WHOSE PENTECOSTALISM? WHICH RATIONALITY? THE

FOURSQUARE GOSPEL AND PENTECOSTAL BIBLICAL PRAGMATISM

OF THE ELIM TRADITION

by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the thesis is to provide a tradition-specific 'Pentecostal rationality.' To do this it will first analyse and evaluate some of the main contemporary Pentecostal rationalities and epistemologies (chapter 1), before proposing that Alasdair MacIntyre's tradition-focused and historically-minded narrative approach is conducive in providing a more tradition-constituted Pentecostal rationality (chapter 2). Utilising the methodological insight of MacIntyre, the thesis will then provide a philosophically informed historical narrative of a Pentecostal tradition, namely, the Elim Pentecostal Church, by exploring its underlying context and roots as a classical British Pentecostal movement (chapter 3), its emergence as a religious tradition (chapter 4), and its two major 'epistemological crises' (chapters 5 & 6). Based on this historical narration, the thesis will argue that Elim's tacit Pentecostal rationality is best defined as *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism* in a *Foursquare Gospel* framework. This form of rationality will then be developed *vis-à-vis* Elim's *Pentecostal* concept of truth (chapter 7), *biblical* hermeneutics (chapter 8), and *pragmatic* epistemic justification in dialogue with William Alston (chapter 9).

For Caroline and Kaiho

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ABBREVIATIONS

BI   British Israelism

CH   *Church History*

CPT   Centre for Pentecostal Theology

CSR   *Christian Scholar's Review*

DBSJ   *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*

EE   *Elim Evangel*

EJPT   *Eastern Journal of Practical Theology*

HeyJ   *The Heythrop Journal*

IJPR   *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*

JAH   *The Journal of American History*

JBPR   *Journal of Biblical and Pneumatological Research*

JEH   *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*

JEPTA   *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association*

JES   *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*

JPT   *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*

JSRE   *Journal for the Study of Religious Experience*

JUH	*Journal of Urban History*
JVC	*Journal of Victorian Culture*
NB	*New Blackfriars*
NT	New Testament
PC	*Philosophia Christi*
PMU	Pentecostal Missionary Union
PS	*PentecoStudies*
RM	*The Review of Metaphysics*
RS	*Religious Studies*
SC	*The Spirit & Church*
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SPS	Society for Pentecostal Studies
SR	*The Sociological Review*
SRPs	Scientific Research Programmes
US	*Urban Studies*
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*

INTRODUCTION

The quest for a Pentecostal theology shaped by a Pentecostal theological methodology has been the interest of Pentecostal theologians for some time,[1] and the importance of rationality, epistemology and theological hermeneutics is increasingly acknowledged as central in this pursuit.[2] For example, Christopher Stephenson in his survey of three Pentecostal systematic theologians, namely Myer Pearlman, E. S. Williams, and French Arrington, notes that each one of them 'makes epistemology the starting point' of their theological endeavour, and thus their intellectual framework inevitably ends up influencing, even if not wholly determining, the content and nature of their theologies.[3] It is for this reason that some Pentecostal scholars claim that there cannot be a Pentecostal theology without a distinct Pentecostal epistemology, or at least a rationality that is compatible with Pentecostal spirituality, beliefs and practices.[4] Modernistic epistemologies, adopted by much of conservative evangelical theology, are seen

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[1] The terms 'Pentecostal' and 'Pentecostalism' are used generically as references to classical Pentecostalism, Charismatic Christianity, Christian renewal movements, and indigenous churches in the majority world that embody Pentecostal spirituality (e.g. emphasis on baptism in the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts). For further discussion on defining 'Pentecostal(ism)' see Wolfgang Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism: The Crisis of Global Christianity and the Renewal of the Theological Agenda* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 8-12; Allan Heaton Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1-7; James K. A. Smith, 'Pentecostalism,' in *The Oxford Handbook of The Epistemology of Theology*, ed. William J. Abraham and Frederick D. Aquino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 608.

[2] The first paragraph of the introduction is adapted from Simo Frestadius, 'In Search of a "Pentecostal" Epistemology: Comparing the Contributions of Amos Yong and James K. A. Smith,' *Pneuma* 38, no. 1-2 (2016): 94.

[3] Christopher A. Stephenson, 'Epistemology in Pentecostal Systematic Theology: Myer Pearlman, E. S. Williams, and French L. Arrington,' in *The Role of Experience in Christian Life and Thought - Pentecostal Insights. SPS-36 Annual Meeting* (Cleveland, TN: SPS, 2007), 307; cf. Christopher A. Stephenson, 'The Rule of Spirituality and the Rule of Doctrine,' *JPT* 15, no. 1 (2006): 84.

[4] Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 184; Kenneth J. Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publishing, 2011), 7; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, 'Epistemology, Ethos and Environment: In Search of a Theology of Pentecostal Theological Education,' *Pneuma* 34, no. 2 (2012): 248-250.

by some as incompatible with Pentecostalism(s),[5] and the so-called postmodern alternatives are not regarded as being without their problems.[6]

In light of this Pentecostal scholarly predicament, the purpose of the thesis is to contribute to this wider 'search' by offering a distinctive *Pentecostal rationality*. In trying to provide such a rationality, it needs to be clarified that this will *not* be done by following the 'standard strategy' employed by many modern theologians and philosophers; that is, a strategy which seeks to 'develop a general account of rationality or justification and then apply it to theism to see how far belief in God is rational or justified.'[7] The reasons for not adopting this 'modernistic' approach are twofold. First, I believe that that the possibility of a universal, general and timeless rationality devoid of influences from any given tradition is questionable at best.[8] Indeed, the inherent weakness of this 'standard approach' is exemplified in the failure of philosophers of religion to actually agree on what is the so-called 'universal rationality,' despite the assumption that this rationality should be universal and thus agreeable to all reasonable people.[9] Second, I assume with Aristotle that the perceived order of things (ontology) should determine how things are known (epistemology).[10] In other words, it is

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[5] Paul W. Lewis, 'Towards a Pentecostal Epistemology: The Role of Experience in Pentecostal Hermeneutics,' *SC* 2, no. 1 (May 2000): 122; Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 7.

[6] Kärkkäinen, 'Epistemology, Ethos and Environment,' 249-250; Robert Menzies, 'Jumping Off the Postmodern Bandwagon,' *Pneuma*, 16, no. 1 (1994): 116.

[7] William J. Abraham, *Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 6.

[8] This is a basic assumption of the thesis and will not be argued for it in detail. That said, I will develop this idea when exploring MacIntyre's work in chapter two.

[9] Abraham, *Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation*, 8-9. For example, two prominent Christian philosophers of religion disagree on the type of religious epistemology one should utilise in philosophising; that is, Richard Swinburne argues for a form of evidentialism and Alvin Plantinga for a type of reliabilism; Richard Swinburne, *Faith and Reason*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); cf. Richard Swinburne, 'Plantinga on warrant,' *RS* 37, no. 2 (June 2001): 203-214; Alvin Plantinga, 'Rationality and public evidence: a reply to Richard Swinburne,' *RS* 37, no. 2 (June 2001): 215-222.

[10] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094b 13-27; cf. Alister E. McGrath, *The Science of God* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 107.

maintained that there should be an appropriate 'epistemic fit' between *what* is studied and *how* the study is carried out.[11] Therefore, a study of a 'Pentecostal God' and his relationship with the world (i.e. Pentecostal theology), is approached in manner that is informed by these underlying Pentecostal assumptions. This need not result in an unfalsifiable *fideism* (as I hope to show in the thesis), but it does mean taking the underlying Pentecostal *faith* commitments seriously.

So, rather than following the 'standard strategy' vis-à-vis religious reasoning, the thesis will seek to construct a Pentecostal epistemology that is grounded in Pentecostal intuitions. It will do so by adopting Alasdair MacIntyre's notion that all substantive rationalities are 'tradition-dependent' and 'tradition-constituted,' and will thus seek to construct a 'tradition-specific' Pentecostal rationality. This means that the thesis should be seen primarily as an exercise in philosophical theology, or religious philosophy, rather than in philosophy of religion (unless religion is understood as a subjective genitive).[12] However, since it employs MacIntyre's philosophical methodology, there will also be a strong historical element. Consequently, the thesis will seek to make three main contributions to knowledge: (1) provide a MacIntyrian tradition-specific *Pentecostal* rationality, which has not been done before; (2) present the first intellectual history of a major European Pentecostal denomination, namely, the Elim

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[11] William J. Abraham and Frederick D. Aquino, 'Introduction: The Epistemology of Theology,' in *The Oxford Handbook of The Epistemology of Theology*, 1.

[12] For example, David Cheetham contrasts philosophy of religion 'with religious philosophy (or philosophical theology) where *religion* or theology is more the priority and which seeks to critically develop a more tradition-specific line of thinking or refine the articulation of a particular area of a tradition's beliefs;' David Cheetham, 'Comparative Philosophy of Religion,' in *Contemporary Practice and Method in the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. David Cheetham and Rolfe King (London: Continuum, 2008), 101. However, Nancey Murphy following MacIntyre's logic calls into question the whole notion and possibility of 'philosophy of religion;' Nancey Murphy, 'MacIntyre, Tradition-Dependent Rationality and the End of Philosophy of Religion,' in *Contemporary Practice and Method in the Philosophy of Religion*, 32-44.

Pentecostal Church; (3) propose that Elim's rationality is best characterised as *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism* and develop it accordingly.

Overview of the Thesis

To make these three contributions, the thesis is divided into three parts. The first part grounds the discussion by exploring the works of Amos Yong, James Smith and William Oliverio, Jr. on Pentecostal theological epistemology and rationality (chapter 1). This first chapter is in essence an analytical literature review of the three main Pentecostal academic works on the topic in question. I will argue that despite the important contributions of Yong, Smith and Oliverio, they all seem to suffer from an element of *ahistoricism* in their philosophical constructions which means that it is unclear to what extent their proposals are in fact 'Pentecostal,' or at least they appear not to be grounded in any particular Pentecostal tradition. Following from this identified weakness, in chapter two I will outline MacIntyre's notion of 'tradition-constituted' and 'tradition-constitutive' rationality, and will suggest that MacIntyre's methodological insights are conducive for constructing a truly tradition-specific Pentecostal rationality.

Informed by chapters one and two, the second part of thesis will then seek to narrate the 'Elim tradition' with the aim of identifying its tacit rationality. However, this cannot be adequately done without paying sufficient attention to the Elim tradition as a whole, with particular emphasis on its history. Therefore, in this section I will first discuss the 'prologues' to the Elim tradition by looking at its social, philosophical and theological context, as well as its religious roots, with particular emphasis on British classical Pentecostalism (chapter 3). I will

then explore the birth of Elim by focusing on its early opponents, the content of its argument, implied rationality, and initial social embodiment (chapter 4). A central argument of this chapter is that the theological essence of the Elim tradition is the *Foursquare Gospel* and its rationality is *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism.* This is followed by a narration of Elim's two major crises (chapters 5 & 6), which in MacIntyre's language can also be articulated as 'epistemological crises.' In these chapters I attempt to demonstrate that the foundational theology and rationality identified in the previous chapter was central in helping Elim to overcome its two moments of crisis.

The third and last part of the thesis is more constructive in nature (rather than analytical) by taking Elim's tacit rationality of *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism* and developing it in the context of the wider Elim tradition narrated in chapters three to six. Chapter seven begins by re-constructing Elim's *Pentecostal* theory of truth and thus provides the metaphysical backdrop for a working Elim rationality. Chapter eight argues for a recalibrated *biblical* hermeneutic for Elim which is more consistent with its Pentecostal doctrine of the Bible. And chapter nine explores Elim's *pragmatic* epistemic justification by developing Elim's 'experientialism' and 'experimentalism' in dialogue with William Alston.

Methodology

As has already been mentioned, the thesis is best located within the disciplines of philosophical and historical theology. Part one interacts primarily with the work of Pentecostal philosophical theologians (Yong, Smith and Oliverio), as well as an eclectic Catholic philosopher (MacIntyre). The engagements are based on the academic literature

written by these four authors and their interlocutors/commentators. Part two of the thesis is mainly historical and will deal with a range of primary sources particularly on the Elim movement, such as, articles in Elim's official periodical (*Elim Evangel*); books by Elim ministers; Elim Conference minutes and reports; correspondence between Elim leaders; and I have also conducted five semi-structured interviews for the purpose of 'oral history' to supplement the limited written material on Elim's history in the 1970s and 1980s (see chapter 6). These primary sources will also be brought into a critical dialogue with key secondary sources on Elim's history. Part three of the thesis, like the first part, is primarily theological and philosophical in its focus. That said, since Elim's rationality has a strong biblical component, regular references will also be made to biblical material in line with Elim's own method of reasoning.

In terms of terminology, throughout the thesis the terms 'rationality,' 'epistemology' and 'philosophical hermeneutics' will be used more or less synonymously. In other words, I take all of them to deal with questions relating to: the nature of knowledge; sources of knowledge; frameworks of reasoning; developing and utilising theories with a view for having justified/warranted beliefs. That said, my personal preference is to use the word 'rationality' for the simple reason that it is also MacIntyre's preferred nomenclature. However, since I do not believe that it is possible to have neutral or 'non-traditioned' rationality, I do not use 'epistemology' in this supposedly neutral sense and so distinguish it from the purportedly more linguistically saturated and metaphysically informed 'hermeneutics.'[13]

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[13] For example, William Oliverio prefers not to use the word 'epistemology' as for him it still carries the ghost of the Enlightenment with the assumption that there can be a 'first philosophy' that is neutral regarding prior beliefs and metaphysical assumptions; L. William Oliverio Jr., *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition: A Typological Account* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 5.

Finally, on a reflexive note, I am an Elim minister and work at Elim's Regents Theological College. Therefore, I am an insider to both Pentecostalism and Elim. However, I hope that the potential force of my own 'Pentecostal biases' in clouding my academic judgments will be offset by the insights often only available to a 'native' Pentecostal. Moreover, it needs to be pointed out that although I am exploring theological epistemology, my aim is not to argue for the truth of Elim's particular position, but rather to articulate a Pentecostal rationality in light of the Elim tradition, which means that I am not essentially arguing for or against the truth of my own religious convictions.

PART I – SEARCHING FOR A PENTECOSTAL RATIONALITY

An increasing number of Pentecostal scholars have offered theological rationalities that are based on Pentecostal intuitions with the aim of serving Pentecostal theology faithfully.[1] It is not hard to argue that the three central figures in this undertaking have been Amos Yong, James Smith, and William Oliverio Jr., who have each developed philosophically mature theories of knowledge stemming from Pentecostal presuppositions, and in doing so have helped pave the way forward for distinctive Pentecostal rationalities. Consequently, the purpose of the first section of the thesis is to analyse and evaluate the theological epistemologies of Yong, Smith and Oliverio (chapter 1) in order to appreciate the current landscape of Pentecostal theological rationalities, as well as to identify areas where further contributions could be made.

In chapter one I will argue that Yong's rationality is best identified as *pneumatological correlationism* in that he strives for a public theology and aims to bring the Pentecostal tradition into a mutually transformative dialogue with different sources of theological knowledge exemplified in other traditions/disciplines. However, I will suggest that it is questionable to what extent Yong's Pentecostal rationality actually reflects the Pentecostal tradition he seeks to represent, and that his theory of epistemic justification needs further

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[1] E.g. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*. Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy Among the Oppressed* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); Lewis, 'Towards a Pentecostal Epistemology,' 95-125; Mark J. Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Theology* (London: Paternoster, 2003), 41-68; Vondey, *Beyond Pentecostalism*, 16-46; Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 1-17; Christopher A. Stephenson, *Types of Pentecostal Theology: Method, System, Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 111-130; Pauli Kuosmanen, 'Towards Pentecostal Epistemology: Being Virtuous in the Spirit' (Masters' thesis, Iso Kirja College – University of Wales, 2016); Daniel Castelo, *Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017).

articulation. With respect to Smith, I will argue that his approach can be seen as a version of Pentecostal postliberalism, since his primary focus is on the internal logic of the Christian tradition which he believes is based on and sustained by the liturgical practices and biblical narrative of the Christian community. I will also suggest that the main weaknesses of Smith's rationality appear to be his one-sided view regarding the relationship between practices/faith and beliefs/theology; the focus on present practices at the expense of the historical, theological and communal narratives that shape these practices; the apparent dilemma in his theory of justification with respect to beliefs/narratives; and his potential anti-realism. When it comes to Oliverio, his Pentecostal rationality is presented to be appropriately captured in his phrase 'hermeneutical realism' with a conviction that all knowing is theory-laden but nevertheless reflects, or at least can reflect, an external reality. Regarding Oliverio, I will seek to point out that although initially it seems that he provides the needed historical and tradition-focused corrective to the Pentecostal epistemologies of Yong and Smith, his own proposal actually falls short of providing such a historically informed and tradition specific Pentecostal rationality.

In light of the above, in the second chapter of this section I will suggest that despite the important contributions of Yong, Smith and Oliverio, further work toward the development of a truly tradition specific and historically informed narrative Pentecostal epistemology is still needed. To aid this task I will introduce Alasdair MacIntyre's concepts of practices, tradition and rationality which provide helpful philosophical resources in constructing a truly *narrative Pentecostal rationality*.

The importance of this section is not just to provide the ground work for the more historical and constructive sections to follow, but it also makes a contribution in its own right by critically evaluating the Pentecostal rationalities of Yong, Smith and Oliverio, as well as introducing the philosophical resources of MacIntyre which will aid the construction of a Pentecostal rationality.

CHAPTER 1 – THE 'PENTECOSTAL' RATIONALITIES OF AMOS YONG, JAMES K. A. SMITH AND L. WILLIAM OLIVERIO, JR.[1]

As noted in the introduction to Part I of the thesis, the aim of this chapter is to analyse and evaluate three major contributions for Pentecostal rationality; that is, (1) Amos Yong's 'Pneumatological Imagination,' (2) James Smith's 'Affective, Embodied and Narrative Knowing,' and (3) William Oliverio's 'Hermeneutical Realism.' I will engage with each scholar respectively by first describing the main tenets of their Pentecostal rationality; second, by exploring what they consider to be the appropriate sources of theological knowledge or ways of acquiring knowledge; third, by identifying their epistemic criteria regarding justification/warrant with respect to theological beliefs; and fourth by providing some evaluative comments of their overall approach. Throughout this chapter I will use the words 'rationality,' 'epistemology,' and 'philosophical hermeneutics' more or less synonymously (see 'Introduction'). That said, for Yong and Smith I will primarily use the word 'epistemology' and for Oliverio 'hermeneutics' as this reflects their preferred terminology.

1.1. 'Pneumatological Imagination:' Yong's Pentecostal Rationality

Amos Yong is arguably the most influential Pentecostal theologian today. He is a prolific writer, a creative thinker and a modern polymath who has made significant contributions to a number of topics within contemporary theology. Yong has also been one of the main Pentecostal theologians to provide a theologically and philosophically mature Pentecostal

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[1] This chapter is a fuller elaboration of a previously published article; Simo Frestadius, 'In Search of a "Pentecostal" Epistemology,' 93-114.

epistemology, hermeneutics and theological methodology.[2] His main works on theological

epistemology have been *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian*

Perspective (2002),[3] and a collection of articles published in *The Dialogical Spirit: Christian*

Reason and Theological Method in the Third Millennium (2014),[4] which Yong refers to as the

practical exemplification and outworking of the method presented in the *Spirit-Word-*

Community.[5]

1.1.1. 'Pneumatological Imagination'

Yong's theological rationality is captured in his concept of *pneumatological imagination*. It is

pneumatological because Yong argues for a 'foundational pneumatology,' which means that

ontology and metaphysics are best understood pneumatologically.[6] His 'foundational

pneumatology' is grounded on three theological principles. First, following Augustine, Yong

understands the role of the Spirit as the bond of love between the Father and the Son, and

hence in the Trinity the Spirit is the divine mediator *in* and *into* the life of God.[7] Second, for

Yong the Spirit is the 'Spirit of power of life in creation' as in Genesis 1:2 the Spirit hovers

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[2] For other interactions with Yong's theological epistemology see; L. William Oliverio, Jr., 'An Interpretive Review Essay on Amos Yong's *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective*,' *JPT* 18, no. 2 (2009): 301-311; Peter D. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience: An Ecumenical Encounter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 274-309; Stephenson, *Types of Pentecostal Theology*, 89-91; L. William Oliverio, Jr., 'The One and the Many: Amos Yong and the Pluralism and Dissolution of Later Modernity,' in *The Theology of Amos Yong and the New Face of Pentecostal Scholarship: Passion for the Spirit*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey and Martin William Mittelstadt (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 51-54; Christopher A. Stephenson, 'Reality, Knowledge, and Life in Community: Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Hermeneutics in the Work of Amos Yong,' in *The Theology of Amos Yong*, 63-81; Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 232-247; Stian Eriksen, 'The epistemology of imagination and religious experience,' *Studia Theologica – Nordic Journal of Theology* 69, no. 1 (2015): 53-54.
[3] Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002).
[4] Amos Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit: Christian Reason and Theological Method in the Third Millennium* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014).
[5] Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit*, 1.
[6] Yong's pneumatology should be understood in a Trinitarian context; see Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 215.
[7] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 59-72. Yong builds the Augustinian model of the Spirit on the Irenaean concept of the 'two hands of God;' Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 50-59.

over 'the deep void and darkness' in a preparatory fashion so that 'the Word of God that creates is carried by the *ruach*.'[8] In this sense the Spirit provides the connection between the creation and the Creator, and so is central in sustaining the creation within the life of the Triune God. Third, the Spirit is not just the Spirit of creation, but in the dispensation of the Pentecost event the Spirit is redemptively 'poured out on all flesh' (Acts 2:17) inaugurating a new era of God's presence among people.[9]

Since Yong follows the common epistemic principle of allowing the order of things (ontology) to determine how things are known (epistemology),[10] it naturally follows that for him God can only be known truly in the Spirit, and hence Yong's epistemology is logically pneumatically orientated.[11] Moreover, in Yong's foundational pneumatology it is evident that the Spirit is the mediator *par excellence* and thus utterly relational, whether that is within the Godhead, creation or at Pentecost. Therefore, if ontology is pneumatological then 'whatever else reality might be, it is relational,'[12] and thus epistemology should also be relational.

The *imagination*, within Yong's pneumatological imagination, is the human belief forming faculty in relation to God and the world. Yong uses the term 'imagination' not as a reference to fanciful ideas, or to *a priori* concepts, but as images formed in the mind through

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[8] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 43; Yong also emphasises that in the creation of humanity the *imago Dei* 'derives in part from our having received the divine breath of life'; Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 131.
[9] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 30; Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 131.
[10] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094b 13-27; McGrath, *The Science of God*, 107.
[11] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 83-118; Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 301-302.
[12] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 87.

experiencing the world.[13] In this sense all knowledge is experientially based and Yong's

rationality can be perceived as a form of empiricism.[14] Following Charles Sanders Peirce (an

important influence on Yong's epistemology), Yong identifies two aspects within this

experiential image forming.

First, images are formed in the mind through passive perceiving, where images are

automatically reproduced based on observed sense data.[15] In Peircean language this first

aspect of image forming are 'perceptual judgments' being 'the uncontrollable operation of

grasping, assenting and acting on sensation.'[16]

The second aspect of the imagination moves beyond simply reproducing images from

experience to a negotiation of meaning by actively producing and constructing images of the

world and thus can be seen as a type of 'worldmaking.'[17] Peirce referred to this second aspect

as 'perceptual facts' which are 'the controlled cognitions or ideas that follow upon perceptual

judgments.'[18] Yong also calls perceptual facts 'knowledge,' that is, our articulated beliefs.[19]

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[13] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 151. In some sense Yong's notion of 'imagination' resembles that of Kant; see Andrew Brook, 'Kant's View of the Mind and Consciousness of Self,' in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2011 Edition), accessed January 4, 2018, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/kant-mind/.

[14] See Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 133.

[15] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 128.

[16] Amos Yong, 'The Demise of Foundationalism and the Retention of Truth: What Evangelicals Can Learn from C. S. Peirce,' *CSR* 29, no. 3 (Spring 2000): 570.

[17] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 144.

[18] Yong, 'The Demise of Foundationalism,' 571.

[19] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 177.

Regarding these two aspects of the imagination, knowledge (perceptual facts) is dependent on and preceded by primary experience of perceptual judgements. This means that knowledge 'is one step removed from basic, inarticulate beliefs (perceptual judgments) and two steps removed from the richness of the world and of our experience of the world,'[20] which lays the foundation for Yong's epistemic fallibilism discussed below ('Justification/Warrant').

However, it is worth noting that these two aspects of the imagination should not be seen as simply objective processes, but 'the imagination is selective, dividing what is trivial from what is important among experiential inputs in order for humans to engage the world evaluatively.'[21] That is, the axiological nature of the imagination seeks to form images that most accurately reflect the world and 'shape habits' that enable the best 'practical human life' in the world.[22] These value judgments of the imagination are not simply the result of the objective competence of the imaginative faculty in forming accurate images of the world, but of the 'heart' (i.e. affections, will and the spirit) of the observer,[23] because it is the heart that is central in informing what a good practical human life looks like. Therefore, the imagination is also affective in nature and the disposition of the heart matters in forming accurate images of the world.

To summarise thus far, for Yong knowledge is gained through the faculty of imagination which through experience forms images of the world both passively and actively, shaped by the disposition of the knower's heart; and the world in which humans find themselves in is a

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[20] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 177.
[21] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 132.
[22] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 132.
[23] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 129.

pneumatically charged relational reality. Hence, Yong's theological epistemology and rationality is best captured in his root metaphor of pneumatological imagination.

1.1.2. Sources of Knowledge/Acquiring Knowledge

Following from the concept of pneumatological imagination, Yong does not restrict his sources of theological knowledge to the biblical foundationalism of conservative evangelicalism or to spiritual experience as understood within one specific 'cultural-linguistic' tradition. Since Yong maintains that reality as a whole is pneumatologically charged, divine encounters are not restricted to certain holy books or experiences within specific traditions, but the divine can be encountered in other people, cultures, religions, history, nature, and science.[24] In other words, Yong interprets the whole world semiotically/symbolically as pointing to a deeper reality, namely, God, that can be experienced.[25] Consequently, it is unsurprising that Yong has actively engaged with other religions,[26] politics,[27] and the natural sciences,[28] because for him the pneumatological world in its fullness is the source for theological knowledge.

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[24] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 212-214, 300-301, 298-299.

[25] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 200; see also Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 61.

[26] E.g. Amos Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*; Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practice, and the Neighbor* (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 2008).

[27] E.g. Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

[28] E.g. Amos Yong, 'How Does God Do What God Does? Pentecostal –Charismatic Perspective on Divine Action in Dialogue with Modern Science,' in *Science and the Spirit: A Pentecostal Engagement with the Sciences*, ed. James K. A. Smith and Amos Yong (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 50-71; Amos Yong, *The Spirit of Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

Yong is not, however, naïve about the direct nature of these divine encounters in the world, because he does not believe that there can be a direct unmediated spiritual experience. In fact, he argues that 'the cultural-linguistic argument has got the better of the experiential-expressivist argument – to use Lindbeck's terminology', and that 'all knowledge is semiotically mediated and therefore at least one step (or sign) removed from the richness of experience.'[29] Nevertheless, this does not lead him into Lindbeck's postliberal position because he still maintains that there are no truly homogenous 'forms of life' or 'grammars' but there always exists 'a complex togetherness of multiple histories, traditions, sources and experiences.'[30] Moreover, Yong's foundational pneumatology creates a further point of contact between different communities since the Spirit is the divine mediator among people. Therefore, despite acknowledging the mediated nature of all knowledge, Yong strongly argues for a public theology and sees it as a necessity if a theology seeks to claim universal applicability.[31] Thus, theological knowledge should be acquired from all possible sources in the world because 'all truth is God's truth, wherever it may be found.'[32]

It is this emphasis on public theology and the multiple sources of theological knowledge that makes Yong's epistemology effectively correlationist with similarities to the mutually critical correlationism of David Tracy.[33] Yong himself has noted that his pneumatological imagination 'charts a path forward from the crossroad where Gelpi's pneumatology and

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[29] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 208.
[30] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community,* 302. For Lindbeck's classic text see George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. 25th Anniversary Edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).
[31] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 304.
[32] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 305.
[33] Tracy advocates 'mutually critical correlations between the interpretations of tradition and situation or church and world;' David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (London: SCM, 1981), 80.

Tracy's fundamental theology meet.'[34] In other words, Yong's pneumatological imagination utilises Donald Gelpi's understanding of pneumatological experience and applies it to all of humanity, enabling a truly public theology à la Tracy. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that Yong's theological epistemology could be seen as a development of Tracy's fundamental theology, and perhaps best captured in the phrase *pneumatological correlationism*.

It is here that my reading of Yong also differs from that of Mark Mann, who argues that Yong's epistemology, with respect to Tracy's correlationism and Lindbeck's postliberalism, has 'much stronger affinity to postliberalism.' Mann notes that Yong's 'sympathy' for postliberalism 'has become especially clear in his more recent work', particularly Yong's *Hospitality and the Other*.[35] However, although Mann acknowledges Yong's critique of postliberalism, he seems to overlook the extent to which Yong finds postliberalism wanting. For example, even in *Hospitality and the Other*, which according to Mann is Yong's more sympathetic work on post-liberalism, Yong supplements Lindbeck's proposal with his foundational pneumatology and its concomitant 'universalist' epistemological implications.[36]

1.1.3. Justification/Warrant

However, although Yong believes in the universal presence of the Spirit in the world and thus in the possibility of divine encounters in all spheres of life, he is careful to qualify that not all

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[34] Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 63.
[35] Mark Mann, 'Traditionalist or Reformist: Amos Yong, Pentecostalism and the Future of Evangelical Theology,' in *The Theology of Amos Yong*, 207, 207 n. 22.
[36] Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*, 57, 128. For a further critique of postliberalism and narrative theology by Yong see Amos Yong, 'Radically Orthodox, Reformed, and Pentecostal: Rethinking the Intersections of Post/Modernity and the Religions in Conversation with James K.A. Smith,' *JPT* 15, no. 2 (2007), 241-242, 246-247.

experiences in the world are, in fact, divine encounters, but rather one must 'test the Spirit(s)'

(1 John 4:1). In terms of identifying the truthfulness of one's images/beliefs about the world,

Yong offers two theories of justification. The first, and his main theory of justification, is a

pragmatic one. According to this, 'true beliefs are those reached when the effects predicted

are borne out in experience.'[37] To test the truthfulness of an image or belief is to see whether

it obtains 'desirable results, not in the sense of that which human beings simply wish or want,

but in the sense of harmonizing or comporting with the way reality is.'[38]

From this Yong argues that the truthfulness of our images/beliefs is dependent on how in

practice they are congruent with the world; and that our practices, behaviour and habits should

be transformed to reflect this reality.[39] The latter assertion implies that truthful engagement in

the world is 'such that our activities and habits are transformed as a result of engaging the

world,' which means that truth is not just cognitive but also ethical.[40] That is, our

beliefs/images are justified pragmatically in as much they reflect both the

ontological/metaphysical reality and the ethical/soteriological reality.[41] Therefore, Yong's

pragmatic justification means that we test the truthfulness of our images/beliefs in practice

and that we allow the truth to shape our habits to enable further truthful engagement in the

pneumatic world.

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[37] Yong, 'The Demise of Foundationalism,' 572.
[38] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 165.
[39] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 165.
[40] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 166.
[41] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 166.

Yong's second test is that of *coherence*. That is, beliefs are justified if they are coherent with a person's/community's other beliefs.[42] It is worth noting, however, that although Yong uses pragmatism and coherence as theories of justification, he does not accept them as appropriate theories of truth.[43] In fact, he favours a 'correspondence theory of truth' in which correspondence is seen as 'correlation,' rather than 'congruence,' implying that true propositions need not be identical with their referents but should, nevertheless, resemble them sufficiently. He favours 'correspondence as correlation' because, following Peirce, he maintains that 'all human experience is mediated semiotically.'[44] Therefore, Yong is effectively a critical realist who sees pragmatism and coherence as appropriate theories of warrant.[45] Yong summarises his approach to epistemic justification by stating that 'theological truth works and coheres because it corresponds – to put it crassly – with reality (nature) which is its measure.'[46]

Yong's critical realism, as well as his pragmatic and coherence theories of epistemic justification, is also very much shaped here by Peirce's 'triadic.' Peirce, as interpreted by Yong, believed that all entities exist in triadic relationships consisting of *Firstness* which is the 'thing itself;' *Secondness* which is 'that by which a thing is related to others;' and *Thirdness* which 'is what mediates between Firstness and Secondness' (e.g. universals, laws and generalities).[47] Yong states that:

> 'All things are what they are only as Firsts, Seconds, and Thirds – viz. having self-
> identity independent of anything else, having relational identity in reaction to other

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[42] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 169-174.
[43] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 174.
[44] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 167-168, 185.
[45] Yong refers to himself as a 'committed metaphysical realist'; Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 71.
[46] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 298.
[47] Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit*, 66; see also Yong, 'The Demise of Foundationalism,' 576,

things, and having a meditative aspect of through which they are brought into relation with other things.'[48]

This means that the 'realism' aspect of Yong's epistemology is maintained by things having independent self-identity (Firstness), the 'critical' element is characterised by all knowing being semiotic (Secondness), and the possibility of 'critical realism' to correlate with reality is enabled by the consistent universals and laws in the world (Thirdness). Peirce's triadic also underscores the relational element of Yong's pneumatological imagination; that is, all knowing and being known takes place within this triadic relationship, facilitated by the Spirit of God.

Yong's critical realism and the concept of triadically mediated knowledge naturally leads to his notion of epistemic fallibilism. He asserts three reasons for the fallibilistic nature of human knowledge. First, all knowledge is *partial*.[49] It is partial not only because the knower is working with images, signs and symbols, but also because what is known is either partial or incomplete (i.e. the world),[50] or inexhaustible (i.e. God).[51] Second, knowledge is *perspectival* in character as 'all thinking is conditioned by the biological, cultural-linguistic, and purposive contexts of inquiry. These contexts determine, in some ways, what is considered to be valuable or important.'[52] The third reason is the '*finitude* of knowledge'. To be human is to be finite and limited, an aspect reflected in our knowing.[53] The significance of Yong's epistemic

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[48] Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit*, 66.
[49] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 176.
[50] Yong's thinking about the nature of the world is not very different from process theology. He states that '[t]he world is not static but evolving or becoming. Things are incomplete in this sense'; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 178.
[51] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 210.
[52] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 180.
[53] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 182.

fallibilism is that the process of justification of beliefs through pragmatic and coherence theories must be perennial because of the fallible nature of all human knowing. In Yong's own words, spiritual discernment 'is a never-ending process.'[54]

1.1.4. Evaluative Comments

To summarise the discussion so far, the key concept in Yong's theological epistemology is the *pneumatological imagination*. The pneumatological aspect stems from Yong's foundational pneumatology, and the imagination from his Peircean understanding that all human knowing is based on experience in which images of the world, and of God in the world, are formed both passively ('perceptual judgments') and actively ('perceptual facts') in the human mind. Furthermore, this image forming process is not an objective activity in the mind but an activity oriented by the observer's 'heart.' When it comes to acquiring knowledge, since God is present in all of creation by the Spirit, the world in its fullness is the source of theological knowledge and thus knowledge of God is not simply limited to certain spheres of life, traditions or disciplines of enquiry. Nevertheless, not all experiences in the world are divine encounters, and therefore justification for appropriate images/beliefs of God must be discerned through *pragmatic* and *coherence* criteria. The need for seeking warrant for beliefs is further highlighted by the triadic and fallibility of all human knowing.

Yong's Pentecostal (read: pneumatological) rationality has a number of strengths. At the forefront, it is developed on the doctrine of the Spirit, which is one of the central aspects of Pentecostalism(s). A great emphasis is also placed on pneumatological experience, and, as

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[54] Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 164.

