⁵⁵¹

⁵⁵⁰ *The Apostolic Faith* (May 1908), number 13, p. 3.

⁵⁵¹ "Tarry in One Accord," *The Apostolic Faith* (May 1908), number 13, p. 3.

Seymour's theology of unity and community appears to have been rooted, in part, to the fact that the New Testament believers in Acts 2 were gathered together, in one accord, seeking the Holy Spirit. This also echoes John 17:20-21 where Jesus prays that his disciples and all who will one day follow Him will be one. It is interesting how once again Seymour appears to anchor his theology on the Bible and his Christology because he focuses on the Biblical concept of unity and then contrasts the work of the Spirit with the works of the flesh (like Paul in the Book of Galatians).⁵⁵² Although this passage does this minimally (with the word "quibbling"), it more explicitly does so with the word "sanctification" and most explicitly in some of the passages mentioned above. This is unique because in the 21st Century, some Pentecostal preachers tend to anchor certain aspects of their theology more on their Pneumatology than on the Biblical text or theological concepts like sanctification. It is unclear if this is because in the past 100 years a more robust Pneumatology has emerged, or if this is a theological preference. But Seymour was always cognizant of the Bible and he appears to have made a good faith effort to faithfully model his understanding of Christian living after the Bible. The two biggest advantages of this approach are that it is Biblically based and that it allows the church to facilitate high levels of equality and social justice without falling into certain cultural traps which might be more politically motivated than Biblically motivated. Although some might have viewed Seymour as fanatical in his day, if Azusa Street were to happen today, the work of the Holy Spirit could provide a solution to some of the equality and social justice issues 21st Century America longs for. Such an interpretation is consistent with those who suggest the Good News should not only be defended, but also offensive (similar to a sports team's offense) in the sense that the Gospel does provide

⁵⁵² The opposite of community (such as division, discord or hate) can shut off the flow of the Spirit both in an individual's life and in the congregation's life.

meaningful and powerful solutions to society's challenges.⁵⁵³ But continuing to develop a more robust Pneumatology beyond Azusa Street is also consistent with how Seymour's understanding of the Spirit appears to have continued to develop throughout his life.⁵⁵⁴

But how can contemporary Charismatic leaders positively impact their city with the Good News? For Seymour, impacting our city (and the whole earth) starts internally and moves externally:

If men and women today will consecrate themselves to God, and get their hands and feet and eyes and affections, body and soul, all sanctified, how the Holy Ghost will use such people. He will find pure channels to flow through, sanctified avenues for His power. People will be saved, sanctified, healed and baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost comes through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by faith in His word. In order to receive it, we must first be sanctified. Then we can become His witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth....⁵⁵⁵

According to this quote, Seymour believed Holy Spirit power came upon someone after they were sanctified, for the purpose of expanding God's Kingdom. Seymour also believed that love takes supremacy over all other spiritual manifestations. This love begins with love for God, rooted in Christ's atoning work, and extends to all we meet. This love is ever "filling" us, unlike some (often Eastern) religions, which suggest the secret to spiritual success is emptying oneself. For the Christian, God is the source of all things, and the New Testament commands us to continually be filled with the things of God so that we can bless others and then continually be

⁵⁵³ Cf. Christopher W. Brooks, *Urban Apologetics: Why the Gospel is Good News for the City* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014).

⁵⁵⁴ This thesis discusses how Seymour's theology developed as he travelled around the country and how it continued to develop to the point where in 1915 he renounced speaking in tongues as the evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Cf. William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission* (Joplin: Christian Life, 2000), 48.

⁵⁵⁵ W.J.S., "The Holy Ghost Flows Through Pure Channels," *The Apostolic Faith* (May 1908), number 13, p. 3.

refilled. We truly are a channel for God to carry out His will upon the earth, but this constant infilling creates a “stream of living water” that flows through us, like a garden hose watering a garden. As a result, God’s love fills us and causes a sweetness, both in word and deed. The corporate manifestation of this love is unity and community. Seymour says, “The Lord never revoked the commission He gave to His disciples: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead,” and He is going to perform these things if He can get a people in unity.”⁵⁵⁶ For Seymour, sanctification and Spirit Baptism were personal spiritual experiences that had communal impact and global impact because of its endowment of heavenly authority.⁵⁵⁷ These ideas are further expounded upon in an article titled, “The Baptism of the Holy Ghost,” which reads, in part:

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” O beloved, there is where the secret is: **one accord, one place, one heart, one soul, one mind, one prayer.** If God can get a people anywhere in one accord and in one place, of one heart, mind and soul, believing for this great power, it will fall and Pentecostal results will follow. Glory to God!

Apostolic Faith doctrine means one accord, one soul, one heart. May God help every child of His to live in Jesus’ prayer: “That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee; that they all may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” Praise God! O how the heart cries out to God in these days that He would make every child of His see the necessity of living in the 17th chapter of John, that we may be one in the body of Christ, as Jesus has prayed.

When we are sanctified through the truth, then we are one in Christ, and we can get into one accord for the gift or power of the Holy Ghost, and God will come in like a rushing mighty wind and fill every heart with the power of the Holy Spirit. Glory to His holy name. Bless God! O how I praise Him for this wonderful salvation that is spreading over this great earth. The baptism of the Holy Ghost brings the glory of God to our hearts.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁶ *The Apostolic Faith* (May 1908), number 13, p. 3. Also, it is rumored Argentine Evangelist Carlos Annacondia (who is reported to have led over 1 million people to Christ), will not hold an evangelistic campaign in a town where the pastors are not unified. Annacondia is known for having a powerful deliverance ministry, and he feels unity is one of the secrets to seeing so many people saved and delivered. Annacondia also believes God told him, “Love for the lost produces revival.” Cf. Carlos Annacondia, *Listen to Me, Satan!* (Lake Mary: Creation House, 1998), 29.

⁵⁵⁷ W.J.S., “The Holy Spirit: Bishop of the Church,” *The Apostolic Faith* (June-September 1907), number 9, p. 2.

⁵⁵⁸ “The Baptism of the Holy Ghost,” *The Apostolic Faith* (May 1908), number 13, p. 3.

What is the secret to the Azusa Street Mission? The answer is unity. Something powerful happens when a group of people unite, petitioning Heaven. As long as there was unity at Azusa Street, there was Pentecostal power. When there was disunity, dystopia set in. Unity = Utopia. Disunity = Dystopia. From a story perspective, it is important to keep this in mind because the central conflict was fought over the identity and spiritual practices of the community of believers gathered at Azusa Street, and whoever led the Azusa Street community would have significant influence on those things. Parham would have led the community into dystopia; Seymour would have led the community into utopia. But the irony is that both Seymour and Parham thought they were doing what was right, so in a sense, they were both trying to lead the Azusa Street community into their respective versions of utopia. But when Seymour took full control over Azusa Street, he also took full theological control. Those who wanted to emphasize other theological distinctives ultimately split from Azusa Street and formed their own denominations (which ironically were formed primarily along racial lines).

5.3 The Rational William Seymour

This thesis does not fully explore the depths of Seymour's personality, but Seymour's probable archetype is likely known for rationality.⁵⁵⁹ This might seem ironic given that Seymour had very little formal education. However, establishing Seymour as an authoritative leadership figure requires us to reconcile his lack of formal education with what appears to be a rather robust theology. The previous section detailed a fairly well thought out and articulate theology. But given his lack of formal education, should Seymour be taken seriously? Should we overlook

⁵⁵⁹ Rohr and Ebert, *The Enneagram*, 148. Rohr and Ebert suggest this is a coping mechanism for avoiding pain.

Seymour and credit the Holy Spirit for the theological views at Azusa Street since Seymour was uneducated? Or do we acknowledge that Seymour's theology was quite impressive, given his lack of formal education? Answering these questions is important to understanding Seymour's leadership and making decisions concerning how authoritative his theology is for Charismatic leadership today. Although it can be difficult to provide answers with absolute certitude, we can examine historical examples where Seymour demonstrates rationality and take a soft rationalist approach about subjecting the historical record to some sort of rational assessment that can help us assess whether Seymour was more likely than not to be rational. To accomplish this, let us consider three instances where Seymour appears to have demonstrated rationality.

First, while Seymour was in Indianapolis, Robeck suggests Seymour was an active and independent thinker. Examples of this include: Seymour leaving the Methodist church because Seymour believed in Premillennialism, and because Seymour gave value to "special revelations."⁵⁶⁰ Robeck suggests the same pattern occurred when Seymour left Daniel Warner and the Evening Light Saints because, "Seymour did not share Warner's commitment to the amillennial position on the Second Coming, and like the Methodists, Warner was not a fan of special 'revelation' in the form of dreams and visions. Seymour had obviously been influenced by another source, most likely from nearby Cincinnati."⁵⁶¹ Robeck's analysis seems to suggest Seymour actively engaged his mind in critical analysis by analyzing and drawing from multiple sources when developing his theology. Seymour's ability to draw from others and develop his own unique theology supports Robeck's contention that, "What was happening at Azusa Street was new. There were no recent books that gave instructions on how to establish a Pentecostal

⁵⁶⁰ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 28-29.

⁵⁶¹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 31.

church or how to lead and disciple Pentecostal believers.”⁵⁶² Developing something new set Seymour apart and revealed his ability to think actively and independently from those around him. This leads into the next point:

The second reason why Seymour may have operated from a foundation of rationality is because Seymour’s theology appears to have developed as he travelled around the country and was exposed to new ideas. Even Robeck acknowledges Seymour may have been, “exposed to a world that may ultimately have proven broader than,” that of some of Seymour’s mentors (some of whom were influential leaders in their day).⁵⁶³ Seymour seems to be able to coalesce these theological pieces, combine them with his existing worldview (some of which came from his experiences in Louisiana, including his exposure to Hoodoo), and emerge with something new and different at Azusa Street. This says something about Seymour and his mental abilities. Not only did Seymour seek out diverse viewpoints, but he was somehow, without much formal education, able to coalesce and refine these diverse viewpoints into a meaningful, coherent theology. Even more amazing is that some of the ministry practices and theology Seymour implemented and taught survived the challenges of their day and still exists today. This is a testimony to the rationality and theological soundness of at least some of Seymour’s theology and practice.

Third, Seymour’s writings appear rational. As noted previously, Seymour may have had an editor that smoothed things out for him, but Seymour would have likely had to approve of those edits. But even if an editor smoothed things out, when *The Apostolic Faith* writes out what could be some of Seymour’s sermons, they all sound very logical, coherent and rational. If those are in fact sermons, they may confirm Seymour’s organizational skills and ability to effectively

⁵⁶² Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 110.

⁵⁶³ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 39.

communicate theological truths in a rational way. Take for instance his first contribution to *The Apostolic Faith* in September, 1906 titled, “The Precious Atonement.”⁵⁶⁴ This writing is essentially a 4-point sermon, complete with both doctrine and scripture references. Although someone might not agree with the teaching, the teaching itself is presented very rationally and in an organized way. It even uses the words, “first, second, third [and] fourth,” to clearly outline Seymour’s points. Seymour also sounds rational in the writings contained in *The Apostolic Faith* that are attributed to him. He rarely veers off point and rarely talks about himself—most of his illustrations are from the Bible, or are testimonial in some way. Robeck suggests this might have been part of Seymour’s nature when he says, “While Pastor Seymour valued spontaneous actions as possible interventions of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the revival, he was also convinced of the value of planning.”⁵⁶⁵ Robeck goes on to give a number of additional examples supporting his hypothesis.

Although this section is brief and relies on limited examples, the examples given, plus the fact that there are no writings which suggest Seymour was not rational, it is likely more probable than not that Seymour was very rational in his thought process. This probability is important because it helps establish the case that Seymour did in fact make a significant leadership contribution to Azusa Street and that his theology can, and possibly should, be taken seriously by Charismatic leaders today.

5.4 The Comedic & Emotionally Intelligent William Seymour

Some of the previous eyewitness accounts claim Azusa Street was a place of shouting, excitement and joy, and many testimonies exist which paint Seymour as a very jovial

⁵⁶⁴ W.J. Seymour, “The Precious Atonement,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 2.

⁵⁶⁵ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 96.

individual.⁵⁶⁶ Given his excessive weight, his personality and his stewarding of the supernatural, Seymour was sort-of a Santa Clause figure. In terms of leadership (and emotional intelligence), his personality, likability and ability to relate to people may have been often overlooked keys to Seymour's success. This thesis does not focus on emotional intelligence because this concept is new, and imposing this upon Seymour could result in proof texting and anachronism. However, Seymour's ability to effectively lead people, the fact that people said so many positive things said about his personality and likeability and the fact that people were attracted to him suggests he possessed a high degree of emotional intelligence. This thesis would be remiss not to at least mention this because the most effective ministries are often led by emotionally healthy leaders who possess a high degree of emotional intelligence.⁵⁶⁷ Although speculative, it seems more likely than not that Seymour's ability to foster community, unity and divine love at Azusa Street stemmed from his ability to foster those things in his own life. How could he teach others to do something he himself could not do? Although Seymour's emotional intelligence is rarely, if ever discussed by scholars, this could have been a more significant factor to his success than his theology because in his day people were not always certain about his theology. But what they were certain about was the atmosphere of Azusa Street, the impression William Seymour left on

⁵⁶⁶ ““Holy Kickers’ Baffle Police: Hold High Carnival In Azusa Street Until Midnight,” *Los Angeles Times* (1886–1922), July 12, 1906; ProQuest Historical Newspapers–Los Angeles Times (1886–1922), I13; Douglas J. Nelson, *For Such a Time As This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, England, 1981), 200. Ken Archer suggests Azusa Street was like, “The travelling circus sideshows, living on the margins of society and presenting to those who ventured into their tents an electrifying vision of Pentecost revisited.” Cf. Ken Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2009), 97.

⁵⁶⁷ In the United States, there appears to be an ever increasing amount of research and literature emerging supporting the claim that emotional intelligence is really the key to success. In the past several years, literature concerning cultural intelligence, spiritual intelligence and a host of other “intelligences” have emerged. Cf. Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003) for more information for an argument about why spiritual health and emotional health might be so intertwined that they are inseparable; Daniel Goleman, “What Makes a Leader?” *Harvard Business Review*, 76 (6), 93–102; Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* (New York: Bantam, 1995).

them and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁶⁸ These things transcend intellectual arguments and are arguably what made Seymour successful (because people tend to flock to these intangible, transformative things as opposed to flocking to the most brilliant theologians). Even today, one could argue that a reconciliation approach that involves emotional intelligence and love might be more beneficial than some of the current intersectional theories which presumes certain groups of people are oppressors. This animosity has a tendency to cause further divisions whereas Seymour's approach resulted in more unity, community and divine love.

5.5 Q v j g t U e j q n c t u ø T g h n g e v k q p u

Up to this point, this chapter has primarily highlighted quotes from *The Apostolic Faith* since that is a primary source. However, many scholars have provided their own commentaries on early Pentecostal writings, such as *The Apostolic Faith*. Some of these insights provide new perspectives and could enrich our understanding of Seymour's theology. This section will briefly highlight four scholars' reflections on Seymour's theology. These scholars include Curtiss DeYoung, Douglas Nelson, Mel Robeck and Estrelida Alexander.

5.5.1 Curtiss DeYoung

Curtiss DeYoung, a respected racial reconciliation expert in the United States, when commenting on Seymour's emergence out of the Church of God (Anderson, IN) states:

Seymour got his early theological training among African American leaders in the Church of God. The primary emphasis of the Church of God movement at that point was unity. So, he brought his theological emphasis of unity with him into his Pentecostal experience. It shaped the way he understood Pentecostalism (which differed from others because of the reconciliation focus). What Seymour got from Parham was an addition to

⁵⁶⁸ This thesis has presented many eyewitness accounts that testified to all these things.

his [existing] theology—speaking in tongues. He otherwise would have had gained from the Church of God an appreciation for sanctification as a second work of grace and other aspects of Holiness theology. The Church of God did have a rather unique perspective for Holiness churches in the late 1800s/early 1900s, since they saw holiness and unity as linked. They understood sanctification in relational terms. When one was sanctified, he or she could love others more perfectly. The ability to love more perfectly led to racial reconciliation.⁵⁶⁹

DeYoung believes Seymour added speaking in tongues to his existing theology, which was a relational theology, built around the concept that loving more perfectly would lead to reconciliation (and ultimately utopia). This historical context could potentially shed light on why Seymour prioritized unity, community and divine love above merely speaking in tongues alone. By adding speaking in tongues to his existing theology, Seymour could have easily removed speaking in tongues from his existing theology, which he sort of did in the form of changing his opinion about whether or not the evidence of Spirit Baptism was speaking in tongues.

DeYoung further elaborates his position by stating that when Seymour began his involvement with the Church of God (where Seymour was ordained) in Cincinnati, Ohio, at the turn of the twentieth century, “he embraced their message of holiness and traveled with other Church of God ministers preaching about reconciliation.”⁵⁷⁰ DeYoung emphasizes that, when Seymour learned of the white Holiness preacher, Charles Parham, it was only then that Seymour attended a ten-week training course offered by Parham where he became convinced, “of the importance of speaking in tongues as the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁷¹ (Due to

⁵⁶⁹ Personal e-mail from Curtiss DeYoung, February 13, 2010. It is generally uncommon to quote references in academic material which others cannot verify, so I have attached this email as an appendix. This source is important, due to DeYoung’s expertise in racial reconciliation in the United States. Also, it is worth noting that John Wesley, in Sermon 39 titled, “Catholic Spirit,” talks about the “royal law.” Wesley says that above all, the catholic spirit involves a union with a congregation fearing God and working righteousness.

⁵⁷⁰ Curtiss DeYoung, et. al. *United By Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 56.

⁵⁷¹ DeYoung, *United By Faith*, 57. Also, it should be pointed out that Robeck believes Seymour studied under Parham for six weeks (possibly because he left for Los Angeles?) See: Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 4.

Parham's racism, and local laws, Seymour was only allowed to sit outside the door of the room and listen to Parham's teachings.)⁵⁷²

Concerning Wesley's beliefs regarding race, DeYoung believes one way of interpreting Wesley's beliefs could be, "love more perfectly and racism will go away."⁵⁷³ Although Wesley's followers sometimes struggled to achieve this, Seymour actualized this utopian ideal via Spirit Baptism. DeYoung believes one of the many possible reasons why Wesley's ideal was never materialized amongst his followers was due in part to the complexities of the race situation in the United States, particularly due to racialization, which is the concept that every social structure is impacted by race.⁵⁷⁴ This might be true, but Seymour never blamed the social structures of his day. Instead, Seymour took a more spiritual approach and primarily emphasized what he felt was the solution to racism which was a transformed heart through sanctification. What set Seymour apart was his ability to have success when, despite their best efforts to reduce racism, Wesley and other white leaders could not overcome the systemic nature of racism in the church and in society by their teachings alone because racism had permeated too deeply into the fabric of the nation.⁵⁷⁵ Seymour's solution was to rely on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit and he

⁵⁷² DeYoung, *United By Faith*, 57. Roberts Liardon suggests Seymour actually had to sit outside the window and listen, and was only allowed into the hallway on rainy days. The interesting part about Seymour is that he was illiterate, and apparently taught himself to read by reading the Bible. Yet, he somehow managed to be able to recite Parham's teachings word-for-word. This may have been an asset deposited into his life by the black oral culture. Roberts Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image, 2006), 92; Larry Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William Seymour* (Joplin: Christian Life Books, 1999), 67-68.

⁵⁷³ DeYoung, Class Lecture, July 23-27, 2001. This class lecture is the only lecture cited in this thesis. Under normal circumstances, a lecture would not be cited, but due to DeYoung's expertise in racial reconciliation, and due to the fact that as a non-Pentecostal, he may never write about these things, I chose to cite him. Lecture notes are available, upon request.

⁵⁷⁴ DeYoung, Class Lecture, July 23-27, 2001.

⁵⁷⁵ Further compounding the issue is the phenomenon in America of racism within the black community. Historically, the lighter one's skin and the straighter one's hair, the more opportunities that person had, and the more likely they were to be accepted amongst whites. Cf. Kathy Russell-Cole, et. al., *The Color Complex: The Politics of Skin Color in a New Millennium* (New York: Anchor, 2013).

felt Spirit Baptism (built on a foundation of sanctification, divine love and a desire for unity) was one way to achieve that.

DeYoung's work provides some valuable historical context. This thesis builds upon DeYoung's analysis and suggests Seymour picked up where existing sanctification and holiness teachings fell short and used Spirit Baptism as a vehicle for superhuman transformation. However, in light of DeYoung's analysis of existing social structures, Seymour may have also benefitted from something many successful ministers benefit from, which is a favorable cultural, socio-political and historical context. Revivals do not exist in vacuums. Azusa Street was unique because it took place in a multicultural urban setting where the laws were not as strict as in some parts of the country. Those social factors, combined with the supernatural empowerment by the Holy Spirit, may have created favorable conditions for racial reconciliation that did not exist in some parts of the country.