Keith Warrington puts it, 'a personal, experiential encounter of the Spirit' is central to Pentecostals.[55] This experience is not understood, however, in a naïve realist fashion because Yong acknowledges that all experience is semiotically mediated, but at the same time he does not restrict the experience simply to a cultural-linguistic tradition but allows the experience of God to also transform that tradition.[56] Yong's epistemology can also be seen as moving beyond Cartesian rationalism and classical foundationalism,[57] which has been common in Evangelical epistemologies and thus an influence on Pentecostal theology. It acknowledges the holistic nature of knowledge and the value of the heart in the formation of images/beliefs.[58] Nevertheless, Yong's concept of the faculty of pneumatological imagination is not a retreat into subjectivism, relativism or fideistic confessionalism, due to his empiricism and the *pragmatic* justification of beliefs/images. Yong's pragmatism is also not only philosophically robust, but reflects the strong pragmatic disposition already present within the Pentecostal movement, which Yong seeks to represent.[59] Therefore, Yong's pneumatic epistemology with its pneumatological correlationism can be seen as an alternative to classical foundationalist and postliberal theological epistemologies, and thus as a plausible option for Pentecostal theologians and philosophers to utilise.[60]

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[55] Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 20.
[56] The importance of a transcendent pneumatological experience beyond a semiotic framework is deemed by Lewis and Macchia as an important feature of Pentecostalism; Lewis, 'Towards a Pentecostal Epistemology', 100; Frank D. Macchia, 'Christian Experience and Authority in the World: A Pentecostal Viewpoint,' in *The Authority of the Church in the World. National Council of Churches USA Faith and Order Commission*, accessed September 10, 2013, http://www.ncccusa.org/faithandorder/authority.macchia.htm.
[57] Although Yong does seem to suggest that his foundational pneumatology provides a weak form of foundationalism; Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 80; cf. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 286. For a critical overview of classical foundationalism see Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 67-107.
[58] Clear similarities can be seen here with Land's 'orthopathy' and Johns concept of *yada*; see Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 134-136; Johns, *Pentecostal Formation*, 39.
[59] See Lewis, 'Towards a Pentecostal Epistemology', 106; Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 13; Macchia, 'Christian Experience and Authority in the World'; Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*, 152.
[60] This, indeed, seems to be one of Yong's main purposes; see Yong, 'The Demise of Foundationalism,' 579-587.

Having identified these strengths, there are at least two aspects of Yong's theological epistemology that probably merit further discussion: (1) the general adequacy of his public theology and correlationism from a Pentecostal perspective, and (2) the effectiveness of his theory of justification/warrant.

Regarding the first issue, it seems that Yong's theological project is effectively that of a (super) 'natural theologian,' since he emphasises the possibility of a universal pneumatic experience that finds its basis in his foundational pneumatology. Now the question is whether Yong's pneumatology in the context of Pentecostal theology and pneumatology is sufficiently robust to justify this position. For example, Smith has argued that Yong pushes the metaphor of 'Spirit poured out on all flesh' too far by not acknowledging its particular connection to Christians, rather than all people, in Acts.[61] This criticism is further articulated by the Pentecostal theologian Roger Stronstad who strongly opposes Yong's reading of Acts 2:17 by claiming that 'the interpretation espoused by Amos Yong is factually incorrect. Contrary to Yong's meaning, the Spirit is NOT poured out on all flesh.'[62] Thus, the potential danger is that Yong's pneumatology emphasises the universal Spirit of Creation at the expense of the particular Spirit of Christ; that is, epistemologically, not soteriologically, speaking.[63] Or to pose the question differently, is (Yong's) natural theology a 'natural' bed-fellow for Pentecostal theology, even when it is pneumatically based?

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[61] James K. A. Smith, 'The Spirit, Religions, and the World as Sacrament: A Response to Amos Yong's Pneumatological Assist,' *JPT* 15, no. 2 (2007): 254 n. 9.
[62] Roger Stronstad, 'A Review Essay on Amos Yong, *Who is the Holy Spirit?: A Walk with the Apostles*,' *JPT* 22, no. 2 (2013): 297.
[63] Yong rejects soteriological universalism due to human freedom enabled by the Spirit; Amos Yong, 'Radically Orthodox, Reformed and Pentecostal,' 247.

Interestingly, L. William Oliverio has pointed out, after explicating Yong's theological methodology, that 'the question remains how Yong's theological forays relate to the Pentecostal traditions that Yong seeks to represent and to those particularities he attends.'[64] This is a crucial question because if Yong's epistemology does not relate to the Pentecostal traditions appropriately, this not only undermines his global/public theology by excluding Pentecostals, but also destroys the foundations upon which he hopes to build his public theology, namely Pentecostal presuppositions. I am not necessarily suggesting that Yong's epistemology does not accurately reflect Pentecostalism, but that this issue simply needs further assessment if Yong's Pentecostal epistemology is to be adopted and adapted by Pentecostal scholars going forward.

Second, when it comes to Yong's theory of justification/warrant, Yong has himself stated that he is 'convinced that the Achilles' heel of any pneumatological approach to theology of religions will be its failure to develop a criteriology of discernment adequate for the dynamic complexity of lived human religious experience.'[65] At the same time, however, in his most philosophical and theoretical work Yong acknowledges that 'the possibility, conditions, and justification of knowledge' are not comprehensively discussed,[66] and, as one might expect, this does cause some ambiguity in Yong's epistemology and also leaves the Achilles' heel of his epistemology very exposed.

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[64] Oliverio, 'The One and the Many,' 60.
[65] Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 166.
[66] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 120. To be fair to Yong, he has tried to remedy this lack to *some* extent in his later work.

For example, Yong maintains that, in the light of his pragmatic justification, beliefs are justified in practice in how they correspond to reality and this informs right habits in a person, enabling them to more truthfully interact with reality. However, Yong also asserts that truth, that is, reality is fundamentally eschatological.[67] If this is the case, then simply testing our beliefs in the world, ever if the world is pneumatic, will not help us reach the truth of the matter or necessarily develop right epistemic habits, unless one maintains a fully realised eschatology. The reason being, that if the eschaton has not yet been fully realised, the current reality experienced in the world and the habits formed by it do not necessarily correspond to the age to come, which will reflect a different reality at least to some extent. Perhaps this is why Paul, among other NT writers, encourages his readers through his example to 'walk by faith, not by sight' (2 Cor. 5:7). However, Paul's exhortation begs the question 'how does one know that one is genuinely walking by faith and that one's faith is warranted, if experience and practice cannot fully confirm this?' The answer from a Christian perspective seems to point towards God's special revelation in Christ mediated by the Bible and the Christian community.

In fairness to Yong, his more recent articulation of theological epistemology has focused increasingly on Christ as the revelation of God and he has also argued for a closer relationship between christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, practice and eschatology.[68] Nevertheless, the relationships between Spirit and Word, experience and the Bible, practice and tradition, eschatology and history, could still be further developed with a more direct focus on epistemic justification. It is here that Yong's pragmatic warrant and habit formation might also be

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[67] Yong, 'The Demise of Foundationalism,' 580.
[68] Amos Yong with Jonathan A. Anderson, *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), chapter 12; Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit*, 285.

strengthened by Smith's notion of habits being formed through the liturgy of the community of faith, which is the eschatological community (see 1.2.).

In conclusion, Yong's theological epistemology captured in his phrase 'pneumatological imagination' characterised by pneumatological correlationism is pneumatically orientated, pragmatically based, and universal in its aspiration. It is rich both philosophically and theologically, and thus offers potential for further Pentecostal epistemic engagement. Nevertheless, two questions remain: (1) to what extent does it reflect the Pentecostal traditions? And (2) is Yong's theory of justification/warrant sufficiently strong within and in dialogue with those outside the Pentecostal community?

1.2. Affective, Embodied and Narrative Knowing: Smith's Pentecostal Rationality

James Smith, like Yong, has been one of the pioneers of Pentecostal philosophical theology in the 21st century. His main work focusing explicitly on Pentecostal philosophy and epistemology is *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (2010);[69] although many of the ideas presented here are expressed, as well as developed, in his other works. In his own words, Smith's philosophical and theological journey has been from Christian 'fundamentalism' to 'postliberalism.'[70] Some of his main philosophical and theological influences and dialogue partners along this intellectual journey have been

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[69] James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010). A more recent articulation explicitly focusing on Pentecostal epistemology is Smith, 'Pentecostalism,' 606-618.
[70] James K. A. Smith, *The Fall of Interpretation: Philosophical Foundations for a Creational Hermeneutic*. 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 5-9.

reformed and Pentecostal theologians/philosophers, the Radical Orthodoxy movement, continental philosophy, and more recently American pragmatism.[71]

My discussion on Smith's Pentecostal epistemology shares the structure of the previous section; that is, I will (1) describe the main tenets of Smith's Pentecostal epistemology; (2) discus his identified sources of theological knowledge; (3) explore the epistemic criteria regarding justification/warrant; and (4) provide some evaluative comments on Smith's theological epistemology.

1.2.1. Affective, Embodied and Narrative Knowing

Smith hopes to develop a Pentecostal epistemology that is based on the tacit epistemic principles present within Pentecostal faith and spirituality.[72] His emphasis on constructing a theological epistemology of faith/spirituality follows his distinction between 'faith/spirituality' and 'theology.'[73] Faith, according to Smith, is a 'pre-theoretical experience,'[74] whereas theology is 'associated with the more narrow, propositional aspect of faith – doctrines, dogma, and theoretical reflection,'[75] and in this sense theology is a 'second-

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[71] E.g. Smith, *The Fall of Interpretation*; James K. A. Smith, *Speech and Theology: Language and the Logic of Incarnation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002); James K. A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-secular Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004); James K. A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006); James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009); James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013); James K. A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism? Community, Contingency and Creaturehood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014); James K. A. Smith. *How (Not) to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).
[72] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 52.
[73] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 25-26.
[74] James K. A. Smith, 'Dialogue: Scandalizing Theology: A Pentecostal Response to Noll's *Scandal*,' *Pneuma* 19, no. 2 (1997): 235.
[75] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 25-26.

order' discipline 'one step back' from the reality of faith.[76] Moreover, for Smith it is the practices of faith/spirituality 'that give rise to (articulated) beliefs' of theology, *not* the other way around.[77] Consequently, it seems that for Smith a Pentecostal epistemology stemming from a Pentecostal theology would be a construction from a secondary source, rather than the primary source of practised faith and spirituality. Therefore, to avoid dealing with lesser sources (read: theology), Smith seeks to build his theological epistemology on the primary source of Pentecostal spirituality, or at least his direct reflection on it.

In reflecting on Pentecostal spirituality, Smith effectively identifies three key aspects for a Pentecostal theory of knowledge: knowing is (1) *affective*, (2) *embodied* and (3) *narrative*. He pitches these three principles against the Cartesian anthropology that reduces humans to 'thinking things' which, he argues, has resulted in the idolisation of reason and the failure of modernistic epistemologies.[78] Smith in fact suggests that 'the epistemology implicit in Pentecostal spirituality... call[s] into question... [the] embrace of rationalist models of knowledge' which 'reduces Christian faith to a set of logical propositions.'[79] In this sense he sees Pentecostalism as a type of '*proto-postmodernism*' or '*countermodernism*,' having great affinity with postmodern epistemologies,[80] which is not necessarily surprising with respect to Smith's own interest in postmodern theology and philosophy.[81]

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[76] Smith, 'Dialogue,' 235.
[77] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 31 n. 35.
[78] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 53. Unlike Yong's epistemology that starts from ontology, Smith bases his epistemology on anthropology. That is, he is driven by the belief that behind every pedagogy and epistemology is a 'set of assumptions about the nature of human persons.' The great failure of modern epistemologies, in his view, is that they have assumed that humans are merely 'thinking things;' Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 37; cf. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 54.
[79] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 55 n. 17.
[80] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 52.
[81] See Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*; Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?*: Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*.

So how does Smith interpret these three Pentecostal epistemic intuitions? First, he argues that

for Pentecostals the *affections* and the 'heart,' not the 'head,' are at the centre of theological

knowledge (and knowledge in general).[82] Smith insists that this should not be seen as a

Pentecostal rejection of reason *per se* or a return to naive anti-intellectualism, but 'the point is

to affirm the *primacy* of the heart and affections as the *basis* for a rational, intellectual

engagement with and interpretation of the world.'[83] Building on the philosophies of Martin

Heidegger and Charles Taylor, Smith argues that we can 'know' (*Wissen*) only what we

'understand' (*Verstehen*) and we can understand only what we 'love/desire.'[84] To put it

differently, what we love shapes who we are;[85] who we are is significant in shaping our

worldview, that is, the way we 'see,' 'inhabit' and 'engage' the world;[86] and, our worldview

then sets the boundaries for our reasoning, intellectual engagement and beliefs about the

world. Therefore, Smith infers that 'we love before we know,' and in a sense we can only

know what we love because it is love that forms our plausibility structures of what could be.[87]

This is why, for Smith, Pentecostal knowledge is fundamentally affective.

The second element of Smith's Pentecostal epistemology is *imaginative embodiment* which

follows from his notion of affective knowledge. As seen above, for Smith the heart is the

'heart' of theological knowing, and he goes on to claim that 'the way to the heart is through

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[82] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues,* 58. In many ways Smith follows Land in building his epistemology on the notion of 'orthopathy'; Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 134.
[83] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 59.
[84] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 70.
[85] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 40.
[86] For Smith's definition of a 'worldview' see Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 27.
[87] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 70; Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 14 n. 26.

the body,' as well as through the imagination.[88] Smith closely links embodiment and imagination, and like Yong, he does not see imagination as 'the stuff of make-believe creativity... or merely an act of pretense,' rather he sees:

> it more as a quasi-faculty whereby we construe the world on a precognitive level, on a register that is fundamentally aesthetic precisely because it is so closely tied to the body... the imagination is a kind of midlevel organizing or synthesizing faculty that constitutes the world for us in a primarily affective mode... There is a kind of precognitive perception that is to be distinguished from perception proper – that is, from perception as being cognizant of and attentive to an 'object' in front of me.[89]

The 'precognitive perception,' as distinct from 'perception proper,' is also referred to by Smith as 'primary perception.'[90] It is this primary perception which is our embodied 'way of being-in-the world as being-*with*-the-world,' attuning our imagination to reflect our embodied experience of the world around us.[91] Smith's primary perception is similar to Yong's first aspect of the imagination (Peirce's 'perceptual judgments') in which images are formed passively in the mind, although Smith places greater emphasis on the embodied nature of this passive image forming. Furthermore, like Yong's second aspect of the imagination, or Peirce's 'perceptual facts,' the rationality, intellection and 'objective knowledge' according to Smith is only made possible through this primary perception.[92] In fact, 'objective knowledge' seems to be a reflection on the 'primary perception'. Hence, Smith argues that as embodied creatures we firstly '*feel* our way around the world more than we *think* about it, *before* we think about it.'[93] And it is this embodied being in, and feeling our way around the world that informs our imagination.

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[88] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 14; 162.
[89] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 16-18.
[90] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 70.
[91] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 70.
[92] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 70.
[93] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 72.

Smith points out that this principle of understanding humans as embodied and imaginative beings who imbibe images through their bodies is acted out in Pentecostal worship. He states that 'there could be no Pentecostal spirituality without the matter of bodies; in other words, for Pentecostalism, *bodies matter*.'[94] He supports his claim by noting how the importance of divine healing and expressive worship (e.g. lifting up of hands, laying on of hands, dancing, shaking, etc.) highlights the centrality of embodied encounters for Pentecostals with the divine, and opposes the reduction of humans to mere rational beings.[95]

Third, from the affective and embodied/imaginative aspects of knowing God, Smith proposes that *narrative* knowledge naturally ensues;[96] he reasons that the form of knowing needs to be narrative/testimonial in order to carry the affective and embodied aspects. That is, 'if the testimony is translated into mere' facts, codified into propositions, distilled into ideas, then we are dealing with a different animal: I would both 'know' something different and 'know' it differently.'[97] In other words, only narrative knowledge, not propositional knowledge, can do justice to the affective and embodied nature of knowing and is therefore irreducible to rational propositions. The role of the narrative within Smith's epistemic triad is to provide a framework to help make 'sense of our world, our experience, and events.'[98] To use N. T. Wright's terminology, the narrative functions as a 'controlling story,'[99] helping to interpret

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[94] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 82.
[95] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 61,
[96] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 64.
[97] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 64.
[98] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 70.
[99] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 42.

the images formed through embodiment in the world. Or, in the words of Smith, 'narrative is the scaffolding of our experience.'[100]

1.2.2. Sources of Knowledge/Acquiring Knowledge

In the light of Smith's affective, embodied and narrative Pentecostal epistemology, I will now seek to further explore how in Smith's terms we come to 'know' and what are the main 'sources' of knowledge. At the forefront, similarly to Yong, Smith sees experience as the central source of theological knowledge.[101] In fact, Smith acknowledges that his view of embodied knowing 'by the images of the world that are absorbed by our bodies' is a form of empiricism.[102] So in simple terms for Smith, as for Yong, we come to acquire knowledge through our *experience* of the world.

Smith, more so than Yong,[103] however, emphasises that the affective, embodied and narrative theological knowing is shaped by *practices*, which can be seen as 'rituals' and 'liturgies' in which we participate,[104] and these practices end up causing *habits* in our lives. Habit, as understood by Smith, is the 'embodied know-how (the 'practical sense')' that 'orients my perception of the world without me realizing it.'[105] The 'know-how' or 'practical sense' is also referred to by Merleau-Ponty as the *praktognosia* 'by which I 'understand' the world

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[100] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 108.
[101] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 81.
[102] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 17 n. 38.
[103] Although see Amos Yong, 'Ignorance, Knowledge and Omniscience: At and Beyond the Limits of Faith and Reason after Shinran,' *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 31 (2011): 205.
[104] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 86.
[105] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 80, 88.

without recourse to discursive, propositional processing.'[106] In other words, habits transform

our imagination and thus our primary perception of the world. Hence, Smith concludes that

'rituals make the man who makes the world,'[107] because practices (read: rituals) shape our

habits, and habits in turn inform our 'know-how'/'practical sense'/*praktognosia*/imagination.

Smith argues that our culture is full of these 'identity-forming practices' (i.e. liturgy) which

influences our understanding and knowledge of the world and God, and in this sense liturgical

practice, whether Christian or non-Christian, precedes our worldviews.[108] To corroborate this

claim, Smith notes that people in 'the church were worshipping long before they got all their

doctrines in order or articulated the elements of a Christian worldview; and they were

engaged in and developing worship practices long before what we now call our *Bible* emerged

and was solidified, so to speak.'[109] Hence, it seems that for Smith a good source of theological

knowledge is a context which enables us to participate in a form of liturgy which will shape

our affective, embodied/imaginative and narrative knowing in a way that will increase true

knowledge of God, because to shape a worldview and to form knowledge is to practice a

specific liturgy.[110] It is not hard to argue that, at least ideally, participation in the life of the

Church provides this context and thus the Church as *a l*iturgical community is an ideal, even

if not the only, source of theological knowledge.[111]

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[106] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 56.
[107] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 107.
[108] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 89-90.
[109] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 135. It is here that Smith's views are very similar to the Wittgensteinian notion of systems of beliefs within 'forms of life;' see Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*. Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Shulte. 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2009).
[110] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 155-214.
[111] Smith states that 'The church is the language-game in which we learn to read the world aright'; Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 72.

1.2.3. Justification/Warrant

It appears from Smith's epistemological triad and the emphasis on knowing through liturgical participation, that we should engage in those practices that help align our affections, imagination and personal narratives increasingly with the reality of God and His Kingdom.[112] So how does one know that they have participated in the right liturgy and that their narrative knowledge of God is justified? For a person to discern the validity of their knowledge, Smith suggests placing their 'micronarratives' of the Kingdom within the 'macronarrative of Scripture' which portrays the true picture of God's Kingdom.[113] In other words, a person needs a sanctified perception which means 're-*story*-ing' their 'being-in-the-world.'[114] Smith elaborates this by noting that 'we need to be regularly immersed in the 'true story of the whole world'; that is, our imaginations need to be restored, recalibrated, and realigned by an affective immersion in the story of God in Christ reconciling the world to himself.'[115] The 're-*story*-ing' happens best within the worshipping community which participates in liturgies that accurately reflect the biblical metanarrative, that is, the 'true story of the whole world.' Thus, it seems that for Smith the justification for the Pentecostal community's narrative is determined by the extent to which it accurately corresponds to and coheres with the Bible.

This, however, raises the question of how, in a pluralist world, does the community know that their macro-narrative, namely Scripture, is in fact the true macro-narrative? Smith suggests two theories of justification for the biblical macro-narrative in relation to the contending stories. Firstly, there is the performative effectiveness of the narrative in lived experience *vis-*

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[112] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 48.
[113] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 63.
[114] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 161.
[115] Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 163.

à-vis alternative and competing narratives 'in the marketplace of ideas,'[116] which lends itself to a type of *pragmatic justification*.[117] It is important to highlight here that Smith is adamant that there is no public rationality or neutral ground between different traditions.[118] This means that it is not possible to justify one's narrative from some form of common criteria, and hence Smith strongly opposes any type of 'correlated Christian theology.'[119] In the absence of common ground between traditions, Smith argues that the biblical narrative is justified pragmatically with respect to competing narratives. The process of pragmatic justification has two steps. The first is to show that there is, in fact, no neutral point of view, and consequently to try to cling on to objective modernistic theories of warrant is disingenuous. For example, the secular ontology is also a '*mythos* and thus equal in epistemic status to the Christian *mythos*.'[120] The next step is then to 'out-narrate' the competing *myths* not by arguments but by the language of life, through a lived witness.[121] In the words of Smith, 'the church does not *have* an apologetic; it is an apologetic.'[122] As well as pragmatically justifying beliefs/narratives through this two-step process, Smith secondly argues that the beliefs/narratives can be also tested regarding their inner coherence, resulting in a coherence theory of justification.[123] In other words, if the biblical narrative is internally coherent and consistent then one is not irrational in believing it.

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[116] Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 181.

[117] See Smith, 'Pentecostalism,' 613.

[118] He writes that 'The neutral, autonomous reason that would have to underwrite a project of demonstration has been forfeited by the fall'; Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 181.

[119] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?*, 123-127; cf. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 31-42.

[120] Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 181.

[121] Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 181. Smith identifies his postliberal apologetic strategy as 'a wager of outnarration;' Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 174-175.

[122] Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 181.

[123] Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 181-182.

In summary, the justification/warrant for Pentecostal narrative knowing is provided by three factors: (1) the way it fits with the biblical macro-narrative; the biblical macro-narrative, on the other hand, is justified by (2) a *pragmatic* criteria in its ability to 'out-narrate' competing narratives, as well as (3) the biblical macro-narrative's own inner *coherence*.

1.2.4. Evaluative Comments

It has been suggested that Smith aspires to build his Pentecostal epistemology on the tacit epistemic principles present within Pentecostal practice and spirituality, rather than on Pentecostal theology. Within Pentecostal practice/spirituality he identifies three main aspects of Pentecostal theory of knowledge, namely that epistemology is (1) affective, (2) embodied and (3) narrative. Knowledge of the world and God is gained through habit forming practices, that is, rituals and liturgies, which shape this epistemic triad and one's 'know-how' of the world. To discern whether one is participating in the appropriate practices, one needs to continually 're-story' themselves within the biblical macro-narrative in the context of a Christian community to ensure that one's narrative *corresponds* with the biblical macro-narrative, and the warrant with respect to the biblical macro-narrative is determined by *pragmatic* and *coherence* criteria.

The Pentecostal scholarly community has been significantly enriched by Smith's philosophical vigour, insights and creativity in articulating a Pentecostal epistemology. Smith's impressive work on Pentecostal philosophy as a whole, and epistemology in particular, has proved to be a significant contribution and catalyst for Pentecostal philosophical theology. Klaas Bom has gone so far as to claim that Smith's epistemological

'contribution provides a first step toward developing... a [Pentecostal epistemological] framework.'[124] Bom's assertion seems somewhat bold, not least in the light of Yong's prior epistemological work, but, nevertheless, rightly highlights the importance of Smith's contribution for Pentecostal epistemology. Particularly, Smith's emphasis on spirituality, liturgical practice and (biblical) narrative as a source for Pentecostal epistemology is very valuable. It is also this aspect of Smith's epistemology that makes it postliberal, a label with which Smith is happy to identify.[125]

That said, there seem to be four weaknesses within Smith's epistemology that merit further discussion: (1) his one-sided view regarding the relationship between practices/faith and beliefs/theology; (2) the focus on present practices at the expense of the historical, theological and communal narratives that shape these practices; (3) the apparent dilemma in his theory of justification with respect to beliefs/narratives; (4) Smith's concept of ''realism' without correspondence.'[126]

One-Sided Relationship Between Faith and Theology

As discussed above, Smith makes a distinction between practised 'faith/spirituality' and articulated 'theology.' He believes that the practised faith informs theology, and not *vice*

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[124] Klaas Bom, 'Heart and Reason: Using Pascal to Clarify Smith's Ambiguity,' *Pneuma* 34, no. 3 (2012): 347.
[125] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 152-153.
[126] Bom has also noted Smith's silence on 'the specific role of reason' and the ambiguity between 'heart' and 'reason'; Bom, 'Heart and Reason,' 349. However, Smith seems to have responded to Bom's enquiry, at least indirectly, in *Who's Afraid of Relativism*, 115-149. Moreover, Davis and Franks have argued against Smith's narrative epistemology as either leading to '*story relativism* (where no story – not even the gospel – is epistemically privileged) or a question-begging *story-ism* (privileging one's own story over other without justification);' Richard B. Davis and W. Paul Franks, 'Against a Postmodern Pentecostal Epistemology,' *PC* 15, no. 2 (2013): 399.

versa, and therefore to deal with the primary material of Pentecostalism he develops his

Pentecostal epistemology from the implicit epistemic assumptions within Pentecostal

faith/spirituality, rather than from Pentecostal theology or historical tradition. However, this

approach is not without its difficulties.

First, Smith's insistence that it is practice that informs theology and not theology that informs

practice seems to be overly simplistic,[127] not least in the light of the two authors that Smith

utilises in developing his idea of giving primacy to faith/spirituality over articulated beliefs

(read: theology). Smith refers to Stephen Land's definition of spirituality as 'the integration of

beliefs and practices in the affections which are themselves evoked and expressed by those

beliefs and practices.'[128] What is evident here is not the superiority of practice over beliefs,

but the value of both in informing spirituality. In fact, Land explicitly states that for

Pentecostals there is a '*mutually conditioning interplay* between knowledge and lived

experience' (my emphasis).[129] Moreover, Charles Taylor's notion of 'social imaginary,'

which Smith also employs in developing a Pentecostal imaginary,[130] neither supports the pre-

eminence of practice informing spirituality and beliefs. In fact, Taylor argues that the social

imaginary is created by the mutual interplay of beliefs and practices, and that it is 'absurd to

believe that the practices always come first, or to adopt the opposite view, that ideas somehow

drive history.'[131] So, although Smith rightly emphasises the importance of practices informing

beliefs and theology, he seems to overlook the role theology plays in influencing religious

practices. The implications of this omission are that Smith's Pentecostal epistemology does

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[127] See Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 31 n. 35.
[128] Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 13 quoted in Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 26.
[129] Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 75.
[130] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 29.
[131] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (London: Duke University Press, 2004), 63; cf. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (London: Harvard University Press, 2007), 172.

not make the most of Pentecostal theology, which has shaped and is currently shaping

Pentecostal spirituality, and therefore Smith's interpretation of Pentecostal spirituality, which

is the foundation of his epistemology, is arguably not fully informed.[132]

Second, even if Smith is right in maintaining that the relationship between practised faith and

articulated beliefs works one way only, he is still unable to avoid theology in developing his

Pentecostal epistemology. The reason is that to construct an epistemology from Pentecostal

faith/spirituality, Smith first needs to interpret the nature of Pentecostal faith/spirituality,

which means that he inevitably ends up articulating a theoretical and theological framework

upon which his epistemology is then based. For example, when constructing his Pentecostal

epistemology Smith begins by providing a narrative description of a Pentecostal worshipping

community, followed by a (theological) interpretation and articulation of his worshipping

community, before developing a Pentecostal epistemology.[133] Consequently, it seems that

what Smith ends up building his epistemology on is not the unmediated spirituality of the

faith community but rather his interpretation and articulation of this community's faith; that

is, Smith's own *Pentecostal theology*. Since Smith is not able to bypass theology, Smith's

epistemology would benefit from a greater interaction with other Pentecostal theologians,

who, like Smith, commonly see themselves as 'witnesses' of the Pentecostal community. In a

true Pentecostal fashion, acknowledging the community's many witnesses would provide a

more informed theology (read: articulated beliefs from practiced faith), reflecting the richness

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[132] In fairness to Smith, his most recent article on Pentecostal epistemology engages more with Pentecostal history and theology; Smith, 'Pentecostalism,' 606-618.
[133] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 48-85.

of the experienced Pentecostal faith and spirituality, and thus providing better foundations for a distinctive epistemology.[134]

Non-Narrative Ahistorical and 'Experiential-Expressive' Pentecostal Epistemology

Smith's Pentecostal epistemology, however, would not only benefit from Pentecostal theology but also from greater appreciation of the history of Pentecostal communities. In fact, Smith's ahistorical approach means that his purported narrative Pentecostal epistemology is in fact non-narrative. The reason being that Smith focuses mainly on *present* Pentecostal practices at the expense of the historical developments of a theology which gives meaning to these practices. This means that his epistemology seems to focus on the contemporary Pentecostal scene without reflecting on the historical scenes (read: theology and historical narrative) that help put the present scene in its right context. The problem with a 'one scene narrative' is that it effectively becomes non-narrative altogether, because you cannot have a story with only one scene.[135] Therefore, to construct a truly narrative Pentecostal epistemology, Smith and those who seek to build on his epistemology, need to pay closer attention to the historical and theological developments of the Pentecostal narrative, as well as its contemporary expressions.

Not giving sufficient attention to Pentecostal history/tradition also weakens Smith's attempt in providing a truly communal and 'postliberal' Pentecostal epistemology. As has already

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[134] Bom also highlights the need for Pentecostal (systematic) theology to influence Pentecostal epistemology; Bom, 'Heart and Reason,' 363-364.

[135] To be fair to Smith, his purpose in *Thinking in Tongues* is to provide a sketch of a Pentecostal epistemology, not a full thesis. Nevertheless, without paying due respect to theology shaping practices, as well as practices shaping theology, it is difficult to see how Smith could provide such a narrative Pentecostal epistemology.

been noted, Smith identifies himself as a postliberal and therefore, like Lindbeck, aims to provide an alternative to the so called 'cognitive-propositional' and 'experiential-expressive' approaches to religion.[136] 'Experiential-expressivism' is seen as the model of liberal Christianity, and for Lindbeck, whom Smith quotes, a main difference between 'liberals' and 'postliberals' is that: 'Liberals start with experience, with an account of the present, and then adjust their vision of the kingdom of God accordingly, while postliberals are in principle committed to doing the reverse.'[137] In other words, liberals start with experience and postliberals with tradition. Interestingly when constructing his Pentecostal epistemology Smith seems to adopt more of a liberal rather than the postliberal approach since he starts his description of epistemology from the experience of a Pentecostal believer, even if they are part of a community, and then from this experience draws his epistemic principles for a Pentecostal epistemology.[138]

Now to be fair to Smith, his articulation of an epistemology from a Pentecostal worship service tries to capture a communal rather than just an individual religious experience, and thus Smith's attempt in making 'explicit' what is 'implicit' in Pentecostal worship can be seen as '*communal* expressivism.'[139] Moreover, his description of the Pentecostal service does not just focus on experience but also on practices within the worship service. Nevertheless, without locating his 'communal expressivism' or practices within the wider Pentecostal tradition and its historical narrative, Smith's epistemology seems to resemble too closely the

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[136] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 151-178.
[137] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 126 quoted in *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 156.
[138] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 48-50.
[139] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 163.

'experiential-expressive' liberalism, which he seeks to distance himself from, rather than his preferred 'cultural-linguistic' postliberalism.

Epistemic Priority: Communal Practices or Creeds/Canons?

Smith also seems to have a possible problem in his theory of justification/warrant; that is Smith claims that practice precedes belief, not *vice versa*, and the church was worshipping long before it canonised its Scriptures or articulated its doctrines.[140] For Smith, it was this worshipping community that gave us the Canon and the Creeds. Nevertheless, Smith also maintains that the worshipping community needs to regularly 'recalibrate' and 're-story' its narrative in the light of the biblical metanarrative in order for its narrative knowing to be justified and warranted,[141] and the doctrines of the church provide the rules and 'grammar' for authentic practices within the community of faith.[142]

This causes an apparent dilemma for Smith because (1) either the practices of the worshipping community are authoritative, and not the Scriptures or doctrines which simply reflect the community's practices; or (2) the Scriptures and doctrines are authoritative and are the norm that should shape the practices of the worshipping community. It appears inconsistent for Smith to hold both assertions. If Smith adopts the first proposition his theory of warrant needs reshaping and he needs to develop some sort of experiential, or further refine his pragmatic, criterion for justified beliefs. If, on the other hand, he decides to give primacy to the second proposition, a more robust theory of warrant with respect to the biblical narrative, or special

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[140] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 135; Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 31 n. 35.
[141] See Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 161-163.
[142] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 162-164.

revelation, needs to be constructed. Either way Smith's theory of justification needs further

clarification and articulation.

Pentecostal (Anti-)Realism without Correspondence

Smith identifies his contextual and pragmatic approach to epistemology as '"realism" without

correspondence.'[143] In other words, from a theological perspective he sees the need to affirm a

'sacramental ontology, with its Christian "realism," [which maintains]: (1) the reality and

*in*dependence of the transcendent God on whom creation depends for its existence; and (2) the

participatory relation of created reality "in" God (per Acts 17; Col. 2).'[144] However, from a

philosophical perspective rather than seeing 'reality' as something that is actually 'outside' of

the knower's language game or conceptual framework as it is traditionally understood, Smith

argues:

> that representation and correspondence and even 'realism' are games that we learn to
> play from a community of social practice… [thus] our realisms (and attendant claims
> to correspondence) are dependent upon communities of practice. In short, our claims
> about 'reality' are relative to a community of social practice and the 'environment' we
> inhabit.[145]

Thus it seems that for Smith 'representation,' 'correspondence' and 'realism' are terms within

an intratextual language game without necessarily referring to or reflecting an outside reality.

However, such a definition of 'realism' seems at odds with how the term is commonly

understood. For example, in philosophy of science Smith's view is more similar to anti-realist

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[143] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 101.
[144] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 106.
[145] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 107.

'instrumentalism' than what is generally understood as scientific realism.[146] Moreover, and more importantly for Smith's Pentecostal epistemology, his definition of 'realism' does not seem to fit how a typical Pentecostal believer understands the term (see chapters 3-6); and therefore Smith is in danger of not just making the implicit practiced Pentecostal epistemology explicit, but actually revising and transforming it into something else through Rortyan pragmatism. Indeed, both and Yong and Oliverio see 'realism' as an important feature of a Pentecostal epistemology (see above), and therefore Smith's unconventional '(anti-)realism' may not sit comfortably with Pentecostal convictions or intuitions.

In summary, despite the various strengths of Smith's affective, embodied and narrative theological epistemology, his *narrative postliberal* approach is in danger of being *liberal* (read: 'experiential-expressivist') by not paying sufficient attention to the Pentecostal community's theology, and *non-narrative* by effectively being ahistorical. The fact that it also seems to lean towards anti-realism would probably raise concerns for most classical Pentecostals, which again suggests that Smith's rationality may not be so Pentecostal after all.

1.3. Pentecostal 'Hermeneutical Realism:' Oliverio's Pentecostal Rationality

William Oliverio, Jr. is the third major contributor to Pentecostal epistemology and rationality, although Oliverio prefers to term 'theological hermeneutics,' rather than

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[146] Kent W. Staley, *An Introduction to Philosophy of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 171. Moreover, Long, Milbank and Pickstock maintain 'truth as correspondence' as grounding realism, even if their theories of correspondence differ from that of classical foundationalism; Long, *Speaking of God*, 283; Milbank and Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas*, 1-18 quoted in Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 106-107 n. 37

theological epistemology, to characterise his methodological constructions.[147] His preference

for philosophical hermeneutics stems from his rejection of the common modernistic

assumption that sees epistemology as '*the* first philosophy' providing neutral and rational

epistemic criteria for one's philosophical quest for knowledge. In contrast to this modernistic

ideal, and in accordance with the so called 'linguistic turn' within Western philosophy,

Oliverio maintains that epistemological systems cannot be constructed prior to or

independently of existing metaphysical or philosophical paradigms. Consequently, he prefers

to frame his own project within the language of theological hermeneutics rather than

theological epistemology, even when the primary focus of his work is set around traditional

epistemological questions, such as, 'what are the sources of the knowledge of God? And how

are these sources approached and utilized for developing Pentecostal theology?'[148]

As discussed in the introduction of the thesis, I share Oliverio's criticisms of the

Enlightenment approach to epistemology, but unlike Oliverio I do not believe that the term

epistemology should be abandoned, as long as it is appropriately qualified and defined.

Nevertheless, in this last section of the chapter I will mainly use Oliverio's preferred term of

'philosophical/theological hermeneutics.' Moreover, the fourfold structure employed above

for engaging with Yong and Smith will also be utilised for interacting with Oliverio's

Pentecostal theological hermeneutics.

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[147] Oliverio's main work on theological hermeneutics/epistemology is Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*.
[148] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 5.

1.3.1. Pentecostal Theological Hermeneutics

Oliverio's discussion on Pentecostal hermeneutics is more accurately a discussion on classical

Pentecostal hermeneutics. By classical Pentecostalism Oliverio means the first wave of

Pentecostalism which emerged in the early twentieth century America (Bethel Bible College

in Topeka, Kansas [1901] and Azusa Street in Los Angeles [1906]), which 'has gone well

beyond a movement within Christianity to the point that it has formed a significant Christian

tradition.'[149] Oliverio believes that the Pentecostal tradition is part of the wider Christian

tradition, but it is also a tradition in its own right with an emphasis on 'Spirit baptized living'

informed by the narrative of Acts 'as a normative model.'[150]

Oliverio's work on theological hermeneutics makes at least two valuable contributions. First,

it provides a historical account of four *types* of Pentecostal theological hermeneutics. Second,

Oliverio makes his own contribution for the future of Pentecostal hermeneutics. I will begin

by outlining Oliverio's four types of Pentecostal hermeneutics, before looking at his own

version.

Four Types of Pentecostal Theological Hermeneutics

After noting the theological roots of early Pentecostalism,[151] Oliverio argues that over the

hundred year history of classical Pentecostalism four types of hermeneutics can be identified:

(1) the Original Classical Pentecostal Hermeneutic; (2) the Evangelical-Pentecostal

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[149] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 10.
[150] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 11.
[151] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 19-30. Oliverio is very much influenced by Dayton's work here; see
Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1987).

Hermeneutic; (3) the Contextual-Pentecostal Hermeneutic; and (4) the Ecumenical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic.

When exploring the first type, *Original Classical Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, Oliverio engages with the works of early American Pentecostal pioneers Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929), William Joseph Seymour (1870-1922), Charles Harrison Mason (1866-1961) and Garfield Thomas Haywood (1880-1931). He argues that despite some of the differences between these first generation Pentecostal leaders, the theological hermeneutic at work in their writings comprise four core characteristics. First, for these early Pentecostals 'the Scriptures were the sole ultimate authority for belief and living, but they functioned dialogically with religious and general experience in producing Pentecostal beliefs.'[152] Second, the restorationist and Latter Rain motif provided the historical narrative and eschatological posture for their understanding of God and the world. Third, the four/five-fold gospel set the grounding beliefs and the underlying doctrinal framework, and in doing so functioned as hypotheses in helping to make sense of the Bible and religious experiences. Fourth, the Pentecostal rationality was characterised by pragmatic and naïve realism which combined 'a folksy version of common sense realism… with a strong affirmation of the supernatural.'[153] In this sense, according to Oliverio, the early Pentecostal rationality served as 'an alternative to a more complex and naturalistic modern scientific rationality.'[154]

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[152] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 78.
[153] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 81.
[154] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 82.

In discussing the Original Classical Pentecostal Hermeneutic, Oliverio provides some insightful observations on the role of doctrine, Scripture and experience within early Pentecostalism. For example, he argues that the first Pentecostals seemed to use doctrines as 'organising ideas;' that is, what 'theories are to facts in Baconian science, so were doctrines and theological discourse to Scripture and experience in the original Classical Pentecostal hermeneutics.'[155] Oliverio continues by pointing out that on this matter early Pentecostals were significantly influenced by modern rationality, and in line with Baconian common sense science, 'doctrines acted as explanatory hypotheses which were supported by the facts, biblical texts, which were thus cited as proofs for the doctrines.'[156]

The second type of theological hermeneutics identified by Oliverio is the *Evangelical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic*. The scriptural emphasis and the common sense rationality of early Pentecostals made it relatively easy for them to align themselves with an Evangelical type hermeneutic. In fact, Oliverio notes that by the mid-1910s Pentecostals began increasingly to justify their beliefs and experiences biblically. He states that:

> While in the original Classical Pentecostal hermeneutic new doctrines explained Scripture and life anew, in the Evangelical-Pentecostal hermeneutic demonstrating that Pentecostal doctrines were the result of the proper readings of the Bible came to the fore. Doing theology became a matter of discovering what the Bible taught – biblical doctrines – and systematically or topically integrating them.[157]

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[155] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 79.
[156] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 80.
[157] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 84.

One of the implications of the shift from the Original Classical Pentecostal Hermeneutic to the Evangelical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic was that the openness to theological innovation present in early Pentecostalism was curtailed.

Oliverio argues that this Evangelical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic quickly became the dominant hermeneutical approach among American classical Pentecostals, particularly among Pentecostal scholars and not least after Pentecostals joined the National Association of Evangelicals in the early-1940s. However, he also highlights some of the internal differences and developments within this hermeneutic. For example, the early advocates of the Evangelical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic 'began to account for the internal context and history in the biblical texts' (e.g. William Kerr and Myer Pearlman), whereas the later and more contemporary hermeneuts have also emphasised 'the external context behind the text' (e.g. Gordon Fee and William Menzies).[158]

The third type noted by Oliverio is the *Contextual-Pentecostal Hermeneutic* which is

> informed by the theoretical and existential concerns in the human experience of interpretation raised by contemporary philosophical or general hermeneutics. For number of its proponents, this hermeneutic has developed through criticisms of the Evangelical-Pentecostal hermeneutic.[159]

Oliverio believes that the Contextual-Pentecostal Hermeneutic has four main emphases. First, there 'is an emphasis on the situation and context of the interpreter, going beyond the affirmation of the historicity and context of the biblical texts already present in the

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[158] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 131.
[159] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 185.

contemporary Evangelical-Pentecostal hermeneutic.'[160] Second, since the context of the hermeneut is not negligible, the way Scripture is understood and interpreted changes. Following from the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer, who Oliverio notes as 'the most critical' philosopher 'to the background of the contextual-Pentecostal hermeneutic,'[161] according to this type the meaning of the text can only be discerned when the horizon of the reader and the horizon of the text come together in a 'fusion of horizons.'[162] Thus, to speak of meaning outside of this fusion is believed to be misleading. Third, the understanding of hermeneutics changes in that the biblical text is no longer seen as the (only) text, but the whole world and human life within it is seen semiotically as a 'text.'[163] Based on this conviction, fourthly, the advocates of this approach have increasingly engaged with broader questions in contemporary philosophy and philosophical theology.[164]

The fourth type is the *Ecumenical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic*. Like the Contextual-Pentecostal Hermeneutic, the Ecumenical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic places a strong emphasis on one's context and/or tradition. This hermeneutical approach gives tradition a twofold significance. First, the Pentecostal hermeneut should be aware of their tradition, including its history, narrative and doctrines. Second, other (Christian) traditions should be respected and viewed as worthy interlocutors for the Pentecostal tradition in the hermeneut's quest for theological knowledge. This twofold emphasis on tradition means that the Ecumenical-Pentecostal

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[160] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 185.
[161] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 187. For Gadamer's classic text see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. William Glen-Doepel (London: Sheed & Ward, 1975).
[162] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 188.
[163] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 186.
[164] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 186. Oliverio identifies Timothy Cargal, James Smith, John Christopher Thomas, Kenneth Archer and Amos Yong as the main champions of this type of Pentecostal hermeneutics. He is very sympathetic towards the Contextual-Pentecostal Hermeneutic, and locates his own work within it, even if he argues for the need to maintain 'hermeneutical realism;' Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 247-252.

hermeneutic is effectively a 'dialogical hermeneutic' where truth is discerned in the

dialectical process between the Pentecostal tradition and other traditions.[165] Scripture remains

central in this process of discernment, but the Spirit's revealing work and the ability to

interpret Scripture is appreciated beyond the Pentecostal tradition.[166]

Hermeneutical Realism

Informed by these four types of Pentecostal hermeneutics, and particularly influenced by the

Contextual-Pentecostal Hermeneutics of Yong and Smith, Oliverio offers his own Pentecostal

theological hermeneutics, which he calls '*hermeneutical realism.*' It is *hermeneutical* because

Oliverio maintains that a '"text"… is any*thing* that is interpreted theologically.'[167] This means

that all (theological) understanding and knowledge is effectively 'textual' and thus must be

approached hermeneutically. The implications of all knowledge being textual and semiotic is

that one's hermeneutical approach cannot be divorced from the linguistic framework and

worldview within which it has been constructed or within which it functions. In Oliverio's

own words:

> My thesis is that theological hermeneutics is best understood in terms of holistic
> paradigms, our best theological accounts of the reality of our world which intertwine
> the ontologies implicit in our hermeneutics, the specific discernments made concerning
> the truths of historical existence, and what has come to be the structures of the
> hermeneutics themselves.[168]

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[165] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 255.
[166] Oliverio states that the key theologians of the Ecumenical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic include Ernest Swing Williams, Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., Frank Macchia, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Simon Chan, and Koo Dong Yun; Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, chapter 6.
[167] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 319.
[168] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 320.

Nevertheless, despite the hermeneutical nature of all knowing and the impossibility to transcend one's linguistic framework, Oliverio also argues for hermeneutical *realism*. The realism he advocates, however, is not a version of naïve-realism assuming the possibility of 'universally available reason, autonomous from culture, tradition or special revelation that corresponds to reality as it actually and statistically is.'[169] But it is grounded on the belief that there is a reality beyond one's cultural-linguistic framework and it is possible for individuals and/or communities to have better or worse interpretations of this 'reality.'[170]

In developing both the *hermeneutical* and *realist* aspects of his theological epistemology, Oliverio draws from the works of the philosophers of science Thomas Kuhn and Imre Lakatos, the scientific theologian Nancy Murphy, and the Catholic philosopher Charles Taylor. With respect to Kuhn, Oliverio states that his hermeneutical approach shares similarities with Kuhn's notion of *paradigms*, which Kuhn believed to consist of 'a set beliefs, methods and values.'[171] Moreover, like Kuhn, Oliverio believes that epistemological enquiry and progress cannot be carried outside but always within existing paradigms.[172]

However, to further develop Kuhn's concept of paradigm, and particularly the possibility of choosing rationally between various paradigms, Oliverio builds on Lakatos' concept of *Scientific Research Programmes* (SRPs).[173] Lakatos is significant because he argued that in a

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[169] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 323.
[170] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 324.
[171] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 327.
[172] See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. 4th ed.* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).
[173] See Imre Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes: Philosophical Papers Volume 1*, ed. John Worrall and Gregory Currie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

post-Kuhnian era his notion of SRPs was the best way to differentiate science from pseudoscience, which both moved beyond the potential irrationality and antirealism of Kuhn's paradigm theory, but at the same time did not return to a new version of naïve justificationism or falsificationism critiqued by Kuhn.[174] Moreover, unlike some philosophers of science influenced by logical positivism, he was not against metaphysical beliefs *per se*. In fact, he claimed that SRPs are commonly stimulated by metaphysical beliefs and assumptions.[175] Thus Lakatos is a natural dialogue partner for Oliverio, as Oliverio seeks to develop a theological (read: metaphysical) epistemology with both hermeneutical and realist dimensions.

Lakatos argued that a SRP does not consist of an 'isolated hypothesis but rather a research programme' comprises a set of hypotheses and theories.[176] These hypotheses/theories within a SRP can be categorised into two types. First, there are theories that make the *hard core* of the SRP which 'includes the methods, theories, and core beliefs of that program[me] that are non-negotiable.'[177] The hard inner core sets the agenda for the SRP and also serves as the *positive heuristic* of the programme. This hard core is the central part of the SRP and thus to abandon it equates to abandoning the SRP as a whole. Second, there are *auxiliary hypotheses* that in relation to the hard inner core help explain observed data, and also provide a *protective belt* around the hard core. The auxiliary hypotheses function as the *negative heuristic*, directing possible criticisms away from the hard inner core.[178] There is greater flexibility within the

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[174] Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes*, 1-7.
[175] Nancey Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 59, 199.
[176] Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes*, 4.
[177] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 329.
[178] Staley, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, 74.

auxiliary hypotheses, as they can be adapted, or even replaced, in an attempt to relate observed data to the hard inner core in a more consistent way.

Among Christian theologians/philosophers Murphy is perhaps best known for utilising Lakatos' notion of SRPs in developing a theological methodology.[179] Oliverio acknowledges this and affirms many aspects of Murphy's adaptation of Lakatos' work. Oliverio writes that,

> I find that much of Murphy's appropriation of Lakatos is helpful… if entire traditions and types of theological hermeneutics are understood similarly to SRPs. They are ways of understanding reality, as programs for accounting for it, given certain core affirmations and attendant agendas...[180]

Oliverio agrees with Murphy that theology is not merely 'the internal discourse of the Church,' but like the natural sciences has an external reality to which it relates, and therefore there is a public element to theology which transcends any given context. However, due to the contextual, linguistic and theory laden nature of all knowing, there is no direct or unmediated access to this external reality. Rather, the data about God for the theological research programme is provided by (religious) communities.[181] This is where Oliverio builds on the work of Smith where a distinction is made between 'faith' and 'theology.' In other words, faith is the lived experience of a religious community, whereas theology is a theoretical reflection on the experience of this community; and therefore in Anselmian terms theology is understood as 'faith seeking understanding.'[182] This means that for Oliverio, like for Murphy, theology is both a contextual and a public discourse; that is, the data for theology arises from

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[179] See Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*.
[180] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 330-331.
[181] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 332.
[182] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 343-344.

within religious (or non-religious) communities, but the data referred to is seen to refer to this 'reality' either accurately or inaccurately.

Nevertheless, despite the similarities between Oliverio's and Murphy's approaches, there are also some differences. The main difference seems to be that Murphy's work sees theology more through the lens of the natural sciences, whereas Oliverio approaches 'theological hermeneutics in terms of qualitative and linguistic categories rather than the scientific and quantitative ones found in the language of "probably reasoning."'[183] Oliverio's motivation for this appears to be a desire to guard theology from becoming 'something akin to a social science.'[184] As part of this move, he distinguishes his 'hermeneutical realism' from the more commonly known 'critical realism.' Oliverio claims that while the latter focuses on a 'single, proper critical method,' his hermeneutical realism affirms 'a historically contingent hermeneutic… [and] the ubiquity of interpretation.'[185]

It is questionable whether Oliverio's distinction between 'hermeneutical realism' and 'critical realism' is justifiable;[186] nevertheless, it is in this context that Oliverio also draws from the work of Taylor who sees epistemological traditions closely connected with 'the most important moral and spiritual ideas' of communities, traditions or civilizations.[187] In agreement with Taylor, Oliverio states that epistemology 'functions in order to form our best

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[183] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 331.
[184] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 332.
[185] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 320.
[186] For example, the 'critical realism' of N. T. Wright does not fit naturally with Oliverio's definition of the term. To the contrary, it is actually very similar to what Oliverio calls 'hermeneutical realism;' see Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 32-37.
[187] Charles Taylor, 'Overcoming Epistemology,' in *Philosophical Arguments*, ed. Charles Taylor (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 8.

account of reality, and this best account is what it means to best 'make sense' of our lives.'[188]

Therefore, hermeneutical realism is an all-encompassing endeavour as a hermeneutic of life, and so cannot be reduced to one particular field or scientific discipline.

In sum, Oliverio's hermeneutical realism follows the trajectory of the so-called Contextual-Pentecostal Hermeneutic with a strong emphasis on the contextual, linguistic and theory laden nature of all knowing, but at the same time it maintains a 'reality' beyond any given paradigm. Oliverio's contextual and realist epistemology is influenced by Kuhn's concept of paradigms; Lakatos' notion of SRPs, as well as its employment by Murphy within theological methodology; and Taylor's holistic approach to epistemology as hermeneutics of life.

1.3.2. Sources of Knowledge/Acquiring Knowledge

As has already been noted, for Oliverio it appears to be the experience of religious and non-religious communities that provides the data for theology. Consequently, the underlying source for knowledge in Oliverio's hermeneutical realism is experience; that is, general human experience but also more specifically human religious experiences of 'the other.' Oliverio claims that for Pentecostals it is particularly 'the experience of the presence of the Spirit [which] functions as the guide… in theological interpretation.'[189] While reflecting historically on the Pentecostal movement, he notes that 'the Azusa Street Revival provides reason for considering the experience of the Spirit as central to the founding of Classical

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[188] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 339.
[189] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 354-355.

Pentecostal tradition, and thus at the core of its theological hermeneutic.'[190] Therefore, like

Yong's and Smith's theological epistemologies, Oliverio's epistemology also seems to be

fundamentally experiential and empiricist in nature.

In the light of this, Oliverio goes onto to identify three specific sources for the pneumatic

experience of the Pentecostal community. The first and 'primary revelatory source for

theological understanding' is the Son of God who is also the Word of God.[191] The Word of

God is fundamentally revealed in the incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth, and it is the Scriptures

that bear witness to the living Word of God. However, Oliverio also seems to want to move

beyond the Barthian idea of the Bible simply being a witness to Christ and hence he adopts

Nicholas Wolterstorff's claim that the written words of the Bible are human words

appropriated by God and thus are both human and divine discourse.[192]

The second source of theological knowledge is 'creation and culture,' with Oliverio's

emphasis being on culture; that is, human cultivation of creation (e.g. human languages,

traditions, actions and beliefs).[193] Oliverio writes that 'the hermeneutical task is not only to

recognise that culture provides the context for interpretation but also that it provides both the

venue for God's revelation and the place of constructive interpretive action to better cultivate

the world.'[194] Although not developed in detail, it seems that Oliverio advocates some form of

(general) revelation being present in various human cultures, and particularly in those cultures

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[190] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 356.
[191] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 357.
[192] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 357.
[193] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 359.
[194] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 359.

that have been influenced by the Gospel.[195] He believes that despite an individual's ability to experience and think outside of any given paradigm, commensurability with other paradigms is possible through 'our common humanity and common world to which we relate.'[196] Hence, Pentecostal theology should learn from other disciplines, even if Oliverio rejects what he calls the 'correlationist strategy' in recent theology.[197]

The third source of theological knowledge is the Christian tradition. Oliverio suggests that Pentecostal theological hermeneutics needs to draw on the richness of the wider Christian tradition as a whole, and also on the distinctives of the Pentecostal traditions. However, apart from referring to the importance of understanding a tradition's historical past, present context, and current actions which help create its future, Oliverio provides very little explanation of what in fact constitutes the Christian or the Pentecostal traditions.[198]

1.3.3. Justification/Warrant

If, as suggested by Oliverio, one's beliefs about God are based on general and religious experiences, the Bible, creation and culture, and the wider Christian and Pentecostal tradition, how does one discern whether their interpretations of these sources do in fact reflect reality? To put it differently, how can a person or a community be justified in believing their particular interpretations of the data from these identified sources of knowledge?

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[195] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 359-360.
[196] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 326.
[197] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 327.
[198] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 360-361.

In developing a theory of justification for his Pentecostal hermeneutical realism, Oliverio utilises the criteria provided by Lakatos and Taylor for choosing between competing SRPs and paradigms. As has already been mentioned, Lakatos' sought to develop a scientific method that moved beyond the perceived arbitrariness and irrationality of Kuhn's paradigm theory *vis-à-vis* choosing between alternative paradigms. To guard against any potential epistemological anarchism, Lakatos argued that the validity of a SRP is based on whether it is considered to be either a *progressive* or *degenerating* programme. A progressive programme is characterised by its internal coherence/consistency, explanatory power regarding the observed data, and also its ability to predict *novel facts*; that is, ability to predict previously unknown facts rather than 'merely explain what is already known.'[199] A degenerating programme, on the other hand, finds its hard core increasingly challenged and is only able to protect it by making 'ad hoc modifications' to its auxiliary hypotheses, which is seen to indicate inconsistencies within its hard core.[200] A degenerating programme has also lost its ability, if it ever possessed such ability, to predict novel facts.

Scientific progress is achieved through the ongoing competition between various SRPs, with the *progressive programmes* eventually gaining prominence over the *degenerating programmes*. However, it is worth reinforcing that for Lakatos, like for Oliverio, the preference of one SRP over another is not determined by a set of neutral facts mediating between the two competing SRPs, as all facts are considered to be theory laden, and therefore independent and neutral criteria is assumed to be practically impossible. This, nonetheless, according to Lakatos need not lead to relativism (a common objection to Kuhn's paradigm

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[199] Staley, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, 80.
[200] Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*, 59.

theory), since the progressive SRPs are superior to the degenerating ones in explaining data and in generating predictions of novel facts which can be empirically corroborated.

In relation to choosing between two paradigms or SRPs, Oliverio also refers to Taylor who has argued against both epistemological foundationalism and relativism.[201] Taylor has pointed out that deciding between paradigms A and B does not require a third and neutral criteria C. One can reasonably choose B over A without the need for C to mediate, because (1) choosing B over A can be seen to overcome some 'error-inducing factor, such as confusion, an elision, a too-simple palette of possibilities, and the like;'[202] (2) there is *asymmetry* between A and B, because there is gain by moving from A to B but not from B to A.[203]

In summary, paradigms according to Oliverio seem to be justified or unjustified primarily in light of coherence and pragmatic criteria. In other words, a paradigm is judged based on the coherence/consistency of its various beliefs, and pragmatically in its ability to predict and corroborate 'novel facts.' It appears that those paradigms that are able to outdo their competitors in the above in an 'asymmetrical' manner are most likely to correspond with 'reality.'[204] Like Yong, Oliverio also believes that the truth of any paradigm can only be

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[201] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 338.
[202] Charles Taylor, 'A Philosopher's Postrcript: Engaging the Citadel of Secular Reason,' in *Reason and the Reasons of Faith*, eds. Paul J. Griffiths and Reinhard Hütter (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 340 quoted in Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 338.
[203] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 338.
[204] Oliverio does not distinguish between theories of justification and theories of truth; Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 325.

'eschatologically verified,' and thus his epistemology is also characterised by fallibilism and the task of justification/corroboration is ongoing.[205]

1.3.4. Evaluative Comments

To recapitulate the discussion thus far, Oliverio begins his exploration of Pentecostal theological hermeneutics by offering four types of hermeneutics based on the history of classical Pentecostalism, namely, (1) the Original Classical Pentecostal Hermeneutic; (2) the Evangelical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic; (3) the Contextual-Pentecostal Hermeneutic; and (4) the Ecumenical Pentecostal Hermeneutic. He follows this by making his own contribution to Pentecostal hermeneutics by developing his 'hermeneutical realism.' This hermeneutical realism falls within the Contextual-Pentecostal Hermeneutic type, assuming that all theological knowing takes place within linguistic paradigms and thus there is no escape from interpretation (i.e. all knowing is hermeneutical). Nevertheless, what is potentially known and interpreted transcends one's cultural-linguistic context, reflecting a reality beyond one's paradigm. The main source of theological knowledge is the experience of the (Pentecostal) community, with particular emphasis on its experience of the Word of God, creation and culture, and tradition(s). The justification or corroboration of paradigms is determined by which beliefs systems are most 'progressive' (see Lakatos) or provide the best account of lived experience (see Taylor) with respect to other paradigms of religious beliefs.

Oliverio's contribution to Pentecostal hermeneutics/epistemology is manifold. To note some of them, Oliverio seems to provide the first systematic and historical analysis of Pentecostal

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[205] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 342.

hermeneutics, and he therefore supplements the more ahistorical Pentecostal epistemologies

provided by Yong and Smith. In his historical work he astutely demonstrates how

Pentecostalism is a unique Christian tradition which has evolved theologically and

philosophically over its hundred year history, perhaps best reflected in the four types of

Pentecostal hermeneutics. Oliverio also deals with both academic and non-academic

Pentecostal theologians, and hence appreciates that Pentecostal theology and philosophy is

not just the privilege of academically educated theologians but also the practice of the wider

Pentecostal community. Moreover, Oliverio's own contribution for the future of Pentecostal

epistemology is insightful and his interaction with Kuhn, Lakatos, Murphy and Taylor is

informative.

However, despite these valuable insights, the main weakness/limitation of Oliverio's work is

that his own Pentecostal 'hermeneutical realism' remains somewhat undeveloped.[206] This has

at least two implications.

First, although Oliverio's hermeneutical realism assumes that all hermeneutical activity can

only take place within an existing paradigm, because all interpreting and knowing is

contextually conditioned, Oliverio does not provide any real articulation of what constitutes

the Pentecostal SRP and/or paradigm. To put this in Lakatosian terms, there is no real

description of what might be the *hard core* and *auxiliary protective belt* of the Pentecostal

paradigm. The closest Oliverio seems to come to identifying the hard core of Pentecostal

hermeneutics is when he states that 'the Azusa Street Revival provides reason for considering

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[206] I will not focus on the accuracy of the historical analysis or the four types of Pentecostal hermeneutics identified by Oliverio.

the experience of the Spirit as central to the founding of classical Pentecostal tradition, and thus at the core of its theological hermeneutic.'[207] However, the 'experience of the Spirit,' unless developed theologically, is a very vague hard core for Pentecostal hermeneutics. For example, within the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit what positive heuristic does it provide for the Pentecostal research programme or what novel facts does this hard core predict? Oliverio provides few clues here. Moreover, there is no explication regarding what might be the main Pentecostal auxiliary hypotheses surrounding the hard core of pneumatic experience.

Of course it is impossible for Oliverio to do everything in a relatively short work on Pentecostal hermeneutics. Nevertheless, it is somewhat surprising that he does not articulate what he sees as the central tenets of the Pentecostal theological paradigm, not least as Murphy, who Oliverio engages with in detail, makes it clear that to develop a genuine 'Lakatosian Theology' one needs to combine both method *and* content.[208] Furthermore, in light of Oliverio's astute historical analysis of classical Pentecostalism he interacts with plenty of Pentecostal material which could have been utilised in providing the content for a Pentecostal paradigm. In fact, it seems ironic that despite most of Oliverio's project being historical in nature with respect to the four types of Pentecostal hermeneutics, his own Pentecostal hermeneutical realism is not more explicitly shaped by Pentecostal traditions and their histories. For example, could the Original Classical Pentecostal hermeneutic provide the hard inner core for his advocated Pentecostal hermeneutical realism? The lack of articulation

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[207] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 356.
[208] Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*, 183.

on this matter means that the potential of Oliverio's Pentecostal hermeneutics in its current form remains largely unrealised.

Now of course it is possible that even if Oliverio would have had the space and time to develop a Pentecostal paradigm along Lakatosian lines, he may have decided not to do so due to his desire to distinguish Pentecostal theology from the natural/social sciences, and develop a Pentecostal hermeneutic more reflective of Taylor's phenomenological approach. However, if this is the case, the same critique would still apply as Oliverio's work would then have to identify the Pentecostal 'moral frameworks' and the 'hypergoods' that are central to a Pentecostal 'social imaginary' according to Taylor.[209] So whether one follows the approach of Lakatos or Taylor, there seems to be no escape from developing the core content of a Pentecostal paradigm in order to be able to truly engage in contextual Pentecostal hermeneutics.[210]

Second, because Oliverio has not (yet) articulated what constitutes a Pentecostal paradigm, SRP or 'social imaginary,' it is not possible to actually evaluate whether Oliverio's Pentecostal hermeneutical realism is epistemological speaking fit for purpose. In other words, is it coherent within itself as a hermeneutical paradigm in light of its own Pentecostal tradition (however that may be conceived)? And is it a progressive or degenerative *vis-à-vis* competing

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[209] See Deane-Peter Baker, *Tayloring Reformed Epistemology: Charles Taylor, Alvin Plantinga and the de jure challenge to Christian belief* (London: SCM, 2007), 105-124.
[210] Articulating a Pentecostal worldview is seen as an important precursor for Smith and Kuosmanen as they develop their contextual Pentecostal epistemologies; Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 17-47; Kuosmanen, 'Towards Pentecostal Epistemology,' 20-46.

theological or anti-theological hermeneutical paradigms?[211] These questions cannot be

answered without an identification of what makes the Pentecostal paradigm.

In conclusion, there is much to commend in Oliverio's Pentecostal hermeneutics, not least the

historical explication of Pentecostal hermeneutics through four main ideal types. However,

although at first it seems that Oliverio follows his historical typologies by providing a

historically informed and tradition specific Pentecostal hermeneutics, he does not actually

achieve this, or at best does so only in a sketch form. Therefore, a truly historical and

tradition-specific Pentecostal philosophical hermeneutics is still to be articulated.

1.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined three major Pentecostal theological rationalities, epistemologies

and/or hermeneutics. At the outset it needs to be acknowledged that the contributions of

Yong, Smith and Oliverio in the search for a Pentecostal rationality have been seminal for

Pentecostal studies. To use Oliverio's categories, all three theological methodologies can be

located within the camp of 'Contextual-Pentecostal Hermeneutic.' That said, Yong and Smith

seem to represent the two sides within this category and Oliverio can be seen to hold a

mediating position between the two. In other words, Yong is effectively a *pneumatological*

correlationist in his epistemological approach with a firm grounding in the Pentecostal

tradition and pneumatological theology; Smith as a type of *Pentecostal postliberal* with an

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[211] For example, Herman Philipse has criticised theistic paradigms for lack of predictive power; Herman
Philipse, *God in the Age of Science? A Critique of Religious Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014),
140-160.

affinity to Pentecostal spirituality and practices; and Oliverio as a *hermeneutical realist* informed by classical Pentecostal history.

In my evaluation of these three positions, I have noted that Yong's rationality would merit further exploration regarding the extent to which it accurately reflects any given Pentecostal tradition. Smith's approach seems to suffer from not fully appreciating Pentecostal theology, as well as being ahistorical, which appears to undermine the 'Pentecostal' aspects of his Pentecostal epistemology. In terms of tradition-specific and historically informed Pentecostal rationality, Oliverio's approach is the most promising. But unfortunately he does not fully develop his own Pentecostal theological hermeneutics along his proposed methodology.

In light of the analysis above, my aim is to develop a historical and tradition-specific Pentecostal rationality (see Part II). However, although many of the building blocks for doing so are already provided by Oliverio – particularly those that he has gleaned from Kuhn, Lakatos, Taylor and Murphy – it appears that Alasdair MacIntyre provides further methodological insights about how to do this in a philosophically mature way.

CHAPTER 2 – ON METHOD: MACINTYRE, TRADITION AND RATIONALITY

The previous chapter has analysed and evaluated three prominent Pentecostal rationalities. I have tried to demonstrate that the philosophical contributions of Amos Yong, James Smith and William Oliverio are significant and should not be ignored by those in search of a Pentecostal rationality. Nevertheless, despite the importance of their work, the main weakness of all three seem to be that they suffer from being ahistorical (Oliverio more in practice than in theory), and therefore are in danger of not fully representing any particular Pentecostal tradition and its implicit epistemology.

It is in the light of this that the philosophical work of Alasdair MacIntyre seems to provide important resources for constructing and developing a truly historically informed, tradition specific and narrative Pentecostal epistemology. Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the philosophical methodology of MacIntyre which will then be employed in the next section for constructing a Pentecostal rationality.

The chapter will first explore MacIntyre's concept of tradition-dependent rationality. Second, it will seek to demonstrate that contrary to some common objections, MacIntyre's methodology does not lead to relativism or fideism, but through his notions of truth and dialectical justification a progressive quest for genuine knowledge is possible. Finally, it will conclude by discussing the potential benefits and implications of adopting MacIntyre's methodology in constructing a Pentecostal rationality.

2.1. MacIntyre's Tradition-Dependent Rationality

According to Stanley Hauerwas, 'few dispute that Alasdair MacIntyre is one of the most important philosophers of our time.'[1] Indeed, MacIntyre's academic oeuvre is impressive as it covers a multitude of topics in an interdisciplinary manner over a number of decades.[2] Despite MacIntyre's many interests, his primary work has been on moral and political philosophy. Moreover, he has been as an ardent critique of modernity, and his concepts of tradition and rationality have been widely debated. For the purposes of this chapter, I will simply focus on MacIntyre's notion of tradition-dependent rationality, since this provides the methodological tools for my later construction of a Pentecostal rationality.

2.1.1. Formal and Substantive Rationality

Ironically MacIntyre's concept of rationality has been simultaneously criticised as leading to relativism because of its inherent historicism,[3] as well as not being '*sufficiently* relativistic or historicist' due to its dialectical nature.[4] These seemingly conflicting criticisms highlight two important aspects within MacIntyre's concept of rationality, or what David Trenery refers to as his 'hybrid position' regarding Enlightenment rationality.[5]

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[1] Stanley Hauerwas, 'The Virtues of Alasdair MacIntyre,' *First Things*, October 2007, accessed January 20, 2017, https://www.firsthings.com/article/2007/10/the-virtues-of-alasdair-macintyre.

[2] For summaries of MacIntyre and his work see Kelvin Knight, 'Introduction,' in *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. Kelvin Knight (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 1-27; Hauerwas, 'The Virtues of Alasdair MacIntyre;' Christopher Stephen Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre: Relativism, Thomism, and Philosophy* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2009), 7-32; David Trenery, *Alasdair MacIntyre, George Lindbeck, and the Nature of Tradition* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 4-139.

[3] Neil Ormerod, 'Faith and Reason: Perspectives From MacIntyre and Lonergan', *HeyJ* 46 (2005): 11.

[4] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 328-329.

[5] Trenery, *Alasdair MacIntyre*, 129.

Generally speaking MacIntyre views rationality as the criterion used for judging 'truth and falsity.'[6] However, within this basic view he understands there to be two kinds of rationality or first principles. First, there is '*formal rationality*' which includes the basic laws of logic (e.g. the law of non-contradiction),[7] and in his own words these first principles 'are evident to all rational persons [and] do indeed provide standards and direction from the outset.'[8] These aspects of rationality are seen to be universal and accessible to all (rational) people due to our 'common humanity.'[9] It is this universal aspect of rationality that MacIntyre shares with the so called Enlightenment thinkers, as well as many modernistic epistemologies.[10]

Nevertheless, although MacIntyre believes that formal rationality and the laws of logic are 'necessary' conditions of rationality, he does not believe that they are 'sufficient' conditions.[11] In other words, formal rationality provides the grounding for human reasoning, but on its own it does not enable us to make any meaningful judgments about truth and falsity. What is needed for making genuine epistemic judgements is not just formal rationality but '*substantive rationality*,' which 'includes all those determinations and judgments about good reasons and acceptable evidence, that arise through tradition and convention.'[12] A major difference between this second kind of rationality, *vis-à-vis* the first kind, is that it is 'self-

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[6] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, 9.
[7] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, 9.
[8] Alasdair MacIntyre, 'First Principles, Final Ends, and Contemporary Philosophical Issues,' in *The Tasks of Philosophy: Selected Essays, Volume 1*, ed. Alasdair MacIntyre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 160.
[9] Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Philosophy Recalled to its Task: a Thomistic Reading of *Fides et Ratio*,' in *The Tasks of Philosophy*, 194.
[10] Trenery, *Alasdair MacIntyre*, 129.
[11] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1988), 4.
[12] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, 9.

evident only to those educated to understand its principles;'[13] that is, it only makes sense to those who have been appropriately 'traditioned' within this particular form of reasoning. Moreover, MacIntyre notes that 'argument to [these second kind of] first principles cannot be demonstrative, for demonstration is *from* [these] first principles.'[14] It is this second aspect of rationality that distances MacIntyre from the Enlightenment ideals of universal justification and common rational criteria, and also what makes his concept of rationality tradition-dependent and tradition-constituted.