The historical record seems to support this because in Los Angeles, African Americans were not only were integrated into the life of the city, but they also held some government positions and served as professionals—doctors, dentists, lawyers—even as “deputy assessor and tax collector” of the City of Los Angeles.⁵⁷⁶ Los Angeles was spiritually, culturally and professionally a place where someone like Seymour could succeed, and Seymour seized that opportunity. Along his journey, Seymour met many people who had a hunger for the things of God. The same was true in Los Angeles, when Seymour became acquainted with people like Pastor Smale, who had been to Wales, and who had the same hunger for revival as Seymour. Los Angeles was unique spiritually because of the significant population of people who were already

⁵⁷⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 56.

praying for the same things Seymour was.⁵⁷⁷ Frank Bartleman's eyewitness account provides insight into some of the different pastors and congregations throughout Los Angeles who were praying for revival before Seymour arrived. Azusa Street definitely did not exist in a vacuum, and it had support from various pastors and congregations throughout the city. This is important because, even though this thesis focuses on unity that existed inside the Azusa Street congregation, there was unity outside the congregation, with certain pastors and other congregations that were praying for revival, that supported Azusa Street and whose parishioners sometimes attended Azusa Street meetings.

5.5.2 Douglas Nelson

Nelson concurs with DeYoung's basic premise. According to Nelson:

Seymour embodied the pivotal black Christian belief forged during 250 years of slavery—there must be no color line in the church of Jesus Christ. His greatness lay in demonstrating the significance of glossolalia when united with the social vision of black experience, giving the church and world a unique historical opportunity for genuine racial and social healing across all divisions.

The color line, most serious global problem of the 20th century, was overcome by Seymour, producing peaceful revolutionary power to transform church and society. Tragically, white leaders retained glossolalia but disregarded the new human equality in favor of traditional white racial attitudes, dividing the movement and crippling its profound social impact.⁵⁷⁸

Nelson best sums up one of the main differences between Parham and Seymour when he observes:

⁵⁷⁷ Many historical accounts describe pre-Azusa street prayer meetings. One of the most popular examples of this is: Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington: Whitaker, 1982). These prayer meetings were birthed out of spiritual hunger and fueled by testimonies of amazing exploits of the Holy Spirit from around the country and around the world (such as Wales). What is interesting about Seymour's meetings at Bonnie Brae and Azusa Street is that God used an outsider to usher in what the locals had been praying for. Yet, due to spiritual hunger, many locals attended Seymour's meetings to seek more of the Holy Spirit. Of course, some spoke ill of Seymour's meetings, but the truly hungry did not seem to mind that Seymour was black, disabled or an outsider.

⁵⁷⁸ Nelson, *For Such a Time As This*, synopsis.

Parham thought glossolalia was proof of an experience. Seymour saw it as the means to a restored community...offering not some special doctrine unknown to previous history and based on white racial attitudes, but a community of apostolic life together restored and formed on the doctrine of human equality in Christ.⁵⁷⁹

Nelson continues by stating how white leaders would humble themselves in the spiritual intoxication at Azusa Street, but the next morning, when they awoke, they decided they could live with glossolalia, but not with fellowship beyond the color line. And that was the doctrine Seymour championed above all others: in Christ, there must be no color line because God is not a respecter of persons. Unfortunately, those white leaders rejected Seymour and his fellowship beyond the color line, resulting in the nascent movement splitting along ideological and racial lines. That caused white leaders to become overly concerned with glossolalia, which resulted in the movement to become defined in terms of this behavioral phenomenon. This distorted emphasis became a doctrinal requirement for some groups and glossolalia became the distinctive feature of Pentecostals as opposed to Seymour's concepts of unity, community and divine love.

The end result of this emphasis, according to Nelson, was that widespread emotional excesses and abuses which did not exist at Azusa Street now abounded.⁵⁸⁰ Nelson believes Seymour's discerning leadership had previously prevented those abuses, and kept the movement together in love. This view sharply contrasts with many white historical readings of Azusa Street, which suggested no one but the Holy Spirit was in charge. Nelson believes:

The greatness of the Azusa work depended upon a black man who understood the faith in a way evidently quite impossible for whites to fully grasp or effectively implement.... As long as the practice of glossolalia remains alienated from its roots in Christian oneness beyond the color line, it must be at best socially irrelevant. To be genuinely Christian it requires expression within the larger social vision of its historic roots.... [Seymour's]

⁵⁷⁹ Nelson, *For Such a Time As This*, 11-12.

⁵⁸⁰ This does not mean Azusa Street was without impurity. However, as Faupel notes, Mrs. Baker and her school determined God, "was responsible for the movement, but not for everything that was in it." Cf. Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 224.

pursuit of a new social vision for human equality in the church is the one clear purpose... to be seen in his life, and integrity from start to finish....⁵⁸¹

Nelson's analysis is unique because he views Seymour as someone who understood the Christian faith in ways many whites did not. Some might disagree with Nelson, but Nelson's work is still significant because he was one of the early non-white scholars to acknowledge Seymour's important leadership role and the fact that Seymour might have had more spiritual awareness than many whites at the time. This stands in sharp contrast to those who tried to minimize Seymour's leadership and it raises the question of whether or not Seymour's theological insights should be revisited. Did Seymour have significant theological insight that has been wrongly overlooked for much of the past Century?⁵⁸²

5.5.3 Mel Robeck and Estrelida Alexander

Although Robeck's work has been utilized extensively throughout this thesis, this brief section assembles Seymour's theological development as it pertains to unity from throughout Robeck's and Alexander's writings. Robeck provides more of the historical details and Alexander provides her historical understanding of those details as it pertains specifically to African American Pentecostalism.

For example, as Seymour is travelling around the country, Robeck suggests Seymour was spiritually nurtured by the Evening Light Saints, which at that time was a predecessor to the Church of God (Indianapolis, IN). They were led by Daniel Warner, and his commitment (in the

⁵⁸¹ Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 15.

⁵⁸² It is worth remembering that Nelson views Seymour favorably which could have influenced his reading of history. This thesis argues that all histories should be examined for bias. Nelson's work is important because, even if it has bias, it was one of the earlier scholarly writings (by someone who was not black) that highlighted Seymour's leadership role and contribution.

1890s) to address all his followers as “Saints” resulted in him adopting a position of gender and racial inclusiveness. As a result, this group became one of the few places where blacks and whites had equal standing and where women were encouraged to preach.⁵⁸³ Estrela Alexander states the Evening Light Saints exposed Seymour to a level of racial inclusiveness, “unlike any he had witnessed,” and that the Saints saw interracial worship as a sign of the true church.⁵⁸⁴ But more importantly, Alexander says that the Saints, instead of testifying they were, “saved, sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost,” testified they were, “saved, sanctified and prejudice removed.”⁵⁸⁵ This message resonated strongly with Seymour, so much so that Azusa Street became an embodiment of this thinking, and, in a way, an extension of the Saints’ ministry since they licensed and ordained Seymour and sent him off.⁵⁸⁶ The Saints’ beliefs further became cemented within Seymour when he left, because Seymour experienced their communal missionary homes where the members worked together, supported one another and probably fellowshiped and discussed theology together. This communal living arrangement would, “later be modelled at the Azusa Street Mission,” and certain aspects of the Saints’ theology appeared in the Azusa Street Mission’s doctrinal distinctive.⁵⁸⁷

In Cincinnati, Seymour studied for one year under Martin Wells Knapp. Knapp’s school was racially inclusive and Knapp believed in Premillennialism and special revelation.⁵⁸⁸ Knapp’s

⁵⁸³ It was here that Liardon believes Seymour received his call to preach.

⁵⁸⁴ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 113.

⁵⁸⁵ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 113.; Cf. Lewis, “William J. Seymour: Follower of the ‘Evening Light,’” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 171. Alexander also states that the Saints’ view of radical inclusiveness extended to public life.

⁵⁸⁶ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 113.

⁵⁸⁷ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 113-114. Also, as a point of reference, D. William Faupel highlights how Charles Parham may have encouraged similar commune-type living, amongst his students who were attending the Bethel Gospel School in Topeka. Although Seymour was not acquainted with Parham in Topeka, Seymour may have been further exposed to either the practice or idea of commune-style living when he met Charles Parham. Cf. D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 169-170.

⁵⁸⁸ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 33.

teachings may have resonated more closely with the spiritual experiences Seymour possibly heard blacks talk about while he was growing up, such as dreams, visions, hearing voices, losing consciousness, etc. Robeck argues that some of these slave narratives, describing these types of spiritual experiences, go back as far as the eighteenth century and that Seymour, being familiar with Hoodoo, would have been aware of both the possibilities and the dangers that such phenomena provided.⁵⁸⁹ Seymour's experience with, and understanding of, these issues may have helped Seymour lead Azusa Street where both blacks and whites would claim to have experienced a wide variety of spiritual experiences. Discerning the spirits, as Knapp taught, may have not only helped Seymour provide guidance, but it also may have given Seymour confidence to discern and lead when other spiritualists came to Azusa Street, looking for acceptance and sympathy.⁵⁹⁰

Another factor that possibly contributed to the community, unity and divine love at Azusa Street was the communal nature of the black culture, both inside and outside the church. Alexander notes that as African American churches formed in the United States, their testimony services mirrored African storytelling.⁵⁹¹ But in these services, testimony was not so much about what God has done for me, but what God has done for us. Communal meals also contributed (practically and spiritually) to the sense of solidarity. Fannie Williams concurs with Alexander's assessment by adding that for many African Americans, this church community bond was so strong that they knew and cared for, "no other entertainment than that furnished by the church."

⁵⁹² For African Americans during this period, their sense of belonging, community, and life itself

⁵⁸⁹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 33-34.

⁵⁹⁰ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 33.

⁵⁹¹ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 53.

⁵⁹² Fannie Barrier Williams, "Social Bonds in the 'Black Belt' of Chicago," *The Survey: The Negro in the Cities of the North* (New York: Charity Organization Society, 1905), 41.

revolved around the life of the church. In addition, there was also a greater sense that blacks were humanly equal before God as whites.⁵⁹³

5.5.4 Summary

In short, Seymour's theology seems to have developed as he travelled across the country.⁵⁹⁴ However, key elements of his theology—particularly those elements pertaining to community, unity and divine love—seem to have been developed before he ever met Parham. These notions of community, unity and divine love were so central to Seymour's theology that the threat of destroying those elements resulted in the ordeal between Seymour and Parham, which was essentially a fight over the nature and control of the community of believers gathered at Azusa Street. It was a fight over the utopian unity Seymour cultivated and who would lead that utopian community. Had Parham embraced the utopia Seymour created, there may have never been a central conflict, and Seymour may have never taken over the main leadership role because he might have looked to Parham as the main leader.⁵⁹⁵ But in a moment of crisis, like a mother hen protecting her chicks, Seymour risked everything when he rose up and confronted Parham.

But is this not what some (including some non-Pentecostals) think the role of the Spirit is? Historically, even some evangelicals have highlighted how two of the main roles of the Spirit are to call and convict. Evangelical theologian Clark Pinnock highlights how the Spirit, “epitomizes the nearness of the power and presence of God,” and how the Spirit, “challenges

⁵⁹³ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 39.

⁵⁹⁴ D. William Faupel confirms this when he states, “Having no formal education, Seymour's theology developed as he interacted with the traditions he encountered.” Cf. D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 197.

⁵⁹⁵ “The Old-Time Pentecost,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1; “Pentecost With Signs Following: Seven Months of Pentecostal Showers. Jesus, Our Projector and Great Shepherd,” *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906), number 4, p. 1. This contrasts with the article titled, “Letter From Bro. Parham,” in the September, 1906 issue which introduces Parham as, “God's leader in the Apostolic Faith Movement....”

theology at numerous points....”⁵⁹⁶ Pinnock goes on to contend that, “Knowing the Spirit is experiential, and the topic is oriented toward transformation more than information,” and that the Spirit, “fosters unity amidst diversity....”⁵⁹⁷ Pinnock’s classic work confirms that the “person” of the Holy Spirit truly does have personable qualities and that the Spirit helps the church unite as the bride of Christ. So, even in a classical Evangelical sense, Seymour’s belief that the Spirit first and foremost fosters unity is theologically sound. And if Pinnock is correct, maybe the Spirit was using Seymour to challenge existing theology at numerous points.⁵⁹⁸

5.6 Seymour on Marriage

Another aspect of unity at the Azusa Street revival was Seymour’s unique views on marriage. In the January, 1908 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, Seymour writes an article to the married where he addresses, “conjugal intercourse.”⁵⁹⁹ This is not the first time Seymour addressed marriage in *The Apostolic Faith*, but this article appears to contain Seymour’s most complete thinking on the subject. Seymour says he wrote this article because, “I have been asked so much on this question....”⁶⁰⁰ Presumably people were curious about his views, so he reasoned it might be better to write one article to everyone. But in addition to addressing Seymour’s specific views, some historical background might also be helpful.

Robeck states that individuals came into the Azusa Street Mission with all sorts of views concerning marriage, sexuality and free love.⁶⁰¹ In a time when some were stating that married

⁵⁹⁶ Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 9-11.

⁵⁹⁷ Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 14, 22.

⁵⁹⁸ To determine that, the reader would have to seek the Spirit and experience the Spirit for themselves to discern the truth and to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church today.

⁵⁹⁹ W.J.S., “To the Married,” *The Apostolic Faith* (January 1908), number 12, p. 3.

⁶⁰⁰ W.J.S., “To the Married,” *The Apostolic Faith* (January 1908), number 12, p. 3.

⁶⁰¹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 309.

people should abstain from sexual relations, or that sexual relations were only for the purpose of procreation, Seymour stated that the Bible supported both marriage and sexual relations between married couples for purposes other than procreation.⁶⁰² Apparently some felt singleness was preferred due to the imminent return of Christ. However, Seymour appears to have a positive view towards marriage, and a positive view of sexual intimacy within marriage, because he gets married himself and he follows the Apostle Paul's advice that married people should be engaging in sexual intercourse, to avoid temptation from Satan.⁶⁰³



William and Jennie Seymour, 1912.
Photo Used With Permission By:
Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center

⁶⁰² Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 309.

⁶⁰³ W.J.S., "To the Married," *The Apostolic Faith* (January 1908), number 12, p. 3.

Mel Robeck hypothesized it is possible Clara Lum left the Azusa Street Mission and took *The Apostolic Faith* newspaper with her to Portland not because of her convictions that singleness was preferred to marriage and she was upset over Seymour getting married, but because she had fallen in love with Seymour, and Seymour married Jennie Moore. In *Bishop C. H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ*, Ithiel Clemmons states that in 1948, Bishop Charles H. Mason said Clara Lum had fallen in love with Seymour and desired to marry him. When Seymour went to Mason for advice, Mason cautioned him against marrying a white woman, given cultural customs and Jim Crow laws.⁶⁰⁴ As a result, Seymour married Jennie Evans Moore. Robeck admits we cannot verify this, but we can verify that Seymour did in fact get married, and he has positive views towards both marriage and sexual intimacy within marriage for purposes other than procreation.⁶⁰⁵

It is worth noting that the marriage question gets brought up on several other occasions. One very notable occasion is in the September, 1907 issue, because on page 3 of that issue there are 7 bold-faced headings dealing with marriage, divorce and remarriage. As with much of *The*

⁶⁰⁴ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 309-310. At the time a marriage between Seymour and Lum would have been illegal because California's anti-miscegenation statutes, specifically Civil Code Sections 60 and 69, essentially banned interracial marriage since 1850.

⁶⁰⁵ Very few, if any, Pentecostal historians address the issue of female hysteria. In the 1800s, it was common both in the United States and in Europe for doctors to use their hands to massage women's genitals to relieve them of the symptoms of "hysteria." This was deemed a medical issue, and since it was a commonly held belief that women could not achieve orgasm, these experiences were termed, "paroxysms." Given the primitive state of medical technology (and its unreliability), this became a very lucrative enterprise because stimulating women's genitals provided more consistent results than many other medical procedures of the day. However, due to the amount of time this took per patient, an English physician invented the vibrator, which was sold in the Sears & Roebuck catalog until it began appearing in pornographic movies of the 1920s. The significance of this topic for this thesis is that like all of us, Seymour lived in a specific place and time—and he happened to live at a time when there was a commonly held belief that women could not achieve orgasm, so they would go to doctors for massage relief in an attempt to relieve what was termed "hysteria." Could common cultural practices like this have influenced Seymour's views of marriage and sexual satisfaction? This is unknown, but the reason this is mentioned here is because many are not fully aware of the prevailing sexual attitudes and practices of the time. Cf. Rachel P. Maines, *The Technology of Orgasm: "Hysteria," the Vibrator and Women's Sexual Satisfaction* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Andrew Scull, *Hysteria: The Disturbing History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Michael Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1990).

Apostolic Faith, it is worth noting how rational and reasoned the teachings are. It is here that marriage is outlined as God's plan for creation, and it is here we are told, "The forbidding to marry is the doctrine of devils. I Tim. 4:1,3."⁶⁰⁶

In short, Seymour's teachings on marriage may have upset some, but they appear consistent with the Bible's teaching and Seymour's overarching theology of community, unity and divine love.

5.7 Body Theology

Seymour's views towards marriage and human sexuality are important for both pragmatic and theological reasons. According to the article titled, "To the Married," Seymour perceived marriage as a way to maintain sexual purity and to model egalitarianism because, according to Seymour's interpretation of the Bible, the man does not have authority to live separated from the wife and the wife does not have authority to live separated from the husband.⁶⁰⁷ The New Testament is somewhat revolutionary in this regard because in the 1st Century, it would not have been common to address women in ancient texts like the New Testament does. But not only does the New Testament address both men and women, it goes so far as to suggest God's desire is that husbands and wives submit to one another and that husbands should have the same level of love for their wife as they do for themselves (Ephesians 5). Seymour appears to have followed this egalitarian model and, like all other areas of leadership at the Azusa Street Mission, seemed to have an expectation for community, unity and divine love within marriage.

But there is potentially a deeper theological reality hidden in Seymour's positive views toward marriage and sexual intimacy within marriage because Seymour does not appear to view

⁶⁰⁶ "The Marriage Tie," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1907), number 10, p. 3.

⁶⁰⁷ W.J.S., "To the Married," *The Apostolic Faith* (January 1908), number 12, p. 3.

the physical body as bad, or less spiritual than the soul or spirit.⁶⁰⁸ For example, early American Pentecostals valued the human body enough to pray for physical healing.⁶⁰⁹ This practice implies God cares about the human body and the body is worth healing. Given the strong emphasis Seymour places on Christology, it is important to note that Jesus himself had a human body and His earthly body had great value because it was through His broken body that believers are able to experience the atoning work of Christ. In the May, 1908 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, an article titled, “The Holy Ghost is Power,” states, “In all Jesus’ great revivals and miracles, the work was wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost glowing through His sanctified humanity.”⁶¹⁰ For Seymour, there is value in preaching to the lost, there is value in pursuing sanctification and there is value in praying for physical healing. After all, how can someone preach to the lost if they are severely ill, or dead?

The reason Seymour’s theology on this point is significant is because globally, Pentecostalism still tends to favor holiness ideals that emphasize the “sins of the body,” as opposed to the sins of the heart. These sins of the body are often committed via the orifices in the body. For example, unholy living might involve activities like listening to ungodly music, engaging in gossip or participating in lying or slander; what one allows their eyes to see; what one allows into and out of their mouth (which could include profanity, lying, food sacrificed to idols, drinking blood, worshipping false gods, smoking, drinking, etc.); engaging in sexual

⁶⁰⁸ James Nelson uses the phrase, “Body Theology,” to describe this. Cf. James B. Nelson, *Body Theology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press 1992).

⁶⁰⁹ Even today, it is interesting to observe how different cultures view the human body and human sexuality differently. For example, in Germany nude spas are so culturally acceptable (and nonsexual) that I am aware of at least one church that has a nude spa. The purpose of this is to foster community. This would not happen in the United States because of how the body and sexuality are viewed. It is also interesting to observe how movies can receive different age restrictions in different cultures. In Europe, violence can cause a higher age restriction than in the United States, and nudity can cause a higher age restriction in the United States than in Europe. For example, one film which briefly revealed a woman’s nipple resulted in a PG-13 rating in the US, but an age restriction of age 6 or higher, in Sweden.

⁶¹⁰ “The Holy Ghost is Power,” *The Apostolic Faith* (May 1908), number 13, p. 3.

immorality (which involves the openings of the genitals)... In all these situations, the openings in the physical body served as a gateway for demonic activity and spiritual oppression. This is unique because it says a lot about how some Pentecostals view the relationship between the physical world and the spiritual world. Seymour appears to hold similar holiness views, but he appears to emphasize the sanctification of the heart and how that affects outward behaviors. For example, he values not being racist just as he values the avoidance of sexual immorality. Seymour is clearly not the only pastor in the 20th and 21st Centuries who hated racism and classified it as a sin. Many pastors (including Martin Luther King, Jr.) have held similar positions. However, what makes Seymour unique is that as early as 1906 he was publicly preaching about the importance of not having hatred in one's heart (not unlike how Jesus emphasizes this point in Matthew 5). This is an important point because, although some Pentecostals have historically renounced racism, Seymour made this such a central point in his theology that *The Apostolic Faith* on several occasions questioned the very salvation of those who did not manifest divine love towards one another.⁶¹¹

5.8 William Seymour the Human

Seymour's jovial personality and his favorable views towards sexual relations in marriage may have come as a surprise to some who favored a more serious faith that prioritized "spiritual" matters over earthly matters. But theologically, Seymour may have embodied an important point. For example, Ray Anderson, a prominent Southern California theologian, has suggested Jesus was possibly the most authentic human who ever lived.⁶¹² Theologically, this is

⁶¹¹ "Bible Salvation," *The Apostolic Faith* (November 1906), number 3, p. 4.; "To the Baptized Saints," *The Apostolic Faith* (June-September 1907), number 9, p. 2; *The Apostolic Faith* (June-September 1907), number 9, p. 2.

⁶¹² Dr. Ray Anderson, *Video Interview* on October 15, 2007 in Huntington Beach, CA. It should be noted that Dr. Ray Anderson passed away not long after that interview.

an interesting point because Jesus does embody what God intended humanity to be (or what God intended humanity to be “again” since Jesus is sometimes referred to as the “second Adam”). Even the English language reflects this because Jesus is known for demonstrating very human (or “humane”) qualities, such as love, empathy and compassion. But when a criminal commits horrific acts, those acts are often described as “inhuman” or not human, and sometimes the criminal will be referred to as an “animal,” which once again implies a lack of humanness. Anderson argues that psychology often looks to a model, or ideal person, but that “person” does not actually exist. Is the ideal human psychologists are looking for actually Jesus? Anderson believes Jesus is the only model we have for authentic, human living. This raises an interesting theological point because both adherents to the New Age and Satan desire(d) to be like God (Isaiah 14:14 describes Satan’s desires). But Christians are called to become like Jesus who was God, but was also a human being who submitted unto God. In light of this, I wonder if becoming like Jesus implies we are becoming authentically human (which means we are actualizing God’s vision for what He intended humanity to be), as opposed to becoming like God? I do not know the answer, but there appears to be a difference between being godly and being God. And we are called to be godly and Christ-like.

John and Paula Sandford concur, stating, “To become human means (at most) to become like Jesus. Jesus was the one fully human person,” and to do the wrong thing means we acted in an inhuman manner.⁶¹³ They go on to define certain characteristics of being human, all of which reminds us of Jesus. Of particular interest to this thesis are the characteristics of love, empathy and cherishing one another above ourselves (although we do indeed love ourselves, as Christ

⁶¹³ John and Paula Sandford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man: The most comprehensive book on inner healing today* (Tulsa: Victory House, 1982), 270-271.

loves us).⁶¹⁴ The Sandfords conclude, “If we were human we would do as Jesus did!”⁶¹⁵ For them, the essence of humanity is to have a conscience, the lack of which results in an inability to have a functioning spirit, full of love.⁶¹⁶ When taken to its final conclusion, this lack of empathy and love results in an inability to care how another feels and an inability to feel bad when we bring harm to others.⁶¹⁷ Specifically speaking to sexual sin, the Sandfords conclude that fornication and adultery do not stem from love, but rather, hate, because true human love respects the sanctity of another, their body and their relationship to their spouse.⁶¹⁸ True love never uses another, and when someone does use another, it is a symptom of a “ruination or blockage” from early childhood.⁶¹⁹

It is interesting how the Sandfords mention the word “conscience” because previously, *The Apostolic Faith* referenced the word “sane” several times in reference to the work of the Spirit.⁶²⁰ This work of the Spirit is consistent with what the Bible tells us in 2 Timothy 1:7 when it says, “For the Holy Spirit gives us a sound mind, faith, love and power (2 Tim. 1:7).”⁶²¹ Part of what makes the use of the word “sane” in *The Apostolic Faith* interesting is because one of the

⁶¹⁴ Sandford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, 270. On that same page, they point out one way to become fully human is to receive copious affection in infancy. The context in which this discussion occurs is one of sexual intimacy. Achieving the maximum potential of this intimacy occurs when one is fully able to nurture, bless, unfold, enrich and “enrapture the heart and spirit of another.”

⁶¹⁵ Sandford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, 271.

⁶¹⁶ Sandford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, 271.

⁶¹⁷ Sandford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, 271.

⁶¹⁸ Sandford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, 275.

⁶¹⁹ Sandford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, 274-275. As noted previously, it is interesting how, in the United States, a lack of “human” traits (especially empathy and compassion), is often associated with sociopathy, which is a common trait amongst serial killers. Therapy often involves developing these “human” traits so someone can function as a “normal human being” in society. One method sometimes used in therapy is to work with pets. It is interesting how serial killers often abuse animals and the helpless, but, “A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal,” (Proverbs 12:10). Being a serial killer involves destroying God’s creation, as opposed to being righteous which involves blessing God’s creation.

⁶²⁰ One such time was: *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 2.

⁶²¹ “Pentecost Has Come,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1; William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission* (Joplin: Christian Life, 2000), 42-43.

allegations leveled against Azusa Street was “fanaticism.” Even today, one critique against 21st Century Pentecostals by people like Ray Anderson is that Jesus was always putting people in their right minds, yet Pentecostals engage in spiritual practices which can make them appear as though they are not in their right minds.⁶²² But is this a valid critique, or is this a reflection of the fact that scholars like Ray Anderson come from a white, reserved culture, as opposed to a more expressive African culture?

Although this section did not provide any definitive theological conclusions, I felt it was important to understand that Seymour’s theology and spiritual practices may not have appeared as other-worldly as some might imagine. For example, Seymour was jovial, he valued sexual relations within marriage and Azusa Street was a place of physical and mental healing. Contrary to some peoples’ assumptions, Azusa Street was not all about trances or bouncing off the walls like crazy people. It was about becoming whole (physical, emotionally and spiritually), so people could live in healthy relationship with God and with one another.⁶²³ Theologically, this meant the congregation had to become what God intended humanity and the church to be. In a sense, this was both a restoration of what was lost in the Garden of Eden (and made available in Christ) and a foreshadow of the utopia that is to come (Revelation 7:9).

5.9 Restoring the Created Order

By its own admission, the Azusa Street Mission was a restoration movement. The September, 1906 issue explicitly states, “The Apostolic Faith Movement stands for the

⁶²² Dr. Ray Anderson, *Video Interview* on October 15, 2007 in Huntington Beach, CA. It should be noted that Dr. Ray Anderson passed away not long after that interview.

⁶²³ Cf. Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003) for more information for an argument about why spiritual health and emotional health might be so intertwined that they are inseparable.

restoration of the faith once delivered unto the saints—the old time religion, camp meetings, revivals, missions, street and prison work and Christian Unity everywhere.”⁶²⁴ The Jude 3 header under the title of every issue confirms this when it says, “Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” But is there Biblical justification for restorationism? If so, should Charismatics continue emphasizing restorationism today, or should they focus on what God is doing now and come into alignment with that? Or maybe they should align themselves with God’s plans for the future? All of these questions involve philosophical presumptions, such as presumptions about time (which is often viewed linearly in many Western cultures), presumptions about the nature of reality, presumptions about interpreting scripture, etc. Although this brief section cannot answer all of these questions, it can analyze a few underlying theological and philosophical presumptions so the reader can begin thinking about what exactly Seymour was trying to restore and whether or not Charismatic leaders should continue on this journey of restoration today.

One way to begin this exploration is to take a broader, more global view of time because how someone views time often influences their theology.⁶²⁵ This is because space and time are two of the most obvious points of connection between an infinite God and temporal humanity.⁶²⁶ As a result, viewing time as linear (which is often how Western cultures view time), creates a scenario where things happened in the past, things are happening now and things will happen in the future. This creates a disconnect between the past, the present and the future. But many

⁶²⁴ “The Apostolic Faith Movement,” *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 2.

⁶²⁵ Sometimes when people have chronic pain, they cannot remember what it was like to not have pain. For some people, the first step (of many) to get free from this is to begin once again imagining what it would be like to live without pain. This is a non-religious example of how a future reality (or a perceived future reality) can impact the present. Likewise, coming into agreement with God’s future Kingdom reality often results in that Kingdom becoming imminent.

⁶²⁶ Personal Conversation with F. LeRon Shults, Spring, 2003.

cultures throughout human history (including some non-Western cultures today), view time as cyclical or circular. This means that just as the hero's journey can be viewed as a circle of life, death and rebirth, God's created order can also be viewed as a circle of paradise, paradise lost and paradise restored.⁶²⁷ As an example of this, Revelation 22 (the last chapter of the Bible), seems to mirror Genesis 3 (the third chapter of the Bible) in several ways. In Revelation 22, there is a tree of life (like in Genesis), and it symbolizes the end of the curse of Adam because this tree bears fruit every month. Just as how God watered the garden in Genesis, a pure river of water of life proceeds out of God's throne. Just as how God walked with Adam and had intimacy with Adam in Genesis, in Revelation God's creation shall see His face and once again have intimacy with the Creator. Adam's curse caused the very earth he was to rule over to become his master. However, in Revelation, as God's servants reign forever and ever with Him and humanity will be restored to its original purpose, which is to rule.⁶²⁸ Once and for all, the grand curse of slavery will be broken, and all of humanity, from every gender, tribe, tongue, race and disability, will all worship God as equal creation.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁷ Although many theological sources have influenced the concepts presented in this paragraph, some of the specific comparisons between Genesis 3 and Revelation 22 were lifted from a message delivered by Dr. Glen Menzies in the North Central University chapel on January 27, 2015.

⁶²⁸ Another example of this is how in Acts 8 an Ethiopian eunuch comes to faith in Christ. Not only does this suggest the Gospel is for everyone (including Africans), but this is also possibly a fulfillment of the law because in Deuteronomy 23:1 (and Leviticus 21:17-23), we are told that a man whose genitals are mutilated cannot enter the congregation of the Lord. Isaiah 56:1-7 (and really all of Isaiah 56-66) tells us that foreigners and eunuchs can be part of God's people, and Acts 8 shows us a eunuch being a part of God's people. This suggests that those of different races and those with disabilities, deformities and other physical imperfections can become part of God's people.

⁶²⁹ This thesis does not talk much about the "Imago Dei" which is the theological concept that all humans are made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27; Acts 17:26; 1 Peter 2:9), because Seymour does not appear to emphasize this as much as some contemporary theologians do. However, this concept applies to this thesis because one of the reasons we are to love one another and treat one another with respect is because we are all made in God's image. This is why Jesus says how we treat one another is how we treat God (Matthew 25:34-40). This is a novel concept when you consider that not all cultures throughout history have viewed humans as equal. For example, in some cultures, the prevailing belief was that only certain people (such as the king) was made in God's image. But in Christian theology, there is a rich tradition that suggests attending to God's creatures is akin to attending to God. In a sense, every encounter with God's creation is holy because it is really an encounter with God.

The Bible describes the restoration of all things in various places, such as Acts 3:21, Romans 8, etc. To some this concept might seem unfamiliar, but if you really think about it, we live in a world of circles: the earth is roughly a circle; the planets circle the sun; we are born helpless and many elderly people die helpless as their minds and bodies reduce in functionality; one's offspring repeats the circle of life by producing offspring; and seasons of the year seem to circle around us; each day seems like a circle for those who work or go to school because each day and school year ends, only to start all over again, etc. The list of circles in our lives is seemingly endless. This is why when Christmas rolls around, some people ask, "Didn't we just have Christmas?" With age, these circles sometimes seem to occur faster and faster.

In keeping with this cyclical theme, Jesus, through His death and resurrection, provided a way to restore the original order God intended for humanity. According to Pannenberg, God's future Kingdom (which could be viewed as a restoration of God's original order) was imminent because Jesus's death and resurrection collapsed space and time between the present reality and God's future Kingdom.⁶³⁰ This is why entire books of the New Testament emphasize our new present reality now that we are in Christ. Clearly Romans talks about this (especially chapter 8), Ephesians 2:6 talks about how we are presently seated with Christ in Heavenly places, and Ephesians 1:3 talks about how every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm is already "lavished upon us as a love gift from our wonderful heavenly Father." Really, the entire Book of Ephesians could serve as a case study for how Seymour's use of the Holy Spirit could help us actualize the present reality God has called Christians to experience.

But how does this Christian experience whereby someone actualizes a future reality fit with God's plan for the world, and with a Biblical understanding of eschatology? Most would

⁶³⁰ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 51-71.

agree that it is God's will for Christians to live victorious in Christ and to rely on the Holy Spirit when evangelizing, which makes it easier to see how actualizing our future reality can help accomplish God's plans and purposes on the earth. But what about eschatology? Aren't things supposed to get worse before they get better? N.T. Wright seems to challenge that assumption by arguing that people who think things are going to get worse in the last days might be misreading scripture.

To begin his argument, Wright argues that the hope we have is both a hope for the future (which includes eternal life), as well as hope for the life we live now, as agents for Christ who are called to implement God's Kingdom reality on the earth.⁶³¹ This, in part, stems from Wright's belief that the transition from this world to the next involves not the destruction of the present earth, but its radical healing.⁶³² This belief is influenced by his interpretation of the concept of the "rapture" which is a theological construct (or fictionalism) that is not actually mentioned in the New Testament, but is useful to our understanding of Christ's return. Here is a summary of what Wright has to say about this event:⁶³³

First, during the "Rapture," Jesus is coming down to earth—the imagery is that of Moses, coming down from the Mountain with the 10 Commandments. Paul then mixes this with the "Son of Man" imagery from Daniel 7, but this time, it is not the Son of Man caught up in the clouds, but us, who are caught up to meet Him. The point is that Jesus is coming to earth and the

⁶³¹ N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian Why Christianity Makes Sense* (HarperOne: New York: 2006), xi.

⁶³² N.T. Wright, *Surprised By Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (HarperOne: New York, 2008), 122. It is worth noting that many people in the Bible and throughout church history have caused us to rethink our theology and our images of God. What Wright does here is not unlike Julian of Norwich who suggested that we revise our image of God from vindictive to tenderly and motherly, that we focus more on our new creation than God's judgment and that we emphasize how Christ cultivates new life. Although it can take time for theologians to process new ideas and time for people to adjust their views, theology has undergone constant revising over the past 2,000 years.

⁶³³ Many of these ideas come from: N.T. Wright, *Surprised By Hope*, but some come from: N.T. Wright, "Farewell to the Rapture" in "Bible Review," August, 2001.

believers, who are caught up with Him in the air, immediately return back to earth to participate with Christ in making creation whole. Wright contends Paul combines the first two images with the imperial image of when an emperor returns to his home city from battle, or from a State visit, and the citizens would go out to meet him (like a welcoming party) and then royally escort him back into the city, where he will continue to rule, or perhaps bring his rule to perfection.⁶³⁴ Paul does not have the language to describe it, but it would be something like Moses coming down from the Mountain, something like us being vindicated for our suffering, and something like an emperor returning to rule his city, with his grateful citizens coming out to meet him and to escort him back to where he belongs. In this case, it is the believers welcoming, or escorting Jesus back to earth. Wright concludes this section by highlighting that the rest of the New Testament confirms that this Second Coming has political significance. The first time Jesus came as a baby in a manger was not political, but the second time Jesus comes will have great political significance because Jesus will be returning as the King of Kings who will rule over the earth (for presumably 1,000 years), during which time he will bring about restoration and establish His intention for humanity through His reign and rule.⁶³⁵ Wright believes Paul's contention is that

⁶³⁴ Dr. Colin Brown explains it this way: Regarding I Thessalonians 4:17, Paul is not talking about some intermediate event, but about the *parousia*—the last things themselves. *εις ἀπάντησιν* occurs when a dignitary pays an official visit called a *parousia* (παρουσία in Greek), at which time you go out to meet him and escort him back to the city. Brown observes that this is how Cicero describes Caesar's progress through Italy. Basically, a delegation goes out to meet another person and escorts that person back. The two other times this word is used in the New Testament (Matthew 25:6 and Acts 28:15), someone is going out to meet another. As a final note, Brown comments how one's understanding of the Millennium is important, because it affects the way one views God's eschatological strategy. He also observes how the real word for "Millennium" is "Chiliasm" (or "Chaliasmos" in Classical Greek). Many of the early Church Fathers were Chiliasts, but Augustine reacted against that, resulting in Millennialism falling into disfavor until the time of the Reformation, but even then, Luther, Calvin and others condemned Millennialism because they did not believe Munster was the New Jerusalem. According to Brown, Millennialism became reinforced during the English Civil War, but fell into discredit since. It was revived in 1792 by Webber and by Darby in the 1800s. It was Darby who introduced the concept of the "Secret Rapture" prior to the Great Tribulation. For Brown, due to the various views concerning the Millennium, one of the issues is an interpretation issue, as various Millennial views are based on degrees of literalism, and not all of the Bible was intended to be interpreted literally. Cf. Dr. Colin Brown, Personal Conversation, Fall, 2004.

⁶³⁵ The 1,000 year reign is typically referred to as The Millennium (or the Millennial Reign of Christ). It is frequently believed that this will be a time of restoration. Also, the first time Jesus came, He came with little fanfare

Jesus is Lord, therefore Cesar is not. Since Jesus is bringing His perfect love, perfect peace, perfect justice and perfect rulership to earth, believers have a responsibility to prepare the earth for His coming by living in allegiance to Jesus and His values. How do we speed up Jesus's return? For Wright this could be done by making the earth more and more like Jesus. This occurs through evangelism, discipleship and establishing God's Kingdom reign and rule throughout the earth with the anticipation that we will soon be joyfully greeting the Coming King. Wright justifies this interpretation by arguing that Paul is mixing his metaphors and does not intend for us to establish a concrete theology out of a singular passage (just like how in the next chapter, when Paul talks about the return of Christ being like a thief in the night, Paul is not referring to a literal thief, nor is he referring to a literal woman in labor, or literal drunkenness, or literal armor).⁶³⁶

Second, Wright suggests the Greek could be translated "appear," which means Christ's coming is not from some distant place within our time-space continuum, but rather, another dimension of what we think of as ordinary reality that overlaps and interlocks with our sphere in mysterious ways. Third, Wright argues neither Ephesians nor Colossians support the notion that a major part of what God created is destined to the trash can or destruction.

Although some might not agree with Wright, hermeneutically, his interpretation is plausible, especially since the word "rapture" is a Latin term that is never actually mentioned in the New Testament. It is a theological fiction (as in fictionalism) that did not exist prior to the

and was hidden in a manger. The famous song "Silent Night" solidified the legend that the night was peaceful and quiet. But the Bible describes the Second Coming of Christ as glorious for those who know and love Jesus, and terrifying for those who do not know Him. This foil is interesting. C.S. Lewis attempted to capture Jesus's character complexity through the fictional lion Aslan, the King who ruled over Narnia (which is a Biblical reference to the "Lion of Judah" which was one of the many names attributed to Jesus). In the novel, Mr. Beaver tells Lucy that Aslan is not safe, but He is good. Cf. C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1950), 86.

⁶³⁶ "N.T. Wright on the Rapture," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqYHeBdMqvU>

nineteenth century, until John Nelson Darby proposed the “Rapture” concept as one possible interpretation of I Thessalonians 4:17.⁶³⁷ Darby, who became famous for his dispensational theology, made this “Rapture” event the main theme of this passage, and he made this entire event occur prior to Christ’s return, as a separate event. Although this thesis does not go into all the details surrounding this, other scholars, such as D. William Faupel, go into great detail, explaining Darby’s motivations behind this interpretation, and why this interpretation helped mediate certain theological challenges of Darby’s day.⁶³⁸ Wright offers an alternative to Darby, while potentially avoiding some of Darby’s pitfalls.

Matthew Avery Sutton, in his book titled, *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism*, traces the history of the apocalyptic theology that appears to have emerged during the 1880s and 90s (which is around the time of Darby).⁶³⁹ This theology led some Evangelicals to the conclusion that nations were going to concede their power, in the End Times, to the Antichrist who will be a totalitarian political leader. Although Sutton contends this was a radical idea at the time, Sutton believes the popularity of this belief is what pushed some American Evangelicals to emphasize American individual liberties, as opposed to expanded government powers and expanded government involvement in people’s lives. Even today, we see apocalyptic theology in some end times movies and TV shows. This seemed to be the prevalent theology portrayed in many Christian end times films throughout the latter half of the 20th Century.

⁶³⁷ Dr. Frank Macchia asserts this in an October 10, 2014 Facebook post. He also notes that early Wesleyan and Pentecostal leaders were not, at first, too enamored with Darby’s teachings.

⁶³⁸ Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*.

⁶³⁹ Matthew Avery Sutton, *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2014).

Although this section may seem like a detour to Seymour's theology, it is actually very important because Seymour's theology is very eschatological (because he believed in the imminent return of Christ), but Seymour focused on utilizing the Holy Spirit to live a victorious Christian life (without fear), and to take the Gospel to the ends of earth because time was running out. Seymour definitely appears to have a sense of urgency, but he avoids much of the fear surrounding the more severe apocalyptic theology.