In fact, much of MacIntyre's mature philosophical work has been an argument for substantive rationality and an attempt to recover 'a conception of rational enquiry as embodied in a tradition.'[15] In his so-called mature philosophical work, he has tried to (re)establish that substantive rationalities are tradition-dependent, implying that rational enquiry is 'inseparable from the intellectual and social tradition in which it is embodied.'[16] He states that:

> there is no standing ground, no place of enquiry, no way to engage in the practices of advancing, evaluating, accepting, and rejecting reasoned argument apart from that which is provided by some particular tradition or other.[17]

Thus, argues MacIntyre, there are no 'traditionless' arguments or (substantive) rationalities, and those that claim such neutral status can be shown to be rooted in a specific tradition within a certain historical context.[18] Following from this, MacIntyre maintains that the

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[13] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, 129.
[14] MacIntyre, 'First Principles, Final Ends, and Contemporary Philosophical Issues,' 161.
[15] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 7.
[16] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 8.
[17] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 350.
[18] E.g. see MacIntyre's analysis of liberal rationality within the liberal tradition; MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 326-348.

Enlightenment project in its current form is bound to fail, since it is based on the 'fiction' that there can be a neutral, traditionless and universal substantive rationality.[19]

2.1.2. Tradition-Constitutive and Tradition-Constituted Rationality

If then substantive rationality is tradition-dependent, what does MacIntyre mean by tradition and how is rationality tradition-constituted? According to MacIntyre, a tradition is a 'historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition.'[20] Or as he puts it elsewhere,

> A tradition is an argument extended through time in which certain fundamental agreements are defined and redefined in terms of two kinds of conflict: those with critics and enemies external to the tradition who reject all or at least key parts of those fundamental agreements, and those internal, interpretive debates through which the meaning and rationale of the fundamental agreements come to be expressed and by whose progress a tradition is constituted.[21]

In light of these two definitions by MacIntyre, a tradition can be seen to have at least four significant features. First, a tradition is an argument, and as an argument it is by its very nature *about something*; that is, it has an object of enquiry which it makes claims about. A tradition is therefore a quest and an argument towards a certain *telos*, and the 'goods which constitute that tradition' are geared towards reaching this goal.[22]

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[19] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1990), 117; see also John Horton and Susan Mendus, 'Alasdair MacIntyre: *After Virtue* and After,' in *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, ed. John Horton and Susan Mendus (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 3; Murphy, 'MacIntyre, Tradition-Dependent Rationality and the End of Philosophy of Religion,' 35. For an 'Enlightenment' critique of MacIntyre's diagnosis see Robert Wokler, 'Projecting the Enlightenment,' in *After MacIntyre*, 108-126.
[20] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*. 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 222.
[21] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 12.
[22] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 219.

Second, a tradition is not just an argument about something, but also an argument *by someone*. For MacIntyre, however, it is not just an argument by individuals, but by a community of people interested in and committed to the common object of enquiry. And since the argument is carried out by a group of people over time, it inevitably becomes 'socially embodied' and 'historically extended.' Moreover, for the argument to be successful and sustained it needs to be supported by appropriate institutions created by the community.[23] Consequently, a tradition cannot be understood apart from the community of 'arguers,' including their history, social embodiment and institutions.

Third, the argument is *with someone*. This could be either those external to the tradition, who nevertheless, make claims about the same goal of inquiry; or it could be with those internal to the tradition. Either way, to truly appreciate the nature of the argument one should be aware of the interlocutors and the tradition's response to them.[24]

Fourth, the argument of the past and present community is not just shaped by its subject matter and its dialogue partners, but also *how* it is being carried out. Indeed the 'how' is the community's method of argumentation and therefore effectively its rationality. However, as has already been noted, for MacIntyre the rationality of the tradition is not some universal or general rationality applicable to all traditions throughout all ages. Rather, the rationality of the community is tradition specific. So, what exactly then makes the rationality tradition-specific and tradition-constituted?

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[23] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 194.
[24] In the context constructing an appropriate philosophical curriculum for universities, MacIntyre writes: '…we have to give due recognition to the conflicts of the past within and between cultures… Texts have to be read *against* one another if we are not to misread them…;' MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, 229.

According to MacIntyre rationality is fundamentally a *practice* of the community.[25] As a practice, it is characterised by its 'intentions,'[26] which if they are 'internally good' are oriented to achieve the *telos* of the tradition's inquiry.[27] So in an Aristotelian manner the order of things (ontology) is allowed to determine how things are known (epistemology),[28] and therefore the rationality of the tradition will be significantly influenced by how the community perceives the nature of its *telos*. Furthermore, rationality as a practice is also informed by its 'setting;'[29] that is, by the history and context of the community of practitioners, as well as their interaction with the interlocutors, which means that the rationality will always be socially and historically conditioned. And finally, rationality as a practice is shaped by a 'narrative,' which is the community's attempt to make its practice of reasoning intelligible by locating it in its historical context with an understanding of the origins (*protos*) and the goal (*telos*) of the argument. The practice of reasoning will only make sense within a narrative framework in which the community identifies how the argument has gone thus far, including telling stories of the successes and failures of the argument to date.[30] In sum, rationality is 'a practice emerging from a history, or rather as an enacted form of a narrative interpretation of the events of a history;'[31] therefore, rationality is tradition-constituted.

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[25] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, 46.

[26] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 206.

[27] MacIntyre distinguishes between 'internal goods' and 'external goods.' The first are goods internal to a particular practice, whereas the latter are good external to it. For example, in the practice of playing football one's intentions may be driven by the internal goods of a game of football, such as, helping one's team to win through skill, fitness and determination; or one's intentions may be driven by external goods, such as, becoming famous or rich through football; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 188.

[28] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094b 13-27; MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, 69.

[29] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 206.

[30] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 208-216.

[31] Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, 46.

However, although rationality in MacIntyrian lines is 'tradition-constituted,' it is also 'tradition-constitutive.'[32] In other words, the practice of reasoning is not only shaped by the tradition but itself shapes the tradition by clarifying the nature and goal of the enquiry, helping to construct appropriate institutions to uphold the argument of the community, and to modify and sharpen the community's argument in relation to internal and external critics.

2.1.3. The Development of Traditions

Thus far I have suggested that MacIntyre sees traditions as 'arguments extended through time' which are teleologically driven, socially embodied and contextually located, with a particular form of rationality specific to the tradition. In light of the above, I will now try to show through examples from MacIntyre's own work how traditions as arguments may be formed, developed and even possibly defeated.

In *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy and Tradition* (1990) MacIntyre identifies what he sees as three dominant, and to some extent archetypal, intellectual traditions emerging in the late nineteenth century Western philosophical and moral discourse.[33] The first one is the Enlightenment tradition (read: *Encyclopaedia*), which MacIntyre equates with Adam Gifford's supposedly neutral, unitary and ahistorical approach to rationality embodied in the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.[34] The second is Nietzsche's genealogist approach (read: *Genealogy*), which sees both rationality and truth as

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[32] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 10.
[33] In *After Virtue* and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* MacIntyre also explores various moral traditions from antiquity to the present day.
[34] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, 18.

relative to a particular context, and in doing so maintains that 'there are no rules of rationality as such to be appealed to, there are rather strategies of insight and strategies of subversion.'[35] The third, and MacIntyre's preferred approach, is traditionalism seen in the Thomism of Pope Leo XIII (read: *Tradition*), which on the one hand agrees with the genealogist in rejecting the ahistorical rationality of the encyclopaedist, but simultaneously attempts to transcend the relativism of the genealogist.[36] I will now use these three 'traditions' as examples of how traditions may emerge and evolve over time.

MacIntyre sees intellectual traditions developing in three stages.[37] During the first stage a community is formed around a common object of enquiry, and authority is bestowed by this community on specific people, texts and/or doctrines with respect to the object of enquiry. For example, the three rival moral traditions identified above roughly speaking share the same object of enquiry (i.e. morality), but they differ because of their alternative authority figures, foundational beliefs, and grounding texts, which influence the nature of their quest for morality. So it could be said that the 'Encyclopaedist Tradition' affirms people like Gifford as its intellectual champions; it adopts the Enlightenment concepts of universal reason, autonomy and progress as its foundational 'doctrines;' and it sees the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as its canonical text. Within the 'Genealogist Tradition,' on the other hand, Nietzsche emerges as the enlightened ethicist; the close coupling of social conditioning and human beliefs becomes the controlling maxim; and Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* is identified as the grounding work. For the 'Thomists Tradition' then, Aquinas is

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[35] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, 42.
[36] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, 59-60. It is this affirmation of the genealogist critique of encyclopaedism and the concurrent rejection of relativism that has placed a significant burden of proof on MacIntyre's traditionalism and his whole philosophical enterprise. This will be explored in 2.2.
[37] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 354-355.

viewed as the *Doctor Angelicus*, Thomism as the appropriate philosophical framework, and *Summa* and *Aeterni Patris* as the foundational documents.[38]

At the second stage, inadequacies and incoherencies are identified within the authoritative sources of the community, which can be fuelled by internal debates within, or external critique from outside the community. This second stage can also be seen as an 'epistemological crisis' within the emerging tradition.[39] Thus, for the Encyclopaedist the epistemological crisis might be caused by the seeming failure to actually establish the nature of universal rationality, exposing a weakness in a central belief of the tradition. The Genealogist might find it difficult to explain and evaluate his or her own project without falling into a 'nongenealogical, academic mode;'[40] and the Thomist might find their Aristotelian metaphysics challenged by current scientific discoveries.

The third stage provides a potential remedy for the epistemological crisis encountered during the second stage, resulting in reformulations and reinterpretations of the tradition's authoritative sources and central beliefs. This means that when it comes to the intellectual challenges faced by the Encyclopaedist, Genealogist or the Thomist, the central question is to what extent they can reinterpret the foundational sources and grounding beliefs of their particular tradition in order to overcome their current incongruities. According to MacIntyre, the degree to which the inadequacies can be resolved depends on the resources available

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[38] For MacIntyre's reflection on the importance of the foundational documents for the three traditions see MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, 19, 25.

[39] See Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science,' in *The Task of Philosophy*, 3-23.

[40] MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, 53.

within the community's tradition and upon the community's inventiveness. For the tradition to continue after the reformulation, 'some core of shared belief, constitutive of allegiance to the tradition, has to survive,'[41] because without some continuity the tradition bears no resemblance to its authoritative origins and thus has been transformed altogether into something else. As living traditions evolve and develop stages two and three are regularly revisited, and it is this continual process that makes an intellectual tradition effectively 'an argument extended through time.'[42]

MacIntyre's concept of rationality embodied within a tradition and tradition being formed over a narrative history means that any 'tradition-constituted and tradition constitutive rational enquiry cannot be elucidated apart from its exemplifications.'[43] This means that to identify rationality, and rational justification, within a tradition cannot be done apart from a narrative enquiry into the tradition's history, which is characterised by its origins (stage one), internal/external debates (stage two) and remedies (stage three).[44] In fact, MacIntyre's so-called trilogy of *After Virtue*, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* have tried to provide this historical exemplification with the aim of demonstrating the superiority of Aristotelian and Thomist moral philosophy.[45]

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[41] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 356.
[42] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 12.
[43] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 10.
[44] Gordon Graham rightly notes that 'the belief that philosophical questions require historical illumination runs through all of MacIntyre's writings;' Gordon Graham, 'MacIntyre's Fusion of History and Philosophy,' in *After MacIntyre*, 163.
[45] Whether MacIntyre has been successful in demonstrating this is not the focus of this chapter.

It must be noted that this kind of 'historicism' leads to a fine tension in MacIntyre's work, as pointed out by Terry Pinkhard, which MacIntyre shares with both Hegel and Wittgenstein; that is, 'the double awareness of the historical and social *contingency* of all our points of view and the necessity to provide *justifications* of those points of view.'[46] Indeed some, like Robert George, have suggested that MacIntyre fails to adequately balance this tension and his emphasis on historical particularism results in a form of philosophical relativism.[47] However, as will be argued below this conclusion is unwarranted as MacIntyre seems to escape relativism, despite his particularism.

2.2. Truth and Dialectical Justification

It has been described thus far that all rationalities are seen by MacIntyre as tradition-dependent and historically specific. However, as will be argued below this particularism should not be seen as relativism because of MacIntyre's concepts of truth and dialectical justification.

2.2.1. Truth

MacIntyre is clear that truth should not be equated 'with what is rationally justified in terms of the scheme of each particular standpoint,'[48] and thus he cannot be seen as merely advocating pragmatic or coherence theories of truth. Rather, truth is understood by him as

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[46] Terry Pinkard, 'MacIntyre's Critique of Modernity,' in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, ed. Mark Murphy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 196.

[47] E.g. Robert P. George, 'Moral Particularism, Thomism, and Traditions,' *RM* 42, no. 3 (March 1989): 599; cf. John Haldane, 'MacIntyre's Thomist Revival: What Next?,' in *After MacIntyre*, 97; Ormerod, 'Faith and Reason,' 11.

[48] Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Moral Relativism, Truth and Justification,' in *The Task of Philosophy*, 56.

being closely connected to the object of inquiry within a specific tradition. In other words,

since traditions are by nature about something, their adequacy is defined by their accuracy *vis-à-vis* their object of enquiry.[49] This means that a tradition, and its concomitant rationality,

may in fact be flawed because they inaccurately reflect their object of enquiry, or to put it

more starkly, do not appropriately 'correspondent' with 'truth.' MacIntyre notes that,

> the most primitive conception of truth is of the manifestness of the objects which
> present themselves to mind; and it is when mind fails to re-present that manifestness
> that falsity, the inadequacy of mind to its objects, appears.[50]

This does not imply that MacIntyre is favouring a simplistic correspondence theory of truth,

or what he calls 'truth as correspondence-to-fact,'[51] but truth and truthful enquiry,

nevertheless, are seen as the mind adequately corresponding to its object (*adaequatio intellectus ad rem*).[52] Following from this, like Aristotle and Aquinas, MacIntyre believes

> truth to be the *telos* of rational enquiry; and rational enquiry so conceived must involve
> progress toward that *telos* through the replacement of less adequate by more adequate
> forms of rational justification.[53]

MacIntyre's position regarding truth can thus be seen as a form of critical realism;[54] that is,

his concept of tradition-dependent rationality commits him to believe that our

conceptualisation and categorisation of the world and objects of enquiry are inevitably shaped

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[49] Jean Porter, 'Tradition in the Recent Work of Alasdair MacIntyre,' in *Alasdair MacIntyre*, 52; Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, 9.

[50] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 357; cf. MacIntyre, 'First Principles, Final Ends, and Contemporary Philosophical Issues,' 165.

[51] MacIntyre argues that discrediting 'truth as correspondence-to-fact should not be allowed to discredit any conception of truth as correspondence.' He goes on to state that 'it is individuals and their properties and relations, not facts or states of affairs, that make asserted sentences true or false;' Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Truth as a good: a reflection on *Fides et Ratio*,' in *The Task of Philosophy*, 200, 203.

[52] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 356; cf. P. Mark Achtemeier, 'The Truth of Tradition: Critical Realism in the Thought of Alasdair MacIntyre and T. F. Torrance,' *SJT* 47, no. 3 (August 1994): 364.

[53] MacIntyre, 'Moral Relativism, Truth and Justification,' 68-69.

[54] See Trenery, *Alasdair MacIntyre*, 175.

by our traditions, but these conceptualisation and categorisations are only truthful to the extent to which they reflect the reality of the world and the objects of enquiry. In light of this, MacIntyre rejects the common anti-realist criticism of realist positions which assume that to claim 'that there are realities that exist independently of and prior to any apprehension of them… [is tantamount to] claiming to be able to conceive of things as they are apart from our conceiving of them.'[55] MacIntyre's response to such anti-realist objection is to argue that although the objects of enquiry cannot be conceived 'apart from our conceiving of them,' this does not mean that there is no mind-independent reality. The reason being that our conceptual schemes can still reflect appropriately or inappropriately the objects of enquiry, and it is possible to move from a less adequate to a more adequate concept of this object. Indeed

> it is precisely in moving from less adequate to more adequate categorical and conceptual schemes and judgments that we recognize that the realities which we formerly categorized and conceptualized in one way, and now recategorize and reconceptualize in another are the same realities, and that they exists and have the characteristics that warrant or fail to warrant our categories and our conceptualizations independently of those categorizations and conceptualizations. We need therefore to be able and we do have the ability to identify and to reidentify objects independently of those categorizations and conceptualizations, whether mistaken or accurate.[56]

All of this suggests that not all conceptual schemes, traditions and rationalities are equally valid with respect to truth (read: the objects and *telos* of rational enquiry), and some can even cease to be living options altogether for simply not reflecting truth sufficiently.[57] This, however, does raise the question of how can then traditions in practice progress towards 'truth,' or be indeed found wanting and even defeated in the process?

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[55] MacIntyre, 'Philosophy recalled to its tasks,' 189.
[56] MacIntyre, 'Philosophy recalled to its tasks,' 190.
[57] MacIntyre advocates fallibilism regarding traditions; See Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Epistemological crises...,' 22.

2.2.2. Dialectical Justification

As has been described above, traditions develop over time through encountering incoherencies (stage two) and by providing remedies to them (stage three). This second stage can also be seen as an 'epistemological crisis' within a tradition,[58] and it is a constant threat to all progressive traditions because they are dealing with 'reality,' which may or may not be adequately reflected by the tradition. When a tradition does find itself in an 'epistemological crisis', the solution (stage three) requires according to MacIntyre 'the invention or discovery of new concepts and the framing of some new types of theory' that have three characteristics.[59] First, the new reformulation 'must furnish a solution to the problems which had previously proved intractable in a systematic and coherent way.'[60] Second, it must be able to explain what had made the tradition before this modification susceptible to the epistemological crisis. Third, 'these first two tasks must be carried out in a way which exhibits some fundamental continuity of the new conceptual and theoretical structures with the shared beliefs in terms of which the tradition of enquiry has been defined up to this point.'[61]

However, it is not guaranteed that a tradition will survive its 'epistemological crisis'. In fact, there seem to be two ways by which it can be defeated. Firstly, 'the lack of resolution itself defeats the tradition', as the inconsistency by its own standards makes the tradition incoherent

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[58] See MacIntyre, 'Epistemological crises...,' 3-23.

[59] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 362. Christian Early makes a stark contrast between the resolution for an 'epistemological crisis' and 'stage three' of tradition development. This distinction, however, does not seem to be found in MacIntyre; Christian Early, 'MacIntyre, Narrative Rationality and Faith,' *NB* 82, no. 959 (January 2001): 39-40.

[60] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 362.

[61] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 362.

and non-progressive.[62] It is worth underscoring here that, although MacIntyre believes that all rationalities are tradition-dependent, he maintains that the 'laws of logic' are universal (i.e. formal rationality) and hence should be followed by all sufficient rationalities.[63] It is this commitment to logic that grounds MacIntyre's rejection of incoherent traditions, and which opens the possibility for a tradition to be defeated by its own inconsistency.

The second way in which a tradition can be defeated is that during the 'epistemological crisis' a competing tradition is discovered that is able to meet, unlike one's own tradition, the first two requirements of the solution to the crisis, namely resolve the crisis and show why the crisis emerged (see above). In this kind of a scenario those inhabiting the tradition in crisis should acknowledge 'that the alien tradition is superior in rationality and in respect of its claims to truth to their own.'[64] As highlighted by MacIntyre, the relationship between the two competing traditions in a situation like this is asymmetrical in that the superior tradition is able to do something that the defeated tradition fails to do, namely, resolve the crisis and explain why it arose in the first place.[65] Therefore, in a situation like this a reasonable enquirer of truth ought to, at least in theory, align themselves with the more progressive tradition.

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[62] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 365. MacIntyre appears to follow a coherence/pragmatic theory of epistemic justification here.

[63] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 4.

[64] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 364-365.

[65] MacIntyre, 'Moral Relativism; truth and justification,' 73; Charles Taylor has also underscored this asymmetrical relationship between superior and inferior traditions; Charles Taylor, 'Explanation and Practical Reason,' in *Philosophical Arguments*, 34-60.

Now of course for one to be able to perceive how an 'alien tradition' is able to solve the epistemological crisis, this alien tradition needs to be understood by the adherents of the tradition in crisis, and consequently there needs to be an element of commensurability between the competing traditions. Aware of the need for commensurability, MacIntyre believes that competing traditions do in fact share some common features, that is, logic and similar, if not the same, object of enquiry. Indeed apart from some similarities and shared aspects between traditions there would be no possibility for disagreement in the first place.[66] Moreover, MacIntyre maintains that people can embody more than one tradition, just like they can speak more than one language fluently, and therefore they can be bilingual or multilingual with respect to traditions.[67] That said, for anyone to move beyond their dominant tradition and embrace the resources of an alien tradition in a meaningful way, albeit a 'second first language', does require 'a rare gift of empathy' and 'intellectual insight.'[68]

In summary, MacIntyre's tradition-dependent rationality should not be seen as an escape into relativism or fideism as any tradition and rationality engages with 'truth' and is thus faced with the possibility of falling 'into a state of epistemological crisis.'[69] In fact, the test for truth in the present, according to Macintyre,

> ...therefore, is always to summon up as many questions and as many objections of the greatest strength possible; what can be justifiably claimed as truth is what has sufficiently withstood such dialectical questioning and framing of objections.[70]

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[66] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?,* 351.
[67] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 364.
[68] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 167.
[69] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 364.
[70] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 358.

Hence, justification for one's tradition is essentially the 'best account so far' regarding the object of enquiry. This 'best account' is dialectical in nature and takes the form of 'intelligible narrative history.'[71]

The influences of the philosophers of science Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn and Imre Lakatos are evident on MacIntyre's concept of dialectical justification.[72] MacIntyre's notion of 'epistemological crises and dramatic narrative' is particularly informed by Imre Lakatos' notion of 'Scientific Research Programmes' (SRPs).[73] Nevertheless, despite engaging with Lakatos' idea of SRPs, MacIntyre does not fully utilise Lakatos' insights regarding the 'hard core' and 'auxiliary hypotheses' of SRPs, and this causes some ambiguity in his methodology with respect to the essential and more peripheral beliefs of a tradition. Indeed, David Trenery has argued that this is a notable weakness in MacIntyre's methodology and has sought to ameliorate this with George Lindbeck's postliberalism.[74] Although I share Trenery's criticism of MacIntyre here, rather than borrowing from Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic framework in section two of the thesis I will employ Lakatos' concepts of 'hard core' and 'auxiliary hypotheses' of a SRP to help clarify the real essence of an intellectual tradition from its surrounding tenets. In doing this I will effectively follow in the methodological footsteps of Nancey Murphy and William Oliverio, who have both referred to Lakatos in identifying the essential and peripheral beliefs of a theological tradition as discussed in chapter one (see 1.3.). In summary, although I maintain that MacIntyre's notions of tradition and rationality are conducive for constructing a Pentecostal rationality, I also believe that Lakatos' reflections on

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[71] MacIntyre, 'Epistemological crises...,' 22; cf. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 360.
[72] See MacIntyre, 'Epistemological crises...,' 15-23.
[73] See Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes*. See also section 1.3.
[74] Trenery, *Alasdair MacIntyre...*, 181-189.

the essence and periphery of SRPs provide further resources for articulating more precisely a Pentecostal intellectual tradition.

2.3. Implications for Pentecostal Rationality and Epistemology

So what are the benefits of utilising MacIntyre's ideas of tradition-dependent rationality, truth and dialectical justification for constructing a Pentecostal rationality and epistemology? At least five helpful aspects can be identified.

First, Pentecostal theologians in search of a Pentecostal epistemology have been quick to point out the incompatibility of modernistic epistemologies, adopted by much of conservative evangelical theology, with Pentecostalism (e.g. see Yong, Smith and Oliverio in chapter 1).[75] However, the postmodern alternatives are themselves not without problematic features (although see Smith in 1.2.).[76] It is here that MacIntyre offers a way forward by providing a clear alternative to modernistic epistemologies, without falling into what many Pentecostals fear about postmodern (de)constructions, namely relativism. For example, Richard Davis and Paul Franks have argued against narrative Pentecostal epistemologies due to a fear of what they call 'story-ism: favouring one's own story over others without legitimate reason or justification.'[77] However, as I have tried to demonstrate above, although MacIntyre's approach is narrative in nature, his concept of dialectical justification means that his 'story-ism' does not suffer from 'favouring one's own story' without having adequate reasons.

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[75] Lewis, 'Towards a Pentecostal Epistemology,' 122; Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 7.
[76] Kärkkäinen, 'Epistemology, Ethos and Environment', 249-250; Menzies, 'Jumping Off the Postmodern Bandwagon,' 116.
[77] Davis and Franks, 'Against a Postmodern Pentecostal Epistemology,' 395.

Hence it seems that MacIntyre's approach has great potential for articulating a rationality of a movement which has been identified as 'paramodern,'[78] that is, neither positivistically modern nor postmodern.[79]

Second, following from MacIntyre's 'hybrid position' regarding modernity and postmodernity, his (critical) realist concept of truth make him compatible with the basic Pentecostal intuition regarding truth and realism (e.g. see my critique of Smith in 1.2.4. and see chapter 7). Moreover, MacIntyre's Aristotelian and Thomistic idea of truth is teleologically driven, which again seems to fit well with the eschatological emphasis of Pentecostals; that is, the assumption that ultimate reality will be fully revealed in the eschaton to come.

Third, Walter Hollenweger has pointed out that one of the central characteristics of Pentecostalism is its narrative form,[80] and therefore it is reasonable to suggest that a genuine Pentecostal epistemology should also be narrative in nature. As seen in the previous chapter, Smith has argued that the Pentecostal focus on 'testimony points to the irreducibility (and perhaps primacy) of "narrative knowledge."'[81] However, although Smith's emphasis on narrative knowing and epistemology is apposite for Pentecostalism, his own attempt to construct a Pentecostal epistemology seems to fail at delivering a truly narrative epistemology (see 1.2.4.). It is here that MacIntyre's emphasis on historical narrative and tradition

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[78] Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 33.
[79] MacIntyre's distinction of formal and substantive rationality has similarities to Yong's pneumatological correlationism by displaying universal and contextual dimensions *vis-à-vis* reasoning.
[80] Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 18-19; cf. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 74-75.
[81] Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 64; cf. Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 13.

formation will provide a way forward towards the development of a truly narrative

Pentecostal rationality.

Fourth, following from this narrative approach, MacIntyre's methodology shares the

contextual elements of Yong's, Smith's and Oliverio's epistemologies, but his concept of

tradition increasingly invites a Pentecostal community's many witnesses (past and present) to

testify to the formation of the Pentecostal narrative, tradition and rationality. This seems to be

a genuine 'testimony in the Spirit,'[82] since it takes into consideration the many witnesses of

any given Pentecostal tradition and allows for the development of a Pentecostal epistemology

and rationality that is particular to that tradition.

At this juncture it should be noted that methodologically MacIntyre's approach is very similar

to Oliverio's, although it seems to provide further tools for understanding the exact nature of

the Pentecostal tradition. Indeed my criticism of Oliverio (see 1.3.4.) was not directed at his

methodology, but rather for not seeing it being put to use. In a MacIntyrian fashion I believe

that 'the concept of tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive rational enquiry cannot be

elucidated apart from its exemplifications.'[83] Therefore, to truly test either MacIntyre's or

Oliverio's methodology in relation to constructing a Pentecostal rationality, one needs to do

this through an 'exemplification' and narration of an existing Pentecostal tradition.

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[82] See Mark J. Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Theology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).
[83] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 10.

Fifth, as a cursory reading of the main Pentecostal journals suggests, Pentecostalism in the 21st century is increasingly trying to articulate its identity and its key characteristics.[84] It seems that MacIntyre's approach can provide fresh methodological insights into analysing Pentecostal traditions. In fact, MacIntyre astutely points out that

> There characteristically comes a time in the history of tradition-constituted enquiries when those engaged in them may find occasion or need to frame a theory of their own activities of enquiry. What kind of theory is then developed will of course vary from one tradition to another.[85]

Arguably this has not yet been sufficiently done for Pentecostalism, and not done at all for British Pentecostalism. The purpose of my thesis is not to construct a unified and global Pentecostal tradition, even if that could be done, but to focus on a particular British Pentecostal movement, namely on the Elim Pentecostal Church. The benefits of focusing on a particular tradition is that it pays due respect to the 'glocal' nature of Pentecostalism,[86] and thus to the uniqueness of different Pentecostal traditions, despite their common family resemblances. That said, since Elim is one of the oldest and largest Pentecostal denominations in Europe, it can be seen as a representative example of European Pentecostalism generally, and therefore narrating its tradition, rationality and epistemology can also be seen as making a broader contribution to understanding global Pentecostalism.

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[84] E.g. see Cheryl Bridges Johns, 'The Adolescence of Pentecostalism: In Search of a Legitimate Sectarian Identity,' *Pneuma* 17, no. 1-2 (1995): 3-17; Gary B. McGee, ''More Than Evangelical': The Challenge of Evolving Theological Identity of the Assemblies of God,' *Pneuma* 25, no. 2 (2003): 289-300; Allan Anderson, 'When is a Pentecostal Not a Pentecostal? When She's a Charismatic! Responding to Irvin, Lopez Rodriquez and Waldrop,' *JPT* 16, no. 1 (2008): 58-63; Kimberly Ervin Alexander, 'Standing at the Crossroad: The Battle for the Heart and Soul of Pentecostalism,' *Pneuma* 33, no. 3 (2011): 331-349.

[85] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 359.

[86] Following Roland Robertson, Wolfgang Vondey states that, 'Instead of proposing the globalization *of* local Pentecostalism and thereby effectively juxtaposing the global *against* the local, the understanding of Pentecostalism as a glocal phenomenon embraces the relationship between the local and the global because Pentecostalism as a whole depends on both realities;' Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 25.

PART II – NARRATING A TRADITION-SPECIFIC PENTECOSTAL RATIONALITY[1]

In the previous part of the thesis I explored the 'Pentecostal' rationalities of Amos Yong, James Smith and William Oliverio (chapter 1). I concluded that the merits of their epistemological constructions are many, but they all seem to suffer from an element of ahistoricism when it comes to the construction of their theological hermeneutics (Yong and Smith more so than Oliverio). Consequently, I have proposed that Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of tradition-constituted rationality provides the necessary methodological insights for developing a truly historical, narrative and tradition-specific Pentecostal rationality (chapter 2). However, this cannot be done apart from providing a historical narrative and exemplification of a particular Pentecostal tradition. Therefore, part two of the thesis seeks to present a MacIntyrian narrative account of a particular Pentecostal tradition, namely, the Elim Pentecostal Church.

I will do so by first providing 'prologues' to the Elim tradition by exploring its early context and roots (chapter 3). This is important for understanding *how* the Elim movement emerged, *why* it emerged in the way it did, and *what* theological and philosophical resources it inherited from its intellectual ancestors.[2] This exploration is followed by an analysis of the emergence of the Elim 'argument' with particular emphasis on its early opponents, content, rationality

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[1] Chapters 4-6 of this section have been presented in a shortened form in Simo Frestadius, 'The Elim Tradition: "An Argument Extended through Time" (Alasdair MacIntyre),' *JEPTA* 36, no. 1 (2016): 57-68.

[2] In articulating the 'Catholic Philosophical Tradition,' MacIntyre has a section on 'Prologues to the Catholic Philosophical Tradition;' Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy and Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 19.

and social embodiment (chapter 4). In many ways this chapter is foundational for

understanding what constitutes the Elim tradition, since in MacIntyrian lines the early makeup

of any given tradition establishes its central ethos and, in doing so, sets its future prospects

regarding what it can and cannot become (without effectively morphing into another

tradition).[3] Indeed, the central argument of this chapter is that the essence of the Elim tradition

is the *Foursquare Gospel* and its rationality is *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism*. The

following two chapters (chapters 5-6) continue the narration of the Elim 'argument extended

through time' by focusing on two of its main 'epistemological crises' to date; that is, the

resignation of its founder George Jeffreys (chapter 5) and the challenge posed by the

Charismatic and Restoration movements (chapter 6). In my evaluation of these two crises, I

will seek to further substantiate that the hard core of Elim is the Foursquare Gospel and its

rationality is Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism. Moreover, in chapters five and six it should

also become clear that Elim has demonstrated significant flexibility in restructuring itself – in

accordance with its pragmatism – to facilitate the future flourishing of its argument.

Finally, it needs to be underscored that this part of the thesis is predominantly historical and I

have sought to engage with a number of primary sources on Elim, as should become evident

in the references. I believe the historical detail I have attempted to provide is important in

establishing correct foundations for the more constructive contributions offered in the last

section of the thesis, not least as I have critiqued Yong, Smith and Oliverio on aspects of their

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[3] This parallels the view of those scholars who identify the roots and early expression of Pentecostalism as its *essence* rather than mere *infancy*; Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Cassell, 1996), 262; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 397; Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 45.

ahistoricism. That said, this section also offers the first comprehensive intellectual history of

the Elim Pentecostal Church, and thus in its own right contributes to the history of ideas.[4]

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[4] For a timeline of Elim's general history see 'Appendix 1: Elim's Chronology.'

CHAPTER 3 – PROLOGUES TO THE ELIM TRADITION: THE CONTEXT AND ROOTS OF THE ELIM ARGUMENT

Pentecostals have often self-identified their movement as originating directly from 'heaven' without having 'earthly' roots.[1] According to this view, the birth of the Pentecostal movement was a providential act of God at the beginning of the twentieth century, which catapulted the Church back to experiencing the reality of Pentecost. This act not only restored the fullness of Apostolic and NT Christianity, but in doing so allowed the emerging Pentecostal movement to sidestep two thousand years of Church history.

Despite the attractiveness of this view for 'primitivist' Pentecostal intuitions, such a reading of Pentecostal origins is not supported by the historical data. The likes of Vinson Synan, Walter Hollenweger and Donald Dayton have all persuasively argued that Pentecostalism should not be seen as a movement emerging *ex nihilo*, but rather as having deep historical, theological and social roots in other Christian traditions.[2] This does not mean that early Pentecostalism did not have its own distinctives, but it does mean that these distinctives were part of a broader theological framework much of which had been inherited from, and was shared with, other Christian streams.

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[1] This historiographical approach is identified by Cerillo and Wacker as 'the providential approach;' A. Cerillo, Jr. and G. Wacker, 'Bibliography and Historiography of Pentecostalism in the United States,' in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 397-399. See also Cornelis van der Laan, 'Historical Approaches,' in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson *et al* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 202-219; Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. 'The Origins of Modern Pentecostalism: Some Historiographical Issues,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. and Amos Yong (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 13-30.

[2] Vinson Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997); Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*; Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*.

This appears to be true for classical Pentecostalism as a whole, and it also seems to be the case for Elim. Consequently, to appropriately narrate the Elim tradition as 'an argument extended through time,' it is necessary to start by identifying the 'prologues' to Elim; that is, to articulate its theological and intellectual roots. I aim to do this by first outlining the social, philosophical and theological context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain to help understand these roots within their surrounding habitat. Second, I will explore how Elim's direct roots can be located in the Anglo-American Holiness Movements of the nineteenth century, the Welsh Revival (1904-1905), and fundamentally in early British Pentecostalism (1907-1914). These two aspects of 'context' and 'roots' are important in shedding light on why the Elim argument emerged in the first place, whose argument(s) did Elim adopt and adapt, against who was the Elim argument directed, and what rational resources were available for Elim within the existing religious climate.

3.1. The Pre-Pentecostal Religious Context: Modernity, Religious Pluralism and Secularisation

The Victorian era was a period of significant religious change in Britain, as an increasingly *modernising* Britain moved from a dominant form of Christian faith to religious *pluralism* and *secularisation*.[3] In other words, the long held hegemony of the Church of England in society

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[3] *Modernity* is defined with Peter Berger 'as the changes brought about by the science and the technology created in the last few centuries;' Peter L. Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity: Towards a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age* (Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2014), 5; Religious *pluralism* is understood in David Martin's terms as 'voluntaristic pluralism;' that is, 'open competition of life-worlds and styles, each with a stall – more or less centrally placed – in the supermarket of beliefs'; David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards A Revised General Theory* (Farnham: Ashgate: 2005), 157. *Secularisation*, on the other hand, is seen as (1) the decline of religious influence in the common institutions of society and (2) the decline of religious beliefs and practices among individuals. This definition of secularisation reflects Charles Taylor's first two definitions of secular. Taylor's

was now being challenged and different religious, as well as non-religious, alternatives were becoming real 'live options.' As noted by Hugh McLeod, there does not appear to have been one 'master-factor' to explain these unprecedented religious changes, but a number of factors played their part.[4] Therefore, to set the general context for the arrival of British Pentecostalism in 1907 and Elim in 1915, I will briefly note some of the social, philosophical and theological factors that contributed to the transformation of the religious landscape in Britain during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[5]

3.1.1. Social Context: Increasing Pluralism

Although my focus in chapters four to six is to narrate Elim's *intellectual* history, along MacIntyrian lines I maintain that this cannot be adequately done without some acknowledgement also of *social* history, since throughout history there seems to have been a mutual interplay between intellectual and social history.[6] Consequently, I will begin the discussion here by identifying some key social changes which appear to have shaped the pre-Pentecostal religious context.

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third and preferred definition of secular in many ways amounts to (religious) pluralism; Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 1-3.

[4] Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1848-1914* (London: MacMillan, 2000), 184.

[5] Cf. William K. Kay, 'Modernity and the Arrival of Pentecostalism in Britain,' *PS* 10, no. 1 (2011): 50-71.

[6] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 8. Cf. Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 14; Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 63.

Modern Agents of Pluralisation: Urbanisation, Rail Network and the Printing Press

Without a doubt the nineteenth century was a time of radical social change in Britain. Fuelled by the agricultural and industrial revolutions the nineteenth century witnessed increasing urbanisation of the British population. In 1800 it is estimated that 19.2% of the British population lived in towns and cities with over 5,000 inhabitants, whereas in 1900 this figure had risen to 67.4%.[7] Urbanisation implied that vast populations left behind their former agricultural lifestyles, family units and religious communities, and started their lives afresh with industrial employment, new neighbours and a plurality of religious traditions in their new environments.

It has not been uncommon for sociologists and historians to make a direct connection between urbanisation and secularisation in Britain.[8] According to this view as people move from the countryside to the city, they simultaneously move from religion to non-religion. However, even if there is some historical evidence to support this in Britain and Europe, a direct causational link between urbanisation and secularisation is difficult to maintain, not least in light of nineteenth and twentieth century American history. For example, Roger Finke has demonstrated that unlike in Britain, urbanisation did not lead to decreased but increased religiosity in America.[9] Thus, caution needs to be applied to any simplistic assumptions that nineteenth century urbanisation *inevitably* caused secularisation in Britain.

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[7] Paul Bairoch and Gary Goertz, 'Factors of Urbanisation in the Nineteenth Century Developed Countries: A Descriptive and Econometric Analysis,' *US* 23 (1986): 288.

[8] E.g. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Secularization and Moral Change* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 11, 14-15; Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century*, 94. This view is also identified but challenged by Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000*. 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2009), 8-9.

[9] Roger Finke, 'An Unsecular America,' in *Religion and Modernization*, ed. Steve Bruce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 145-169.

Nevertheless, urbanisation does seem to trigger an important change within society. The sociologist Peter Berger has pointed out that although urbanisation does not necessarily bring about secularisation, it does seem to bring about pluralism.[10] The reason being that cities are places where 'cognitive contamination' takes place;[11] that is, urbanisation implies that individuals who may have previously lived and worked in predominantly homogenous agricultural communities now find themselves in heterogenous urban environments rubbing shoulders and sharing views with people of diverse beliefs and practices. According to Berger such 'cognitive contamination,' which is facilitated by the plurality of beliefs within cities, inevitable 'relativizes' the beliefs of people.[12] His rationale is that 'any extended interaction with others who disagree with one's own view of the world relativizes the latter.'[13] This means, that unlike in a homogenous community, in a pluralist environment it is more difficult for any religious denomination to assume a monopoly status or for religious believers to simply take their beliefs for granted. Hence, pluralism facilitated by urbanisation births and sustains a 'religious market in which individuals can, indeed must, make choices.'[14]

Indeed, in line with Berger's sociological reasoning, the historian McLeod has proposed that the nineteenth century European cities should be seen primarily, not as places of

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[10] Peter L. Berger, 'Religious America, Secular Europe?,' in *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations*, ed. Peter Berger, Grace David and Effie Fokas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 12.

[11] Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity*, 5.

[12] Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity*, 2.

[13] Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity*, 3.

[14] Peter Berger, 'Religious America, Secular Europe?,' 13. Interestingly Bruce, who is considered to be one of the main current advocates of the so-called 'secularization theory,' proposes that 'the greatest damage to religion has been caused, not by competing secular ideas, but by the general relativism that supposed that all ideologies are equally true (and hence equally false);' Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 117.

secularisation, but as places of religious 'diversity,' 'conflict' and 'contest.'[15] Interestingly, unlike in America where the religious pluralism of cities seems to have increased religiosity, in Britain it appears to have had the opposite effect. There are potentially a plethora of reasons for this difference, and these will not be explored in detail.[16] Nevertheless, the philosophical and theological factors in Britain discussed below may provide some clues (see 3.1.2. and 3.1.3.).

Pluralisation of beliefs in Victorian Britain, however, was not only aided by urbanisation but also by two other fruits of modernity, namely, mass transportation (read: the rail network) and mass communication (read: the press).[17] Between 1829 and 1914 the railroad tracks in Britain increased from 51 miles to 20,000 miles, with the '"Golden of Age" of construction' being from 1836 to 1870.[18] The train network in Britain not only changed the landscape, introduced the concept of 'universal time,' and enabled a quick and affordable form of public transportation;[19] but in doing so it connected individuals, communities and cities which had previously been isolated and thus further facilitated pluralism in Britain.

The nineteenth century also saw a proliferation of newspapers in Britain creating 'mass communication for mass consumption.'[20] In the words of Edward Gitre, 'the newspaper

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[15] Hugh McLeod, 'Review Essay: Religion in an Urbanizing Europe, c. 1840-1939,' *JUH* 39, no. 6 (2013): 1179.
[16] The jointly authored work by Berger, Davie and Fokas offers various historical, intellectual, institutional and social reasons why America and Europe have reacted so differently to modernisation; Peter Berger, Grace Davie and Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
[17] Berger identifies both the steam engine and the printing press as 'two powerful agents of modern pluralism;' Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity*, 5.
[18] Edward J. Gitre, 'The 1904-05 Welsh Revival: Modernization, Technologies, and Techniques of the Self,' *CH* 73, no. 4 (Dec. 2004): 804.
[19] Gitre, 'The 1904-05 Welsh Revival,' 805-810.
[20] Gitre, 'The 1904-05 Welsh Revival,' 821.

became the demotic voice of the people, the masses – as opposed to the church or state – able to reflect the ever-changing desires, whims, and needs of the imagined community.'[21] The newspapers both reflected and created public opinion, but also exposed ordinary people to various ideas and, in doing so, once again increased pluralism in society.

Further Agents of Pluralisation: Liberalisation of Politics and Education

As well as seeing religious pluralism gaining prominence in British society through urbanisation, the rail network and the press, the nineteenth century witnessed liberalism facilitating further pluralism in society. The exact cause and effect relationship between liberalism and pluralism is difficult to know with certainty. Nevertheless, it is not hard to argue that the pluralism identified above made some form of liberalism a necessity for people of different views and practices to co-exist peacefully within British society. And once liberalism had penetrated some of the main institutions, this allowed for greater pluralism to take root in society. The influence of liberalism was keenly felt within both politics and education.

In politics there were a number of important changes that undermined the hegemony of the Church of England. The Roman Catholic Relief Act in 1829 allowed Roman Catholics to sit in the Westminster Parliament, and in 1858 Jews were granted the same privilege.

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[21] Gitre, 'The 1904-05 Welsh Revival,' 821.

Furthermore, the Gladstone's Government of 1868-1874 attacked other privileges of the

Church of England with the aim of achieving religious equality in society.[22]

Similar liberalising changes were seen in education. In 1854 the University of Oxford and in

1856 the University of Cambridge allowed the admission of non-Anglicans (e.g. Roman

Catholics, Nonconformists and non-Christians) for its programmes. This was followed by the

Universities Test Acts of 1871 which enabled non-Anglicans to take 'offices' at Oxford,

Cambridge and Durham.[23]

At the other end of the education sector, the Education Act of 1870 was the first piece of

legislation in Britain stipulating government guided primary education for all. The

significance of the Education Act is that the newly established state schools were to provide

non-denominational religious education, unlike the voluntary church schools, and it also

demonstrates the process of the state beginning to take over services previously provided by

churches.[24] Indeed, the years following saw the state and local authorities becoming

increasingly active in social welfare, a domain previously dominated by churches.[25]

These liberalising effects in politics, education and broader welfare can be seen as causing

secularisation in Britain, namely, the declining influence of the Church of England on

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[22] McLeod, *Secularization in Western Europe*, 56.
[23] Universities Test Act 1871, United Kingdom, accessed March 21, 2016, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/34-35/26.
[24] The 1870 Education Act, United Kingdom, accessed March 21, 2016, http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/1870educationact/.
[25] McLeod, *Secularization in Western Europe*, 57.

important institutions within society. These changes undermined the *ancien régime* in Britain, where the Church (of England) had previously played a central role in all aspects of society, by bringing *social differentiation*; that is, 'increasing autonomy of the various spheres of human activity.'[26] Politics, education and welfare were no longer necessarily seen through a theological lens, but as independent and secular entities.

However, it is worth noting that although the atheist/agnostic John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* (1859) became a landmark work on liberalism, a significant force for liberalism in Britain during the nineteenth century were the Protestant dissenters who sought to eliminate religious privileges of the established Church and establish religious equality.[27] In fact, to a great extent the nineteenth century secularisation of society was not implemented by free-thinkers but by Christians, particularly of nonconformist persuasion. Therefore, the changes in politics and education were not 'secular' in the sense of being anti-religious as such, but 'secular' in the sense of facilitating the plurality of religious and non-religious beliefs to flourish in society. Nevertheless, these social changes increasingly cultivated the ground for the possibility of philosophical and religious change.

3.1.2. Philosophical Context: Change in the Conditions of Knowledge

The seventeenth and eighteenth century Enlightenment with its emphasis on reason, empiricism and science changed the 'intellectual conditions' of knowledge in Britain.[28] The

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[26] Martin, *On Secularization*, 123.
[27] McLeod, *Secularization in Western Europe*, 105.
[28] Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century*, 144. For works paying particular attention to the British Enlightenment see Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern*

influence of the Enlightenment during these centuries, however, was mainly contained among the social elite, whereas the nineteenth century saw a proliferation and development of the Enlightenment principles among the wider population. As noted by Owen Chadwick, this seemed to cultivate religious doubt within society. Chadwick has proposed that the 1840s can be characterised as 'the time of doubts' *vis-à-vis* traditional religious beliefs and theological methodologies, but as the nineteenth century progressed this mood gathered momentum, meaning that by the 1860s Britain had entered 'the age of Doubt.'[29] Although Chadwick's identification of the Victorian society first facing 'doubts' and then moving to a singular and capitalised form of 'Doubt' somewhat exaggerates the prominence of religious doubt in the late Victorian era,[30] it does, nevertheless, correctly highlight the change in the expected epistemic conditions of belief, as well as the rise in religious doubt, towards the end of the nineteenth century.[31]

Developments in Science and History: From Common Sense Realism to Scientific Empiricism

Scientific and historical developments both seemed to contribute to this epistemic change. Unlike much of the French Enlightenment, the British Enlightenment was not intrinsically hostile to organised religion or Christian beliefs.[32] In fact, up to the mid nineteenth century

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World (London: The Penguin Press, 2000); Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French and American Enlightenments* (London: Vintage Books, 2008).

[29] Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century*, 184.

[30] See Timothy Larsen, *Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[31] McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe*, 147; James C. Livingston, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age: Challenges and Reconceptions* (London: Continuum, 2006), 31; David Hempton, *Evangelical Disenchantment: Nine Portraits of Faith and Doubt* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 2.

[32] Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity*, 50; Porter, *Enlightenment*, 128-129.

majority of (Evangelical) Christians claimed perfect harmony between scientific knowledge and Christian truth. In the words of Bebbington, for them there 'was no possibility of divorce between faith and reason.'[33] However, the first clear test for this harmony seemed to come from geology, which now propounded that the earth was millions of years old and thus appeared to oppose a 'literal' and 'common sense' reading of Genesis.[34] Charles Darwin's influential works *Origin of Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871) further undermined this common (Evangelical) reading of Genesis. Moreover, Darwin's theory provided an explanation for biological life without appealing to teleology and so challenged what had previously been seen as a strong argument for the existence of God, and it also raised serious questions about the uniqueness of humanity being specially created in the image of God.[35]

However, it was not just the new scientific discoveries that influenced people's understanding of and approach to religion, but the scientific method itself was modified in the nineteenth century. In the early nineteenth century the 'Common Sense Realism' of Thomas Reid combined with the inductive scientific methodology of Francis Bacon was the predominant intellectual paradigm, particularly among Evangelicals in Britain.[36] In other words, along Reidian lines it was believed that the world could be experienced and understood directly through the innate faculty of 'Common Sense' present in all humans; and along Bacon's

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[33] David W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 2005), 111.

[34] Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age: A Survey from Coleridge to Gore*. 2nd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995), 212.

[35] Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age*, 215-216; Alister E. McGrath, *Science and Religion: A New Introduction*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 38. Copleston notes that 'it is difficult for us now to appreciate the ferment which was caused in the last century by the hypothesis of organic evolution, particularly in its application to man;' Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Volume 8. Bentham to Russell* (London: Search Press, 1977), 103.

[36] See Harriet A. Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 100; David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), 59; Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Volume 8*, 1.

inductive method this understanding was believed to be achieved by (1) examining the

evidence in question, (2) gathering facts from this examination, and (3) then classifying these

facts according to a coordinating law/maxim.[37] The challenge to the Common Sense approach

is well captured in John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic* (1843), which became 'the definitive

account of the philosophy of science and social science' for the remainder of the century.[38]

Mill's positivist empiricism undermined both the intuitionist common sense advocated by

Reid and Baconianism,[39] as Mill believed that a scientific method should be characterised by

(1) starting with a range of hypothesis, (2) then examining data that eliminates 'all hypothesis

but one,' and (3) finally concluding that the 'uneliminated hypothesis is true.'[40] In other

words, Mill thought that hypotheses were fundamental to scientific progress,[41] and that it was

possible for induction to exceed the simple data of experience.[42] Thus, the modified approach

to science and knowledge exemplified by Mill subjected previously assumed common sense

beliefs to rigorous empiricism and increasingly introduced the concept of hypothesis to

scientific inquiry, undermining aspects of the naïve realism of Baconianism.

In fact, it seemed that Darwin's theory of evolution was developed by utilising Mill's method

of hypothesis/induction. For example, the Victorian intellectual T. H. Huxley defended

Darwin's scientific methodology against its critics – who claimed that it was 'not inductive

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[37] Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals*, 96-116; Bradford McCall, 'The Pentecostal Reappropriation of Common Sense Realism,' *JPT* 19, no. 1 (2010): 61-64.

[38] Fred Wilson, 'John Stuart Mill,' in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Edward N. Zalta* (Spring 2016 Edition), accessed May 24, 2016, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/mill/.

[39] Steve Wilkens and Alan G. Padgett, *Christianity and Western Thought. Volume 2. Faith and Reason in the 19th Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 198.

[40] Fred Wilson, 'John Stuart Mill.' For 'Mill's Method' in more detail see John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive*. Vol. 1. 7th ed. (London: Longmans, 1868), Book III, Chapter 8.

[41] Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Volume 8*, 74.

[42] 'Induction, then, is that operation of the mind, by which we infer that what we know to be true in a particular case or cases, will be true in all cases which resemble the former in certain assignable respects;' Mill, *A System of Logic*, Book III, Chapter 2:1.

enough, not Baconian enough' – by arguing that Darwin's method was in line with that of Mill and was 'the only adequate method.'[43] This debate is significant because it highlights that the opponents of Darwin's theory where not just opposing his conclusions but also his methodology; that is, the modified scientific method. Among Darwin's critics were particularly conservative Evangelicals who on the whole still followed the 'Common Sense' approach. All of this suggests that the scientific debate in the nineteenth century was as much about appropriate *rationalities*, as it was about the actual *content* of the debates. Indeed, the twentieth century disputes between the so-called Liberal and Fundamentalist Christians was characterised by these opposing rationalities carried over from the nineteenth century.[44] This is important for not only appropriately understanding the religious disputes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but also for locating and making sense of the emerging Pentecostal and Elim rationality.

What makes this 'clash' of rationalities even more significant is that the 'new' scientific method was not only utilised in the domain of natural science but was applied to other spheres of knowledge in a positivistic manner. The Utilitarian Movement – first articulated by Jeremy Bentham and then further developed by John Stuart Mill – is a good example of the new empirical principles being put to use for understanding and grounding morality within society. Mill is known for praising Bentham 'for employing a scientific method in morals and politics.'[45] Moreover, T. H. Huxley noted that his own agnosticism regarding religion was composed of applying what he saw as the new scientific method to all of human experience,

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[43] T. H. Huxley, *Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews* (New York: D Appleton, 1880), 293, accessed February 12, 2017, https://archive.org/details/laysermonsaddre08huxlgoog.
[44] See Nancey Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism: How Modern and Postmodern Philosophy Set the Theological Agenda* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 5; Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals,* 95.
[45] Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Volume 8*, 16.

and in doing so he rejected metaphysical speculations and Christian doctrines as either unproven or unprovable.[46] W. K. Clifford took his positivism even a step further by arguing that those who failed to apply scientific reasoning to their beliefs were not just mistaken but morally culpable. His well-known positivist and evidentialist maxim was: 'it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence.'[47]

The scientific method was also utilised in the study of history and historical texts, including the Bible. Like the natural scientist, the ideal historian and religious scholar was also seen as an objective scientific enquirer. Scripture was now to be analysed like any other document, which seemed to undermine its authority and divine origins. Moreover, the refusal of historical criticism to look beyond natural explanations challenged concepts like providence and miracles. This meant that a divide was created between sacred history (the sphere of faith) and secular history (the sphere of science), with the latter having epistemic primacy.[48] The apparent *locus classicus* of this new secular and positivist historical approach was David Strauss' *The Life of Jesus* (1835) translated from German into English by the ex-Evangelical George Elliot (Mary Ann Evans) in 1846. Strauss' work exemplifies the demythologising effects of the new historical criticism on both biblical studies and traditional Christian beliefs.

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[46] Livingston, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age*, 27.
[47] W. K. Clifford, 'The Ethics of Belief' in *Contemporary Review*, 1877, accessed January 1, 2016, http://people.brandeis.edu/~teuber/Clifford_ethics.pdf.
[48] Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age*, 6. Chadwick identifies the nineteenth century as the period when the 'secularization of history' took place; Chadwick, *The Secularisation of the European Mind in the 19th Century*, 193.

Alternatives to Empiricism: Romanticism and Idealism

However, not all were satisfied with the Enlightenment and Empiricist legacy being applied to religious and historical knowledge in a positivist manner. The nineteenth century saw the emergence of a new cultural and intellectual mood: Romanticism. Although Romanticism was a diverse phenomenon, its essential aspects can be articulated in its reaction against the Enlightenment.[49] Its emphasis was not on argument but experience, not on reason but on 'will, spirit and emotion.'[50] One of its most influential voices, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, captures the Romantic sentiment well with respect to religion:

> I more than fear the prevailing taste for books on Natural Theology, Physico-Theology, Demonstrations of God from Nature, Evidences of Christianity, and the like. *Evidences* of Christianity! I am weary of the word. Make a man feel the *want* of it; rouse him, if you can, to the self-knowledge of his *need...*[51]

For Coleridge Christian belief is based on inner experience and feeling rather than on arguments or external evidences. This Romantic emphasis on intuition and experience was carried on later in the century by the Oxford Movement,[52] and especially by its champion John Henry Newman who strongly opposed scientific positivism. In his seminal work *An Essay in Aid of Grammar of Assent* (1870), Newman argued that the positivist epistemic standards were too narrow for general human beliefs and religious beliefs in particular. British Idealism of the late nineteenth century, although different from Coleridge's romanticism and

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[49] Although one must be careful not to strictly demarcate between the Enlightenment and Romanticism, or between Empiricism and Idealism. For example, after a nervous breakdown in 1826 John Stuart Mill began appreciating the Romantic poets, despite his scientific empiricism, and the phenomenalism of the empiricists influenced the idealists; Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Volume 8*, 26, 146.

[50] Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 139. Bebbington notes that although Romanticism is often identified as a movement from late eighteenth century to 1830s, 'it is important to insist that what was novel at that time gathered increasing popularity throughout the Victorian era;' Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 140.

[51] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection and the Confessions of An Inquiring Spirit* (Anboco, 2016), Kindle.

[52] David Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000), 13.

Newman's traditionalism, also shared this critique of 'a positivist empirical account of human knowledge.'[53]

However, despite the force of the romantic mood in the late nineteenth century British philosophy, these sentiments, particularly in the form of British Idealism, were challenged in the early twentieth century by realists such as G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell.[54] In fact, it was Russell who emerged as the most influential British philosopher of the twentieth century and thus the dominance of Idealism in British universities was short lived.[55]

It is worth pointing out at this point that unlike in America where Pragmatism became the dominant philosophical movement in replacing Idealism,[56] in Britain, despite the effort of F. C. S. Schiller, this philosophical movement never gained prominence (at least not in the academy).[57] This is noteworthy as I will argue below that in relation to the main Anglo-American philosophical 'schools' of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Pentecostalism and Elim share many similarities with Pragmatism.

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[53] Sandra M. Den Otter, *British Idealism and Social Explanation: A Study in Late Victorian Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 2. Wilkens and Padgett note that when 'ideas common to Romanticism are systematized, the movement is in the direction of Idealism'; Wilkens and Padgett, *Christianity and Western Thought*, 66.

[54] See particularly G. E. Moore, 'The Refutation of Idealism,' *Mind*, 12 (1903), accessed February 17, 2017, http://www.ditext.com/moore/refute.html.

[55] See Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Volume 8*, Part IV.

[56] On American Pragmatism see Cheryl Misak, *The American Pragmatists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Robert B. Talisse and Scott F. Aikin, eds, *The Pragmatism Reader: Form Peirce through the Present* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

[57] On Schiller see Misak, *The American Pragmatists*, 91-96; Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Volume 8*, 346-351.

In summary, the intellectual context of the nineteenth century can be seen as continuing the Enlightenment and British Empiricist legacy, albeit with an increased emphasis on hypothesis and positivistic scientific method which began permeating society's epistemic standards regarding all spheres of knowledge, including that of religious knowledge. The 'new' methods of induction and hypothesis exemplified in the work of J. S. Mill provided a direct challenge to Common Sense Realism as the dominant philosophical position. Applying this more positivistic methodology to religious beliefs, coupled with Darwinian evolution, also raised doubts for many regarding the traditional Christian doctrines. Romanticism in its various forms sought to counter scientific positivism and offer an experiential epistemic alternative, but its philosophical influence, as least in the form of Idealism, was diminishing as the new century dawned. The general significance of the nineteenth century intellectual context for religious belief was that whether one was a positivist or romanticist (or indeed neither!), it was increasingly difficult to take Christian beliefs for granted because the conditions for knowledge had been challenged and changed. As a result, the Victorian intellectuals had become 'religious/philosophical *seekers*' in search of justified beliefs.[58] This change had implications for individual believers, as well as their religious institutions.

3.1.3. Theological Context: Evangelical Conversionism and Diversity of Religious Options

It was not, however, simply changes in society and the intellectual environment of the Victorian era that facilitated secularisation, plurality of beliefs, and the need for individuals to

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[58] David Nash, 'Reassessing the 'Crisis of Faith' in the Victorian Age: Eclecticism and the Spirit of Moral Inquiry,' *JVC* 16, no. 1 (2011): 70.

justify their beliefs and make religious choices accordingly. The Evangelical emphasis on genuine Christianity and true conversion also made its contribution.

Evangelical Conversionism

In the nineteenth century Evangelicalism was a dominant religious force in Britain and its theological influence was significant.[59] In the previous century John Wesley, a founding father of British Evangelicalism, had argued that it is possible for an individual to have the outward appearance of being a Christian without actually truly being one.[60] The nineteenth century Evangelical tradition shared Wesley's conviction and reinforced the idea that a genuine Christian should not just participate in religious rituals but have a conversion experience, which was understood as consisting of a personal decision for Christ, as well as having a deeply held conviction of the gospel's truth.[61]

These two aspects (i.e. decision and conviction) of the Evangelical conversion paradigm were important in shaping people's religious psyche. First, there was a strong emphasis on individual choice. This marked an important shift from the church tradition of the so-called *ancien régime* where one was born into the Church rather than choosing to belong to it. Callum Brown states that it was in fact this aspect of choosing that 'broke the mental chains

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[59] See Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 249; Larsen, *Crisis of Doubt*, 11; Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, 37.
[60] Larsen, *The Crisis of Doubt*, 12.
[61] Larsen, *The Crisis of Doubt*, 13.

of the *ancien régime* in Britain,' enabling people to see the previously dominant church tradition as simply one religious option among many.[62]

Second, there was an expectation that a real Christian would have a firm conviction of the truth of Christianity.[63] Timothy Larsen points out that a 'person who had internalized such a way of thinking learned that continuing with a life of worship while quietly doubting the claims on which it is based was not only of no spiritual benefit but was also a craven thing to do.'[64] In other words, whereas individuals before could quite comfortably remain in the Church despite their religious doubts, this was less of an option for the Evangelical doubter. Thus, Evangelical conversionism seemed to either push Victorians *towards* a more committed form of (Evangelical) Christianity, or push them *out* of Christianity altogether.

Charles Taylor has identified *Reform* as the main cause of Western secularisation. He refers to it as the 'Reform Master Narrative' of secularisation and summarises it in the following way:

> Reform demanded that everyone be *real, 100 percent* Christian. Reform not only disenchants, but disciplines and re-orders life and society. Along with civility, this makes for a notion of moral order which gives a new sense to Christianity, and the demands of the faith. This collapses the distances of faith from Christendom. It induces an anthropocentric shift, and hence a break-out from the monopoly of Christian faith.[65]

Although Taylor's historical scope is broader than the nineteenth century, the Evangelical emphasis to reform Victorian Christianity through the conversion paradigm seems to have had

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[62] Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, 36-38.
[63] Bebbington has pointed out that the Evangelical doctrine of assurance as advocated by Wesley was influenced by the Enlightenment and its quest for certainty; Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 50.
[64] Larsen, *The Crisis of Doubt*, 13.
[65] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 774.

the exact effects identified by Taylor. To put it differently, the Evangelicals articulated new 'demands of the faith', distancing what was perceived to be true Christian faith from nominal Christianity of Christendom, and in doing so induced an anthropocentric shift by prioritising individual choice. It also polarised these two groups, namely, what it saw as true Christians and non-Christians, and thus undermined the monopoly status of the so called 'Christian faith of Britain.'

Whether Evangelicals of the nineteenth century pursuing religious reform were aware of or even intended the secularising effects of their conversionist agenda is difficult to know for certain.[66] Nevertheless, it is telling that John Wesley in the eighteenth century predicted that something like this would happen when he wrote 'that in a century or two the people of England will be fairly divided into real Deists and real Christians.'[67] Wesley himself did not only predict this but welcomed it, and was personally happy to use sceptical arguments to wake 'nominal Christians from their dogmatic slumbers.'[68]

Diversity of Religious Options

That said, the Victorians of the late nineteenth century should not be simply divided into two homogenous 'religious' groups; that is, (Evangelical) Christians and non-Christians, or what Wesley saw as Christians and Deists. There were, in fact, several 'religious' options for both Christians and non-Christians.

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[66] Gregory has argued that secularisation was the unintended cause of the sixteenth century Reformation; Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknapp Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 2.

[67] John Wesley, 'A Letter to the Reverend' quoted in William J. Abraham, *Aldersgate and Athens: John Wesley and the Foundations of Christian Belief* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 51.

[68] Abraham, *Aldersgate and Athens*, 51.

Regarding the latter, McLeod has noted that 'in the second half of the nineteenth century non-religious views of the world became a possibility for the mass of the people, rather than only for small elite groups.'[69] Like Christianity these various views offered their own paths to 'salvation' and human fulfilment. McLeod has identified four common non-Christian views and/or paths. First, there was 'salvation by politics alone' which followed the legacy of the French Revolution and was promulgated by 'republicans,' 'radicals,' 'nationalists' and 'socialists.' Second, there was salvation by 'science' which saw scientific discoveries and technological advances as the harbinger of the golden age of humanity. The third way to salvation was through 'aesthetics' which advocated art, music and literature as the path for true human flourishing. Fourth, there was 'spiritualism' which rejected both materialism and Christianity, offering a new way between the two.[70] All of these were seen as viable options, and it was not uncommon for people to pick and mix from the above to construct their own paths to fulfilment.

In terms of Christian options, Evangelicalism, with its various denominational incarnations, was also one option among others. The two most prominent Christian alternatives to Evangelicalism were Broad Church Liberalism and Anglo-Catholicism. Both movements, like Evangelicalism, were influenced by the contemporaneous general trends identified above, and were particularly aware of biblical criticism, the questioning of the plausibility of miracles, and scepticism towards orthodox Christian beliefs.

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[69] McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe*, 150.
[70] McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe*, 150-151.

The 1860 publication of *Essays and Reviews* proved to be a seminal work for articulating the theology of Broad Church Liberalism.[71] The seven articles in the work, among other things, urged the Bible to be treated like any other book (Benjamin Jowett), seemed to deny the possibility of miracles (Baden Bowell), and questioned the nature of Christian doctrines such as that of hell (Henry Bristow Wilson). The aim of *Essays and Reviews* was to modernise Christian theology. The work was received with great hostility by many, but as stated by Reardon, '*Essays and Reviews* gave liberalism a place in English theology from which it could not in future be dislodged and might extend a continuously widening influence.'[72] Thirty years later the publication of *Lux Mundi* (1889) continued this legacy. Its editor Charles Gore referred to the *Lux Mundi* as a reconciliation between 'new knowledge' and the Christian religion.[73]

Indeed, the prevailing theological trend during late nineteenth century was towards a liberal stance,[74] at least from an Evangelical perspective. *Essays and Reviews* and *Lux Mundi* argued that Christian theology had to reconcile itself with modernity. This had implications for traditional Christian views on creation, providence, the Fall, sin, evil and theodicy, miracles, free-will, and theology of religions.[75]

However, like Evangelicalism, Anglo-Catholicism especially those aligning themselves with the Oxford Movement (i.e. Tractarianism), were critical of the liberal trends in theology.

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[71] Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age*, 237.
[72] Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age*, 251.
[73] Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age*, 321.
[74] Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 171.
[75] For a detailed exploration of these doctrines see Livingston, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age*.

Influenced by Romanticism, the Oxford Movement from 1830s onwards attacked liberalism, but unlike Evangelicalism it did not do so by seeking to reassert the Reformation doctrines (e.g. authority and primacy of Scripture), but to revive 'a high doctrine of the church and its ministry.'[76] From 1840s onwards the movement inclined towards Roman Catholicism and at the end of 1845 its charismatic leader John Henry Newman joined the Roman Catholic Church.[77] Although the dominance of the Oxford movement declined after Newman's departure, its influence was lasting in emphasising the authority of the Church, holiness, and ritualism in worship. The Oxford Movement's legacy was its ability to reinstate Catholic spirituality and theology into British Christianity.

3.1.4. Elim's Context: An Argument within Modernity

In discussing some of the social, philosophical and theological trends of the Victorian era I have tried to show that the nineteenth century and early twentieth century was a period of increasing modernisation, secularisation and pluralisation of beliefs within Britain. This trajectory was fuelled by urbanisation, liberalisation of politics and education, Enlightenment rationality, scientific positivism, Romanticism, Evangelical conversionism, and the emergence of viable Christian and non-Christian options with respect to 'salvation' and human flourishing. Religious plurality in society meant that it was difficult to take any religion or worldview for granted. In the words of Charles Taylor, the 'conditions of belief' had changed;[78] implying that adhering to any religion increasingly became a choice and for this choice to be justified one had to have reasons, not least when many of the religions and

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[76] Noel S. Pollard, 'The Oxford Movement,' in *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 739.
[77] Pollard, 'The Oxford Movement,' 739.
[78] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 539.

worldviews were in direct competition. However, as the Victorian era reached its twilight having reasons for one's beliefs was not a straightforward task, because there was not just one form of rationality available to ground one's beliefs. Rather, versions of Common Sense Realism, Mill's Scientific Empiricism, Romanticism, Idealism, and the New Realism of Moore and Russell were all on offer.

This is the wider social, intellectual and theological context for the emergence of British Pentecostalism in 1907 and Elim in 1915. Indeed, it seems difficult to fully understand the Elim argument without locating it in this context. Three aspects are particularly noteworthy from the discussion above in locating and better appreciating the emerging Pentecostal and Elim tradition in Britain. First, in line with the early twentieth century *sitz im leben*, the Pentecostal faith from its inception was a religion of *radical choice*. That is, Pentecostalism was not seen as an inherited faith, but one would actively choose to become a Pentecostal. This choice would typically mean having a conversion experience, deciding to get baptised in water, and then seeking baptism in the Holy Spirit. As a religion of choice, Pentecostalism was very much in line with the spirit of the era.

Second, the decision for Pentecostalism/Elim meant that one would *choose what was claimed as 'apostolic faith' or the 'Full Gospel.'* As has been argued above, this was not the only option in the marketplace of religions, and therefore in choosing Pentecostalism one would also explicitly, or at least implicitly, reject the non-religious alternatives, Roman Catholicism, liberal Christianity and cessationist forms of Evangelicalism. Consequently, the choice *for* Pentecostal Christianity was shaped also by the decision *against* its alternatives. Indeed, the

very concepts of apostolic faith and the Full Gospel were understood in relation to what it stood against in the contemporaneous religious discourse. I will argue in chapter four that the Elim argument spearheaded by George Jeffreys was particularly shaped by its antagonism against the so-called theological liberals, Christian ritualism and cessationist evangelicals. However, it should be added that the Pentecostal and Elim argument against some religious traditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was not an argument *per se* against modernity, even if Pentecostals often saw themselves as opposing aspects of modernistic (read: liberal) theologies.

Third, in the context of competing religious and non-religious options, some *reasons were needed for choosing Pentecostalism* over its alternatives. This task was not without complexity, as the nineteenth and early twentieth century intellectual environment did not simply have one form of rationality but embodied various rationalities. Now the average religious seeker was probably not fully cognizant of these various epistemological options, but, nevertheless, they were expected to make rational choices in an environment of competing rationalities. Thus, the question of justification for religious belief was not merely about having 'good reasons' but also about having a 'good rationality.' Interestingly Pentecostalism and Elim would not simply adopt any existing rationality, but developed its own rationality and ways of reasoning for accepting and promulgating the Pentecostal faith. This Pentecostal/Elim rationality was certainly influenced by the smorgasbord of existing rationalities, but as I hope to demonstrate below it cannot simply be equated with a single rationality on offer. Therefore, what made British Pentecostalism and Elim unique traditions was not just *what* they believed, but *how* they justified these beliefs. And their approach to

justification of beliefs was very much influenced by contemporary ways of reasoning, and thus could be seen as another modern rationality.

In conclusion, the foundations for British Pentecostalism and Elim were provided by the nineteenth and early twentieth century social, intellectual and theological environment. This was a context of modernisation, pluralisation and secularisation. Although British Pentecostalism would react against some aspects of this context, it would be misleading to call Pentecostalism in Britain simply a 'protest against modernity' and its consequences.[79] To put it simply, the context had changed too drastically for early British Pentecostals to return to pre-modernity, and more importantly British Pentecostals were themselves children of modernity (e.g. emphasis on choice and ways of reasoning) to be able to fully protest against modernity. Perhaps early British Pentecostalism could be called a 'paramodern' movement *à la* Kenneth Archer; that is, a movement emerging within modernity and sharing some aspects with it, but simultaneously not able to 'accept Modernity's worldview completely.'[80] However, although Archer's concept of 'paramodern' is insightful, it can also give the wrong impression that 'modernity' is somehow a uniform concept, which Pentecostalism opposes. To avoid this possible misconception, it is better to speak with Berger of 'multiple modernities,'[81] and to view the emerging British Pentecostalism and Elim as modern religious movements with some unique emphases.[82] Therefore, in light of Elim's first prologue, namely

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[79] Margaret Poloma sees the growth of American Assemblies of God as an 'anthropological protest against modernity;' Margaret Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 19.

[80] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century*, 33.

[81] Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity*, 68. Berger attributes the concept of 'multiple modernities' to Shmuel Eisenstadt.