This also pertains to *The Apostolic Faith's* emphasis on restoration theology Seymour does not stand by idly. Rather, he focuses on using the Holy Spirit to restore God's plan for humanity to live in unity, community and divine love without hatred or racism, he focuses on actualizing the Bible's utopian vision, and he focuses on actively evangelizing the world and making disciples. This stands in sharp contrast with those who stop actively engaging the world with the Good News because they believe things are destined to get worse or that everything is "going to go to hell in a handbasket." Since Seymour was ministering and writing shortly after apocalyptic theology emerged onto the scene, I argue that Seymour's active engagement with culture and the emphasis in *The Apostolic Faith* on restoration are worth noting because the concepts work together and they appear to stand in contrast to other prevailing ideas of the day. This possibly could be one more theological distinctive Seymour had.

Some might disagree with this analysis, some might disagree with Seymour, and some might disagree with Wright. But whatever the reader's position, I argue that things like eschatology (in all its varied forms) and restorationism are worth thinking about because these concepts profoundly influence how Christians understand and live the Christian life, whether they are aware of these concepts or not. Should someone proactively attempt to reform their workplace or industry because they believe it is their duty to restore God's intended order and

establish God’s Kingdom reign and rule everywhere, or should they not integrate their faith and work in this way because the world is “going to hell in a handbasket” anyway? Although some might philosophically classify this as falling under “ethics,” I argue that ethics often involves philosophical assumptions. As a Christian, what are those assumptions, and how do those assumptions affect how we engage with culture? How do these assumptions affect how charismatic leaders lead others? Seymour did not get philosophical about these matters. Instead, he focused on living the way he believed the Bible taught us how to live. But in 21st Century society, people sometimes have questions, especially if their personality favors having a plan, or knowing where they are heading. As a result, charismatic leaders sometimes have more success when they can articulate the end goal and why they model a certain way of living. In Seymour’s ministry context, he seemed to be able to effectively do that through his teachings on restoration theology, his explanation for why God was doing this now and how the Pentecostal experience fit into God’s larger plan, and through his example of how one should live.⁶⁴⁰

5.10 The Physical Layout of 312 Azusa Street

Even the physical structure of the Azusa Street Mission promoted equality and helped facilitate the restoration of the created order. 312 Azusa Street had no platform for a worship band or preaching. Everyone was at the same level. In the United States, the physical layout of a

⁶⁴⁰ As an interesting side note, the founder of Earth Day, John McConnell, Jr., was a Pentecostal minister, his grandfather was at the Azusa Street Revival and his parents were founding members of the Assemblies of God. This is just one example of how someone’s beliefs about God’s redemptive purposes for the world can have a significant impact on their theology, life mission and influence in culture and society. For more information, see: John McConnell, *Earth Day: Vision for Peace, Justice and Earth Care: My Life and Thought at Age 96* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2011); cf. also, the following three links:

<http://ministrytodaymag.com/index.php/ministry-life/legacy/19622-pentecostal-founder-of-earth-day>
<http://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/570-news/featured-news/10732-earth-day-has-pentecostal-root->
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_McConnell_\(peace_activist\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_McConnell_(peace_activist))

spiritual meeting place is very important. For example, in Catholic churches, the communion table is oftentimes front and center because communion plays such a central role in Catholic liturgy. In most Pentecostal churches, the pulpit is front and center because Pentecostals value “Pentecostal preaching,” and worship, which is also why the worship bands tend to be front and center as well, versus an organist, hidden in the corner. The physical layout of Azusa Street and the physical posture of its leader (with his head in a milk crate) said a lot about Seymour’s theology of equality and his belief that there is equality in Christ, because Christ died for all. This physical setup allowed for everyone to seek the Lord and minister to one another (which sounds like the concept of the “priesthood of all believers” which some Pentecostals adhere to).

5.11 Dystopia & The End of the Revival

This thesis has mainly focused on the conflict between Seymour and Parham. However, Seymour experienced other opposition along the way, and on more than one occasion whites tried taking over the revival. One early example of this was Elmer Fisher, a white Baptist pastor who received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street in 1907. He attracted a number of Seymour’s white followers and took them with him when he established his Upper Room Mission in Los Angeles.⁶⁴¹ Surprisingly, William Durham also stirred discord. Mel Robeck claims Durham felt Seymour played the race card by sticking with, “men of his own colour,” but that Seymour mitigated what could have been a disaster when he, “reached a conclusion and made a decision that was keeping with the mission’s statement of faith and consistent with the constitution of the mission.”⁶⁴² Despite Seymour’s skilful use of diplomacy, at one point

⁶⁴¹ C. Mel Robeck, “Historical Roots of Racial Unity and Division in American Pentecostalism,” a paper presented to the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America, Memphis Colloquy. Race Relations File, Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, MO.

⁶⁴² Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 317.

Seymour acknowledged, “All the trouble we have had with some of our white brethren in causing diversion...” This resulted in Seymour not allowing whites to be directors at the mission, “not for discrimination, but for peace.”⁶⁴³

Whether due to Seymour’s leadership issues, racism or a combination of factors, the Azusa Street Mission was in a steady decline by early 1909.⁶⁴⁴ As noted earlier, this decline could have started as early as May 13, 1908, when William Seymour married Jennie Evans Moore and Clara Lum, the mission’s secretary, denounced the marriage and left, taking the nearly 50,000-member mailing list with her to Portland.⁶⁴⁵ Despite confronting her, she refused to turn over the list. Consequently, Seymour began losing influence and funding (since the donations were now being mailed to Portland). By 1912, people began splitting from the mission to form their own Pentecostal groups. Although this possibly resulted in the Pentecostal message being spread and new Pentecostal leaders being raised up, many of these splits resulted in people dividing and forming along theological or racial lines (which was antithetical to Seymour’s utopian vision). Despite the decline, Seymour continued to serve as its pastor until he died from a heart attack on September 28, 1922.⁶⁴⁶ Douglas Nelson said some of Seymour’s followers felt he died of a broken heart, feeling a failure for the schisms and lack of unity that manifested in the

⁶⁴³ William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission* (Joplin: Christian Life, 2000), 30. I believe this resolution was adopted on May 19, 1914.

⁶⁴⁴ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 313.

⁶⁴⁵ Alexander suggests that Seymour and Lum entertained marriage. However, C.H. Mason discouraged it because Lum was white and such an interracial marriage could be controversial and disastrous for the ministry. This, combined with the fact that Jennie Moore, Seymour’s wife, gained more power and prominence after their marriage, may have contributed to Lum’s leaving. Lum apparently held the theological notion that the imminent return of Christ made it unwise to marry, given the large task of world evangelism. It appears as though she may have adopted this theology after Seymour’s marriage. Lum never married. Alexander, *Black Fire*, 144.

⁶⁴⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 315. It is interesting that some reports state a doctor was called, because the October-January, 1908 issue of *The Apostolic Faith* states on page 2 that it is wrong for saints to take medicine. Due to the fact that a doctor was called, it is unclear if Seymour changed his position, or if calling a doctor was not the same thing as taking medicine. In the October-January 1908 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, the question gets asked: Does the Lord Jesus provide healing for everybody? The answer is: Yes: for all those that have faith in Him. The sinner can receive healing. Cf. “Questions Answered,” *The Apostolic Faith* (October-January 1908), number 11, p. 2.

years following Azusa Street.⁶⁴⁷ He died in such obscurity that for a period of time, few people knew where Seymour was buried. (He was buried at Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights, not far from the Azusa Street Mission).⁶⁴⁸ Outside of his inner circle, Seymour's death went so unnoticed that the local papers failed to even report it.⁶⁴⁹ In some ways, the physical property suffered a similar decline. After Seymour's death, the mission continued to decline. After an attempted takeover and infighting in 1931 that resulted in litigation, the Azusa Street Mission was offered to the Assemblies of God, but they had no interest in relics.⁶⁵⁰ At some point, Seymour's wife, Jennie [Moore] Seymour mortgaged her home to try to save the mission, but the bank ended up foreclosing on the mission after she could no longer make payments.⁶⁵¹ As a result, the City of Los Angeles condemned the building as a fire hazard and had it razed.⁶⁵² All who remained were some of the original group (and possibly a handful of others) who first met at the Asberry home on North Bonnie Brae Street which is where the revival started.⁶⁵³ Ironically, just like the hero's journey and the circles of life, the Azusa Street Revival ended where it began 26 years before, at the Asberry home at 216 North Bonnie Brae Street.

5.12 Azusa Street as Tragedy, Comedy and Fairy Tale

Some consider a story a tragedy when the hero experiences something far worse than they should have (like Othello). If that is true, Seymour died a tragic hero. Millions of people

⁶⁴⁷ Douglas J. Nelson, *For Such a Time As This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, England, 1981), 271-272.

⁶⁴⁸ This author personally visited his gravesite and can testify to the location of his burial.

⁶⁴⁹ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *Azusa Street Mission & Revival* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 319. Cf. Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007), 54.

⁶⁵⁰ Larry E. Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William Seymour* (Joplin: Christian Life Books, 1999), 333.

⁶⁵¹ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 156.

⁶⁵² Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 320.

⁶⁵³ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 320.

trace their roots back to Azusa Street, yet Seymour died in obscurity, thinking he was a failure.⁶⁵⁴ Some of this tragedy was caused by Seymour's own leadership failures, and some of it was caused by others who attempted to destroy the utopian community.

But despite this tragic end, Seymour's story is also comedy. Not only do Seymour's demographic characteristics contrast with Parham's, but the idea of God using a one-eyed black preacher during the height of Jim Crow segregation to ignite one of history's greatest revivals is comic. Seymour's story becomes even more comic when you consider the details, like how he became stranded in Los Angeles after getting locked out of a church, and then went on to marry a black woman who owned her own house during Jim Crow segregation! Hollywood films frequently use this "fish out of water" concept as a way to create comedy because of the natural cultural conflict that results from people being placed in unfamiliar contexts.⁶⁵⁵ The natural conflict Seymour experienced, his propensity for humor and the fact that outsiders poked fun at Azusa Street, all had the potential to create a very enriching comedy.

And finally, Seymour's story is fairytale. Not only was the Azusa Street community a utopian fairytale, but Seymour's story itself was a fairytale. In his day (and even today), few other disabled black men had the local success and global influence Seymour had. Seymour shattered any internal (as in mental) limitations he may have had, he shattered external limitations such as the limitations others imposed on him, he ran a successful (and utopian) congregation during Jim Crow segregation, he had a house and money (at least enough money to not live in poverty), he was able to develop his own theology and lead Azusa Street the way he

⁶⁵⁴ Nelson, *For Such a Time As This*, 271-272.

⁶⁵⁵ One famous example of this was the film *Crocodile Dundee* (1986). In the United States, there is a history of ordinary individuals, or underdogs, who emerge as the greatest or wisest of us all. This happens with both historical figures as well as fictional characters, from Charlie Chaplin, to Buster Keaton, to Harold Lloyd, to Forrest Gump....

wanted, Azusa Street was seemingly magical in the way the Spirit flowed and in the way healing abounded at a time medical technology was still somewhat primitive and unreliable, etc., etc. Many preachers today would consider this a fairy tale. But for a black preacher living in 1906, Seymour was a forerunner who redefined what it meant to live as a black Christian in America.

In his book *Telling The Truth: The Gospel As Tragedy, Comedy & Fairy Tale*, Frederick Buechner suggests the gospel itself contains these same elements of tragedy, comedy and fairytale.⁶⁵⁶ The tragedy is that humanity's sin will result in eternal death. The comedy is that that same sinner can be loved, cherished and forgiven, despite their tragic condition. The fairytale is that that same sinner can be forgiven and experience eternal pleasures forevermore in Heaven even though they do not deserve those things and could do nothing on their own, apart from the work of Christ, to obtain those things.

Jesus's life contains some similarities as well because His death on the cross was a fate worse than he deserved. Jesus's life also contains comic elements because the God of the universe came to earth as a baby, born in a manger. And, Jesus's life has fairy tale elements because Jesus is truly the ultimate superhero who conquered sin, sickness and death. (And Satan is the ultimate supervillain. Even today, many villains are in some way modeled after the archetypes of Judas and Satan.)

In some ways, Seymour's story appears to mirror the literary motifs of tragedy, comedy and fairy tale. Aligning with these familiar tropes makes Seymour appear to be the hero, and possibly the tragic hero, of the Azusa Street story. Seeing an ordinary person experience and

⁶⁵⁶ As noted elsewhere in this thesis, approximately 2/3 of the Bible is story. Matthew 22:1 says, "As was his custom, Jesus continued to teach the people by using allegories," (TPT).

overcome difficulty and tragedy allows the reader to identify with Seymour and feel sympathetic towards him.⁶⁵⁷

5.13 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed Seymour's theology and suggested that not only was Seymour's theology rational, but it was distinct and made a contribution to early American Pentecostal theology. Given Seymour's theological contribution and the noteworthy parallels between Seymour's life and the hero's journey, should Seymour be considered the archetypal hero the Holy Spirit used to lead Azusa Street? This thesis argues that Seymour's story, leadership and theological contribution was so significant that he possibly rises to the level of an archetypal hero. At a minimum, Seymour should at least be considered a legend because he was a historical figure whose story has been embellished so that the positive elements are highlighted and his failures minimized.⁶⁵⁸ However, many of Seymour's accomplishments and the outline of his story are so incredible that at times Seymour's story seems to resemble that of a heroic character.

⁶⁵⁷ In storytelling, it is often important that the hero is someone audiences can identify with and care about. Although Seymour may have irritated some people in his day, when audiences today hear his story, they can often identify with some of Seymour's struggles and they often care about him.

⁶⁵⁸ Rebecca and Philip Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 35.

Chapter 6

Seymour & Contemporary Culture

6.1 Overview

This thesis began by reconsidering Seymour's leadership contribution to the Azusa Street Revival and to early American Pentecostalism. Most of this thesis focused on the early 20th Century, and considered William Seymour in his immediate historical context. However, as the 20th Century progressed, Civil Rights leaders in the 1950s and 1960s employed some of the same leadership principles and tactics that Seymour used. This observation is important because those Civil Rights leaders were (and are) considered leaders. Even if those leaders may not have been consciously thinking about Seymour's leadership, the fact that those Civil Rights leaders were revered as leaders (and are still revered as leaders), suggests that Seymour should also be viewed as a leader because Seymour used some of the same strategies, and Seymour had some of the same results.

For example, consider Martin Luther King, Jr., ("King") who, like Seymour, emphasized the "weapon" of love, who had a utopian vision of equality, and who utilized non-violent tactics like nightly revival meetings, leaflets and word-of-mouth advertising. King added one extra dimension, which was his effective use of the legal system. This also meant that King drew from the United States Constitution and US Supreme Court rulings, and he incorporated social justice and social action into his message. Both Seymour and King had profound impact both inside and outside the church, yet King is often immediately regarded as a leader, whereas Seymour is not.

In its final quest to suggest Seymour was the leader of Azusa Street, and that his leadership contribution is worth studying, this chapter opens by exploring the similarities between Seymour and King. This chapter then considers Seymour's leadership in light of other established leaders,

like Peter and Paul from the Bible. Third, this chapter considers how Seymour's leadership relates to contemporary notions of leadership. And finally, this chapter considers how "charismatic leadership" is not as developed as other leadership styles, and how analyzing Seymour's leadership can potentially provide a path forward to more clearly define what exactly charismatic leadership is (especially in the church).

6.2 Similarities Between Seymour and King

Although the Civil Rights Movement technically started in 1954, one of the most significant moments early in the American Civil Rights Movement was the Montgomery Bus Boycott (December 5, 1955 – December 20, 1956).⁶⁵⁹ The boycott started when activist Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white bus passenger. At the time, Jim Crow segregation laws required black people to sit in the back of the bus. If there were too many white passengers, black people were required to give up their seats. Parks refusal to give up her seat resulted in her arrest on December 1, 1955. At the time, Parks was the Secretary for the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). Not only was Parks active in the Civil Rights Movement, but she had previously had an issue with the same bus driver. Her trial date was Monday, December 5, 1955. The day before, December 4, 1955, plans for a Monday boycott were spread via churches, newspapers, leaflets and word-of-mouth. On Monday, Parks was found guilty of disorderly conduct and fined. This sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott and an appeal of her conviction all the way up to the United States Supreme Court.

⁶⁵⁹ "Montgomery Bus Boycott." The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, May 30, 2019. <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/montgomery-bus-boycott>; Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965* (New York: Penguin, 2013), 59-90.

On Monday, December 5, 1955, the boycott organizers held a mass meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. A local pastor named Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke. Although King was already an ordained Baptist minister, he had little notoriety until December 5, 1955, when he delivered a rousing message. This message, and King's continued leadership in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, catapulted King to the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement.

In many ways, King was at the same place in his ministry on December 5, 1955, as Seymour was on Monday, April 9, 1906, when Edward Lee first spoke in tongues at one of Seymour's prayer meetings. Both Seymour and King were relatively obscure ministers who entered situations where others had prepared the way, and both were ready to act. For King, the Civil Rights Movement had already begun and had gained momentum. For Seymour, parishioners throughout Los Angeles had already been praying for revival, and some of them had been deeply touched by the Welsh Revival by the time Seymour arrived. In both cases, the movement started amongst the working class. Those riding the buses in Montgomery were from the working class, and some of those attending Seymour's prayer meetings at the Asberry home (prior to moving to Azusa Street) were from the working class. For example, Edward Lee (the first person to speak in tongues in Seymour's meetings) was a janitor at First National Bank; Richard Asberry was a janitor at the Wilcox Building (and had previously worked for the Pullman Pacific Car Company); William "Bud" Traynor was a railroad worker; William Cummings was a plasterer; Jennie Evans Moore (Seymour's future wife) was a massage therapist (and had previously worked as a domestic and cook); etc.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁶⁰ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission & Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 64-65.

Another interesting similarity between Seymour and King is that they both appealed to history when making their case. Seymour appealed to the Bible and God's end times promises; King appealed to Supreme Court precedent, the Constitution, and to both natural law and moral law, both of which came from God. To that end, both Seymour and King were attempting to restore people to the high standards set forth in the Bible, the Constitution, and God's natural and moral law. Both believed humanity had fallen short from those standards, but with God's help, individuals, the church and society could live up to the high ideals contained in those writings. In that sense, Seymour and King were sort of like Old Testament prophets who were calling people to repent for falling short of God's standards. Their call was for people to turn back to God who could empower them to live according to God's standards. Seymour and King also shared theological and philosophical similarities in their understanding of equality. Both men believed that in Christ, we are all equal. As a result, we must live accordingly. However, King appeared more explicit in how this should affect broader society, as opposed to Seymour, who focused more on achieving equality in his own congregation and those in his sphere of influence.

Both men had utopian visions for their audiences and both believed equality could be achieved. This involved focusing on the end utopian prize that Revelation depicted, as well as actively engaging the evils of racism here on earth. Although both Seymour and King engaged evil spiritually, Seymour seemed to emphasize the power of the Holy Spirit, and King seemed to emphasize civic engagement. However, both built their ministries on foundations of love and peace. Neither man advocated violence. Rather, they repeatedly focused on the utopia that lie ahead of them and took a non-violent approach to bring about change. For both men, this approach involved nightly meetings, leaflets, word-of-mouth advertising and other publications (such as periodicals). However, King more effectively used the courts, newspapers and secular

organizations to help him achieve his utopian vision, whereas Seymour more effectively utilized testimonials and periodicals.

In addition, both Seymour and King spoke with a new voice, they started new movements and they were inspiring and stimulating. Part of this voice involved emphasizing love, and part of it involved resisting segregation laws while still remaining within their Constitutional rights. Their message and behavior had a profound effect on whites of the time. Both Seymour and King were able to rally whites to the cause of equality in ways others had not. They did this through their message, their willingness to make great personal sacrifices to see their utopian visions fulfilled, their lack of corruption by the establishment, and their reliance on God. In the end, both the buses in Montgomery and the Azusa Street congregation were desegregated. This involved prayer, unity amongst the people, and a careful reasoning through the issues by both Seymour and King.⁶⁶¹

How strong were the similarities between Seymour and King? In *Stone of Hope*, David Chappell goes so far as to suggest that the Civil Rights Movement was primarily a “religious event, whose social and political aspects were...secondary or incidental.”⁶⁶² Chappell bases his analysis on primary source documents which referred to King as a modern-day “Moses.”⁶⁶³ This typology was also present at Azusa Street, except Frank Bartleman referred to Pastor Smale as Moses and Seymour as Joshua (because Seymour was able to lead people over into the promised

⁶⁶¹ Examples of the “reasoning through the issues” would be Seymour’s developing theology in both *The Apostolic Faith* and his *Doctrines and Disciplines* book. One famous example of King’s “reasoning through the issues” would be his “Letter from the Birmingham Jail,” where we see how King reasoned through the issues to arrive at the conclusion that the time to act was now. Cf. William Seymour, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission* (Joplin: Christian Life, 2000), 42-43; Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from the Birmingham Jail,” in *Why We Can't Wait*, edited by Martin Luther King, Jr. (New York: Signet Classics, 2000), 85-112.