[82] Some might object by saying that a Pentecostal movement emphasising supernatural and enchanted Christianity can hardly be modern, but that is only the case if one equates modernity with a form of metaphysical naturalism, and there seems to be no obvious reasons to do so.

its social, intellectual and theological context, the emerging Elim movement discussed in the

next chapter is best seen as a modern religious tradition.

3.2. Holiness, Revival and Pentecostal Roots of Elim

I have suggested above that in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain there were

effectively three main Christian 'streams:' Evangelicalism, Anglo-Catholicism and Broad

Church Liberalism. Pentecostalism in Britain is best located within the Evangelical stream

and seen as 'part of the larger quest for evangelical spirituality.'[83] Early Pentecostals would

share many of the theological beliefs, ways of reasoning and religious practices of other

Evangelicals, even if they were to develop their own distinctives. However, within this

broader Evangelical framework, it was the radical Evangelicalism of the Holiness Movements

and the Welsh Revival that were particularly significant in laying the foundations for British

Pentecostalism.

3.2.1. The Holiness Movements

Like their American counterparts, early British Pentecostal leaders had deep roots in the

Holiness movements of the nineteenth century.[84] For example, the so-called 'Father of British

Pentecostalism,' Alexander Boddy, regularly attended the Keswick Conventions and was also

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[83] Ian M. Randall, 'Old Time Power: Relationships between Pentecostalism and Evangelical Spirituality in England,' *Pneuma* 19, no. 1 (1997): 54.
[84] Donald Gee, *The Pentecostal Movement: A Short History and an Interpretation for British Readers* (Milton Keynes: Lightning Source, n.d.), 4; Timothy B. Walsh, *To Meet and Satisfy a Very Hungry People: The Origins and Fortunes of English Pentecostalism, 1907-1925* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012), 3.

a member of the Pentecostal League of Prayer founded by Richard Reader Harris.[85] George

Jeffreys, the founder of Elim, also seemed to have visited the Keswick conventions,[86] and

other Elim pioneers, such as, E. J. Phillips,[87] R. E. Darragh,[88] and Ernest C. W. Boulton[89] all

had strong links with the Holiness traditions.

David Bebbington has identified four main Holiness traditions in nineteenth century England;

that is, the High Church Tradition, the Calvinist Tradition, the Wesleyan Tradition, and the

Keswick Tradition.[90] The High Church tradition, incorporating the Oxford Movement, seems

to have had little direct influence on British Pentecostalism or Elim, not least due to its

Anglo-Catholic spirituality and opposition to Evangelicalism.[91] The Calvinist, Wesleyan and

Keswick traditions, on the other hand, did have a significant influence on early British

Pentecostalism. Keswick is particularly important as it can be seen as a 'synthesis' of the

Wesleyan and Calvinist holiness streams.[92]

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[85] Boddy seems to have been converted at Keswick in 1876; Gavin Wakefield, *Alexander Boddy: Pentecostal Anglican Pioneer* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2007), 19-20.

[86] Randall, 'Old Time Power,' 58; cf. George Jeffreys, 'Jesus Christ *the* Baptiser,' *EE* 7, no. 23-24 (December 6, 1926): 297-298.

[87] Maldwyn Jones, 'An Assessment of the Leadership of E. J. Phillips' (Master's thesis, Regents Theological College, 2011), 9.

[88] James Robinson, *Pentecostal Origins: Early Pentecostalism in Ireland in the Context of the British Isles* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), 22.

[89] W. G. Hathaway, 'Home-Call of a Pentecostal Pioneer,' *EE* 41, no. 2 (January 9, 1960): 20.

[90] Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England*, 6.

[91] Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England*, 10-12.

[92] Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England*, 73. Andrew David Naselli, 'Keswick Theology: A Survey and Analysis of the Doctrine of Sanctification in the Early Keswick Movement,' *DBSJ* 13 (2008): 19. Dieter identifies Keswick as more Calvinist than Wesleyan; Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*. 2nd ed. (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1996), 249.

The Keswick tradition emerged in the summer of 1875 when its first convention was held in Keswick at the Lake District.[93] From inception its focus was on 'the higher Christian life' and 'sanctification by faith.'[94] It was the emphasis on sanctification that it held in common with the Wesleyan Holiness tradition. However, the Keswick Holiness views were also informed by the Reformed Holiness teachings of the Americans Charles Finney, Asa Mahan and William E. Boardman, making it more acceptable to Calvinists.[95] Regarding sanctification, the Keswick tradition taught that 'sin was not eradicated' but 'repressed' by the working of the Holy Spirit.[96] In other words, the experience and process of sanctification for the Keswick movement did not imply sin being completely removed from the believer but counteracted by the presence of the Holy Spirit. To experience the fullness God's empowering presence, one was encouraged to *surrender* fully to God ('let go') and to place one's *faith* completely in Him ('let God').[97] For some Wesleyans, like Reader Harris, the emphasis on 'repression' of sin, rather than its 'eradication,' was seen as unbiblical,[98] but the Keswick emphasis on 'higher Christin life,' sanctification, and the role of the Spirit seemed to be broad enough to attract adherents from both Wesleyan and Calvinist holiness camps.[99]

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[93] The preceding meetings held at the Broadlands estate (1874), Oxford (1874) and Brighton (1875) with speakers, such as, the married couple Robert Pearsall Smith and Hannah Whitall Smith were influential in the launching of the first Keswick Convention in 1875; J. C. Pollock, *The Keswick Story: The Authorized History of the Keswick Convention* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), 11-37; David D. Bundy, 'Keswick Higher Life Movement,' in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Revised and expanded edition, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 820.

[94] Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England*, 73.

[95] Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England*, 76. Boardman's *The Higher Christian Life* (1858) is considered to be influential for the Keswick Movement; see Pollock, *The Keswick Story*, 13; Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, 49-50.

[96] Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England*, 83; Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 105.

[97] Pollock, *The Keswick Story*, 74-76.

[98] Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England*, 87.

[99] Alexander Boddy is a good example as he attended both Keswick Conventions and was a member of Reader Harris' Pentecostal League of Prayer; see Mark J. Cartledge, 'The Early Pentecostal Theology of *Confidence* Magazine (1908-1926): A Version of the Five-Fold Gospel?' *JEPTA* 28, no. 2 (2008): 122.

Theology and Rationality of Keswick

The Keswick Movement, as well as the broader Wesleyan and Calvinist holiness traditions, was significant in providing theological and rational roots for early British Pentecostalism and Elim. In terms of *theology*, it effectively provided the framework for the Fourfold Gospel (Jesus as Saviour, Healer, Baptiser in the Holy Spirit, and coming King), which was to become a central tenet for early Pentecostals and, as I will argue in chapter four, the doctrinal 'hard core' for Elim.

In terms of the Fourfold Gospel, the Keswick movement first shared the evangelical emphasis on conversion. Second, its focus on sanctification and the need for a deeper Christian experience of the Holy Spirit suggested the need for a crisis moment that was subsequent to conversion. In fact, Donald Gee notes that thanks to the holiness movements the 'phrase 'Baptism of the Holy Ghost' began to appear and become familiar in the sense of a real spiritual crisis for the Christian subsequent to regeneration.'[100] This notion of having a spiritual experience subsequent to conversion, coupled with the 'higher life' teaching that the Spirit baptism was not just for personal sanctification but for the purpose of empowerment,[101] paved the way for the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit Baptism.

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[100] Gee, *The Pentecostal Movement*, 4.
[101] Grant Wacker, 'The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Age in American Protestantism, 1880-1910,' *JAH* 72, no. 1 (June 1985): 48; Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, 251-252.

Third, the doctrine of sanctification was also seen by many Keswick and holiness teachers as connected to the divine healing of the body.[102] This emphasis would be carried into the Pentecostal movement, for example, Mary Boddy – the wife of Alexader Boddy and a British Pentecostal pioneer in her own right – taught a close 'relation of "full sanctification to Divine Life and Healing."'[103] Finally, the Keswick tradition advocated premillennialism over postmillennialism,[104] which would become the eschatological position of most Classical Pentecostals, including Elim.

In terms of *rationality* the 'higher life' and 'holiness' advocates were biblical primitivists searching for a deeper spiritual experience. This meant that they saw great value in what they believed to be true biblical religious experiences. For example, the influential American holiness preacher A. J. Gordon stated that 'experience is the surest touchstone of truth. It is not always infallible [but] this is a kind of testimony which is not easily ruled out of court.'[105] And the regular Keswick speaker F. B. Meyer encouraged Christians to move from 'the realm of shadows into that of realities.'[106] It is thus not surprising that space was given for spiritual encounters to take place at the Keswick Conventions and 'testimonies' of people who had had these types of experiences were an important part of the meetings.[107]

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[102] Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 136; Vinson Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 192; William K. Kay, *Pentecostalism: SCM Core Text* (London: SCM Press, 2009), 33.
[103] T. M. Jeffreys, 'Sunderland International Pentecostal Congress – Teaching,' *Confidence* 2, no. 6 (June, 1909): 135.
[104] Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England*, 83.
[105] A. J. Gordon, *The Ministry of Healing; or, Miracles of Cure in All Ages* (Brooklyn, 1882), 175 quoted in Wacker, 'The Holy Spirit and Spirit of the Age,' 56-57.
[106] F. B. Meyer, *The Way into the Holiest: Expositions of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (London, n.d.), 221-222 quoted in Wacker, 'The Holy Spirit and Spirit of the Age,' 61.
[107] Steven Barabas, *So Great Salvation: The History and Message of the Keswick Convention* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1952), 34; Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, 157-158.

Thus, in many ways the rationality of Keswick was 'Romantic' in nature; that is, it preferred personal experience over argument.[108] For example, the view of the Romantic 'Lake Poet' Samuel Taylor Coleridge regarding the importance of experience and feeling in grounding true Christianity, over 'evidences' and 'arguments' (see 3.1.2.),[109] seemed to have been shared by the Keswick movement.

These spiritual experiences at Keswick were primarily seen as individual and inner experiences for Christians. In other words, the Keswick Conventions focused on inner religious experience, and discouraged 'emotionalism' and physical manifestations;[110] there was a dislike for mass meetings and using 'devices for attracting large crowds;'[111]and the purpose of the experience was to renew the Christian, not to convert the unbeliever, even if Christians were encouraged to fulfil the Great Commission.[112]

This kind of Keswick rationality characterised by experientialism and testimony would be shared by the Welsh Revival, as well as the early Pentecostals. However, both the Welsh Revival and Pentecostalism would move beyond the Keswick concept of experience by focusing also on external manifestations, facilitating collective spiritual experiences, and not limiting religious encounters just to Christians (this will be developed below).

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[108] Bebbington has rightly pointed out the 'Romantic affinities' of the Keswick movement; Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England*, 79.
[109] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection and the Confessions of An Inquiring Spirit*. Kindle.
[110] Barabas, *So Great Salvation*, 31; Pollock, *The Keswick Story*, 129.
[111] Barabas, *So Great Salvation*, 37; Pollock, *The Keswick Story*, 126.
[112] Barabas, *So Great Salvation*, 31; Pollock, *The Keswick Story*, 88.

In sum, the influence of the holiness ethos, particularly in its Keswick expression, was significant for the emergence of early British Pentecostalism and Elim, and it is central for understanding their roots. In the words of Malcolm Hathaway:

> The Keswick movement played a seminal role in the origins of the Welsh Revival and the Pentecostal movement. It raised the level of spiritual life and commitment in the churches, against the wider background of decline caused by higher criticism, theological liberalism and the religion-science conflict.[113]

The 'higher life' and holiness traditions fitted well into the Victorian *sitz im leben*. They sought true and authentic Christian spirituality, were Romantic in their intellectual mood by emphasising spiritual experience over 'arguments,' and they opposed the so called liberal theology by holding strongly to key Evangelical beliefs.[114]

3.2.2. The Welsh Revival

The Welsh Revival of 1904-1905 was influenced by 'the Keswick movement and its holiness teaching.'[115] Like Keswick, the revival at Wales had a significant impact on British and worldwide Pentecostalism.[116] The early American participant-historian of Pentecostalism, Frank Bartleman, wrote in 1925 that the Pentecostal movement was 'rocked in the cradle of

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[113] Malcolm R. Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church: Origins, Developments and Distinctives,'in *Pentecostal Perspectives*, ed. Keith Warrington (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 3.

[114] The Holiness movement as a reaction against liberal tendencies in later nineteenth century Christianity has been noted by Vinson Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition,* 46. However, Wacker makes the valid point that the so called 'new theology' (read: liberals) and 'higher life theology' (read: holiness movements) also had a number of similarities and were both children of the nineteenth century 'religious womb;' Wacker, 'The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Age,' 49.

[115] Robert Pope, 'Demythologising the Evan Roberts Revival, 1904-1905,' *JEH*, no. 3 (2006): 520. See also David D. Bundy, 'Welsh Revival,' in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 1187.

[116] Bundy, 'Welsh Revival,' 1187; Gitre, 'The 1904-05 Welsh Revival,' 826; Pope, ''Demythologising the Evan Roberts Revival, 1904-1905,' 520-521; Kyuhyung Cho, 'The Importance of the Welsh Religious Revival in the formation of British Pentecostalism,' *JEPTA* 30, no. 1 (2010): 22-25.

little Wales;'[117] a view shared by his British contemporaries Alexander Boddy, Ernest C. W. Boulton and Donald Gee, who all acknowledged the Welsh Revival as one of the main precursors for the birth of Pentecostalism.[118]

Indeed many British Pentecostal pioneers had been personally impacted by the revival. The 'father of British Pentecostalism,' Alexander Boddy, made contact with the Welsh revivalist Evan Roberts and visited Tonypandy in South Wales to see the revival. Thomas Ball Barratt, who is often acknowledged as bringing Pentecostalism to Europe, was also in contact with Roberts and began midday prayer meetings for revival in Norway.[119] Moreover, some key early British Pentecostal leaders were converted through the revival. Daniel Williams, the founder of the Apostolic Church, claimed that he was 'saved' through the ministry of Roberts;[120] and Donald Gee, the future Assemblies of God statesman, in his own words, 'personally accepted Christ as his Saviour' in a London meeting held by the Welsh revivalist Seth Joshua.[121] Of particular significance to Elim is that George Jeffreys and his older brother Stephen were both converted during the revival in Wales.[122] With respect to George Jeffreys, Andrew Walker and Neil Hudson have persuasively argued that the Welsh Revival was not only the place of his conversion but also became the benchmark for what Pentecostalism

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[117] Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street: The Roots of Modern-day Pentecost* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1980), 19.

[118] Alexander A. Boddy, 'The Pentecostal Movement. The Story of its Beginning at Sunderland and its Present Position in Great Britain,' *Confidence* 3, no. 8 (August, 1910): 194; Ernest C. W. Boulton, *George Jeffreys: A Ministry of the Miraculous* (London: Elim Publishing, 1928), 2-3; Donald Gee, *The Pentecostal Movement*, 5-7.

[119] Cho, 'The Importance of the Welsh Religious Revival…,' 23-24.

[120] Cho, 'The Welsh Revival,' 24.

[121] Gee, *The Pentecostal Movement*, 37.

[122] Desmond Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists: The Remarkable Lives of George and Stephen Jeffreys* (Basingstoke: Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1986), 18-19; William Kay, *George Jeffreys: Pentecostal Apostle and Revivalist* (Cleveland, Tennessee: CPT Press, 2017), 28. Cho surprisingly does not mention the conversion of George Jeffreys when referring to important conversions of the revival; Cho, 'The Importance of the Welsh Religious Revival…,' 24-25.

should achieve,[123] a position further supported by Noel Brooks who was an associate of Jeffreys.[124] In this sense George Jeffreys and other Pentecostal pioneers were truly 'children of the Welsh Revival.'

The Welsh Revival can be seen to have lasted from the autumn of 1904 to the summer of 1905, although there were reports of spiritual awakening in Wales from 1903 onwards.[125] The revival was facilitated by a band of revivalists, including Seth Joshua, Joseph Jenkins and most notably Evan Roberts.[126] During the revival there were 32,000 to 100,000 converts and many more attended meetings claiming spiritual renewal.[127] It began in South Wales but ended up impacting North Wales, the wider British Isles and various overseas nations.[128]

One key aspect of the Welsh Revival, as stated by Edward J. Gitre, is that it was arguably 'the first distinctly modern religious revival.'[129] Its local and global effect was partly enabled by modern developments of 'mass communication and mass public transportation.'[130] In other words, the press spread the news of the revival like 'wildfire' and the British rail network enabled ordinary people to come and experience the 'revival fire' for themselves. These tools of modernity would also be utilised by British Pentecostals later on to further their cause.

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[123] Andrew Walker and Neil Hudson, 'George Jeffreys, Revivalist and Reformer: A Revaluation,' in *On Revival: A Critical Examination*, ed. Andrew Walker and Kristin Aune (Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 2003), 140; Neil Hudson, 'The Development of British Pentecostalism,' in *European Pentecostalism*, ed. William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 45.

[124] Noel Brooks, *Fight for the Faith and Freedom* (London: The Pattern Bookroom, 1948), 22.

[125] Pope, 'Demythologising the Evan Roberts Revival,' 516-519; Kay, *Pentecostalism*, 61.

[126] Bundy, 'Welsh Revival,' 1187. For other significant figures see Pope, 'Demythologising the Evan Roberts Revival,' 516-518.

[127] Bundy, 'Welsh Revival,' 1187; Gitre, 'The 1904-05 Welsh Revival,' 794; Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*. 2nd ed., 36.

[128] Gitre, 'The 1904-05 Welsh Revival,' 794.

[129] Gitre, 'The 1904-05 Welsh Revival,' 794.

[130] Gitre, 'The 1904-05 Welsh Revival,' 824.

Theology and Rationality of the Welsh Revival

The main significance of the Welsh Revival for Pentecostals was not its theology as such –

although on the whole it reaffirmed the Evangelical theology of Keswick – but (1) its ethos

and rationality, and (2) its non-institutional nature. Regarding the first, the Welsh Revival

shared the underlying Romantic rationality of the Keswick movement which emphasised

religious experience over arguments. However, the Welsh Revival also developed and

modified the Keswick concept of religious experience *from* an internal and individualistic

encounter of God for Christians, *to* an emotional, spontaneous, and collective divine

encounter accompanied by external manifestations to be experienced by both believers and

sceptics alike.

To put it differently, the Welsh Revival meetings were characterised by emotionalism and

informality, commonly channelled through spontaneous music and corporate prayer.[131]

Roberts himself was an exemplar of spontaneity as he sought direct guidance of the Holy

Spirit in the meetings and did not necessarily prepare beforehand what he would say or do.[132]

The meetings also tended to be democratic in nature where members of the congregations,

who had previously often been marginalised (e.g. women and young people), were given

freedom to contribute in their own way and contrary to the traditional patterns of the Welsh

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[131] Cho, 'The Importance of the Welsh Religious Revival…,' 25-26. The Welsh Revival was referred to as 'Quakerism with a song' due to its openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit but also its emphasis on spontaneous singing; S. B. Shaw, *The Great Revival in Wales*, ed. Larry Martin (Pensacola, Florida: Christian Life Books, 2002), 220.
[132] Pope, 'Demythologising the Evan Roberts Revival,' 522.

Nonconformist churches.[133] There is also some evidence of *charismata*, like glossolalia, healing and 'words of knowledge' in the revival meetings.[134]

Moreover, the spiritual experience was not just to renew existing Christians but also to convert the sceptics. S. B. Shaw's reporting in 1905 of the revival highlights stories of agnostics and atheists converting to Christianity.[135] The story of Tom Hughes is his primary example where a sceptic who was a member of the 'Ethical Society' was not converted to Christianity through arguments but by both witnessing and experiencing something in the revival meetings. These encounters caused Hughes to not only convert but also burn his books, which supposedly advocated non-Christian sentiments. The moral of Shaw's story about the conversion of Hughes seems to be that no arguments were needed to win the sceptic, only a deep spiritual experience. This experience was sufficient to refute and win over the cynic to the Christian faith.[136] Indeed, this was seen as the answer for re-converting what was seen as 'backsliding' Britain.[137]

These characteristics – particularly emotionalism, informality, spiritual manifestations, and evangelistic emphasis – made the Welsh Revival different from Keswick, which was

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[133] Gitre, 'The 1904-05 Welsh Revival,' 796; Pope, 'Demythologising the Evan Roberts Revival,' 522; Cho, 'The Importance of the Welsh Religious Revival…,' 26-27.

[134] Kay, *Pentecostalism*, 63; Pope, 'Demythologising the Evan Roberts Revival,' 524.

[135] Shaw, *The Great Revival in Wales*, 188-193.

[136] David Matthews tells a very similar story where an agnostic wants to engage in conversation with Evan Roberts but as he approaches the pulpit he is converted in a Saul of Tarsus like manner. The narrative also highlights that the agnostic had been reading 'questionable literature' and no arguments were needed to convert him, just a spiritual experience; David Matthews, *I Saw the Welsh Revival. 1904 – Centenary Edition - 2004* (Belfast: Ambassador Publications, 2004), 35-40.

[137] Shaw quotes from 'Old Time Religion' that refers to the Welsh 'revival in which professors of religion will have their eyes opened to see and feel their responsibility for souls, and in which they will confess with broken hearts their former backslidings, their carelessness and indifference, and in thousands of cases their actual transgression of the moral law;' Shaw, *The Great Revival in Wales*, 213.

significantly more reserved in its ethos and spirituality.[138] This revivalist ethos would be later emulated by Pentecostals, even if some of the excesses of the Welsh Revival witnessed by many early Pentecostal pioneers would be guarded against.[139]

Second, despite the immediate 'successes' of the Welsh Revival, its long term potential did not seem to be fully realised. Roberts did not appear to have a clear ecclesiology and the leaders of revival did not make an effort to strategically organise its results.[140] The new converts were welcomed into the existing Nonconformist churches, but these churches did not seek to reform their liturgical practices to accommodate the revivalist spirituality of their new converts but simply continued with their traditional approaches to Christian worship. Robert Pope sees this failure to reform as the great mistake of the Welsh Nonconformist churches and the possible cause of its twentieth century decline.[141] It is not hard to argue that the Pentecostal denominational leaders, many of who themselves were 'children of the revival,' did not want to find their revival in a similar predicament where either due to a lack of ecclesial structure people would fall away, or due to existing rigid ecclesial structures the momentum of Pentecostalism would be lost. Consequently, many Pentecostal leaders sought to create new church structures with the aim of avoiding both of these pitfalls and to provide institutions for the Pentecostal experience to flourish.[142] In this sense, the Welsh Revival was not just an influence for British Pentecostalism in what it achieved, but also in what it failed to achieve.

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[138] Pollock, *The Keswick Story*, 129.
[139] Walsh, *To Meet and Satisfy a Very Hungry People*, 111.
[140] Bundy, 'Welsh Revival,' 1188.
[141] Pope, 'Demythologising the Evan Roberts Revival,' 534.
[142] The justification for new denominational structures from both Elim and Assemblies of God perspectives see; Ernest C. W. Boulton, *George Jeffreys: A Ministry of the Miraculous*, ed. Chris Cartwright (Tonbridge: Sovereign World, 1999), 20-23. Gee, *The Pentecostal Movement*, 140-146.

In sum, the Welsh Revival set a model of spiritual renewal for the early Pentecostals. Like the Keswick Movement, its emphasis on spiritual experience and holiness motifs would be shared by the early Pentecostals. However, more so than the Keswick Movement, it was its ability to facilitate spiritual encounters for the masses with spiritual manifestations that left a lasting impression on the Pentecostal pioneers, particularly George Jeffreys. It was this aspect of spiritual experiences with external signs on a large scale that provided the spiritual, theological and rational resources for the emerging British Pentecostals. And it was the seeming failure of the Welsh Non-conformist churches to reap the full benefits of the revival that may have motivated some early Pentecostal pioneers to form new Pentecostal denominations.

3.2.3. British Pentecostalism

By 1907 Britain seemed to be ready for the emergence of Pentecostalism. The underlying context of increasing religious pluralism and secularisation of society, the theology and spiritualty of the Holiness Movements, and the revivalist experientialism and hunger generated by the Welsh Revival, provided a fertile ground for the emergence and spreading of Pentecostalism in Britain. Donald Dayton, writing about the birth of Pentecostalism in USA, notes that the 'higher Christian life' and Holiness movements with their emphasis on salvation, baptism in the Spirit, divine healing and the second coming functioned as 'a sort of pre-Pentecostal tinderbox awaiting the spark that would set it off.'[143] He goes on to point out that when Pentecostalism did finally emerge, the leaders within the Holiness movement

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[143] Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 174.

'recognized that it was only the gift of tongues that set it apart from their own teachings.'[144] A similar comment can be said of British Pentecostalism; that is, the Holiness movement(s) and the Welsh Revival provided the theological framework, spiritual expectation and rational resources for the Pentecostal renewal; and like in America it seemed to be *glossolalia* that was mainly condemned by the British Pentecostals' Holiness counterparts.[145] However, I will argue that it was not just the theology of *glossolalia* that was the difference between the early Pentecostals and their holiness predecessors, but the rationality that accompanied this doctrine.

Los Angeles, Barratt and Boddy

The question of Pentecostal origins has been widely debated by scholars. For example, was there a single origin (monogenesis) or multiple origins (polygenesis) for the global movement?[146] Moreover, if there was a single origin, was it Topeka with Charles Fox Parham or Los Angeles with William Seymour?[147] My aim is not to discuss the global origins of Pentecostalism as such, but rather to focus on the origins of British Pentecostalism in as much as it is relevant for understanding Elim. As has already been argued, the emergence of British Pentecostalism can only be understood in the context of the broader British religious context, the Holiness movements and the Welsh Revival. However, the American Pentecostal influence on British Pentecostalism cannot be ignored. Cornelis van der Laan has

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[144] Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 175; see also D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 14.

[145] Some of the major British holiness critics of the Pentecostal notions of 'tongues' were Reader Harris, Oswald Chambers and Jessie Penn-Lewis; see Walsh, *To Meet and Satisfy a Very Hungry People*, 44-46.

[146] For a good summary and an insightful contribution to the topic of origins see Michael McClymond, ''I will Pour Out of My Spirit Upon All Flesh': An Historical and Theological Meditation on Pentecostal Origins,' *Pneuma* 37, no. 3 (2015): 356-374.

[147] See Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 20-24.

demonstrated from early British Pentecostal periodicals that in self-identifying the origins of

the British Pentecostalism 'Azusa Street plays a very important role as the place where the

fire first fell and from where it spread over the world,' whereas 'the Topeka event and Parham

are completely absent.' [148] For example, in early *Elim Evangels* Thomas E. Hackett refers to

April 1906 and Los Angeles as the place where the Pentecostal 'movement commenced,'[149]

and Elizabeth Sisson refers to Los Angeles and Azusa Street as the birth place of the global

Pentecostal revival.[150]

This link with Los Angeles for British Pentecostalism was largely created by three influential

British Pentecostal pioneers: Thomas Ball Barratt, Alexander Boddy and Cecill Polhill. While

visiting America and residing in New York at A. B. Simpson's 'Missionary Home,' Barratt

heard of the Azusa Street revival taking place in Los Angeles. Inspired by the Azusa events,

in October 1906 Barratt had a profound religious experience which was then followed by

'speaking in tongues' in November 1906.[151] When Barratt returned to Norway, he began

preaching the Pentecostal message and holding revival meetings in Oslo.

Boddy received news of the events taking place at Azusa Street and also of the Oslo meetings

under Barratt's leadership. Encouraged by what he heard, he visited Barratt in Oslo in March

1907 for four days.[152] According to Boddy's own reflection of his time in Christiania (Oslo),

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[148] Cornelis van der Laan, 'What Good Can Come From Los Angeles? Changing Perceptions of the North American Pentecostal Origins in Early Western European Pentecostal Periodicals,' in *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy*, ed. Harold D. Hunter and Cecil M. Robeck (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2006), 159.
[149] Thomas E. Hackett, 'The Nearing Advent of Our Lord,' *EE* 2, no. 3 (June, 1921): 43.
[150] Elizabeth Sisson, 'Reminiscences,' *EE* 10, no. 16 (August 16, 1929): 245-246.
[151] David Bundy, 'Thomas Ball Barratt: From Methodist to Pentecostal,' *EPTA Bulletin: JEPTA* 13, no. 1 (1994): 37.
[152] Wakefield, *Alexander Boddy*, 81.

'the presence and power of God were even beyond that of the meetings in Wales... [and] in one meeting... [I] received a blessed and wonderful 'Baptism' of the Holy Ghost.'[153] He was clearly impressed with what he witnessed and experienced in Oslo, and when he returned to England be began advocating the Pentecostal message, including speaking in tongues. Boddy also invited Barratt to visit Sunderland and it was at the end of August 1907 that Barratt finally arrived at Sunderland. At Sunderland Barratt held a number of revival meetings with the result of many receiving Baptism in the Spirit accompanied with speaking in tongues.[154] Although these were not the first instances of individuals experiencing Baptism in the Spirit understood through a Pentecostal lens in Britain,[155] they seemed to be the first occasion where collective speaking in tongues took place.[156] In fact, Donald Gee referred to Barratt's meetings as the moment when the 'Pentecostal Revival had commenced in the British Isles.'[157]

That said, Boddy's influence on British Pentecostalism and Sunderland's significance as *the* early centre of the emerging movement was not just down to Barratt's visit.[158] From 1908 to 1914 annual Pentecostal conferences were conducted by Boddy at Sunderland and from 1908 to 1926 Boddy also edited the *Confidence* magazine. Both of these proved to be formative for British Pentecostal practice and theology.[159] In fact, when it comes to Elim it was at the Sunderland convention in 1913 where George Jeffreys was first introduced to William

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[153] Boddy, 'The Pentecostal Movement,' 194.

[154] Wakefield, *Alexander Boddy*, 84-89.

[155] Catherine Price of Brixton (London) spoke in tongues in January 1907 and is credited as the first person in Britain to speak in tongues in the twentieth century; Neil Hudson, 'The Earliest Days of British Pentecostalism,' *JEPTA* 21, no. 1 (2001): 52.

[156] William K. Kay, 'Sunderland's Legacy in New Denominations,' *JEPTA* 28, no. 2 (2008): 193.

[157] Gee, *The Pentecostal Movement*, 24.

[158] For analysis of other important 'centres' of British Pentecostalism see Walsh, *To Meet and Satisfy a Very Hungry People*.

[159] Kay, 'Sunderland's Legacy in New Denominations,' 193-196. Hudson, 'The Earliest Days of British Pentecostalism,' 66-67.

Gillespie, who subsequently invited Jeffreys to Ireland leading to the birth of Elim in 1915.[160]

Moreover, the Pentecostal Missionary Union (PMU) was founded in 1909 with Boddy's close

associate Cecil Polhill as its President (who himself had received the Pentecostal experience

at Azusa in February 1908),[161] and Boddy as the editorial secretary.[162] The PMU was pivotal

in training many early British Pentecostal pioneers, such as, Elim's George Jeffreys and E. J.

Phillips.[163] The formation of the PMU also meant that British Pentecostalism under the

leadership of Boddy and Polhill, would travel overseas with the organisation's missionaries.

Theology and Rationality of Early British Pentecostalism

As has already been suggested, the early British Pentecostals shared the fourfold/fivefold

doctrinal emphasis common in the Holiness movement. Indeed, Mark Cartledge has argued

that the early Pentecostal theology of the *Confidence* magazine was very much characterised

by the fourfold/fivefold framework, despite the actual absence of the phrases 'Fourfold-

Gospel' or 'Fivefold-Gospel.'[164] Cartledge's conclusion is supported by the early issues of

Confidence, where the themes of Jesus as saviour, sanctifier, healer, baptiser in the Spirit and

coming King are common topics of discussion.[165] Furthermore, the programme of the first

'Whitsuntide Conference' held at Sunderland in June 1908 highlights the centrality of the

Fourfold Gospel for the emerging British Pentecostalism. In other words, there are three

themed sessions for the Conference which cover three of the four aspects of the Fourfold

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[160] Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists*, 39.
[161] See John Usher, 'Cecil Henry Polhill: The Patron of the Pentecostals,' *Pneuma* 34, no. 1 (2012): 48.
[162] Wakefield, *Alexander Boddy*, 136.
[163] Boulton, *George Jeffreys* (1928), 13.
[164] Cartledge, 'The Early Pentecostal Theology of *Confidence* Magazine (1908-1926),' 118-132.
[165] E.g. Alexander A. Boddy, ''Confidence' – Our First Number,' *Confidence* 1 (April, 1908): 3; Alexander A. Boddy (ed.), 'The Gift of Tongues,' *Confidence* 2 (May, 1908): 4-5; Mary Boddy, 'Health and Healing in Jesus,' *Confidence* 2 (May, 1908): 16-17; Alexander A. Boddy, 'Pleading the Blood,' *Confidence* 5 (August, 1908): 3-6.

Gospel; that is, there is a session on (1) ''Tongues' as a Sign of 'Pentecost';' (2) 'The Coming of the Lord;' and (3) 'Divine Life – Health and Healing in Christ.'[166] Boddy's own reflective conclusion on the Sunderland Conference further affirms the importance of the Christocentric Fourfold/Fivefold Gospel. He writes:

> Glory to God! Souls are being *saved* and *sanctified*, *bodies healed*, demons cast out, and the *Holy Ghost poured out 'as at the beginning,'* but far above all '*we see Jesus*,' and His Love is flooding our own souls, and in our gathering of 1908 we felt that we were knit together by a love that burst all bonds of Church organization and social position, and made us truly 'one in Christ Jesus' – *'Till He comes'* [my italics].[167]

The distinctive feature of the British Pentecostal movement *vis-à-vis* the wider British Holiness fraternity, is the emphasis on receiving 'Pentecost' or 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit' with tongues as the evidence. Boddy notes in his first editorial of *Confidence* that the magazine could have legitimately been called 'Pentecost with signs,'[168] and interestingly those coming to the first Sunderland Conference are expected to sign a declaration stating: 'I declare that I am in full sympathy with those who are seeking "Pentecost" with the Sign of the Tongues. I also undertake to accept the ruling of the chairman.'[169] This declaration underscores both the centrality of glossolalia as the sign and also the seeming opposition from some (presumably from the holiness traditions), who may have wanted to attend the first British Pentecostal Conference. This same sentiment is reflected in one of the first British Pentecostal theological statements, namely, the 'London Declaration' on 'The Baptism in the Holy Ghost' – signed in November 1909 by prominent Pentecostal leaders – which starts by

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[166] Alexander A. Boddy (ed.), 'Conference Programme,' *Confidence* 1 (April, 1908): 2.
[167] Alexander A. Boddy, 'The Sunderland Conference, June, 1908,' *Confidence* 3 (June, 1908): 13.
[168] Boddy, ''Confidence' – Our First Number,' 3.
[169] Alexander A. Boddy (ed.), 'Whitsuntide Conference at Sunderland,' *Confidence* 1 (April, 1908): 2.

stating that 'THE "PROMISE OF THE FATHER" (Acts i., 4) was, and is, *evidenced* by the Speaking in "*Tongues*"' (my italics).[170]

The significance of the 'Sign of the Tongues,' however, is not just in emphasising the importance of 'tongues' within early Pentecostal theology, but in the actual need to have a '*sign*.' In other words, there appears to be an 'experiential' and 'evidentialist' dimension in the rationality of the emerging Pentecostals. To put it differently, Pentecostals needed to have evidence for their encounter with God, and a genuine spiritual experience for them needed to be supported by external evidence, namely, 'tongues.' In fact, the common synonym for the word 'sign' on the pages of *Confidence* is 'scriptural evidence(s).'[171] Consequently, it seems that the rationality of early Pentecostalism could be categorised as a form of *biblical and experiential evidentialism*.

Indeed, Kenneth Archer, William Oliverio and Bradford McCall have noted that early American Pentecostalism affirmed both the authority of 'Scripture' and 'experience.'[172] In the words of Oliverio, 'the Protestant Christian Scriptures were the sole ultimate authority for Christian belief and living which functioned dialogically with the religious and general experiences of early Pentecostals to form a theological understanding of their world.'[173] This dual emphasis on the 'Bible' and 'experience' was also strongly present in the British

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[170] Alexander A. Boddy (ed.), 'A London Declaration (November 1909). The Baptism in the Holy Ghost. What we teach concerning the Evidence and the Results,' *Confidence* 2, no. 12 (December, 1909): 287.