⁶⁶² David Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 87.

⁶⁶³ Chappell, *A Stone of Hope*, 87.

land).⁶⁶⁴ Chappell goes on to note that, like Seymour, King had a diverse audience, he was able to unite people, and he used spiritual tactics to advance God's Kingdom and fight evil.⁶⁶⁵ The Montgomery Bus Boycott meetings resulted in evangelism across racial lines, increased church attendance, and increased supporters to the cause.⁶⁶⁶ Chappell notes that King rose to the occasion because great faith was needed since there had been nearly a Century of setbacks since the Civil War ended.⁶⁶⁷ King rose to that occasion, and put his faith on the line, not unlike how Seymour rose to the occasion when confronting his mentor, Charles Parham, and put everything on the line for the nascent Azusa Street Congregation. Both King and Seymour had great faith, and they took great risk to actualize their utopian visions. And in both cases, the faith of the congregation seemed to rise. One example of this was how two ministers were miraculously healed during the December 5, 1955 nightly meeting for the Montgomery Bus Boycott.⁶⁶⁸ After that first meeting in Montgomery on December 5, 1955, King apparently went home and told his wife that he was concerned that, "People will expect me to perform miracles for the rest of my life."⁶⁶⁹ Chappell notes these were the first of many miracles that would occur over the next 15 years.⁶⁷⁰ Given that conversions in the Civil Rights Movement were happening across racial lines (as it did in other religious revival), the fact that conversion was continually happening as the Civil Rights Movement grew, and the fact that King claimed he was hearing from God, Chappell concluded that the Civil Rights Movement may have primarily been a revival-type spiritual

⁶⁶⁴ Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, 61.

⁶⁶⁵ Chappell, *A Stone of Hope*, 87-88. Chappell credits some of this language to Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth. Chappell believes Shuttlesworth's relenting nonviolent spiritual battle was instrumental in mounting this unprecedented challenge to segregation.

⁶⁶⁶ Chappell, *A Stone of Hope*, 90, 92.

⁶⁶⁷ Chappell, *A Stone of Hope*, 91.

⁶⁶⁸ Chappell, *A Stone of Hope*, 91.

⁶⁶⁹ Coretta Scott King, *My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Avon, 1970), 159.

⁶⁷⁰ Chappell, *A Stone of Hope*, 91.

movement, with the civil rights flowing from the foundation that God demands equality and justice.⁶⁷¹

Just as Seymour's theology developed over time, King's theology also appears to have developed over time. And just as Seymour had developed his own theology and was thinking independently when his white mentor, Charles Parham, visited Azusa Street, King had also developed his own theology and was thinking independently when he composed his "Letter from the Birmingham Jail" in By the time Parham arrives at Azusa Street, Seymour develop over time because by the time King writes his "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," in 1963, King had developed his own theology, was thinking independently, and he also stood up against ministers who felt Civil Rights leaders should wait longer before taking action. Both Seymour and King were in the middle of their public ministries when these events happened (i.e., the confrontation between Seymour and Parham and King's "Letter from the Birmingham Jail").

When King wrote his "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," he deeply believed he was on a mission from God, that it was God's will that he act, and that the time to act was now, lest nothing ever happen. King uses this spiritual foundation (and the legal foundation found in the Constitution), to argue for immediate, non-violent action. This is because King viewed the spiritual struggle for civil rights and racial justice as inextricably tied to the civil aspects of the struggle. Jane Daily says this was because King tied both the spiritual and civil issues to divine authority, as evidenced by his proclamation that if he was wrong, then both the Supreme Court and God Himself were wrong (because King believed he was operating within his divine rights as well as his Constitutional rights).⁶⁷² David Howard-Pitney confirms this linking of King's

⁶⁷¹ Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow*, 92.

⁶⁷² Jane Dailey, *Building the American Republic: A Narrative History to 1877*, Volume 2 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), 237.

spirituality with civil rights when he observes that King was deeply committed to integration, as opposed to Malcolm X's Muslims who, "spurned integration with 'white devils.'"⁶⁷³ Rather, King urged his followers to integrate with whites, and to do so, "in a spirit of love."⁶⁷⁴ But where did these ideas come from? Both Daily and Howard-Pitney highlight King's religious upbringing and the fact that he was both a pastor and an activist. For King, these two ideas merged in the United States because King believed both the Constitution and the Bible supported his reinterpretation of what equality meant and looked like in his time. When King wrote his "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," he not only affirmed those beliefs, but he went so far as to say that the Christian worldview demands that people take action against injustice as part of the Christian duty to actualize God's Kingdom reality on earth.

For King, the purpose of law and order was to establish justice. Taking actions to see those laws carried out (like protests), should not be condemned because even the courts do not condemn peaceful actions just because they might lead to violence. Anything could lead to violence. That is not a good enough reason to not peacefully act in ways that could carry out justice. And when should people carry out these peaceful actions that lead to justice? They should carry them out now because inaction allows injustice to remain. This would be a violation of the Christian duty. Therefore, the time to partner with God to instate moral law and natural law is now. In the Bible, and throughout history, people acted in the "now" to advance human rights. And many of those people were labeled extremists, like Jesus who acted in extreme love

⁶⁷³ David Howard-Pitney, *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004), 2.

⁶⁷⁴ Howard-Pitney, *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s*, 2.

when he said to love your enemies.⁶⁷⁵ To not act when the time arises to carry out justice is to be negligent in one's leadership duty and in one's Christian duty.

Understanding King's logic, his theological analysis and his story is important because it highlights many ways in which King's leadership and Seymour's leadership overlap. This is very important in terms of learning from Seymour's leadership because the parallels between Seymour and King suggest that Seymour's approach was not an isolated approach that should be discarded as unique, or as a "one-off." Rather, this thesis suggests that the comparisons between Seymour and King add validity to Seymour's leadership, and given that Seymour and King were two of the most effective racial justice ministers in the 20th Century, we could learn from their leadership.

Based on these similarities between Seymour and King, and based on the fact that King is considered a leader, I contend that Seymour is a leader in the same way the Civil Rights Movement's leaders were leaders. Even though Seymour's leadership may have looked different, it shares many similarities with other African American leaders in the 20th Century. One example highlighted in this chapter is how Seymour and King appear to be in the same sequence of their leadership development when they first came on the national scene. As both of them grow as leaders, they use some of the same tactics, some of the same theology and they both have wide-reaching impact. In light of this, I argue Seymour's leadership is worth revisiting because it contains elements that both the Pentecostal church and the African American church have lost and need to once again be restored.

6.3 Biblical Precedent

⁶⁷⁵ King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait*, 102.

In addition to the comparisons between Seymour and King, there are also comparisons between Seymour and Biblical leaders. For example, in Galatians 2:11-21 Paul strongly confronts Peter because he goes back to eating with the Jews. This Biblical confrontation suggests there are times when Biblical leaders do engage in conflict, and they either have to resolve these matters at a later time (after theological reflection and/or reconciliation), or they part ways. Given the New Testament's emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation and unity, occurrences of abrasive, relationship-ending confrontations should be rare because they are rare in the Bible. Yet, they do happen, such as the sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15 which resulted in Barnabas and Mark going one way, and Paul and Silas going another. For Seymour, the core values of community, unity and divine love were so important that he was willing to sever his relationship with his mentor over those issues. Yet, Seymour did so without slandering Parham, or harming Parham's ministry. Unfortunately, we cannot say the same about Parham who attempted to take over the Azusa Street Mission. When Parham's attempted coup failed, he tried starting a competing congregation several blocks away. Parham then asked the press to discredit Seymour and declare him as the true leader of the movement.⁶⁷⁶ Parham is a foil to Seymour in the sense that Seymour is an example of what to do, and Parham is an example of what not to do.

In his book *Scripture and Discernment: Decision Making in the Church*, Paul Timothy Johnson's analysis of Acts 15 suggests that Seymour may have embodied a Biblical model of leadership and confrontation. For example, like the Apostle Paul, Seymour used Scripture to validate Azusa Street practices, Seymour avoided prejudice and partiality, Azusa Street participants relied on discernment and they "tested" spiritual phenomena, Azusa Street was a

⁶⁷⁶ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 127.

place of spiritual freedom, etc.⁶⁷⁷ Johnson goes on to note how the New Testament pattern as set forth by Paul in his writings is to evaluate whether or not church member's actions "betray the Spirit's authentic expression."⁶⁷⁸ For Seymour and the Azusa Street congregation, Parham's betrayal of the various expressions of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street, such as unity and divine love, disqualified him from leading the movement and resulted in his excommunication from the community. But given how Seymour's theology had developed by this point, Parham's beliefs concerning segregation challenged the identity of the Azusa Street community by calling into question the Spirit's manifestation of unity and divine love (which was arguably a fruit of sanctification).⁶⁷⁹ But can Seymour legitimately reinterpret Biblical passages to presume that equality, unity or divine love extends to racial integration? On several occasions, Johnson argues that Paul himself reinterpreted various Old Testament passages in his attempt to appeal to scripture to justify his theology.⁶⁸⁰ Although some might not have liked Seymour's theology, it was consistent in how it viewed racial integration as flowing from the work of the Spirit, and consistent in how in the New Testament, these previous barriers between men and women, Jew and Greek, and slave and free no longer existed.

Seymour also seems to follow the narrative decision-making process of the early Church.⁶⁸¹ For example, Johnson highlights how the narrative of the offended person or the witnesses, "forms the basis for the community discernment and decision (Matt. 18:17)."⁶⁸² Here, both Seymour and the community evaluated Parham's claims and behavior and operated within

⁶⁷⁷ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment: Decision Making in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 63-65.

⁶⁷⁸ Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 65.

⁶⁷⁹ Cf. Johnson's analysis of I Corinthians in: Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 65.

⁶⁸⁰ Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 66.

⁶⁸¹ Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 67.

⁶⁸² Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 67.

its authority, “to decide its future and discipline its members...[because] the survival of the group is at stake.”⁶⁸³ Johnson’s analysis of Matthew 18:17-20 is that the church community has the authority to reach its own decisions which are “binding” with God (Matthew 18:18). For Johnson, this authority stems from the fact the church assembly is unique because it is, “visited by the power of the Lord—the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁸⁴ This authority allows the church, “to address challenges posed to the group’s life as a whole...[which] requires the assertion of the community’s identity.”⁶⁸⁵

In other words, the church’s identity is formed by Biblical values and its authentic expression of Spirit, in accordance with those values. Those expressions often involve activities which are evaluated (or “tested”) by “local authority structures.”⁶⁸⁶ When activities manifest which cause the church to lose its distinctive witness, church leaders, and the collective church community, have the authority to act, and are even obligated to act, for the purpose of retaining the church’s integrity and identity.⁶⁸⁷ The scriptural authority for this is found in the New Testament, but also throughout the Bible since the Bible highlights the importance and the authority of community leadership.⁶⁸⁸ Johnson believes that since the Bible does not outline many of the practical details concerning the structure of these authority structures, these communities can look different in various cultures and in light of diverse local customs.⁶⁸⁹ At Azusa Street, the community was preaching Christ and was allowing the Holy Spirit to authentically express itself via unity, community and divine love. Any threat to that expression

⁶⁸³ Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 67.

⁶⁸⁴ Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 67.

⁶⁸⁵ Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 67.

⁶⁸⁶ Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 62.

⁶⁸⁷ Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 62-67.

⁶⁸⁸ Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 61-67.

⁶⁸⁹ Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 61-67.

would have been a direct attack against the community's identity and the work of the Spirit in that community. Therefore, according to Johnson, local church leaders (i.e. the Azusa Street leaders) had the scriptural authority to excommunicate people like Parham who threatened the identity and work of the Spirit at Azusa Street.

In *Paul and the Gift*, John Barclay provides another lens through which the Parham/Seymour conflict could be analyzed. Here, we find a dispute between Peter and Paul because Peter went back to eating with the Jews and he started recruiting others (such as Barnabas) to do the same. Barclay argues Paul viewed this as Peter being “unfaithful to ‘the truth of the good news’ which was a *superior norm*” to any one cultural tradition.⁶⁹⁰ Barclay acknowledges that ethnic identity and cultural traditions are okay, but it was not okay that the community be separated and not allowed to eat together, especially since by going to the Gentiles, the Gospel signified a broader inclusion (Galatians 3:28).⁶⁹¹ Barclay suggests the Gospel changes our value system and that in Christ we are, “drawn into an association of mutual recognition that is blind to ethnic evaluations, [and] other differentials of worth.”⁶⁹² This incident is also outlined in Acts 15 and we learn that the conflict was ultimately resolved in Acts 15:19-20 where a decision was made not to add to the Gospel or make it difficult for those turning to God. Instead, the Gentiles were commanded to abstain from food offered to idols, sexual immorality and blood.

Given the inclusive nature of the Gospel, Seymour's interracial community that manifested unity and divine love was arguably one of the greatest examples in the 20th Century of what the Church should look like. Seymour did not add to the Gospel, nor did he make it difficult for

⁶⁹⁰ John M. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 368-369.

⁶⁹¹ Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 368-369; Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 67-68.

⁶⁹² Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 369.

diverse peoples to accept the Gospel and participate in the community of God. Just as Paul confronted Peter over adding certain Jewish restrictions to the Gospel, Seymour confronted Parham over his attempt to add segregation to the meetings and over his attempt to restrict the manifestations of the Spirit. Legally, Parham arguably had the upper hand due to Jim Crow Segregation laws and cultural norms. But theologically, Seymour arguably had the upper hand because Seymour was embodying the superior norms of the Gospel. It was on this basis that Seymour rose up and exercised his authority over Parham. As noted previously in this thesis, this was the climax of the Azusa Street story because this was when Seymour's theology became firmly established at Azusa Street and when he became the true leader (because the congregation no longer considered Parham to be their true leader).⁶⁹³

In summary, there is a biblical basis for Seymour's actions. Understanding the conflict between Parham and Seymour and Peter and Paul, and understanding the role of church leadership and authority can provide some valuable leadership lessons for the church today. This is especially true for those churches that are attempting to develop multicultural congregations and want to be inclusive while not overstepping the acceptable Bible bounds of diversity.⁶⁹⁴

6.4 What Is Charismatic Leadership?

In the United States, discussions about charismatic leadership often include a discussion of Max Weber who, in 1947, defined charisma this way:

It is a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as not accessible to the

⁶⁹³ "Pentecost With Signs Following: Seven Months of Pentecostal Showers. Jesus, Our Projector and Great Shepherd," *The Apostolic Faith* (December 1906), number 4, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁴ Johnson, *Scripture & Discernment*, 65.

ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader.⁶⁹⁵

Weber's definition of charisma is not new. Those familiar with the Bible might recall the handful of times the Apostle Paul uses the word, "charismata," in Romans and I Corinthians. In English, the word "charismata" is often translated "gift," because it is a grace gift given by God. Although Weber's incorporation of language such as "superhuman" calls to mind the "supernatural aid" Joseph Campbell says heroes often receive, this thesis approaches charismatic leadership from the perspective that it is God who graciously bestows charisma since He is the source of all good things, and it is the Holy Spirit who empowers humans to achieve seemingly "superhuman" feats.⁶⁹⁶ However, Weber is correct in noting that not all heroic traits require superhuman feats. According to Allison and Goethals, someone can become a hero by demonstrating "exceptional powers or qualities," which are often manifest, "either by performing extraordinary actions or by displaying strong virtues."⁶⁹⁷

An example of someone who demonstrated a high skill level, or special ability, was Captain Sully Sullenberger, the captain who successfully landed US Airways Flight 1549 on the Hudson River with all passengers and crew surviving.⁶⁹⁸ Sullenberger also demonstrated virtue by not leaving the plane until everyone else had gotten off, which meant he made a personal sacrifice for the benefit of others. For his actions, Sullenberger became an American "hero" in

⁶⁹⁵ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: The Free Press, 1947), 358-359. Max Weber was also known for concepts such as the "Protestant Ethic." This was obviously a unique concept because it inverts Marxism by arguing that religion may have contributed to an economic system. However, some people have now begun to challenge Weber's methods and conclusions. Cf. Solomon Stein, and Virgil Henry Storr, "Reconsidering Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism." *Independent Review* 24, no. 4 (Spring 2020): 521-32.

⁶⁹⁶ Cf. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (Novato: New World Library, 2008), 57-63.

⁶⁹⁷ Scott T. Allison and George R. Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 25.

⁶⁹⁸ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes*, 28, 8.

one day. In reality, he had been preparing for this moment his whole life with his 40 years of flying experience and his special skill of flying glider planes. What Sullenberger did not know is that all that special training, and his unique skillset as a certified glider pilot, would ultimately result in him becoming a hero in 208 seconds (the amount of time between the dual engine failure and the successful forced water landing on the Hudson River). People who demonstrate high skills levels like Sullenberger, or people like make powerful moral choices, like Oskar Schindler who made a moral decision to protect Jews even though it meant personal risk to him, often become heroes because they have exemplary qualities that reflect the best of humanity.⁶⁹⁹

But the idea of demonstrating an exceptional skill level, or making a significant moral choice might seem unattainable to some. However, what is interesting is that a survey of 450 people revealed that approximately 1/3 of those surveyed listed a family member as a hero.⁷⁰⁰ This is because family members often make the kind of exemplary self-sacrifices that heroes make. Since the church is like a family, it is not unreasonable to view one another as heroes, especially when we demonstrate attributes of Christ, the superhero who defeated the villain, Satan.⁷⁰¹ As noted throughout this thesis, charismatic leaders, like Seymour, can legitimately be viewed as heroes, not because they are perfect, but because they demonstrate heroic qualities despite their imperfections.

⁶⁹⁹ The United States values athletes, doctors and just about anyone else who demonstrates a high skill level, especially those who seem to demonstrate almost superhuman skills at the most critical moment. We also value those who make exemplary moral choices, like Corrie Ten Boom who sacrificially assisted Jews during WWII because she believed it was God's will, even though it ultimately meant she would suffer imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp. Cf. Corrie Ten Boom, *The Hiding Place* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 2006).

⁷⁰⁰ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes*, 25.

⁷⁰¹ To children, Christ is sometimes viewed as a superhero, not just because of how he looks and acts in Bible stories and Bible cartoons (such as wearing a robe which can look like a superhero costume or cape, having a beard, etc.), but also because some children who call on Jesus at night when they are afraid report that Jesus did in fact show up and chase the monsters away.

As a practical matter, we often put people in the news and call them “heroes” for that very reason—they were ordinary people who selflessly responded in a moment of need. Often, those “heroes” were ordinary people who used their ordinary skills the best they knew how to render aide to those in need. One distinction between a “hero” we might see on the news, versus a Bible “hero” is that in the Bible, God often enabled leaders to accomplish more than they could on their own. This is in alignment with the notion of charisma being a divine grace gift, to empower humans to accomplish God’s purposes. Some people, like Seymour, experienced this kind of empowerment via the Holy Spirit working through Him. Other Christians, such as the terminally ill, have experienced this divine grace more internally, in the form of hope and peace in the face of death (which can inspire Christians and non-Christians alike).

Today, charismatic leaders often read books, attend conferences or utilize practical exercises to proactively develop their grace gifts and position themselves for an increase in supernatural aid, similar to how pastors can develop gifts of preaching, counseling and prayer.⁷⁰² This is consistent with secular research. For example, after analyzing social scientific and qualitative studies, Olivia Fox Cabane concluded that what contemporary North American culture often refers to as “charisma” is really a set of behaviors that can be learned.⁷⁰³ As such, Cabane’s book is sort of an applied science that provides practical exercises which can help the reader become the ideal North American business person, doctor, lawyer, teacher, stay-at-home mom, pastor or friend. This is because North American culture has ideal archetypes for each of these people. Cabane’s main premise is that by consciously developing the traits and skills

⁷⁰² One of the clearest examples of this would be what Dan McCollam is doing through Prophetic Company, or what Kris Vallotton is doing at Bethel Church (Redding, CA) through their community transformation initiatives and their School of the Prophets.

⁷⁰³ Olivia Fox Cabane, *The Charisma Myth: How Anyone Can Master the Art and Science of Personal Magnetism* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 5.

required to manifest these culturally accepted ideals, an individual can develop charisma through their presence, magnetism and behavior (among other things). This is also true for Christian charismatic leaders in the sense that they can grow and develop in their spiritual gifts, preaching abilities, people skills, leadership skills, counseling skills, administrative and financial skills, and a host of other very important skill sets. One who excels in these matters could become an exemplar, or a hero, by virtue of their high levels of skill or competency in a particular area.⁷⁰⁴

This thesis accepts the notion that one can grow in charisma. But for charismatic leaders, both the Bible and Seymour serve as examples that suggest there are higher levels of divine empowerment available to those who seek God and allow God's grace gifts to flow in their lives. In that sense, someone is not necessarily charismatic due to their own presence or magnetism, but because of God's presence and anointing on their life. This is why, despite suggestions that Seymour did not appear to do much other than put his head inside a milk crate and pray, the reality is that by getting out of the way and allowing God to minister directly to the people, it was God's presence, magnetism and anointing that drew men and women of all races and socioeconomic status to Himself and to Azusa Street.⁷⁰⁵ Without God's presence, it seems unlikely that Seymour himself would have had enough natural charisma to draw the crowds of people from around the world to Azusa Street, or to withstand the opposition he faced with such profound love. Seymour's partnership with God was significant because other ministers at the time were seeking God, but God showed up at Azusa Street in a powerful and unique way. It appears as though God wanted someone to create space for Him, and to woo Him. One person who appears to have done that successfully was William Seymour.

⁷⁰⁴ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes: What They Do & Why We Need Them*, 8.

⁷⁰⁵ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington: Whitaker, 1982), 56.

However, little academic research has been published on the type of charismatic leadership that involves Holy Spirit empowerment (which is the type of charismatic leadership Seymour portrayed). As of the writing of this thesis, an internet and library database search of “charismatic leadership” returns many popular writings and some academic writings from a secular perspective, but few academic writings that analyze charismatic leadership through the lens of Holy Spirit empowerment.⁷⁰⁶ One of the few academic books that has done this is Truls Akerlund’s *A Phenomenology of Pentecostal Leadership*.⁷⁰⁷ Akerlund highlights the aforementioned literature gap and then sets out a case for why Pentecostal leadership should be examined on its own terms, instead of through non-Pentecostal constructs that are imposed on it (including Weber’s notions of charisma).⁷⁰⁸ What is ironic is that, despite Pentecostalism’s influence on the church and culture, and despite an increased interest in spiritual leadership, little has been done to understand charismatic leadership beyond the writings of Max Weber (and Joachim Wachs).⁷⁰⁹ This is a significant literature gap, given that in a little over 120 years charismatics grew from hundreds of people to hundreds of millions of people. This rapid growth, and the subsequent global impact Pentecostalism has had on Christianity and culture, makes charismatic leadership worth studying.⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁶ One example of a popular article is: Ronald E. Riggio, “What is Charismatic Leadership?: Is Charisma Born or Made? What Makes Leaders Charismatic?” *Psychology Today*. October 07, 2012, www.psychologytoday.com.

⁷⁰⁷ Truls Akerlund, *A Phenomenology of Pentecostal Leadership* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2018).

⁷⁰⁸ Concerning this topic, Akerlund references Mark Cartledge, “Practical Theology” in Allan Anderson, *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (Berkeley: University of CA Press, 2010), 282.

⁷⁰⁹ Gillian Lindt, “Leadership,” in Lindsay Jones, *Encyclopedia of Religion* (Detroit: Macmillan, 2005), 5383.

⁷¹⁰ Allan Anderson links Pentecostalism’s rapid growth to the entrepreneurial spirit of its early leaders. Grant Wacker concurs when he concludes that the strength, determination and leadership of early Pentecostal leaders was essential to Pentecostalism’s sudden growth. Cf. Allan Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 224; Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 141.

Since many early American Pentecostal leaders were marginalized, Holy Spirit empowerment was essential to their personal success (especially when they needed healing), as well as their professional success (because they often did not have powerful positions in society). Picking up on Wacker's notion that one of the hallmarks of charismatic leadership is Holy Spirit empowerment, Akerlund observes the social status of many early American Pentecostals and he notes the connection between Holy Spirit empowerment and the elevation of the marginalized.⁷¹¹ This was especially true for early 20th Century African American preachers because the church was one of the few places in the United States at that time where African Americans could have power and take on leadership roles.⁷¹²

An approach to charismatic leadership that begins with Holy Spirit empowerment aligns with the Apostle Paul's notion of "charismata," or grace gifts, which were given for the purpose of worshipping God, blessing the church, and expanding God's Kingdom reign and rule.⁷¹³ Given that spiritual gifts are often cultivated, this approach allows us to consider the possibility that leaders can affect the culture and trajectory of charismatic communities based on how they steward charisma. In other words, God gives gifts, but those gifts often have to be cultivated to have maximum effect.

But charismatic leadership also involves a stewarding of the not-so-spiritual aspects of ministry as well. Akerlund observes, charismatic leadership is built upon divine endowment, yet

A spiritual approach to charismatic leadership might also benefit the broader field of management studies because in recent years spirituality has become a topic of interest in organizational and management theory. Cf. Laszlo Zsolnai, *Spirituality and Ethics in Management* (London: Kluwer, 2011).

⁷¹¹ Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 148; Akerlund, *A Phenomenology of Pentecostal Leadership*, 6.

⁷¹² Curtiss DeYoung, Personal Conversation, July 23, 2001.

⁷¹³ The NIV translates I Corinthians 12:7 this way, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." In context, Paul is talking about the Corinthian church. But a Biblical theology of signs, wonders and miracles suggests that these gifts can also be used outside the church. The difference is that when they are used outside the church, they often tend to be signs and wonders which point people to Christ.

it occasionally ends in human disaster.⁷¹⁴ This was true at Azusa Street. Despite Seymour's spiritual giftedness, his failure to properly steward some of the business and professional aspects of Azusa Street arguably contributed to its demise. And Seymour is not alone. Roberts Liardon has published a multi-volume set that explores why some charismatic leaders succeed, and why some fail.⁷¹⁵ What becomes clear from Liardon's work, and the stories of charismatic leaders not included in Liardon's work, is that some charismatic leaders fail to reach their full potential because of issues unrelated to their gifting. These issues can include spiritual issues, personal issues (such as emotional and psychological issues or addiction), relationship issues, ethical issues (especially in professional ethics), legal or financial issues, or a host of other issues unrelated to the gift itself. Seymour's failure to properly guard his flock from outsiders who wished to cause division, his negligence with regards to financial oversight and his lack of professional ethics arguably contributed the most to Azusa Street's decline. These failures, and the resultant schisms and lack of unity that resulted, had such a devastating effect on Azusa Street that Seymour died in obscurity, feeling he was a failure.⁷¹⁶ Worse, the infighting at Azusa Street resulted in litigation and after no one would purchase it, the City of Los Angeles condemned the building as a fire hazard and had it razed.⁷¹⁷ This serves as a powerful lesson because even today, most charismatic leaders who lose their ministries do so because of human reasons, such as moral issues, financial issues or leadership issues. One conclusion that can be drawn from this is that charismatic leaders must either diligently watch over the business and

⁷¹⁴ Akerlund, *A Phenomenology of Pentecostal Leadership*, 6.

⁷¹⁵ Volume one of this series is: Roberts Liardon, *God's Generals: Why They Succeeded and Why Some Failed* (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 1996).

⁷¹⁶ Douglas J. Nelson, *For Such a Time As This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, England, 1981), 271-272.

⁷¹⁷ Larry E. Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William Seymour* (Joplin: Christian Life Books, 1999), 333; Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission & Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 320.

management issues of their organization, or they must surround themselves with a team of trustworthy advisors who can carefully monitor those aspects. But even then, responsibility ultimately falls upon the leader. The leader cannot say they did not know, or claim the failure is not their fault.

Another aspect to consider when examining charismatic leadership is that charismatic leaders in the United States often incorporate other leadership models into their charismatic leadership. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: missional leadership, transformational leadership and servant leadership. This suggests charismatic leadership can look different in different contexts, especially different cultural contexts.⁷¹⁸ However, it is unclear if this amalgamation of charismatic leadership with other leadership models is because charismatic leadership can be applied to many different models, or if it is because charismatic leadership has not developed its own separate, distinct identity. Globally, charismatic leadership is somewhat fluid and is often mainly defined by Holy Spirit empowerment. In that sense, the Holy Spirit is sometimes incorporated into existing leadership models, not unlike how Seymour incorporated the baptism in the Holy Spirit to his existing theology.⁷¹⁹ The closest charismatic leadership has come to fostering its own identity has come through books written about Pentecostal pastoring (which involves leadership). However, as noted earlier, many of those books have been written at the practical, versus the academic level.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁸ Concerning how diversely Weber's definition of "charisma" is applied globally, cf. Reed Nelson, "Authority, Organization, and Societal Context in Multinational Churches," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 38.4 (1993): 653-82.

⁷¹⁹ Curtiss DeYoung, et al. *United By Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 58-59.

⁷²⁰ One example of a book for Pentecostal pastors which includes leadership topics but is written at a practical level is: Thomas Trask, et al., ed., *The Pentecostal Pastor: A Mandate for the 21st Century* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1997).

Given that charismatic leadership is diverse, and given that many other books have been written about missional leadership, transformational leadership and servant leadership, this chapter will primarily focus on making an original contribution by analyzing charismatic leadership through the lens of Holy Spirit manifestations, Pentecostal epistemology and Holy Spirit empowerment, with a special emphasis on how those concepts are useful for Pentecostal apologetics and social transformation.⁷²¹ This analysis is ground in Seymour's theology and leadership, but it is influenced by 21st Century experiences. For readers who have not read earlier chapters, it is worth noting that other leadership concepts have been addressed throughout this thesis. One key concept that has been addressed, and is important for any charismatic leader, is that charismatic leadership is diverse. This means that just as Seymour's leadership flowed from his personality, charismatic leadership can flow from any leader's personality. As noted previously, one of the reasons Seymour's leadership contribution was overlooked throughout much of the 20th Century was because his leadership looked so different from what was expected of charismatic leaders. For those questioning their leadership style, or for those concerned that God cannot use them because they are different, it is advisable to read earlier chapters of this thesis because Seymour's story could serve as a source of inspiration and encouragement.

⁷²¹ The purpose of this empowerment was to build God's Kingdom. Cf. *The Kingdom and the Power* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1993). The approach in this thesis is unique because it highlights charismatic leadership principles that are grounded in early American Pentecostalism, as opposed to non-Pentecostal notions of charisma. But this approach is also consistent with scholarly thinking concerning what makes charismatic leadership distinct from other forms of leadership.

6.4.1 The Connection to Biblical Leadership⁷²²

Many scholars highlight how the New Testament model of leadership is not top-down (where the leadership controls everything), but rather, it is a model where the leaders were part of the community. Yes, leaders had the authority to lead, but they were often held to the same standards as the people, and it was the people who were doing a lot of the ministering to one another (as part of the priesthood of believers that was addressed earlier in this thesis). This concept has been emphasized in modern times by the many books written about Christian community as well as Pentecostal scholars like Gordon Fee.⁷²³ The general sense is that some of the best leaders do not rule as kings, but rather, they become involved in the ministry, they encourage others, provide direction when needed, occasionally make judgment calls, etc. The idea is that the leader is an example of how to live and do ministry. Others should be able to model their lives and ministries after those exemplars.

This is how it was throughout parts of church history. For example, Gregory the Great says, “When the spiritual director is in the company of the laity who live well, he should downplay his position of honor and consider himself their equal, but for the perverse, he should not fear to enact his authority.”⁷²⁴ But some of these concepts go back even further, to the Pastoral Epistles of Timothy and Titus in the New Testament. Here, we read about qualities of church leaders. Many of those qualities deal with modelling right behavior, making sure one’s speech is edifying (and not argumentative or destructive), and demonstrating the varied expressions of love. In many ways, Seymour embodied the type of leadership the Apostle Paul taught. Given that some

⁷²² Some of the concepts about leadership contained in this thesis are my notes and synthesis of various materials I ruminated on while studying in Bethel Seminary’s Transformational Leadership Program. Some of the materials in this section were from notes, reflections and readings I completed for some of my courses, especially courses with Mark McCloskey and Andrew Rowell.

⁷²³ Cf. Gordon D. Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 132.

⁷²⁴ St. Gregory the Great, *The Book of Pastoral Rule* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2007).

of these characteristics are associated with the fruit of the Spirit, is it possible that Seymour's secret to demonstrating this exemplary leadership was because of Holy Spirit empowerment? We may never fully know the full extent of Seymour's leadership influences. But what we do know is that he demonstrated an almost superhuman ability to just smile at his accusers and critics.⁷²⁵ Many ordinary humans would have lashed out, or mounted a defence because they do not know how or are unable to handle offense. But Seymour did none of that. He simply let the love of God flow through him. This is Biblical. But given how rare this demonstration of love is, and how difficult it is to live up to the Biblical standards in our own strength, this thesis suggests the power of the Holy Spirit might be one of the keys to experiencing all the qualities of Biblical leadership.

6.5 The PAOC

A modern example of using William Seymour as an example of Biblical leadership is the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). They recently changed their Statement of Essential Truths to make them more "Pentecostal." To do this, they changed their eschatology, focusing on "restoration" and returning to some of the original, core elements of Pentecostal eschatology. To do this, the scholars who researched this considered Seymour's theology, and they removed 20th Century categorical, Dispensational and Evangelical concepts that came after Seymour (such as "inerrancy" and "infallibility"). Another example of this is when they removed the word "physical evidence" and replaced it with "sign" concerning the speaking in tongues. Rather than emphasizing speaking in tongues as the "initial physical evidence," the PAOC embraced some of Seymour's theology, which was that Spirit Baptism is an empowerment for speech and action,

⁷²⁵ D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 195.

and the outpouring that began in Acts will continue being poured out on, “everyone, male and female, of every age, status, and ethnicity.”⁷²⁶

6.6 Holy Spirit Manifestations

This thesis examined the Azusa Street story through the lens of story analysis and literary analysis. Part of this analysis involved an analysis of the characters and conflicts. One of the key findings was that a key conflict defined Azusa Street. This conflict stemmed from the fact that Parham believed Seymour was engaging in “fanaticism.”⁷²⁷ Readings of Azusa Street sometimes lump this objection in with Parham’s disgust over the racial integration at Azusa Street and the people Seymour put in charge (whom Parham felt were unqualified). However, since many historiographies emphasize Parham’s disgust over the racial integration, few scholars have contrasted Seymour’s permitting of diverse spiritual manifestations at Azusa Street. This contrast is important because the central conflict involved racial integration, leadership and spiritual manifestations. In stories, conflicts often sharpen a character’s point of view. Here, Seymour’s theology becomes clear, and since Seymour won this conflict, Pentecostalism was forever influenced by Seymour’s allowance of diverse spiritual manifestations. The purpose of this section is to not only examine Seymour’s theology concerning manifestations a little more closely, but also to use Seymour’s perspective to help serve as an apologetic for charismatic leaders who face opposition concerning the use of Holy Spirit manifestations.

On the surface, this might not seem like an unusual way to approach to charismatic leadership. However, one of the greatest challenges charismatic leaders in the West face

⁷²⁶ https://paoc.org/docs/default-source/fellowship-services-documents/constitutions/2022/statement-of-essential-truths-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=1874f16a_8

⁷²⁷ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 127; Sarah E. Parham, *The Life of Charles F. Parham* (Birmingham: Commercial Printing, 1977), 246, 302.

concerning Holy Spirit empowered leadership is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. A quick internet search reveals the fierce opposition some pastors and scholars have to the work of the Holy Spirit. The very notion of charismatic leadership is challenged by those who reject physical manifestations of the Spirit (such as shaking), personal prophecy, or even the idea that God speaks directly to people today.⁷²⁸

But this approach might be necessary to fully understanding the Azusa Street story, and it might be necessary for understanding the current conflict between some Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals in Western culture. This is because the conflict between Seymour and Parham potentially reveals a much deeper philosophical and worldview conflict that still exists in the United States today. We first get a foreshadow of this when we learn Seymour grew up in Louisiana. Many of the blacks who came to Louisiana in the 18th and 19th centuries came via the Caribbean, and many of them engaged in syncretism, such as Voodoo, which, “took Catholic forms and rituals and wedded them to the religious realities that the slaves had brought with them from Africa.”⁷²⁹ Although many slaves disguised their Voodooism as Catholicism, many slaves retained their, “beliefs, superstitions and fears...and they passed them on to the next generation of slaves.”⁷³⁰ The version of Voodoo most slaves practiced was a popular variation known as “Hoodoo,” which was a way for the slaves to retain some of the beliefs and practices from their African past. This worldview had some similarities with the Christian worldview, such as, “they

⁷²⁸ Many individuals directly and publicly challenge these practices. One example of this who regularly appears in my YouTube feed is Pastor Chris Rosebrough of Konsvinger Lutheran Church, in Oslo, Minnesota (USA). The video comments under his videos indicate that a number of former charismatics and Pentecostals agree with his theological positions and praxis. It is through listening to objections from people like Rosebrough that my understanding of Seymour has become clarified and my belief in Pentecostalism strengthened. Listening to people who do not value the Holy Spirit’s work, in contrast with someone like Seymour who saw racial reconciliation at an unprecedented level, has made me realize that the power and work of the Holy Spirit is very important, and even essential, to carrying out God’s mission in the church and in the world.

⁷²⁹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 22-23.

⁷³⁰ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 22-23.

believed in a Divine spirit, [they believed] in the supernatural including the empowerment of individuals, signs and wonders, miracles and healings, invisible spirits, trances, spiritual possession, visions and dreams as a means of Divine communication, as well as other phenomena described in the Bible.” As part of their spiritual practice, “they sang, clapped, trembled, shouted, danced, played drums and developed a “call and response” preaching style.”⁷³¹ Some of these activities may sound familiar because, as Robeck noted, some of these practices were found in the Bible. For those exposed to charismatics, or for those who have traveled outside Western culture, some of these more “supernatural” aspects of Christianity are routinely practiced, and even encouraged. This is so common that entire books have been written about supernatural practices throughout church history.⁷³² Archer observes that these supernatural signs, “tongues, trances, exorcisms, dancing and healings” were “in direct opposition to modernity’s conception of reality.”⁷³³ Archer also draws a connection between these spiritual practices and socioeconomics, particularly the fact that many early North American Pentecostal pioneers were from marginalized communities who, “read Scripture with revivalist, restorative lenses.”⁷³⁴

Although Archer has a section in his book which quotes several other scholars who concur with Pentecostalism’s anti-modern tendencies, Archer concludes by stating that Pentecostalism should not be viewed as premodern because it was born in the modernistic age and because it used modern language and beliefs to articulate its theology and praxis.⁷³⁵ This may be true of many of the white Pentecostals, such as Charles Parham, or maybe those who split away from

⁷³¹ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 23.

⁷³² However, there were periods where supernatural events were more common than others.

⁷³³ Ken Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2009), 37.

⁷³⁴ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 37.

⁷³⁵ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 38-45.

Seymour at Azusa Street. But this thesis argues that the premodern/modern clash was at the core of Parham's and Seymour's conflict, and it was this very worldview that prevailed. Although Archer's research is very detailed, he fails to provide a satisfactory explanation for why, or how, all these supernatural manifestations of the Spirit could co-exist in an environment that is opposed to modernity.⁷³⁶ Archer holds these ideas in tension and tries to explain them through a parenthesis on page 44. This thesis proposes there is a better explanation, which is that Seymour arguably held to premodern tendencies, and his lack of formal education and full integration into white society insulated him from modern philosophy more than other early American Pentecostals. By prevailing at Azusa Street, Seymour created a lasting legacy whereby Spirit manifestations from the premodern era (which includes the time of the Bible), remained in the Pentecostal tradition. Had Parham prevailed at Azusa Street, Pentecostalism could have possibly become modern, just like many other Christian denominations in the United States. The significance of Seymour on early American Pentecostalism cannot be overstated. His ability to stand up against the dominant, modern philosophical forces of his day (with little formal education), and establish a distinct Pentecostal view of the world likens him to the heroes of old.

The crux of the matter is that this supernatural way of viewing the world sharply contrasts with a more natural, modern way of viewing the world. Philosophically, some believe the premodern era was all of human history, up until around 1500, when the Enlightenment began. As noted in Chapter One, premodernism begins with the underlying assumption that the spiritual world is real and that the physical world is dependent on the spiritual world.⁷³⁷ In the premodern world, experience, rather than modern rules of evidence, form a significant portion of one's

⁷³⁶ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 44.

⁷³⁷ This thesis generally views premodernism, modernism, postmodernism and metamodernism as cultural philosophies, as opposed to worldviews, because worldviews tend to provide specific answer to existential questions in a way that cultural philosophies generally do not.

epistemology.⁷³⁸ This is why in the Bible, people often knew the truth, knew God and knew one another because they had personal, experiential knowledge of those things. However, in the modern world, some theologians, and some Christians, reject the premodern notion of spiritual experience as the primary means to know God, and instead favor a more rational, evidential approach.⁷³⁹ This modern view favors knowing God primarily through intellectual and natural means, as opposed to direct experience of God. Hence, in the West, supernatural experiences are sometimes viewed with suspicion.⁷⁴⁰ Christians who view supernatural experiences with suspicion sometimes adhere to modern philosophy which suggests God rarely heals today, or that God only speaks through the Bible (which is God's Word and a historical, evidentiary book), as opposed to speaking to someone via direct revelation.⁷⁴¹ This is because modernism favors knowing God through the natural world. Although the premodern/modern conflict was not a philosophical argument Parham and Seymour had, an understanding of these cultural

⁷³⁸ This thesis does not have time to explore every philosophical opportunity that presents itself, but it is worth noting that even some Reformed Theologians, like Friedrich Schleiermacher, will emphasize the experiential side over the doctrinal side. However, Pentecostals often do not associate with Schleiermacher because he was the father of modern liberalism. The purpose of this brief section is to suggest the resources exist to create a sound Pentecostal apologetic concerning the nature of religious experience.