[171] E.g. Alexander A. Boddy (ed.), 'India – A Message from Mukti,' *Confidence* 6 (September, 1908): 14; Alexander A. Boddy, 'Speaking in Tongues. Is this of God?' *Confidence* 8 (November, 1908): 9.

[172] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century*, 63; McCall, 'A Contemporary Reappropriation of Baconian Common Sense Realism in Renewal Hermeneutics,' 228.

[173] Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 31.

Pentecostal psyche, and it is what makes them different from the early twentieth century

Protestant Liberals, who primarily emphasised (inner) experience, and Protestant

Fundamentalist, who primarily emphasised the Scriptures. Pentecostals focused on *both*

experience and scripture and thus in the words of Nancey Murphy would hold a 'middle

position between fundamentalism and liberalism.'[174]

Nevertheless, Pentecostals in both America and Britain did not simply understand experience

as an inner spiritual matter of the heart, but as an external spiritual manifestation with visible

evidences along biblical lines. This kind of biblical and experiential evidentialism is

interesting in the light of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century intellectual context

discussed above. The Pentecostal logic seems to be, perhaps somewhat ironically, a

combination of Coleridge's Romanticism of 'experience over arguments' and Clifford's

Evidentialism of 'it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon

insufficient evidence.'[175] In combining *Romanticism* and *Evidentialism* Pentecostalism shows

developments from the Keswick and Welsh Revival understandings of what is deemed as an

authoritative spiritual experience. At the risk of oversimplification, the Keswick emphasis

appears to have been on personal inner spiritual experience in line with the Romantic mood.

The Welsh Revival develops this inner Keswickian experience by intensifying it in the

context of revival meetings, and starts to show some 'signs' of external spiritual

manifestations. The Pentecostal movement then further moves from the 'inner' to the 'outer'

aspects of experience by now articulating the need for there to be specific and verifiable

evidence for one's encounter with God. Boddy himself suggests that there is a difference

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[174] Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism*, n. 8 on 6; cf. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century*, 63.
[175] Clifford, 'The Ethics of Belief.'

between the Keswick and the Pentecostal Movement possibly along the lines I have suggested. In his words: 'Many of us thank God for Keswick in the past... [but we] feel that the Lord is calling to His people to "go forward." He is calling His people to an *experimental Pentecost*' (my italics).[176]

Therefore, the Pentecostal distinctive with respect to the Holiness movements and the Welsh Revival is not only the theology of 'tongues,' but the Pentecostal movement also demonstrates a unique element within its rationality. It takes on the Romantic experientialism of Keswick and adds an element of external verification to it. To put it simply, *Pentecostalism is Keswick Romanticism 'baptised' with Evidentialism*.[177] This Evidentialism, however, is not simply aligned to Mill's new scientific method or simply a retreat to Baconian Common Sense philosophy. It does carry elements of both, particularly the latter,[178] but it also offers its own nascent rationality of *biblical pragmatism* which Elim would adopt and develop, as will be argued in the next chapter.

3.2.4. Elim's Roots: From Keswick 'Romanticism' to Pentecostal 'Evidentialism'

The purpose of this chapter has been to outline the 'prologues' to the Elim tradition. In doing so, the first part has explored the social, philosophical and theological *context* within which British Pentecostalism and Elim emerged, and this second section has identified the *roots* which nourished British Pentecostalism and Elim to life. Regarding the roots, I have argued

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[176] Alexander A. Boddy, 'Brief Items,' *Confidence* 5 (August, 1908): 14.
[177] For a similar conclusion regarding the Pentecostal doctrine of 'tongues as initial evidence,' albeit from an American perspective, see Kenneth Richard Walters, Jr. *Why Tongues? The Initial Evidence Doctrine in North American Pentecostal Churches* (Dorset: Deo Publishing, 2016).
[178] Cf. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 63; McCall, 'A Contemporary Reappropriation...,' 227-232.

that British Pentecostalism is best seen within the tradition of British Evangelicalism with more direct theological and rational links to the nineteenth century Holiness traditions (particularly Keswick) and the early twentieth century Welsh Revival. The theology of early Pentecostals in Britain was on the whole Evangelical with an emphasis on the Four/Fivefold Gospel that had been largely inherited from Keswick and the Welsh Revival. The main theological difference between early British Pentecostals and their holiness ancestors was the Pentecostal emphasis on Spirit Baptism with the 'sign of tongues.' However, as I have tried to demonstrate, an important distinction between early Pentecostals and the holiness fraternity was not just on the 'theology of tongues,' but on the underlying rationality at work within this doctrine. In other words, Pentecostals took the Romantic experientialism of Keswick, which had been externalised in the Welsh Revival, and 'baptised it in Evidentialism' by demanding 'evidences' and 'signs' for the validity of one's Spirit baptism. It was this move that gave Pentecostals their distinct theological emphasis and unique rationality. Elim, as a British Pentecostal tradition, would go on to embody and develop this innovation.

The next chapter will move from Elim's *context* and *roots* to focusing explicitly on Elim. However, as noted by MacIntyre, we are all 'born with a past,'[179] and thus we can only make sense of the emerging Elim argument if we understand its pre-history. In sum, Elim was birthed in the context of modernity and its early nourishment was from Keswick, Welsh Revival and nascent British Pentecostalism as it went on to argue its own case.

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[179] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 221.

CHAPTER 4 – THE BIRTH OF ELIM: THE EARLY OPPONENTS, CONTENT, RATIONALITY AND EMBODIMENT OF THE ELIM ARGUMENT

In the previous chapter I identified the 'prologues' to the Elim tradition by first outlining its broader social, philosophical and theological *context*, and then narrating its theological and intellectual *roots* within Keswick, the Welsh Revival and British Pentecostalism. Shaped by this wider context and firmly rooted in the British Pentecostal heritage, Elim emerged as a movement in 7th January 1915. Elim's initial 18 years (1915-1933) can be seen along MacIntyrian lines as the first stage in the formation of the Elim tradition and thus foundational in the development of the 'Elim argument.'[1]

To identify the essence of the emerging Elim argument, I will utilise the methodology presented in chapter two by first discussing Elim's implied opponents. Second, I will seek to discern exactly what the Elim movement was arguing for, with particular emphasis on its early theological *hard core* and *auxiliary hypotheses*. Third, I will explore how Elim in its early days sought to proceed with this argument; that is, what was the movement's tacit rationality? And finally I will explore the social embodiment of the argument.

The primary sources used in this chapter are *Elim Evangel* (the authorised Elim periodical depicting the views of the movement to its own adherents and other interested parties), Elim

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[1] The formational stage of Elim seems to end in 1934 when the Deed Poll effectively cements Elim's constitution. Moreover, around the same time Jeffreys increasingly shifted his emphasis away from evangelistic campaigns to revisiting established Elim churches, which also implies an end to Elim's formational period. In fact, Walker and Hudson refer to 1915 to 1934 as Jeffreys' 'golden years;' Walker and Hudson, 'George Jeffreys, Revivalist and Reformer,' 141.

books and pamphlets (particularly those written by George Jeffreys), letter correspondence, and Elim's early constitutional and doctrinal documents.

4.1. The Implied Opponents of the Elim Argument

When the Elim argument entered the British religious scene it quickly articulated both what it stood *for* and also what it stood *against*. In Elim's first official statement of beliefs, the movement is presented as 'earnestly contending for the Faith which once was delivered to the saints' (Jude 3) in a 'Laodicean age of apostasy' that was making the Church 'powerless to cope with the sin and unbelief which is overwhelming in the world in the present age.'[2] For Elim this purported 'apostasy' seems to have been caused by three trends within early twentieth century Western Christianity, namely, (1) *liberalism* (often equated with 'Modernism') with its 'Higher Criticism' and 'New Theology;' (2) *cessationism* regarding the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirt in the current dispensation; and (3) *ritualism* which was seen as a distraction from the true essence of Christianity. It was against these three opponents that Elim directed its argument.

4.1.1. Contending Against Liberalism

As discussed in the previous chapter (see particularly 3.1.2. and 3.1.3.), in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century religious scepticism and theological liberalism was on the rise in Britain. Russell Spittler has noted that classical Pentecostalism as a whole, just like

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[2] George Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church: What We Believe* (Belfast: Wm. Brown and Sons, 1916), 1. To be precise this document is a statement of faith for Elim's first local church in Belfast. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that it reflects the ethos of the emerging movement and functioned as the benchmark for Elim's subsequent statements.

Fundamentalism and Neo-Orthodoxy, can be seen as reacting against this liberal trend within European and American Christianity.[3] This seems to be true also for Elim, as from its inception it opposed theological liberalism,[4] and from May 1931 onwards the *Elim Evangel* explicitly identified on its first page that the Elim 'Movement stands uncompromisingly for the whole Bible as the inspired word of God and contends for THE FAITH *against modern thought, Higher Criticism, and New Theology*' (my italics).[5]

Elim seemed to have three major concerns with so-called 'modern thought.' Firstly, along with Higher Criticism, it appeared to challenge the divine authority of the Bible. George Jeffreys lamented that 'it was considered a terrible thing a few years ago for a person to openly condemn the Scriptures,' but today the 'Bible as the inspired word of God is disputed.'[6] This 'disputing' of the Bible's divine authority was seemingly carried out by the Higher Critics in undermining Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch, questioning the historicity of Noah's Flood, and attempts to reconcile Darwinian evolution with Genesis 1-2.[7] Secondly, the Modernists rejected the miraculous nature of the Christian faith as understood by Elim. Indeed, the anti-supernaturalism of the Higher Critics was believed to be a major reason for them not accepting the (full) divine inspiration of Scripture.[8] Thirdly, in denying the supernatural aspects of Christianity the New Theologians were believed to be

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[3] Russell P. Spittler, 'Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists? A Review of American Uses of These Categories,' in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, ed. Karla Poewe (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 107.

[4] E.g. Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church: What We Believe*, 1-2.

[5] No author, 'The Elim Evangel and Foursquare Gospel Revivalist,' *EE* 12, no. 18 (May 1, 1931): 273. Reflecting on the Elim Movement and its founder Boulton declares in 1928 how 'George Jeffreys with the rod of he inspired Word fearlessly smote the water of an incredulous and invasive modernism, opening up a passage by which many others might pass;'Boulton, *George Jeffreys* (1999), 8.

[6] George Jeffreys, *The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel – Doctrinal* (London: Elim Publishing, 1929), 51.

[7] D. J. Davies, 'The Bible and Modernism,' *EE* 6, no. 23 (December 1, 1925): 273-274.

[8] George Jeffreys, *Healing Rays*. 4th ed. (Henry E. Walter LTD, 1985), 7.

inappropriately rewriting orthodox doctrines by rejecting Christ's divine incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and second coming.[9]

Elim was resolute in its attack against these liberal trends; not least as the Modernist approach to the Bible and Christian beliefs was argued to originate from the 'devil... the Father of lies' who was believed to be the 'first Higher Critic' in questioning the truthfulness of God's words.[10] Writing in 1923 George Jeffreys went as far as to suggest that 'if Germany, with the other nations, had rejected the poison of New Theology and Higher Criticism, they would have escaped the awful judgments that were now falling upon them.'[11] Consequently, Elim's opposition to theological liberalism was not just based on the latter disputing the authority of the Bible, rejecting supernaturalism and undermining orthodox Christian doctrines, but on the conviction that these beliefs emanated from 'the devil' and thus in due course would receive divine punishment.

So does this opposition to 'Modernism' make Elim effectively a Fundamentalist Movement? Elim certainly rejected liberal theology with the vehemence of the Fundamentalists.[12] Moreover, Elim shared many of the same religious roots with the Fundamentalists in the Holiness Traditions, and also held a number of similar theological convictions, with particular

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[9] Jeffreys, *The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel - Doctrinal*, 51-52; A. M. H., 'Modernism: Self-confessed & Self-exposed,' *EE* 12, no. 5 (January 30, 1931): 66; J. N. Hoover, 'The Tragedy of Modern Theology,' *EE* 14, no. 35 (September 1, 1933): 549.

[10] Davies, 'The Bible and Modernism,' 129.

[11] George Jeffreys, 'Pentecost in Scandinavia,' *EE* 4, No. 11 (November, 1923): 231.

[12] For studies on Fundamentalism see Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970); George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals*.

emphasis on the authority of the Bible and the second coming of Christ.[13] Indeed, the Elim

Movement was quite happy to be associated with Fundamentalism,[14] and George Jeffreys

together with the Fundamentalist Professor J. Robertson were even visualised by *Elim*

Evangel as 'the two champions of Fundamentalism.'[15]

Nevertheless, there were also significant differences between Elim and Fundamentalism with

respect to their *rationality* and *theology*. Regarding rationality, the Fundamentalists

effectively followed Baconian Common Sense approach,[16] whereas Elim would adopt a

Pentecostal type experiential/pragmatic rationality (this will be developed in 4.3.). In terms of

theology, the Fundamentalists embraced a more *cessationist* view regarding the gifts of the

Spirit, whereas Elim promulgated what it saw as the 'Full Gospel' (this will be developed in

4.2.). It was these types of theological differences (grounded in differing rationalities) that

appeared to lead to the 1928 condemnation of Pentecostals by the World's Christian

Fundamentals Association,[17] and also what made many of the Fundamentalists Elim's second

implied opponents.

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[13] Gerald King identifies the premillennial commitment of Pentecostals and Fundamentalists as the factor that 'most closely found the two movements;' Gerald W. King, *Disfellowshiped: Pentecostal Responses to Fundamentalism in the United States, 1906-1943* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2011), Loc 2164.

[14] Earle V. Pierce, D.D. 'Why I am a Fundamentalist?,' *EE* 14, no. 8 (February 24, 1933): 116-118.

[15] Percy Le Tissier, 'A Champion of Fundamentalism: Rev. Professor J. Robertson, D.D. at the City Temple, Glasgow,' *EE* 13, no. 27 (July 1, 1932): 427.

[16] For the philosophical roots of Fundamentalism see Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals*, 94-130.

[17] For the statement of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association on Pentecostals see Spittler, 'Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists,' 109.

4.1.2. Contending Against Fundamentalist Cessationism

George Jeffreys claimed that by contending for the miraculous Gospel, Elim was not just against the 'higher critic,' but also what he called the 'lower critic.' According to Jeffreys,

> The lower critic is the one who unreservedly accepts the Bible as the inspired Word of God, but who endeavours to shew from its pages that we are not living in the days of miracles. If he cannot succeed in proving that the miraculous was withdrawn at the end of the apostolic days, he attempts to postpone the supernatural element to a future millennium... the lower critic is the most inconsistent with his own standpoint, and indeed presents a pitiable sight. He starts off by declaring his absolute faith in a present-day miraculous Bible with all its commands and promises, and then argues that miracles are not for the present age... While professing to believe in a supernatural religion, he is all the time undermining its foundations.[18]

Elim's criticism of the 'lower critic' was partly a reaction to the lower critics' opposition to Elim's belief in present day miracles. Indeed, ever since the Pentecostal movement emerged in Britain it was heavily criticised, particularly by the Holiness fraternity.[19] Desmond Cartwright insightfully points out that in 1907-1913 the opposition towards Pentecostalism was mainly with respect to 'speaking in tongues,' but by the 1920s the criticism had shifted to the Pentecostal practice and theology of 'divine healing.'[20] George Jeffreys was a healing evangelist reaching increasing influence in the 1920s and thus it was this rejection of 'divine healing' (read: miracles) by certain Evangelical groups that was a major concern for Jeffreys and Elim.

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[18] Jeffreys, *Healing Rays*, 8-9.

[19] Reflecting on the early years of British Pentecostalism, Alexander Boddy notes how the Pentecostal message was 'rejected by many;' Boddy, 'The Pentecostal Movement,' 195.

[20] Desmond Cartwright, 'Everywhere Spoken Against: Opposition to Pentecostalism 1907-1930,' accessed April 20, 2017, http://smithwigglesworth.com/index.php/smith-wigglesworth-pensketches/miscellaneous/everywhere-spoken-against. A classic criticism of the early Pentecostal Movement is Jessie Penn-Lewis in collaboration with Evan Roberts, *War on the Saints: A Text Book for believers on the work of deceiving spirits among the children of God* (Leicester: The 'Overcomer' Office, 1912).

That said, Elim did accept some criticism against the 'experiential excesses' of certain

Pentecostals. To this effect Elim identified itself as a movement that 'condemns

extravagances and fanaticism in every shape and form.'[21] Nevertheless, Elim saw itself as

promulgating 'the old time Gospel in old time power.'[22] Therefore, it was the assumption of

the cessationists that the gifts of the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn, not their criticism of

experiential fanaticism, that Elim contended against.[23]

4.1.3. Contending Against Ritualism

As well as directing its argument against the 'higher critics' and the 'lower critics,' Elim was

also opposed to 'ritualism.' George Jeffreys maintained that 'in some quarters, even if they

claim to believe the old truths [the orthodox Christian beliefs, including miracles], they are

lost to sight behind the rituals of crucifixes, vestments, masses, confessionals.'[24] The main

perceived problem with the Roman Catholic Church, as well as Anglo-Catholicism, was its

ritualism, which was seen as a barrier for experiencing the Full Gospel.[25] For example, when

George and Stephen Jeffreys visited Rome in 1922 they said that they 'saw great Church

buildings which were like prison houses, altars, statutes, vestments and everything the carnal

mind could devise to in order to obscure the light of the Gospel.'[26] And when the Elim Bible

College was opened in 1925, Boulton contrasts how a building that had previously been a

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[21] 'The Elim Evangel and Foursquare Gospel Revivalist,' 273.

[22] 'The Elim Evangel and Foursquare Gospel Revivalist,' 273.

[23] Jeffreys' acknowledgement of spiritual 'extravagances,' as well as his criticism of those who claim that the gifts have been withdrawn is made clear in Elim's first statement of beliefs; Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church. What We Believe*, 2. Boulton also reflects this sentiment when he writes that '[w]e are persuaded that where the Holy Spirit holds sway in an assembly there will be a beautiful combination of liberty and order, and all the gifts of the Spirit will be in operation;' Ernest C. W. Boulton, 'Christian Liberty,' *EE* 3, no. 6 (June, 1922): 93.

[24] Jeffreys, *The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel – Doctrinal*, 52.

[25] There are also some suggestions within early Elim literature that the Papacy would become the Church of the anti-Christ; Charles Kingston, 'The Coming *of* Christ – and After. The Tribulation Period – The Antichrist,' *EE* 6, no. 18 (September 15, 1925): 205-206; E. J. Phillips, 'The Editors' Page,' *EE* 10, no. 3 (March, 1929): 41.

[26] Boulton, *George Jeffreys* (1928), 118.

Roman Catholic Convent characterised by 'bitterness' and 'medieval monasticism' was now

turned into a place of 'joyous praise issuing from lives immersed in the fullness Divine.'[27]

4.2. The Content of the Elim Argument: The Foursquare Gospel

The response of Elim to *liberalism*, *cessationism* and *ritualism* was the promulgation of the

'Full Gospel.' Hence, when the Elim Evangelistic Band was formed by George Jeffreys and

six others in Monaghan, Ireland, on 7th January 1915, the minutes of the instituting meeting

indicate that the purpose of the new movement was to reach 'Ireland with the Full Gospel on

Pentecostal lines.'[28] So what exactly was this Pentecostal Full Gospel? Or to put it differently,

what was the content of the Elim argument?

4.2.1. *What We Believe* (1916)

The first official articulation of the Full Gospel was published in January 1916 under the title

Elim Christ Church: What We Believe,[29] although Jeffreys seems to have been working on the

booklet since August 1915. This doctrinal document is not so much a statement of faith as a

statement of distinctives.[30] In other words, there is no real discussion on general doctrines

found in traditional Christian creeds with which Elim concurred, but the focus is primarily on

the differences from other Christian traditions, not least cessationist evangelicalism and

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[27] Boulton, *George Jeffreys* (1928), 142-143.
[28] Minutes of the 'First informal meeting of Christian brethren at Monaghan, Thursday Jan. 7th 1915,' in *Elim Evangelistic Band Minute Book*, Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern; cf. Boulton, *George Jeffreys* (1999), 30; Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists*, 43.
[29] Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church: What We Believe*.
[30] Malcolm Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 34.

modernist liberalism. Nevertheless, it does provide an early explanation of the Full Gospel as perceived by Elim.

The document begins by underscoring that Elim is advocating the 'faith which was once delivered to the saints' (Jude 3), with particular emphasis on the faith's supernatural and spiritual elements.[31] Thus, the Full Gospel was not seen by Elim as a new invention, unlike the New Theology of liberalism, but it was understood as the orthodox truth proclaimed by the NT Church, and thus the new movement identified itself with what it saw as the faith of the Apostles.

The doctrines identified in this early articulation include (I) the sinfulness of all humanity, (II) salvation by faith and through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, (III) baptism in the Holy Spirit, (IV) restoration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, (V) 'eternal conscious punishment of all Christ rejectors,' (VI) the 'personal and pre-Millennial' return of Christ, (VII) healing in the atonement and promised healing according to James 5:14, and (VIII) whole body ministry of the church, with particular emphasis on the offices of Ephesians 4:11.[32] This is followed by two ordinances, namely, (I) believers' water baptism, and (II) holy communion open for all regenerate Christians.[33]

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[31] Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church: What We Believe*, 1-2.
[32] Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church: What We Believe*, 3-5.
[33] The fourth and final section is on 'Church Discipline;' Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church. What We Believe*, 6-8.

To help interpret Elim's first statement of beliefs, I will compare it with 'The Doctrinal Basis of Faith of the World's Evangelical Alliance (1846),' which to a great extent served as the baseline for Evangelical theology of the period;[34] and Thomas B. Barratt's proposed 'Standards of Truth' for European Pentecostalism (1911), which was an early attempt to provide a Pentecostal equivalent to the doctrinal statement of the Evangelical Alliance.[35] In relation to these two statements, the obvious omission in Elim's *What We Believe* is that there is no article on the Bible or the Godhead/Trinity (an 'oversight' that was corrected in Elim's next doctrinal statement). With Evangelical Alliance, Elim effectively shares the doctrines on human sinfulness, Christ's incarnation and atonement, justification by faith, eternal state of both the righteous and the wicked, and the ordinances. However, unlike the Evangelical Alliance, Elim has included articles on Baptism in the Holy Spirit, restoration of the spiritual gifts, premillennial return of Christ, and divine healing in the atonement. Unsurprisingly Barratt also has statements on Baptism in the Spirit, gifts of the Spirit, and the second coming of Christ. But what is surprising is that unlike Barratt, the Elim statement does not explicitly mention 'speaking in tongues' either in relation to Spirit Baptism or spiritual gifts, but instead has a distinct article on divine healing. Perhaps one should not to read too much into this, but it does seem to highlight how the gift of tongues was not considered as *the* unique 'gift/sign' of Baptism in the Spirit within Elim, whereas divine healing was of particular importance for the movement from its inception. In sum, Elim adopted the basic Evangelical beliefs; with fellow Pentecostals it emphasised Baptism in the Spirit, spiritual gifts and second coming of Christ; but it also developed its own Pentecostal distinctive in appearing to emphasise divine healing over the gift of tongues. Indeed, for Elim this was the Full Gospel.

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[34] Ian Randall and David Hilborn, *One Body in Christ: The History and Significance of the Evangelical Alliance* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 2001), Appendix 2, 358-359.
[35] Thomas B. Barratt, 'An Urgent Please for Charity and Unity,' *Confidence* 4, no. 3 (March 1911): 63-64.

The Full Gospel would later be expressed in 1920s as the Foursquare Gospel. This later

articulation, however, should not be seen as a novel development, because the fourfold pattern

is already strongly present in *What We Believe* with statements covering the role of Jesus as

(1) Saviour, (2) Healer, (3) Baptiser in the Holy Spirit, and (4) coming King. In other words,

in *What We Believe* Jesus is already identified as the saviour of fallen individuals who can

become 'new creations' by receiving the gift of eternal life, and freedom from 'the penalty

and power of sin' through his atoning work. The 'saved' must also produce the fruit of the

Spirit, which highlights that sanctification is seen as part of salvation.[36] The article on divine

healing emphasises healing in the atonement and the promise of healing according to James

5:14-15, which notes church elders anointing the person suffering with oil, praying in faith

and seeing him/her restored to health.[37] Baptism in the Holy Spirit is seen as something that

'every regenerate person should seek' for empowerment and hence is understood as a

subsequent experience to conversion, but, as has already been noted, unlike for many early

British Pentecostals tongues is *not* seen, or at least not mentioned, as the initial evidence of

Spirit Baptism.[38] Finally, 'the personal and premillennial' return of Jesus is affirmed.[39]

Therefore, it seems that the explicit references to and centrality of the Foursquare Gospel

from the mid-1920s onwards should not be seen as an unexpected development from the

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[36] Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church: What We Believe*, 3. This is another difference to Barratt's statement titled as 'Standards of Truth Taught in this Revival' which emphasises sanctification in more Wesleyan Holiness terms; Barratt, 'An Urgent Please for Charity and Unity,' 64.

[37] Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church: What We Believe*, 5.

[38] Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church: What We Believe*, 3. The 'London Declaration' on 'The Baptism in the Holy Ghost' signed by the early British Pentecostal pioneers clearly identifies speaking in tongues as the evidence of Spirit Baptism; 'A London Declaration (November 1909). The Baptism in the Holy Ghost. What we teach concerning the Evidence and the Results,' *Confidence* 2, no. 12 (December 1909): 287-288.

[39] Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church: What We Believe*, 4.

earlier Full Gospel of 1915-1916, but rather as Elim's theological articulation of the implicit

beliefs already present in Elim's Full Gospel.[40]

4.2.2. 'Statement of Fundamental Truths' (1922)

The 1916 doctrinal document was followed by Elim's 'Statement of Fundamental Truths' in

1922, with some revisions from the original *What We Believe*.[41] The new additions in the

1922 Statement are articles on the Bible, the Trinity, and ordination of ministers.[42] As

mentioned above, it is interesting that the centrality of the Bible is not explicitly stated in the

1916 document, although it is assumed throughout.[43] The doctrine of the Trinity may have

been introduced due to the increasing influence of Oneness Pentecostals in North America in

the early 1920s.[44] The addition of ordination of ministers as the third 'ordinance,' with water

baptism and Holy Communion, is possibly caused by the expanding movement's need to

formulate a doctrine regarding its own accredited and approved ministers.

However, like in 1916 the Foursquare Gospel motif is central in the 1922 statement. The

articles on Jesus as saviour are more or less identical to those of 1916. Healing is also still

seen to be in the atonement and therefore available to 'all who believe,' although there is no

more mention of James 5:14. The personal and pre-millennial return of Jesus is also

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[40] This inference is further supported by surveying the articles of *Elim Evangel* from 1919 to 1924, which demonstrate a strong Christological emphasis and an already clear focus on (1) individual salvation, (2) divine miraculous healing, (3) baptism in the Spirit and (4) the *parousia*. The 'Special Pentecostal Number' of December 1922 is a good example of the Foursquare Gospel fully at play within Elim from an early stage; see *EE* 3, no. 12 (December, 1922).
[41] George Jeffreys, *The Constitution of the Elim Pentecostal Alliance* (London: Battley Bros., 1922), 6-7.
[42] Jeffreys, *Constitution* (1922), 6-7.
[43] E.g. all the doctrines are provided with proof texts; Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church. What We Believe*.
[44] See Gee, *The Pentecostal Movement*, 138-139.

reaffirmed.[45] However, the doctrine of Baptism in the Holy Spirit is revised to include

speaking in tongues as the initial evidence,[46] bringing Elim in line with the majority view of

early British Pentecostals,[47] even if George Jeffreys himself never held tightly to this view.[48]

4.2.3. 'Fundamental Truths of the Foursquare Gospel Churches' (1928/1934)

In the late 1920s Elim articulated its core doctrines for the third time.[49] In these statements

there is a new article on the Church, and assertions on the 'fruit of the Spirit' and 'anointing

with oil' which had been present in 1916 but omitted in 1922. It appears that as Elim is

coming of age as a denomination there is an intensified need to identify what constitutes the

Church Catholic. To put it differently, as a new denomination Elim needed to increasingly

clarify how it perceived and related to other Christian traditions.

For the first time the Foursquare Gospel receives an *explicit* articulation; that is, there are four

articles with the titles 'The Saviour,' 'The Healer,' 'The Baptiser' and 'The Coming King.'[50]

This clear fourfold categorisation seems to have been influenced by the North American tour

of Jeffreys and other Elim leaders in 1924. During this visit, the group was exposed to the

work of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) founded by Albert Benjamin Simpson,

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[45] Jeffreys, *Constitution* (1922), 6-7.
[46] Jeffreys, *Constitution* (1922), 6.
[47] 'A London Declaration (November 1909),' 287.
[48] Malcolm Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 36.
[49] The Fundamental Truths of 1928 and 1934 are almost identical and thus treated as part of the same doctrinal articulation; George Jeffreys, *Constitution of the Foursquare Gospel Churches of the British Isles* (no city: no publisher, 1928), 6-7; George Jeffreys, *Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance. Deed Poll* (London: Electrical Law Press, 1934), 3-4. It should also be noted that the 'Statement of Fundamental Truth' in the 1925 Constitution differs from the 1922 Constitution by not having an article on ordination of ministers. However, apart from this the 1925 doctrinal statements are the same as those in the 1922 Constitution and thus are not discussed further; George Jeffreys, *The Constitution of the Elim Pentecostal Alliance* (London: Elim Publishing, 1925), 4-5.
[50] Jeffreys *et al*, *Constitution* (1928), 6.

who had first coined the term 'Fourfold Gospel' in 1890, and they also visited Aimee Semple McPherson's 'International Church of the Foursquare Gospel.'[51] From North America, Jeffreys wrote to E. J. Phillips that he wanted Elim 'to be in Great Britain what the CMA is in America, with the difference that we retain the whole truth of Pentecost with signs.'[52] Consequently, like McPherson, Jeffreys substituted 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' for 'sanctification,' and on his return to England began explicitly promulgating the Foursquare Gospel. In 1929 the name of the Elim Pentecostal Alliance, which in 1918 had subsumed the Elim Evangelistic Band, was changed to the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance, and Jeffreys also went on to further define these four core beliefs in his two-volumed *The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel* (1929-1930).[53]

When comparing the 1928 document with that of 1922, Jesus as saviour and coming King effectively remain unchanged. However, Baptism in the Spirit is yet again changed in that tongues as the initial evidence is replaced with the phrase 'with signs following.'[54] This restores the 1916 emphasis on general 'signs' rather than elevating tongues as *the* 'sign.'[55] Moreover, the doctrine of healing is altered by deleting the explicit mention of healing being

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[51] Malcolm Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 6.
[52] George Jeffreys, letter to E. J. Phillips (5 August 1924), Elim Archives, Malvern.
[53] Jeffreys, *The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel – Doctrinal*; George Jeffreys, *The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel – Supernatural* (London: Elim Publishing, 1930).
[54] Jeffreys, *Deed Poll* (1934), 3.
[55] It is worth highlighting that although Elim is often seen as being unique as a Classical Pentecostal movement in not maintaining tongues as the initial evidence of Spirit Baptism, the role of tongues as initial evidence was not uniformly held by European Pentecostals (e.g. see Pastor Paul [Germany] and Pastor Polman [Holland]); Alexander Boddy, ed., 'The Place of Tongues in the Pentecostal Movement. Address at a Friendly Conference of Leaders and Workers at Sunderland Wednesday, Jun 7th, 1911,' *Confidence* 4, no. 8 (August 1911): 176-179, 182.

in the atonement, and there is also an added phrase that 'those who will walk in obedience to

His [Christ's] will can claim Divine Healing for their bodies.'[56]

4.2.4. The Foursquare Gospel and Doctrinal Statements: Elim's *Hard Core* and *Auxiliary Hypotheses*

In light of the first three doctrinal statements, I will now try to articulate what appears to have

been the essence of the early Elim argument. Nancey Murphy has noted that the *hard core* of

a 'philosophical and/or theological tradition' (to use MacIntyre's language) is its 'central

organizing idea... while theories regarding the various doctrines would constitute *auxiliary*

hypotheses elaborating that central idea and relating it to the data' (my italics).[57] For Elim this

'central organising idea' (read: hard core) seems to be the Foursquare Gospel for at least three

reasons.

First, as I have tried to demonstrate above the first references to the 'Full Gospel along

Pentecostal lines' already implies the Foursquare Gospel. Second, it is the fourfold

theological emphasis of Jesus as (1) Saviour, (2) Healer, (3) Baptiser in the Holy Spirit and

(4) coming King that makes Elim different from mainstream British Evangelicalism, and thus

in Lakatosian terms makes Elim, like other classical Pentecostal denominations who share

this fourfold focus, a distinct *research programme*. Third, and perhaps most importantly, Elim

itself during its formational period identifies the Foursquare Gospel as its 'central organising

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[56] Jeffreys, *Deed Poll* (1934), 3.
[57] Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*, 176; As noted in 2.2.2. I will supplement MacIntyre's methodology here regarding the 'content of the Elim argument' with the Lakatosian concepts of 'hard core' and 'auxiliary hypothesis.'

idea.' This is reflected in Elim changing its name from 'Elim Pentecostal Alliance' to 'Elim

Foursquare Gospel Alliance' in 1929. Moreover, from 1925 onwards the Foursquare Gospel

is also presented as the guiding principle in providing the four sides that hold together Elim's

other beliefs (see Appendix 3).[58] And these four aspects are depicted also symbolically as the

corners of the *Elim Evangel* and the core ideas for which it stands (see Appendix 2).[59]

If the Foursquare Gospel is Elim's hard core, as I suggest, then the doctrines articulated in

Elim's theological statements of 1916, 1922 and 1928/1934 can be identified as the *auxiliary*

hypotheses unpacking this controlling fourfold Christological conviction. As such the

doctrinal statements have two important functions. First, they provide further descriptions of

the hard core's *positive heuristic*. For example, the governing idea of 'Jesus is healer' is

further expressed in the doctrinal statement that Jesus provides healing in the atonement. In

other words, the doctrine of 'healing in the atonement' provides a more elaborate model of

what it means to believe that 'Jesus is healer,' and thus positively explains a central aspect of

Elim's hard core.

Second, as auxiliary hypotheses, these doctrinal statements also provide the *negative heuristic*

for the Elim tradition in protecting 'the hard core from falsification by making additions or

changes in the belt of auxiliary hypotheses.'[60] For example, the concept of Jesus as baptiser in

the Holy Spirit was first presented as something that all Christians should seek (1916); then

this doctrine was developed by stating that Spirit baptism is evidenced by speaking in tongues

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[58] No author, 'What We Believe,' *EE* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 1925): last page [no page number].
[59] No author, 'The Elim Evangel,' *EE* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 1925): front cover [no page number]. Kay also refers to the Foursquare Gospel as Jeffreys' 'organising principle;' Kay, *George Jeffreys*, 221.
[60] Murphy, *Theology in the Age of Scientific Reasoning*, 184.

(1922); until the doctrine was modified by replacing tongues as the unique sign with the more general concept of Baptism in the Spirit being accompanied 'with signs following' (1928). These changes may well reflect the 'data' of the Pentecostal experience shaping Elim's interpretation of Jesus as Spirit Baptiser. To put it differently, throughout these three doctrinal statements the hard core of Jesus as Baptiser in the Spirit is maintained, but the auxiliary hypotheses/doctrines change as they seek to relate the data with the hard core. Indeed, seeing Elim's doctrinal statements as the auxiliary hypotheses provide reasons why the statements changed during the first fifteen years.

In sum, it is not hard to argue that the Foursquare Gospel is the hard core of Elim,[61] and the doctrinal statements are the protective belt that are subject to change as it connects the theological data to Elim's hard core. This argument will be further developed and substantiated when looking at Elim's two epistemological crises (chapters 5 & 6).