⁷³⁹ This is also why someone can graduate from business school without ever having run a business. Many schools in the United States (except for maybe trade schools), tend to value intellectual knowledge over practical experience. But even trade schools value the number of training hours completed, as opposed to competence.

⁷⁴⁰ This is not to say all moderns are opposed to the supernatural. Søren Kierkegaard became famous for existentialism and Alvan Plantinga was instrumental in developing Reformed Epistemology. Also, this thesis does not specifically address philosophical pragmatism, but Seymour was pragmatic, and some argue pragmatism is also a reaction against modernism.

⁷⁴¹ Sometimes this critique also gets raised concerning whether or not God speaks prophetically today, or if God speaks through modern-day "prophets." Part of this disagreement stems from whether someone believes the Bible or the church is the final authority for Christian faith and practice, some of this disagreement stems from hermeneutical differences (which is how we interpret the Bible and determine what parts are relevant for today), and some of this disagreement is philosophical and theological. Concerning the latter, philosophy of religion (and maybe more specifically, theology and science), explores topics like God's relationship to the temporal world. For example, someone's beliefs on physical healing often intersect with their views of God's relationship to the temporal world, and how God interacts with temporality. This is also true concerning God's relationship with time (for those who believe time exists). Seymour's ontology (which contained non-Western influences), possibly shaped his beliefs concerning how God interacted with the material world (which would include healing), God's relationship to what humans call time (which would include prophecy), and God's relationship to the future (which is eschatology). Later, this thesis will explore the possibility that existence is possibly cyclical, as opposed to linear (sort of like Ecclesiastes 3:20 which suggests humans come from the dust, and they return to the dust).

philosophies, combined with Seymour's presumed exposure to Hoodoo in Louisiana, could have created a situation where he was more open to spiritual realities and spiritual manifestations than Parham. This was, after all, one of Parham's three biggest complaints against Seymour at Azusa Street. Parham disagreed with Seymour's acceptance of spiritual manifestations Parham labeled as "fanaticism."

The significance of this for contemporary charismatic leaders is that one of the main differences, and sources of conflict, between Pentecostalism and mainline churches in the West often concerns the cultural philosophies of premodernism, modernism and postmodernism. As William Menzies observed, there are many theological similarities between Pentecostals and many non-Pentecostal Christian organizations in the United States.⁷⁴² Few differences exist concerning many of the core tenants of the Christian faith. The main sources of conflict tend to be over the Holy Spirit's role in the world today, and how one should view the world. Does Jesus's pronouncement that the Kingdom is imminent still apply today? The Jewish audience at the time thought the Kingdom was somewhere in the future. But Jesus shocked everyone by announcing it was imminent. As a result, everything the Jewish people thought was in the future (including healing and wholeness), was here now. Pannenberg goes so far as to say it is the imminent, eschatological future that is impacting the present.⁷⁴³ To somehow suggest that God intended for signs, wonders and miracles to cease after the time of Christ would suggest that Jesus's whole message of the imminent Kingdom (as understood by the original audience) was not true. Pentecostals recognized this, along with other Old and New Testament prophecies, and they viewed themselves as restoring the Kingdom trajectory that Jesus initiated while here on earth.

⁷⁴² William W. Menzies, "Synoptic Theology: An Essay on Pentecostal Hermeneutics."

⁷⁴³ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 53.

What does this mean? This means that there appears to not be an issue with the supernatural phenomena themselves. If there was an issue, the Bible would have condemned these phenomena, but it didn't. As a matter of fact, the opposite is true because we know that several churches in the New Testament, such as the Corinthian church, had a lot of supernatural phenomena, but the Apostle Paul put few restrictions on that activity. This does not mean that anything goes. Pentecostals often quote the Bible. Early American Pentecostal periodicals are full of Bible verses. Great care was taken to test everything according to the Word of God. All one has to do is read *The Apostolic Faith* from beginning to end to discover that there are a number of corrections and clarifications. Experience clearly shaped the Azusa Street community and its epistemology. They essentially read the Bible, invited the Holy Spirit to show up and then tested their experiences against the Bible. This often involved prayer and discernment from other community members (sort of like in the New Testament where things seemed good to the leaders and the Holy Spirit). Some charismatic congregations use similar hermeneutical techniques today.⁷⁴⁴

Theologically, experiential knowledge has always been a part of the Judeo-Christian tradition. This is why the Bible sometimes uses the word “to know” when discussing things like sexual intimacy. This is because you know someone experientially. The notion that Pentecostals incorporate “verification by experience” in to their hermeneutics and theology has been written about since at least 1979 when William Menzies wrote an article for *Paraclete* where he argued that Pentecostal theology is not distinct because it is different from Evangelical theology; rather, it is distinct because it restores the experience of Pentecost to its proper place in the Christian

⁷⁴⁴ For example, during my time in Argentina (which has been experiencing revival for many decades), it is not uncommon for pastors to permit new works of the Spirit, and then judge those works by their fruit. This allows the Spirit freedom to do new things, but it also provides accountability.

theological tradition.⁷⁴⁵ Today, Pentecostal Bible schools and seminaries teach entire courses on Pentecostal distinctives, but Menzies does have a point in suggesting that Pentecostalism has historically been viewed as a restoration movement, as was frequently discussed in early Pentecostal periodicals.⁷⁴⁶ Not only did someone experience manifestations of the Holy Spirit, but they also experienced spiritual transformation through the Spirit. Early American Pentecostals frequently referenced Christ's atoning work on the cross because they not only believed that atonement was available for today, but also because they believe the Spirit would help them manifest that atonement in their life because the purpose of the Spirit was to glorify Christ.

Finally, it is worth noting that in the United States, there are a small number of practitioners who are moving away from solely using classical psychology to treat issues like trauma or PTSD. The reasons for this are varied, but some have found that psychotherapy can cause someone to continually relive and trigger trauma by continually talking about it and replaying the experiences in their mind. Instead, some practitioners use a more integrative approach which includes techniques like EMDR, Somatic Experiencing (SE) or craniosacral therapy (which may include craniosacral unwinding). As the body processes and unwinds trauma, a client may display physical movements that mimic manifestations commonly seen in some Pentecostal gatherings. Although no formal studies have been done on this, I can only wonder if what is sometimes labeled "Pentecostal manifestations" or "fanaticism" is really on the cutting edge of modern therapy (which, ironically, are also very ancient and traditional ways of healing trauma and working with fascial restrictions).

⁷⁴⁵ William W. Menzies, "Synoptic Theology: An Essay on Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Paraclete* 13/1 (Winter 1979): 14.

⁷⁴⁶ Cf. "Pentecost Has Come," *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), number 1, p. 1.

6.7 Pentecostal Epistemology

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that deals with how we know what we know. The plethora of scripture references in their writings suggests early American Pentecostals were always examining their experiences in light of the Word of God.⁷⁴⁷ But is this a valid means of interpreting Holy Spirit phenomena, both historically and today?

William Menzies suggests Pentecostals add an extra layer to their epistemology and hermeneutics by using verification and experience to help them choose among their exegetical options.⁷⁴⁸ This is not unlike how scientists might verify a scientific theory by its repeatability. However, it is unlike how Evangelical or Liberal theologians might engage in hermeneutics and epistemology because they will often not include verification by experience into their methodology.

Although some debate has existed in Pentecostal circles concerning Pentecostal hermeneutics, less has been written about Pentecostal epistemology. Although there is overlap between Pentecostal hermeneutics and epistemology, for this thesis, epistemology involves not just the interpretive issues hermeneutics addresses, but the very nature of truth itself (which is a bigger philosophical concept). In Chapter One, this thesis linked Pentecostal epistemology to the cultural philosophies of premodernism, modernism and postmodernism. The reasons this is

⁷⁴⁷ This approach is still used today in some Pentecostal circles. For example, when I was in Argentina (which is known for its Pentecostal revivals), respected pastors and leaders would often err on the side of allowing new manifestations in services (within reason), lest they grieve the Holy Spirit. But later, they would examine/analyze these manifestations in light of their fruit. If they bore fruit not consistent with what they knew about God and the Bible, they would no longer permit those manifestations to persist. But if they bore fruit, they would be open to allow the “new thing” God was doing. However, it should be noted that William Menzies does not appear to agree this methodology. As noted on the same page as the following footnote, Menzies would argue this Argentine methodology is not verification, but origination, and he could take issue with that. Cf. footnote below.

⁷⁴⁸ William Menzies, “Synoptic Theology: An Essay on Pentecostal Hermeneutics,” *Paraclete* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1979): 20.

relevant to Pentecostals today is because Pentecostalism has grown exponentially throughout the world, but a sizable number of those Pentecostals live in cultural contexts where supernatural realities are viewed the same as, or even superior to, the natural world and in some cases, even natural laws.

In the United States, this is a main source of contention between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostal pastors and scholars. Yet, few people discuss the root cause of this conflict, which is cultural philosophy. Do we live in a primarily natural world, governed by natural laws, or a supernatural world? Is our theology primarily intellectual (i.e. believing the right things), or should it be experiential? Earlier this chapter alluded to pastors and scholars who take issue with two Pentecostal ideas: 1) that we can interpret Bible patterns as being normative for today (which is hermeneutical), and 2) that the supernatural is for today (which is epistemology). The reason the debate between the nature of reality is epistemological is because it not only deals with ontological and metaphysical issues, but because it directly relates to how we “know.” Pentecostals are often open to the Holy Spirit speaking to them and leading them. But some non-Pentecostal pastors challenge those assertions, both on the grounds of Biblical interpretation as well as by asking questions like, “how do you know that was from God?” This cuts to the heart of epistemology. As a result, the whole Pentecostal concept of being led by the Spirit is epistemological because it relates directly to how Pentecostals know what is true. Pentecostal conferences even teach courses on hearing God’s voice, being led by the Spirit, hearing and knowing the voice of God, etc. Pentecostals who operate in gifts of discernment or prophecy will claim to “know” things without having empirical evidence.

This thesis demonstrated that those epistemological concepts, and the notion that the nature of reality is supernatural, goes all the way back to Seymour. By prevailing over Parham,

Seymour's supernatural worldview left an indelible impact on global Pentecostalism.⁷⁴⁹ Had Parham prevailed, Archer's contention that Pentecostalism should be viewed through modern lenses would be accurate because many early American Pentecostals did cling to certain modern philosophical concepts.⁷⁵⁰ This thesis argues the reason why Pentecostalism should not be viewed exclusively through a modern lenses is because both in North America and around the globe, Pentecostalism has retained many premodern tendencies. In the United States, these premodern tendencies get accentuated because critics often attack Pentecostal theology and leadership on primarily philosophical, rather than theological grounds. But to accomplish their goal, these critics often have to discard what the normative patterns about God's nature and the nature of reality in the Bible, in an attempt to justify their anti-charismatic positions. Throughout the 20th Century, some of those critics got away with this because much of the American church was so steeped in modernism that it mistakenly presumed modern philosophy encompassed the nature of reality. In some cases, this resulted in ethnocentrism and instances of theological harm because bonding Christian faith and practice too strongly to modern philosophy distorted the Bible's message which was written to a premodern, pre-Enlightenment, non-Western, world. Worse, this has resulted in significant church decline and people actually losing their faith because modern philosophy, and now postmodern philosophy, are outdated philosophical systems that have been replaced by metamodernism. And soon, metamodernism will likely be replaced with a new cultural philosophy. We now know that building a theology on modern philosophy, instead of God's Word, is akin to the foolish person in Matthew 7:26-27 who built

⁷⁴⁹ One reason for why Pentecostalism possibly grew so much globally was because this supernatural worldview resonated with non-Western cultures. Not only did it make sense, but when Jesus demonstrated Himself stronger than the other gods and spirits, people naturally wanted to follow Him. This very much speaks to Menzies's concepts of verification by experience and pragmatism.

⁷⁵⁰ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 38-45.

their house on the sand. Thankfully the church has withstood and transcended every cultural philosophy over the past 2,000 years. This stellar track record and resiliency suggests the church will likely withstand metamodernism and any future cultural philosophies. Based on church growth data, it should be noted that the American church almost shipwrecked because it went all-in on naturalism and modern philosophy. According to church growth statistics, the Pentecostal and charismatic wings of the American church are often the only branches that are consistently showing growth. Based on current church growth trends, Pentecostal critics will likely continually diminish.

Understanding this is important because the Pentecostal nature of reality is supernatural, not unlike Seymour's view of reality. It is also important to understand that Pentecostals do have valid hermeneutical interpretations and valid epistemologies with regards to God speaking to them and the Holy Spirit being active in their lives. This thesis demonstrated how those are valid conclusions that can be reached as result of narrative hermeneutics. It is also important to understand that many of the attacks against Pentecostalism are philosophical, not theological. This is because Pentecostal and narrative hermeneutics does validate Pentecostal interpretations and applications of scripture. Finally, it is important to be wary about the cultural philosophy of modernism and its impact on the church. Not only is this philosophy yielding diminished fruit, but the cultural philosophy itself is dying. Rather than building a theological "house" on the sands of modernism, one should build it on the Word of God, which involves a living, active and vibrant relationship with God, through the Holy Spirit. This thesis is not suggesting premodernism is the answer. It is merely suggesting that cultural philosophies should be viewed as tools to aide our understanding of God and to make disciples. However, our faith should not be built so firmly on cultural philosophies that we lose sight of God's work in our lives and in

the world, nor should our faith be built so firmly on cultural philosophies that our faith collapses when the cultural philosophies collapse.

Earlier, this thesis alluded to the connection between authentic humanity and having a conscience. Since epistemology deals with what we know, it might be worth briefly addressing the role the Holy Spirit plays in helping us know right from wrong. Classically, the Holy Spirit is often attributed with the roles of calling people to Jesus and convicting them of their sins. The reason the Holy Spirit can call and convict is because all humans have a conscience. Those who respond to the Holy Spirit's calling and conviction repent of their sins and live God-pleasing lives. They do this out of love and devotion, but also out of a sense of awareness that one day they will be judged. Unbelievers often have the same conscience but it can become dulled, or in some cases they may experience shame or depression, because of the dissonance between how they are living and how they know they should be living. One example of this is how sometimes when unbelievers are fornicating or committing adultery, they will joke that they are "living in sin," or "doing the dirty deed." It is interesting how their conscience reflects theological realities, even though they may claim to be nonbelievers. On the one hand, their conscience detects spiritual truths; on the other hand, they often do not have the knowledge of a future judgment where what matters is not skin color, gender or sexual orientation, but sin and whether or not one's sins have been washed so they can stand in the presence of a Holy God. Unfortunately, there will be no affirmative action on the Day of Judgment. That is not to say those concepts are not important, or not useful, here on earth. Those concepts can be important, in light of the fact that God created different people groups and He gave humanity diversity of skin color. But we must never lose sight of the fact that the Bible suggests we are all from one race (Genesis 1:26 & Acts 17:26), and in the end, there are only going to be two categories of people: those whose

names are written in the Book of Life and those whose names are not. I Peter 2:9 refers those who accepted Christ as God's chosen people, His royal priesthood and His special possession. In light of this, and in light of the Bible's message on unity, the foundation of a Biblical response to race might be to consider our similarities to one another as God's creation as opposed to our differences. How great are these similarities? According to the National Human Genome Research Institute, "All human beings are 99.9 percent identical in their genetic makeup."⁷⁵¹

Although this thesis cannot explore all the issues related to conscience, it can highlight how Pentecostals can potentially have a distinct advantage in racial reconciliation, not only because the fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, but also because sane people have an innate sense of right and wrong. Violating this embedded conscience can cause someone to experience internal dissonance which can lead to any number of emotional issues (such as shame or depression), or it can result in spiritual conviction. The good news is that the Holy Spirit can help us address dissonance in all areas of our lives, including racial prejudices, racial hatred and other biases. Hence, if someone is unable to love as perfectly as they know they ought they should, one solution might be to partner with the Holy Spirit, or even seek the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, to obtain a divine empowerment to love. Pentecostals are in a unique position to utilize Holy Spirit power to assist them in evangelism, apologetics and in presenting solutions to pressing cultural issues of our day, like race relations.

⁷⁵¹ "Genetics vs. Genomics Fact Sheet." Genome.gov. Accessed February 16, 2022. <https://www.genome.gov/about-genomics/fact-sheets/Genetics-vs-Genomics>.

6.8 Holy Spirit Empowermentô A Case Study in Racial Reconciliation

Much has been written about speaking in tongues, miracles and a host of other popular charismatic themes. However, less has been written about Seymour's linking of Spirit empowerment to racial reconciliation, and his rejection of racists who linked Spirit empowerment to speaking in tongues. Some even surmise that Seymour's 1915 official position deemphasizing speaking in tongues as the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit may have been in response to witnessing racist whites speaking in tongues.⁷⁵² But despite Seymour's 1915 motives, it is clear that by 1906, Seymour was firm and uncompromising in his resolve concerning the supremacy racial reconciliation. Theologically, this may have been part of Seymour's larger emphasis on unity, community and divine love, but racial reconciliation was the most visible manifestation of Seymour's theology.

As noted in the introduction, this thesis suggested Seymour's theology and leadership are important because his understanding of Holy Spirit empowerment can speak meaningfully and powerfully to culture. In the United States today, the concept of racial unity, as outlined by Seymour and Martin Luther King, Jr., is being deconstructed and replaced with ideologies which emphasize our differences and promote division. This thesis proposes that Seymour's understanding of unity, divine love and Holy Spirit empowerment is Biblical, practical, and one of the few successful templates of racial reconciliation. In light of the urgent need for racial justice and racial reconciliation in the United States at this time, this section explores how Seymour's leadership and theology might provide practical solutions to current racial tensions.

⁷⁵² Curtiss DeYoung, et al. *United By Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 59.

6.8.1 A Brief History of the African American Experience

In the United States, the African American experience is often linked with slavery (because many of the Africans brought to the United States were brought as slaves). Many of those slaves experienced unimaginable horrors. These horrors were physical (in the form of torture), psychological (because some African American families were literally ripped apart and sold at auction blocks, never to see each other again), and economic (because of the long-term effects slavery has had on African American families). The economic effects began shortly after the Civil War ended, when General Sherman and Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of War reached a deal for reparations which included giving 40 acres of land to freed slaves. However, after Lincoln's assassination, President Andrew Johnson signed a proclamation which took much of the land back and returned it to the original slaveowners.⁷⁵³ Some of this land has been passed down to the descendants of slaveowners since, even though it was promised to African Americans.

A Google search for "40 acres and a mule adjusted for inflation," suggests the value of the 40 acres and a mule all the African Americans were promised after the Civil War would total over \$6 trillion in today's dollars. However, that amount could have grown, given how much of that land appreciated, and given that the new owners would have been able to work the land and generate more revenue. But because many African Americans did not receive that land, some of them used their farming skills to work as sharecroppers, but the white sharecroppers would sometimes/oftentimes cheat them out of their earnings.⁷⁵⁴

⁷⁵³ For a brief summary of some of the financial challenges African Americans have experienced since the Civil War, cf. Nasheed, Jameelah. "We May Be Closer Than Ever to Reparations." *Teen Vogue*. (Accessed April 23, 2021.) <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/what-are-reparations-explainer>.

⁷⁵⁴ A Google search reveals a decent amount of information about lawsuits concerning this practice. Also, W.E.B. Du Bois has written about how black sharecroppers were sometimes murdered for standing up to whites who cheated them out of their earnings.

Although the financial abuse of African Americans may have begun with their forced enslavement, it did not end after the Civil War, nor did it end after the denial of the 40 acres of land (and eventually the promise of a mule). One of the main reasons slavery did not end sooner was because much of the US economy was built around slavery and African American labor. These same economic forces arguably influenced laws which attempted to not only prevent African Americans from integrating into American society, but also to maintain the economic status quo.⁷⁵⁵ One example this thesis referenced was Jim Crow segregation, which essentially restricted African Americans from education, work and medicine. By preventing African Americans from working, police could arrest African Americans under vagrancy laws and then rent them out as convict labor, essentially continuing slavery, but through the criminal justice system.⁷⁵⁶

Arguably, all of these factors influenced Seymour and the Azusa Street community. Earlier, this thesis contrasted Seymour's job waiting tables and his reliance on donations with the

Spiritually, the Bible does talk about restitution (in some cases seven fold, per Proverbs 6:31), if a thief gets caught. Although we do not currently live in Biblical times, our current laws make allowance for actual damages, compensatory damages and punitive damages. Whether this issue is approach spiritually or legally, evidence exists suggesting African Americans were stolen from, both in terms of actual damages and opportunity costs, such as being denied homes in neighborhoods where property values would have increased, or being denied access to higher education throughout the 1800 and 1900s. This suggests something should be done, and it is strange that this evidence does not get a fair hearing.

⁷⁵⁵ As a child, I had heard an old Southern pastor once tell me that the Civil War was about money, but money is not a good motivator for war, so the issue became about slavery. Although I am not 100% certain that this was entirely true, this is a topic that is still debated today in some history circles.

⁷⁵⁶ This still happens today. During the recent US Presidential election, then-Senator Kamala Harris had to defend why attorneys from her office (when she was CA Attorney General) argued against releasing non-violent offenders because the state needed their cheap prison labor. Cf. Fathi, David. "Prisoners Are Getting Paid \$1.45 a Day to Fight the California Wildfires." *American Civil Liberties Union*, American Civil Liberties Union, 15 Nov. 2018, www.aclu.org/blog/prisoners-rights/prisoners-are-getting-paid-145-day-fight-california-wildfires; Dokoupil, Tony. "In California, a Clash of Ideals: Fighting Fires and Fixing the Prison System." *MSNBC*, NBCUniversal News Group, 1 Oct. 2020, www.msnbc.com/msnbc/california-clash-ideals-fighting-fires-and-fixing-the-prison-system-msna682481

fact that he married Jennie Moore who had a house. Presumably this house had equity since Moore mortgaged it after Seymour's death to try to save the Azusa Street mission.⁷⁵⁷ In many ways, leading Azusa Street and marrying Jennie Moore allowed Seymour to transcend what could have been a life of financial subsistence. It is unknown how much Seymour's conflict with Parham was altruistic (in the sense that he was fighting for the survival of the multiethnic Azusa Street community), and how much of it was personal (in the sense that the loss of Azusa Street could have possibly meant the loss of his personal financial security). However, what appears noticeable in Seymour's story is that his African American experience was somewhat unique. With the limited information we have, it is unknown if Seymour's financial situation and African American experience shared similarities with other prominent black preachers, like Charles H. Mason, if his experience was more like other working blacks in Los Angeles, or if his experience was entirely unique. But what is clear is that Seymour's African American experience was different in Los Angeles than it was for him in other parts of the country. This conclusion is consistent with Robeck's suggestion that financial opportunities may have contributed, in part, to Seymour's movement around the country.⁷⁵⁸ The purpose of this paragraph is not to draw any definitive conclusions, as much as it is to briefly explore some of the financial aspects of Seymour's African American experience. Understanding the African American experience, as well as the diversity within the African American experience, is important to finding future solutions to historical challenges.

Another aspect of the African American experience in the United States is the African American relationship with Western medicine. In recent years, books like *Medical Apartheid*

⁷⁵⁷ Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 156.

⁷⁵⁸ Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission & Revival*, 25.

have introduced new audiences to the horrors of medical experimentation on the African American community.⁷⁵⁹ Even online entertainment websites, such as *Vox*, have published videos about the relationship between slavery and the United States medical system that have received millions of views. One such video is a *Vox* video about J. Marion Sims, who is known as the “father of modern gynecology.”⁷⁶⁰ One of the ways he received this title was by performing experimental surgeries, surgeries without anesthesia, and other medical procedures on African Americans.⁷⁶¹ These surgeries included experimenting with C-Sections and hysterectomies, all without anesthesia, because Sims believed African Americans did not feel pain or anxiety. What he learned from these surgeries laid the foundation for how many of these surgeries are still performed today. He also is credited with developing the modern vaginal speculum which means every time a woman visits a gynecologist, she encounters a remnant of slavery. Contemporary debates about reparations for African Americans often focus on money, but some people use the aforementioned medical examples to argue that some African Americans paid for America’s economic prosperity and medical advances with their lives. That argument is not always used since many whites lost their lives fighting in the Civil War to end slavery, but that argument does call into question how much of modern medicine, and the profit derived from modern medicine, has its roots in forced medical experimentation on African Americans.

⁷⁵⁹ Washington, Harriet A. *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Harlem Moon, 2006).

⁷⁶⁰ The US Medical System is Still Haunted by Slavery. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfYRzxeMdGs> (Accessed April 23, 2021).

⁷⁶¹ Washington, Harriet A. *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Harlem Moon, 2006).

However, the financial disenfranchisement of African Americans is not something from the distant past. Throughout the 20th Century, African Americans were continually discriminated against via predatory lending agreements, redlining and other means used to extract money from African Americans. In some cases, these practices resulted in African Americans losing their homes or being denied housing in certain neighborhoods. An internet search for “Wells Fargo African American Lawsuit,” reveals multiple lawsuits from as recently as 2010 to 2020 where Wells Fargo discriminated against Black and Latino homebuyers and Black employees. And according to a book titled *The New Jim Crow*, it is not just the banks that are discriminating against African Americans. As of its original 2010 publishing, there were currently more African Americans in prison, on probation or on parole than there were African Americans enslaved in 1850.⁷⁶²

Although many facts and statistics are missing from this brief history, the point is that African Americans have been systemically taken advantage of physically and financially in the United States. The African American storyline from slavery, through Jim Crow segregation, through housing discrimination, through education and employment discrimination, to modern-day predatory lending practices has resulted in been generations of poverty and has made it difficult for African Americans to break this cycle. And how can they break the poverty cycle when, as recently as 2020, large national banks were still taking financial advantage of African Americans via predatory lending?

This nearly 200 year metanarrative of African American oppression pertains to this thesis because this thesis is about story. The first question is: how representative are these individual

⁷⁶² Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010).

stories of the whole story? Some might argue that the other side of the story is the empirical side. For example, the official United States Census website reveals approximately 13.4% of the US population is black, but the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) website reveals approximately 50% of murders and robberies committed in the United States are by blacks.⁷⁶³ The second question is, “How do we respond?”

If done properly, people of all races could enthusiastically embrace a model of social change that diverse groups of people could understand and support. Because the United States is so diverse, the foundation for this is storytelling. For example, Native Americans have their own history of horrors, as do some Europeans, Asians, Hispanics, the disabled, and just about every other minority group. One example of this is J. David Hecker, a history professor who used statistics to argue that American Civil War deaths may have been as high as 750,000, with a significant number of those deaths being Caucasians who gave their lives to end slavery.⁷⁶⁴ Numerically, more Americans died during the Civil War than any other war, and America’s defeat of slavery was historically and globally significant because slavery had previously existed for thousands of years and continued to exist in other countries (even in some African nations) after the Civil War ended. Even today, the Global Slavery Index suggests that of 2016, there were approximately 40.3 million slaves in the world.⁷⁶⁵ Some argue that numerically, this means there are more slaves in the world today than at any other point in human history.⁷⁶⁶ Allowing all people to share their stories is important because it allows others to participate in the healing

⁷⁶³ Cf. “Quick Facts.” United States Census. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/RHI225219>; “Table 43.” FBI, September 22, 2019. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/tables/table-43>.

⁷⁶⁴ Editor, “Civil War Death Toll Rises Dramatically.” 2012. *American History* 47 (3): 12.

⁷⁶⁵ “The Global Slavery Index 2018,” [GSI-2018 FNL 190828 CO DIGITAL P-1632074299.pdf \(globalslaveryindex.org\)](https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/).

⁷⁶⁶ Statistically, however, this high number is, in part, due to increased global population. Some argue that when slavery is measured in terms of percentage of the population, some countries have a lower percentage of slaves than in previous years, yet the number of slaves is higher due to increased population.

process.⁷⁶⁷ Not only can this foster unity, but it also allow diverse peoples to come together to make and support policy decisions that can benefit all people.

The end goal is to find lasting, healing and empowering policies that can benefit African Americans while formulating a Christian theological perspective that is godly, brings practical results and operates within the confines of the law (at least in the United States where the Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 mandate that all people are treated equally). Seymour achieved this at Azusa Street through the inward power of the Holy Spirit and through the community of believers serving one another. At a time when government social programs were not as robust as they are now, the Azusa Street community ministered to one another spiritually and practically. But the foundation for Seymour was the Holy Spirit, because it was the Holy Spirit that changed peoples' hearts and allowed them to experience unity, community and divine love. It was the Holy Spirit that increased their desire to love God, love one another and obey God's commands. As noted earlier, Seymour was influenced by the Evening Light Saints who, instead of testifying they were, "saved, sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost," testified they were, "saved, sanctified and prejudice removed."⁷⁶⁸ The Holy Spirit empowered the Azusa Street community to become more loving than they could on their own. The Holy Spirit was an accelerant to spiritual growth, and it allowed them to transcend the usual human capacity to love and serve one another. This level of love and unity is what is missing from many government programs today. Government and academic alternatives attempt to undo past

⁷⁶⁷ This thesis has not spent much time talking about the role of testimony in early American Pentecostalism. However, some scholars have emphasized this aspect of the oral tradition as being very formational, both in shaping theology and liturgy. Testimony involves storytelling, and it was instrumental in communicating theology and epistemology in the sense that God was known, in part, through experience. Cf. Mark Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013).

⁷⁶⁸ Alexander, *Black Fire*, 113.; Cf. Lewis, "William J. Seymour: Follower of the 'Evening Light,'" *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 39, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 171. Alexander also states that the Saints' view of radical inclusiveness extended to public life.

injustices, but they often fall short due the inability to love and have unity at consistently high levels.

But by seeking the Holy Spirit, Seymour was able to achieve extraordinarily high levels of unity, community and divine love. In that sense, Seymour was a hero because he fostered an environment that welcomed the Holy Spirit and allowed the Holy Spirit to transform all who desired change. To accomplish this, Seymour had to make the difficult moral choice of confronting his mentor.⁷⁶⁹ By displaying high levels of Christian character, by demonstrating a high competence level in seeking God and by doing a difficult thing at a critical moment, Seymour established himself as an exemplar, and arguably a hero.⁷⁷⁰ It is for these reasons that Seymour's leadership should be taken seriously. Combined with the treasure trove of theological resources that exist today, an opportunity exists to couple the power of the Holy Spirit with theological and practical solutions and apply solutions to urban challenges in unprecedented and unique ways.

However, it should be noted that just as Seymour experienced a few bumps along the way, we should not expect unity, community and divine love to happen instantaneously, or without work on our part. This is how Andy Crouch describes the transition from apartheid to majority rule in South Africa.⁷⁷¹ Crouch describes the major cultural shift away from apartheid as a process that was undergirded by prayer, discipline and determination.⁷⁷² For Crouch, prayer and discipline form the foundation for the Christian's high responsibility of stewarding power,

⁷⁶⁹ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes*, 8-11.

⁷⁷⁰ Allison and Goethals, *Heroes*, 8-11.

⁷⁷¹ Crouch, Andy. *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2008), 212-213.

⁷⁷² Crouch, Andy. *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2008), 212.

which he believes God has given Christians to create culture in God's image.⁷⁷³ The theological foundation for this is that the Bible supports the loving, equal treatment of all humans. As noted earlier in this thesis, theologians like Wolfhart Pannenberg, George Eldon Ladd and others, note that Christ is the King of Kings and ruler of the earth. As noted earlier, Pannenberg viewed the imminent Kingdom as "key to the whole of Christian theology" because the message of Jesus is that God's Kingdom does not lie in the distant future, but rather, it is imminent and manifest now in the lives of those who love God, love one another and obey God's commands.⁷⁷⁴ Given Pannenberg's suggestion that God's Kingdom is marked by unity and actualized in terms of love, Seymour's theology of unity, community and divine love, combined with his eschatology, could serve as a case study to understand and develop a 21st Century theology of the Kingdom of God. This is especially true today, when many in the United States are seeking the eschatological ideal of racial harmony and unity.⁷⁷⁵

A 21st Century theological analysis of racial history and reconciliation in the United States might balance the interests of restorative justice (and possibly even reparations), with moral philosophy which does not allow for us to punish living individuals for the crimes of their dead ancestors, nor does moral philosophy allow for us to hand out jobs or reparations when existing empirical evidence suggests those approaches produce limited, or possibly even negative, results. Part of a 21st Century approach to racial justice might also involve listening to African Americans. For example, according to Solomon Green, more than 1/3 of African Americans oppose reparations for various reasons, including the feeling among some that

⁷⁷³ Crouch, Andy. *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2008), 226-227.

⁷⁷⁴ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 51-71.

⁷⁷⁵ Cf. Frederick Buechner, *Telling The Truth: The Gospel As Tragedy, Comedy & Fairy Tale* (New York: HarperCollins, 1977).

reparations would be insulting.⁷⁷⁶ Rather than beginning by focusing on policies, I propose that we begin by listening to one another's stories. Raising awareness and telling people's stories is a very powerful way to collectively get people willingly and enthusiastically on board with taking action and being mindful of ways in which their organizations might discriminate against minorities or take financial advantage of them. This would be in alignment with Biblical notions of unity, using our privilege and power to protect the rights of the oppressed and fighting against financial injustice and usury. Plus, this approach could address unawareness of the African American experience in the broader culture, as well as what Charles W. Mills refers to as "white ignorance," which is a more active form of ignorance.⁷⁷⁷ The current political and racial climate appears to have people fighting more than talking. This creates animosity, instead of empathy. The situation is further compounded when other non-African American groups feel they are already making sacrifices to help African Americans. One example of this was research conducted by the *Journal of Politics* which examined white collective guilt.⁷⁷⁸ Current "collective guilt" in the United States can result in affirmative action, affirmative admissions and affirmative grading at universities, support for policies and the spending of tax dollars on programs because they are perceived to benefit African Americans (despite whether or not that program actually helps African Americans and despite whether or not another program might

⁷⁷⁶ Green, Solomon. "The Case Against Reparations." *Merion West*, October 25, 2020. (Accessed April 24, 2021). <https://merionwest.com/2019/09/15/the-case-against-reparations/>

⁷⁷⁷ Mills, Charles W., "White Ignorance," in: Sullivan, Shannon and Nancy Tuana, eds., *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 11-38.

⁷⁷⁸ Chudy, Jennifer, Spencer Piston, and Joshua Shipper. 2019. "Guilt by Association: White Collective Guilt in American Politics." *Journal of Politics* 81 (3): 968–81.

actually be more beneficial), and an overall fear that someone might do something perceived as anti-African American which could result in their loss of job or reputation.

One solution that balances American ideals of merit with more contemporary notions of “reparations” is to use different language. For example, online searches for reparations yields all sorts of ideas, such as tax cuts, scholarships, business grants, family tax credits (for families that stay together), etc.⁷⁷⁹ Although some might argue these ideas do not treat everyone equally, the reality is that the United States has a long history of directing resources to specific people groups, for specific purposes. One could argue the entire United States tax code is about directing economic policy by incentivizing people to engage in certain behaviors and to not engage in others. By offering money to individuals who are incentivized and motivated, both the individual and the community could benefit, and the best interests of the nation could be directed.

But the good news is that the church does not have to wait for the government to do this. In the United States, the church has had a long history of offering social programs and of incentivizing people through financial support and the creation of endowments. This would be no different. By directing personnel and resources to areas, programs and people that the church deems is benefiting the cause of Christ, the churches of a city could literally transform their city. And they could use this opportunity to share the gospel. But the best part is that ideas like this have united America for decades. It is in the fabric of American DNA to help the less fortunate and to reward those who are working hard and making a positive contribution to society.

⁷⁷⁹ Clark, Charles T. “Column: Reparations, Apologies and the Absurdity of 'It Happened a Long Time Ago'.” *Tribune*, San Diego Union-Tribune, 5 Feb. 2021, www.sandiegouniontribune.com/columnists/story/2021-02-05/column-reparations-apologies-and-the-absurdity-of-it-happened-a-long-time-ago.

Would this entirely appease people who want no strings attached reparations or who want affirmative action to place individuals who may or may not be qualified in positions, based upon their skin color? Probably not. But it would create a sense of fairness, it could level the playing field for the less fortunate, and it could create minorities who are qualified to compete at the highest levels of society based upon their qualifications, instead of their skin color.

Equally as important is the idea that an approach like this could foster unity, as opposed to division, disunity or animosity between the races. This would involve a uniting, as opposed to starting with the assumption that certain people are inherently evil, or that certain people are automatically oppressors due to their race. This more dignified approach could also help avoid some of the white guilt that was previously referenced. Shame and guilt are not of God, and a healthy community should be a community that empowers all.⁷⁸⁰ Some Christians might argue this is not possible because they view the core problem as a sin problem, whereas some believers may emphasize non-sin root causes, such as oppressive systems, psychological problems or any other host of materialist root causes. But the Bible offers a long history of Christians engaging in their culture in productive ways.⁷⁸¹ I propose that Christ transforms our hearts and our cities. These ideals are consistent with 20th Century leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr. and William

⁷⁸⁰ Conviction of the Holy Spirit is of God. Shame and guilt is what Adam and Eve felt as a result of their sin, but these feelings are often not associated with healthy Christian living. Conviction and repentance is the message of the New Testament.

⁷⁸¹ One (of many) models of Christians actively engaging and transforming culture is contained in: Brooks, Christopher. *Urban Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014). But Brooks is not the first person to suggest this. One famous author from several decades ago who helped bring urban ministry to the forefront of 21st Century ministry was author Ray Bakke.

Another example of this is Rodney Stark's historical analysis of Christians' relationship to epidemics. In his analysis of the second great epidemic (which occurred around 260 AD), those who lived near Christians fared better because of how the Christians would physically minister to those in need. Stark quotes Dionysius who was amazed at the Christians' selfless love and their willingness to nurse the sick, even if it meant material sacrifice or death for those Christians who assumed that responsibility. Dionysius observed that the heathen fared far worse. Not only did they not take care of their sick, but they often avoided them entirely by running away and isolating themselves, in an attempt to avoid the disease. Cf. Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (New York: HarperOne, 1996), 82-83.

Seymour who both supported a Biblical notion of equality, and who envisioned a world where everyone would be treated equally, just as is outlined in Galatians 3:28 and Revelation 7:9. This is a far cry from modern tribalistic notions which tend to cause division along tribal lines, rather than promoting unity.⁷⁸² Offering handouts to certain groups of people and not others can cause resentment, entitlement and tribalism. This is the situation now, where some whites and Asians feel disadvantaged because affirmative action is presently favoring African Americans. But what if we acknowledged that some people need some additional assistance, and we provided a path to level the playing field so African Americans were empowered to study and work alongside everyone else at all levels of society? This would create equality based upon merit which is something most people in this country can accept. Setting African Americans up for lifelong and intergenerational success and wealth generation sounds like a better idea than a reparations handout which would only last a limited amount of time (and which would likely end up in the hands of corporations, anyway).

6.9 Conclusion

In summary, this thesis established that William Seymour has qualities which have classically been deemed heroic. As such, his contribution should be valued, and rightfully acknowledged. Was the Holy Spirit the driving force at Azusa Street? Yes! But God works through surrendered individuals and communities who value and desire His presence. Seymour created an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit could freely show up and work. As a result of humbling himself before God, God elevated him as an exemplar for future generations.

⁷⁸² Pluckrose, Helen & James Lindsay. *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything about Race, Gender, and Identity—and Why This Harms Everyone* (Durham: Pitchstone, 2020), 261.

Today, the same Holy Spirit power is available to us. We know this because God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), and because we see evidence of this same Holy Spirit power throughout the world today. However, we have an added tool which is a more robust Pentecostal theology and hermeneutic. By proactively seeking the Holy Spirit and using every available theological and human resource, unprecedented opportunities exist to provide God ideas and solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges. Just as Seymour transcended Jim Crow segregation, we too can transcend all the natural and spiritual forces working against God's Kingdom reign and rule with the blood of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.



WILLIAM J. SEYMOUR⁴⁰

Seymour Sitting Holding a Bible, Date Unknown.
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APPENDIX

10/2/2016

Gmail - PhD Question



Seth Zielicke <seth.zielicke@gmail.com>

PhD Question

Curtiss DeYoung

Sat, Feb 13, 2010 at 11:14 AM

To: Seth Zielicke <[REDACTED]>

Hi Seth,

It is good to hear from you. Here are a few sources for you on Seymour:

DeYoung, et al. *United by Faith* (Oxford, 2003), see pages 53-59. We look at Seymour and his emergence out of the Church of God (Anderson, IN) to the Azusa Street Revival. What this will tell you is that Seymour got his early theological training among African American leaders in the Church of God. The primary emphasis of the Church of God movement at that point was unity. So he brought his theological emphasis of unity with him into his pentecostal experience. It shaped the way he understood pentecostalism (which differed from others because of the reconciliation focus). What Seymour got from Parham was an addition to his theology—speaking in tongues. He otherwise would have had gained from the Church of God an appreciation for sanctification as a second work of grace and other aspects of holiness theology. The Church of God did have a rather unique perspective for holiness churches in the late 1800s/early 1900s, since they saw holiness and unity and linked. They understood sanctification in relational terms. When one was sanctified he or she could love others more perfectly. The ability to love more perfectly led to racial reconciliation.

Another good source is Cheryl J. Sanders, *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (Oxford, 1996). Sanders is an African American professor (Howard Univ. School of Divinity) and Church of God pastor. Her book should offer some insights for your questions and offer you a perspective that does not use Anglo methodologies. .

I hope this is helpful.

Curtiss

From: Seth Zielicke <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2010 9:11 PM
To: Curtiss DeYoung
Subject: PhD Question

[Quoted text hidden]