4.3. The Rationality of the Elim Argument: Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism

To summarise the discussion thus far, the early Elim argument seems to have been primarily directed at the so called 'higher critics' (read: modernist liberal Christians), 'lower critics' (read: cessationist evangelical Christians) and 'ritualists' (read: Roman Catholics and Anglo-Catholics). The content of the argument can be captured in the phrase Full Gospel, which was later explicitly articulated as the Foursquare Gospel. This Foursquare Gospel can be seen as Elim's hard core and the various doctrinal statements as Elim's auxiliary hypothesis. Indeed,

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[61] Elim as a British classical Pentecostal movement shares this Four/Fivefold Gospel emphasis with American classical Pentecostalism; Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecotalism*; John Christopher Thomas, 'Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century,' *Pneuma* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 17; Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 14.

the content of the Elim argument appears to have directly challenged the modernist attempts to demythologise Christianity by seeking to re-establish the purported scriptural and orthodox Christocentric doctrines of old; counter cessationism by highlighting the miraculous aspects of the Gospel for the current age; and oppose ritualism in presenting the raw potency of the Full Gospel.

So how then did Elim justify its argument? To put it differently, what was Elim's underlying rationality and epistemology, and what did the movement consider as appropriate sources for its theological 'data'? In exploring these questions, I will propose that Elim affirmed three main sources for theological knowledge, namely, (1) its (pre-)Pentecostal tradition, (2) the Bible and (3) experience. These three sources did not merely provide Elim with theological data for formulating beliefs, but also functioned as its epistemic core in helping to formulate its theory of justification and warrant. In short, I will argue in this section that in light of these three aspects Elim's tacit rationality is best identified as *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism*.

4.3.1. *Pentecostal* Biblical Pragmatism: The Role of Tradition

The Evangelical and Pentecostal heritage of Elim provided the movement's background theological beliefs. As has already been pointed out, Elim's first doctrinal statements share a number of similarities with the 'The Doctrinal Basis of Faith of the World's Evangelical Alliance (1846)' and Thomas B. Barratt's 'Standards of Truth' for European Pentecostalism (1911). This is not surprising as many Elim pioneers had received their early religious nurturing within British Evangelicalism (see 3.2.1.), and later spiritual nourishment from British Pentecostalism before joining Elim (see 3.2.3.).

The early Elim literature underscores the importance of the wider Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions for Elim's theological identity. For example, Ernest C. W. Boulton writes how the Elim story 'flows out of what was designated the Pentecostal Movement in the British Isles as it emerged in 1907.'[62] And R. E. McAlister explains how Pentecostalism, among other things, is an 'evangelical' movement.[63]

Consequently, it is reasonable to suggest that the wider Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions gave Elim its basic beliefs and frameworks of thinking. This does not mean that Elim did not go on to develop its own distinctives with respect to theology and ways of reasoning, but it does mean that these distinctives were not developed *ex nihilo* but in the context of British Evangelicalism and emerging Pentecostalism. Indeed, Elim's *biblicism* and *pragmatism* 'flowed out of' its (pre-)*Pentecostal* heritage.

4.3.2. Pentecostal *Biblical* Pragmatism: The Role of the Bible

In line with Elim's inherited Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism, the Bible was the grounding document and primary theological source for the early Elim argument.[64] In fact, from the mid-1920s onwards the phrase 'Foursquare on the Word of God' became the movement's motto (see Appendix 2 and 3).[65] Moreover, as already noted, although there is no article on the Bible in the 1916 *What We Believe*, its centrality is assumed throughout the document, and this

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[62] Boulton, *George Jeffreys* (1999), 17.
[63] R. E. McAlister, 'The Pentecostal Movement,' *EE* 4, no. 1 (January, 1923): 16.
[64] See MacAlister, 'The Pentecostal Movement,' 16; Boulton, *George Jeffreys* (1999), 186; Jeffreys, *Healing Rays*, 109.
[65] See also *EE* cover pages from Vol. 6, no. 1 (January 1, 1925) until Vol. 18, no. 1 (January 1, 1937).

assumption is formalised in the 1922 Statement of Fundamental Truths with the first article stating: 'we believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and that none may add or take away therefrom, except at their peril.'[66] In the 1928 Fundamental Truths this same article is repeated verbatim.[67]

Elim appeared to give epistemological primacy to the Bible for two reasons. First, although Elim did not have a developed theory of truth, consistent with its Evangelical worldview, Elim seemed to assume that 'truth' and true knowledge was effectively theocentric.[68] This view is reflected in R. E. McAlister *Elim Evangel* article on 'What is Truth?' when he writes that 'if I have God's viewpoint regarding any subject, I have the truth respecting that subject.'[69] In other words, as the ultimate reality, God is the source and justifier of all truth, and therefore true beliefs about any given subject equals to having God's beliefs on that particular subject. This kind of theory of truth is very similar to the one advocated by Jonathan Edwards when he writes that 'the only adequate definition of Truth is, the agreement of our ideas with existence,' and since God is the only necessarily existing being, truth is the 'consistence and agreement of our ideas, with the ideas of God.'[70]

Following from this theocentric concept of truth, secondly, it was further believed by Elim, again with many Evangelicals, that the 'Bible gives us the mind of God [read: truth] on every

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[66] Jeffreys, *Constitution* (1922), 6.
[67] Jeffreys *et al*, *Constitution* (1928), 6.
[68] Peter Hicks points out that Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, the two eighteenth century 'fathers' of Evangelicalism, both believed that truth is theocentric; Peter Hicks, *Evangelicals and Truth: A Creative Proposal for a Postmodern Age* (Leicester: Apollos, 1998), 55-56.
[69] R. E. McAlister, 'What is Truth?' *EE* 13, no. 2 (January 8, 1932): 25.
[70] Jonathan Edwards, *Remarks in Mental Philosophy – The Mind*, 10, in *Works*, vol. 1, p. ccxxv quoted in Hicks, *Evangelicals and Truth*, 50, 210.

subject pertaining unto life and godliness,'[71] because the Bible is divinely inspired by God.

This 'divine inspiration' was not assumed to apply to some parts of the Bible, but was

believed to be *verbal* and *plenary*. For example, Percy Parker in discussing the issue quotes

Clarence Larkin that inspiration 'extends to *every sentence, word, mark, point, jot and title* in

the original parchments.'[72] Parker also agrees with the 1893 General Assembly of the

Presbyterian Church of America that the Bible 'is the very Word of God, and consequently

wholly without error,'[73] and concludes with James Martin Gray of the Moody Institute,

against any neo-orthodox sentiments, that 'the Bible does not merely contain the Word of

God; it is the Word of God.'[74] To summarise, the Bible's primacy as a theological source for

Elim stems from the notion that (1) 'truth' fundamentally corresponds with God and his ideas,

and (2) God's nature and his ideas are revealed in the Bible due to its divine inspiration.

Since the Bible as whole was believed to be verbally inspired by God, it seemed logical for

Elim to also maintain that the Bible was infallible in what it affirmed or taught, since God was

assumed to be infallible.[75] Elim's similarities here with the 'Old Princeton' theology

regarding inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible *à la* Charles Hodge, Archibald

Alexander Hodge and Benjamin Warfield are noteworthy.[76] In fact, Archibald Alexander

Hodge is affirmingly quoted in *Elim Evangel* on divine inspiration and the infallibility of the

Bible.[77] This means that Elim's concept of biblical inspiration would have also been shared

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[71] McAlister, 'What is Truth?' 25.
[72] Percy Parker, 'To What Extent *is the* Bible Inspired?' *EE* 9, no. 2 (January 16, 1928): 26.
[73] Parker, 'To What Extent *is the* Bible Inspired?' 26.
[74] Percy Parker, 'In What Way *is* the Bible *the* Word of God?' *EE* 9, no. 3 (February 1, 1928): 46. 'Verbal inspiration' is also argued for in J. Robinson, 'Why I Believe in Verbal Inspiration,' *EE* 12, no. 30 (July 24, 1931): 473; F. A. Conners, 'Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures,' *EE* 13, no. 45 (November 4, 1932): 707-709.
[75] So argued by Robinson, 'Why I Believe in Verbal Inspiration,' 474.
[76] See Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals*, 135-142.
[77] Conners, 'Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures,' 708.

by the cessationist fundamentalists, and thus Elim's view on the Bible's divine authority is more or less identical with that of the Fundamentalist movement of the early twentieth century.

So what justification did Elim then provide for believing that the Bible was in fact divinely inspired and therefore accurately conveyed the mind of God? In the Elim literature three common arguments are provided for believing that the Bible is inspired by God. First, and probably the most common argument, is the *argument from transformed lives*.[78] It is suggested that when it comes to the divine authority and inspiration of the Bible, 'one of the greatest, if not the greatest proofs, is its miraculous regenerative power in the lives of men.'[79] F. A. Conners echoes this notion when he writes that 'the greatest proof of the inspiration of the Bible is its transforming power in the lives of men.'[80] Second, the divine inspiration of the Bible is supported by the *argument from the uniqueness of the Bible*.[81] This argument seeks to demonstrate how the Bible is supreme in its message, unity, and ability to transcend cultures and languages. Furthermore, it is suggested that the Bible's fulfilled prophecies, preservation throughout the ages, and phenomenal publication history points towards its supernatural origins. Third, there is the *argument from its own testimony*.[82] In other words, the words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels, as well as the accounts in 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21, are seen as evidence that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God.

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[78] D. W. G. H., *The 'Elim' Foursquare Gospel Churches of the British Isles (Incorporated 1927). For What do they stand? And why?* (Eastbourne: C. A. Holmes, n.d.), no page numbers; Franck Peckham, 'The Bible is the Word of God,' *EE* 11, no. 46 (November 14, 1930): 723; Robinson, 'Why I Believe in Verbal Inspiration,' 473; Conners, 'Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures,' 707.

[79] D. W. G. H., *The 'Elim' Foursquare Gospel Churches of the British Isles (Incorporated 1927).*

[80] Conners, 'Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures,' 707.

[81] Peckham, 'The Bible is the Word of God,' 721-722; Robinson, 'Why I Believe in Verbal Inspiration,' 473; Conners, 'Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures,' 707; P. H. Shaayman, 'The Bible,' *EE* 13, no. 45 (November 4, 1932): 714.

[82] D. W. G. H., *The 'Elim' Foursquare Gospel Churches of the British Isles (Incorporated 1927)*; Peckham, 'The Bible is the Word of God,' 721.

It seems that the first two types of arguments for divine inspiration, namely, argument from transformed lives and argument from the Bible's uniqueness, indicate a *pragmatic rationality* at work within Elim. In other words, these arguments to a great extent assume that *results*, such as, changed lives, fulfilled prophecies, relevance in different cultures, preservation against the odds, and publishing success, point towards the Bible's divine origins. In fact, it seems that the first two arguments provide the underlying rationale for the Bible's divine authority, and the third argument is then used to explain the nature of this authority; that is, the Bible carries divine authority because it is divinely inspired along the lines of 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21. Furthermore, the third argument also provides some justification why inspiration should be applied to the whole Bible and not just some passages.

When it came to Elim's early biblical hermeneutics, this 'verbally inspired and infallible Word of God' appears to have been interpreted in a common sense fashion, or what Kenneth Archer has referred to as 'the Bible Reading Method,' where Scriptures are read in a pre-critical and canonical proof-text manner through a devotional lens.[83] Elim's 'Bible Reading Method' is well demonstrated in the *Elim Evangel* article on 'How to Study the Word.'[84] In studying the Bible the reader is encouraged to (1) '*Seek the Literal Meaning*' of the text in a pre-critical manner; (2) '*Use the best Possible Translation*' in terms of its accuracy and English expression; (3) '*Use the Marginal References*' and thus read the text canonically; (4)

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[83] See Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century*, 74-75. Although Archer's work tends to focus on early American Pentecostal hermeneutics, his suggested hermeneutical trends are also present in the early Elim literature.

[84] No author, 'How to Study the Word,' *EE* 12, no. 45 (November 6, 1931): 713-715; cf. J. T. Bradley *et al*, *Elim Lay Preachers' Handbook* (London: Elim Publishing, 1946), chapter 1.

'Trust Christ for… Openings,' that is, rely on Christ to reveal the Scriptures; and (5) '*Study for Your Own Life*', that is, read the Bible devotionally.

In sum, the Bible was seen by Elim as a grounding document for theological knowledge, because God was seen as the ultimate truth and the Bible was believed to be His fully inspired and infallible word. Elim had primarily pragmatic reasons for believing in the divine inspiration of the Bible, and it encouraged its members to adopt a form of 'Bible Reading Method' to gather theological data from Scripture.

4.3.3. Pentecostal Biblical *Pragmatism*: The Role of Experience

However, the Bible and the Evangelical/Pentecostal tradition were not Elim's only sources of theological knowledge. The pragmatic rationality, already evident in Elim's justification for the divine inspiration of the Bible, meant that 'experience' played an important role both as a source of knowledge and particularly in providing justification for theological beliefs.

Elim's basic understanding of 'religious experience' was inherited from early British Pentecostalism (see 3.2.3.). As suggested in chapter three, (British) Pentecostalism is best seen as *Keswick Romanticism 'baptised' with Evidentialism*. In other words, like the Welsh Revival early British Pentecostals externalized the inner religious experience of Keswick, but they also moved beyond the Welsh Revival by expecting specific biblical *signs* and *evidences* to accompany genuine spiritual encounters. In early British Pentecostal thinking the distinctive religious experience was 'baptism in the Spirit' and the biblical sign was 'speaking

in tongues.' As has been noted, for Elim the notions of baptism in the Spirit accompanied by biblical evidences remained central, but the idea of tongues as 'the initial evidence' was not maintained (despite its inclusion in the 1922 doctrinal statement). Instead the general manifestation of spiritual gifts, with particular emphasis on divine healing, was seen as the evidence of the outworking of Spirit baptism.

In light of the above, the role of 'experience' was central for Elim to justify its early argument. Moreover, this *experience based rationality* seems to have been characterized by what I will call *experientialism* and *experimentalism*, which together constituted Elim's *pragmatic rationality*.

First, by *experientialism* I simply mean the foundational role that experience played in shaping Elim's rationality. George Jeffreys fondly referred to a quote from his Bible College days asserting that '*He that hath an experience is not at the mercy of him that hath an argument.*'[85] Jeffreys particularly saw this to be the case when one's experience was Scriptural, and thus in his mind there was a close relationship between the Bible and personal experience, each mutually confirming the other. This same line of thinking was shared by Donald Gee's *Elim Evangel* article written in 1922 where he argued that:

> No man possessed of a Scriptural experience need be afraid of an argument, he is beyond its reach. Any man rejoicing in a living experience of God in his life has a power independent of, and mighty beyond, all external training in logic or theology.[86]

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[85] Jeffreys, *Healing Rays*, 56.
[86] Donald Gee, 'A Plea for Experience,' *EE* 3, no. 5 (May, 1922): 76.

Jeffreys' and Gee's reasoning reflects the nineteenth century Romantic preference for 'experience over argument' (see 3.1.2.). To put it differently, within Elim's rationality *the experience becomes the 'argument.'* In some ways this approach is epistemologically similar to the so-called Reformed Epistemology which claims that belief in God is a 'basic belief' rising from a 'spiritual intuition/*sensus divinitatis*' (Alvin Plantinga) or 'religious experience' (William Alston), and therefore supposedly needs no further evidence to be warranted.[87]

Nevertheless, Elim's second aspect of *experimentalism* moves beyond subjective experientialism as it tries to provide 'evidences' or 'signs' to authenticate the religious experience. This is the *Evidentialist* addition to the *Romantic* experientialism. Interestingly, in contemporary philosophy of religion the idea of 'confirming empirical evidence' is often expected by those critiquing the Reformed epistemologists more subjective accounts of spiritual experience.[88] Moreover, this is the type of empirical evidence demanded by John Locke – regarded by some as the father of modern 'evidentialism' –[89] when discussing religious 'enthusiasm' of his day, characterised by spiritual experientialism and intuitive revelation.[90] Locke proposed that if the 'enthusiasts' are to be justified in their beliefs based on their personal experience and revelations, they need to be like

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[87] See William P. Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*.

[88] Jerome I. Gellman, 'Mysticism and Religious Experience,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Religion*, ed. William J. Wainwright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 155-156.

[89] Plantinga refers to Locke as 'both paradigm evidentialist and the proximate source of the entire evidentialist tradition;' Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 82.

[90] David Middlemiss argues that Pentecostals broadly speaking fall within the 'enthusiast' Christian tradition; David Middlemiss, *Interpreting Charismatic Experience* (London: SCM, 1996), 1.

> ...the holy men of old, who had *revelations* from GOD, [but also] had something else beside that internal light of assurance in their own minds, to testify to them, that it was from GOD. They were not left to their own persuasions alone, that those persuasions were from GOD; but had outward signs to convince them of the author of those revelations. And when they were to convince others, they had a power given them to justify the truth of their commission from heaven; and by visible signs to assert the divine authority of the message they were sent with.[91]

It appears that the 'outward signs' and 'visible signs' demanded by Locke are exactly what Elim sought to provide when justifying its experientialism and the content of its Full Gospel. To give some examples of its evidentalist *experimentalism* in action, in 1928 Ernest C. W. Boulton wrote a history of the early Elim movement in which he referred to George Jeffreys as 'a minister whose weapon is the Word, and who relies wholly upon the Spirit of God to produce the *desired results*' (my emphasis).[92] Much of Boulton's description of the ministry of Jeffreys and the initial developments of Elim emphasise how Scriptural truths (i.e. the Foursquare Gospel) were substantiated through experiential and empirical evidence. For example, after reporting the testimony of a woman who had been healed of a tubercular knee, he boldly states:

> And then the modern biblical exegete would persuade us that the miraculous is impossible. In the face of such positive proofs we cannot but accept the statements of Scripture, confirmed as they are by the evidences of our eyes.[93]

It was this type of experimental justification that seemed to provide Elim with the epistemic grounds for both its belief in the authority of the Bible and its Foursquare Gospel reading of it. R. E. Darragh follows a very similar logic when he reflects on the first 17 years of Elim's history in his book *In Defence of His Word* by stating that if

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[91] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Roger Woolhouse (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 621-622 [XIX.15].
[92] Boulton, *George Jeffreys* (1999), 178.
[93] Boulton, *George Jeffreys* (1999), 137.

> all those who have proved Jesus Christ to be the same to-day in the twentieth century [would say] Hallelujah... Hallelujahs would come from thousands of voices, and thousands of hands would be raised as testimony that they have proved this to be true, for some have had their ears opened, others have received their sight, and many lame have discarded their crutches and stepped out of wheeled carriages, never to get into them again. Some have had cancers and growths removed in answer to prayer, and many with weak bodies have been made strong.[94]

The rest of Darragh's book is a collection of short testimonies of purported healings from Jeffreys' ministry, which seek to demonstrate that Elim's argument is supported by its results; that is, *experientialism* is backed up by *experimentalism*.

David Middlemiss has argued that the twentieth century Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has simply followed the epistemology of religious 'enthusiasm' of seventeenth to nineteenth century, and that 'within the charismatic movement, there is little evidence of a concern for philosophical epistemology.'[95] Although this claim may apply to some Pentecostals and Charismatics, it does not accurately reflect early British Pentecostalism or Elim. In other words, Elim's rationality, which reflected the early British Pentecostal rationality, was effectively *evidentialist enthusiasm* and thus fulfilled John Locke's epistemic requirements for Christian 'enthusiasm.' And although Elim may not have had the academic resources in constructing a 'philosophical epistemology' to be studied and critiqued in universities, Elim nevertheless was 'concerned' in providing an epistemology to justify its beliefs, as sketched above.

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[94] R. E. Darragh, *In Defence of His Word* (London: Elim Publishing House, 1932), 9.
[95] Middlemiss, *Interpreting Charismatic Experience*, 45.

Elim's *experientialist experimentalism* or *enthusiast evidentialism* as a rationality has a number of similarities to American Pragmatism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. First, in line with the views of William James, Elim seems to believe that the essence of 'religion' is identified as a spiritual experience (read: *experientialism*), rather than merely a form of 'theology' or 'ecclesiasticism,' albeit for Elim this experience was understood in a canonical context and interpreted through a Pentecostal lens. To put it differently, James' conviction that 'knowledge about a thing is not the thing itself' is reflected well in Elim's experientialism.[96] For example, this sentiment is well captured by Elim's Henry Proctor when he writes that a 'real, vital Christian experience is a progression from faith to knowledge;'[97] that is, an experience confirms the truth of one's faith, or in Jamesian language moves one from the 'knowledge about a thing' to 'the thing itself.'

Second, like American Pragmatism, Elim's *experientialism* is effectively empiricist. In other words, knowledge of God and the world is gained primarily through the senses. Experience is king.

However, third, like the American pragmatists William James and Charles Sanders Peirce, Elim also moves beyond the empiricists paradigm with its *experimentalism* that focuses on 'results' and 'effects' *vis-à-vis* beliefs and concepts. To put it simply, 'empiricism' focuses primarily on *what produces the belief*, whereas 'pragmatism' focuses on *what the belief produces*. This is well captured in Peirce's famous pragmatic

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[96] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (London: The Fontana Library, 1960), 49, 467.
[97] Henry Proctor, 'Faith and Knowledge,' *EE* 6, no. 3 (February 1, 1925): 36.

maxim, also adopted and elaborated by James,[98] which states that when it comes to

beliefs about objects,

> consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearing, we conceive the
> object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of
> our conception of the object.[99]

Based on this pragmatic principle, Peirce developed his inferential method of

'abduction,' 'deduction' and 'induction.' In other words, (1) the 'inferential knowing'

starts abductively by formulating a hypothesis based on the raw data of experience (e.g.

'the earth is round, not flat'); (2) this is followed by a deductive inference predicting

'operational consequences of the hypothesis' (e.g. if one sails across the Atlantic Ocean

one will eventually reach the Orient, rather than fall off the face of the earth); and (3)

finally after testing the deductive inference (e.g. sailing across the Atlantic), through

inductive reasoning a general rule/law can then be established (e.g. 'the laws of nature

had in fact made the earth round rather than flat').[100]

While it would be misguied to assume that Elim's early rationality came even close to

the philosophical sophistication of Peirce's inferential logic, it does seem that Elim's

underlying rationality shares central aspects of Peirce's pragmatism (or pragmaticism as

Peirce preferred to call it). For example, it is not difficult to imagine that Elim's central

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[98] William James, *Pragmatism and Other Writings*, ed. Giles Gunn (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2000), 25.
The direction of James' development of Peirce's pragmatic maxim was not always appreciated by Peirce, and
thus Peirce later coined his more scientific pragmatism as 'pragmaticism' to distinguish it from James' more
therapeutic pragmatism.
[99] Charles Sanders Peirce, 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear,' in *The Pragmatism Reader*, ed. Robert B. Talisse and
Scott F. Aikin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 57; cf. Charles Sanders Peirce, 'The Fixation of
Belief,' in *The Pragmatism Reader*, 37-49.
[100] Donald L. Gelpi, *Varieties of Transcendental Experience: A Study in Constructive Postmodernism* (Eugene,
OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 235-237; cf. Misak, *The American Pragmatists*, 47-50.

belief of Jesus as Healer was tacitly formulated along the lines of Peircean logic; that is, (1) experience and testimony suggests that Jesus heals people today (abduction); (2) in an evangelistic meeting people will be healed after being prayed for (deduction); (3) after praying for people in an evangelistic meeting and witnessing their purported healings, a general 'rule' of Jesus as healer can be established (induction).

Indeed, as has been discussed above, Elim's understanding about the nature of Jesus as healer and Jesus as baptiser in the Holy Spirit were modified in 1922 and 1928/1934 from the original 1916 statement. It is not hard to argue that the adaption of these doctrinal statements demonstrates Elim's Peircean type pragmatic rationality at work. In other words, with respect to divine healing, in the earlier doctrinal statements healing is believed to be in the atonement. However, in the 1928/1934 statement it is no longer assumed to be in the atonement, but 'those who will walk in obedience to His [Christ's] will can claim Divine Healing for their bodies.' This change can easily be explained in the light of Elim's pragmatic rationality (even if it does not fully follow Peirce's abductive, deductive and inductive logic); that is, (1) based on scripture and experience Elim believed that Jesus heals; (2) initially this was believed to be because healing was in the atonement; (3) however, not everyone who was prayed for received healing in the same way as they seemed to receive forgiveness of sins; (4) therefore, healing may not be in the atonement, but those can claim healing who walk in obedience because Jesus is still the healer. Interestingly, the doctrine of healing was further modified in 1993 by deleting the notion that those who walk in obedience can claim healing, and again this modification seems to have been largely caused by 'results' and 'effects' not supporting a doctrine of perfect health for perfectly obedient Christians.

When it comes to baptism in the Holy Spirit, the same pragmatic logic seems to explain the changing understanding of the doctrine; that is, (1) in the 1916 statement Jesus is identified as the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit; (2) in 1922 speaking in tongues is identified as the initial evidence of one's Spirit baptism; (3) however, experience did not seem to support the idea that only those who spoke in tongues had been filled with the Holy Spirit; (4) thus in 1928/1934 tongues as initial evidence is replaced by the more generic idea of signs following, which better reflects the experience of Elim.

Consequently, Elim's pragmatic experiential experimentalism appears to have strong family resemblances to Peirce's 'critical common sensism,' which like other common sense rationalities of the time appreciates sense experiences, but with Peirce is also critical of common sense and seeks to test these intuitions in practice.[101] This means that Elim's pragmatism is also fallibilistic, acknowledging that one's beliefs can be wrong (e.g. healing in the atonement and tongues as initial evidence), which is another important feature of Peirce's and James' Pragmatism.

In 1907 William James argued that pragmatic philosophy provided the alternative to the cold religious scholastic rationalism and the atheistic positivist empiricism. In fact, he believed that pragmatism would be an appropriate religious philosophical method for the modern era (although he believed that both the religious and non-religious could

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[101] Gelpi, *Varieties of Transcendental Experience*, 249.

utilise the pragmatic method).[102] Interestingly, despite F. C. S. Schiller's efforts to advocate pragmatism under the name 'humanism' in Britain, philosophical pragmatism never gained prominence in British Universities. Nevertheless, even if James' vision of a religious pragmatic philosophy may have not infiltrated the academic halls of Oxford or Cambridge, it seems that a version of it was developed and embodied by the British Pentecostal movement which was birthed the very same year James published his *Pragmatism* (1907). Elim went on to modify and develop this Pentecostal pragmatic method as its own religious rationality, or what I have called *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism*. Therefore, if my analysis is correct, Elim and British Pentecostalism represent a genuine British philosophical and religious pragmatism, and something future histories of British philosophical pragmatism should not ignore. Although Elim pioneers may have lacked philosophical erudition in articulating their rationality, they did not lack the practical energy in living out their pragmatism, and thus were in some sense *true pragmatic pragmatists*.

4.3.4. *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism*: 'Tradition-Constituted and Tradition-Constitutive Rationality' (MacIntyre)

In this section I have argued that Elim's rationality should be seen as *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism*. It is *Pentecostal* because Elim inherited many of the underlying theological and epistemological assumptions of early British Pentecostals. It is *biblical* because for Elim the Bible was the grounding document and a primary source of theological knowledge. It is *pragmatic* because Elim believed that its argument was justified by religious experience

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[102] James, *Pragmatism and Other Writings*, 12, 20.

(*experientialism*) and evidenced by life transforming 'signs,' 'effects' and 'results' (*experimentalism*).

Following Alasdair MacIntyre's methodology (see 2.1.), Elim's rationality seems to naturally emerge from within the Elim tradition, namely, it is 'tradition-constituted.' To put it differently, Elim's Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism stems from the content of its argument (the experiential Foursquare Gospel), it is shaped by its social, religious and intellectual context (late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain), it is informed by its implied opponents (liberals, cessationists and ritualists), and characterised by its institutions (discussed below). In short, it is truly a tradition-specific rationality.

However, as noted by MacIntyre, rationalities are not only 'tradition-constituted' but also 'tradition-constitutive.'[103] This 'tradition-constitutive' element is also true of Elim's rationality as its pragmatism is not only informed by the experiential Foursquare Gospel, but itself ends up shaping the nature of the Foursquare Gospel by modifying doctrines about baptism in the Holy Spirit and divine healing. Therefore, Elim's Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism fits well within MacIntyre's concept of 'tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive rationality.'

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[103] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 10.

4.4. The Social Embodiment of the Elim Argument: The Elim Alliance

In MacIntyrian terms the Elim argument was not just against someone (opponents), about something (content) or justified in a particular way (rationality), but it was also carried out by a community that socially embodied the argument (see 2.1.2.). This 'Elim community' created social systems and shared methods that helped to sustain, develop and propagate the Elim argument in its historical context. Alvin Goldman points out that such 'social systems' can be seen as 'epistemic systems' which 'house social practices, procedures, institutions, and/or patterns of interpersonal influence that affect the epistemic outcomes of its members.'[104] Elim seemed to have at least three types of prominent epistemic systems for, and social expressions of its argument, namely, (1) revivalistic meetings, (2) alliance of local churches, ministers and ministries, and (3) publishing and training institutions.

4.4.1. Revivalistic Meetings: The Primary Platform of the Elim Argument

Elim's founder George Jeffreys was first and foremost an evangelistic revivalist. Jeffreys was converted during the Welsh Revival (see 3.2.2.) and in the words of Andrew Walker and Neil Hudson 'his whole life and ministry would reflect the fact that he was a child of the Welsh Revival.'[105] In fact, some of the first references to George and his brother Stephen Jeffreys in British Pentecostal periodicals identify the brothers as the Pentecostal 'Welsh Revivalists.'[106] George Jeffreys describes some of these first revivalistic meetings held with his brother in 1913 in Wales by writing that:

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[104] Alvin I. Goldman, 'A Guide to Social Epistemology,' in *Social Epistemology: Essential Readings*, ed. Alvin I. Goldman and Dennis Whitcomb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 18.
[105] Walker and Hudson, 'George Jeffreys, Revivalist and Reformer,' 140.
[106] Alexander A. Boddy, 'The Welsh Revivalists Visited,' *Confidence* 6, no. 3 (March, 1913): 47-49.

> The work here is deepening, and numerous conversions are taking place daily, and many have received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the Signs following. Praise the Lord! Some miraculous cases of healing have also taken place, and it is a real Apostolic Revival... The dear Lord is once again drawing multitudes after Him. We think of commencing at Llandrindod next week.[107]

This concept of holding a series of revival meetings in one town after another, characterised by preaching the Full Gospel with an expectation of 'signs' following (e.g. dramatic conversions, Spirit baptisms and divine healings), was to be George Jeffreys' focus and *modus operandi* for Elim between 1915-1933. Indeed, it seems that the primary purpose of the Elim Evangelistic Band (the first social embodiment of Elim) and Elim's later Revival Party was to carry out this type of ministry.

With George Jeffreys at the helm, these two revivalistic organisations held meetings with significant pulling power, filling some of the largest venues in the British Isles for a number of years. For example, it is recorded that in 1930 Jeffreys filled the Bingley Hall in Birmingham (seating 15,000 people) 26 times with the final service commencing half an hour early due to the venue already being full. Moreover, it is claimed that during these meetings 10,000 people were converted, 1,100 were baptised in water, and 3,000 attended the first service of Elim's newly established Graham Street Church.[108]

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[107] George Jeffreys quoted by Alexander A. Boddy, 'An Apostolic Welsh Revival,' *Confidence* 6, no. 2 (February, 1913): 28.

[108] Chris Cartwright, *Defining Moments: 100 Years of the Elim Pentecostal Church. Elim 100 Centenary* (Malvern: Elim Pentecostal Church, 2014), 48.

It is difficult to verify or falsify these early accounts (although there is no *prima facie* reason to suspect their accuracy). Nevertheless, at least in Elim's own understanding these revivalistic meetings facilitated by George Jeffreys and his evangelistic team provided an important social embodiment for the Elim argument. In other words, they became a primary platform for the full force of the Elim argument to be experienced as Elim proclaimed what it saw as the biblically grounded Foursquare Gospel, and as it sought to demonstrate this truth through experiential and empirical means.

4.4.2. Alliance of Congregations, Ministers and Ministries: The Faithful Advocates of the Elim Argument

However, to sustain the ministry of the revivalist meetings and to disciple its new converts, Elim saw it as necessary to also establish local congregations, churches and/or Pentecostal centres. In fact, the instituting minutes of the Elim Evangelistic Band state that George Jeffreys was appointed as an evangelist and 'that a centre be chosen by him for the purpose of establishing a church out of which evangelists would be sent.'[109] The first local church was founded in Belfast in the summer of 1915.[110] At this stage Jeffreys and other Elim leaders had no intention of starting a new denomination.[111] Nevertheless, as the movement grew during its early years – not least due to the success of the revivalist meetings – a number of new assemblies were established and new workers recruited,[112] which meant that the formation of a denomination was becoming inevitable. Indeed, on 7th June 1918 the Elim Pentecostal

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[109] 'First informal meeting of Christian brethren at Monaghan. Thursday Jan. 7th 1915.'
[110] Desmond Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists*, 44.
[111] Desmond Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists*, 44; Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 13.
[112] Chris Cartwright mentions that by 1920 there were 15 churches in Ireland; Chris Cartwright, *Defining Moments*, 26; cf. Kay, *George Jeffreys*, 82.

Alliance was formed – subsuming the Elim Evangelistic Band, Elim assemblies and Elim missions – and effectively constituted Elim as a denomination (although at this stage members of the Alliance could also be members of their existing churches and Elim was not 'encouraging members to leave their own denominations').[113] George Jeffreys was made the Superintendent of this new denomination with the power to nominate its Council who would function as the denomination's governing body, making Elim a centrally governed movement.[114]

In the 1920s Elim expanded from Ireland to Wales, England and Scotland, and further structures and increasing central control were introduced in the 1922 Constitution.[115] George Jeffreys remained as the unchallenged founder and leader of the movement with an ability to choose a team of Overseers 'for the purpose of consultation and decision on any matter affecting the Elim Pentecostal Alliance as the need arises.'[116] The Constitution also highlights a specific role for the General Secretary as Jeffreys' right hand person, as well as District Superintendents to look after workers and assemblies within their area.[117] The increasing structure and control was believed to make the movement and its congregations more effective in 'the proclamation of the full Gospel.'[118]

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[113] Minutes of 'Elim Evangelistic Band Meeting, June 7, 1918,' in *Elim Evangelistic Band Minute Book*, Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern; cf. Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 13; Kay, *George Jeffreys*, 77.

[114] Kay, *George Jeffreys*, 78-79.

[115] In the Constitution's introduction Jeffreys writes that 'in view of the present needs of the work, I have concluded that it is most essential that it should be effectively organised if it is to spread and increase in the manner it is now doing;' Jeffreys, *Constitution* (1922), 3.

[116] Jeffreys, *Constitution* (1922), 7.

[117] Jeffreys, *Constitution* (1922), 9-10, 12.

[118] Jeffreys, *Constitution* (1922), 2-3.

As suggested in the previous chapter (see 3.2.2.), one of the perceived failures of the Welsh Revival was its inability to provide sufficient social structures and institutions to maintain its revivalistic success. And it seems that Elim was wary of finding British Pentecostalism and its own revivalism in the same predicament. This fear is reflected in Ernest C. W. Boulton's analysis of the development of British Pentecostalism and Elim. He writes:

> Within six years of its introduction into Great Britain, the Pentecostal revival had assumed such proportions as to necessitate the creation of some form of scriptural organisation. To observant minds it was evidence that unless some stable, scriptural government was established, the whole thing would become unwieldy and unmanageable, and much of the rich results reaped during those early years would fail to be conserved.[119]

Boulton continues by arguing that it was at this stage that Jeffreys and Elim entered the religious scene with its 'scriptural organisation.' However, constructing such an organisation was not a simple task. In fact, the 1922 Constitution was revised a number of times in the 1920s – partly to attract existing British Pentecostal congregations into the Elim ranks by giving them greater autonomy in an otherwise centrally governed alliance – before it was finally cemented in the 1934 Deed Poll.[120] For understanding the social embodiment of the Elim argument as a new denomination, there are at least three important factors to note from the Deed Poll.

First, the Deed Poll firmly articulates the purpose of the Elim movement. That is, Elim's name as 'Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance' is confirmed and the 'objects of the Alliance are

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[119] Boulton, *George Jeffreys* (1999), 20-23.
[120] Jeffreys, *Deed Poll*.

to spread and propagate the full Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Fundamental Truths.'[121] These statements affirm that the content of the Elim argument is to be the Foursquare Gospel with its supporting doctrines.

Second, the objectives of Elim are to be carried out through 'the training and sending of Ministers and Evangelists, the establishment of Churches, the formation of Sunday Schools and the issue of religious publications throughout Great Britain and elsewhere' (commas added).[122] In other words, the Elim argument is to be embodied by ministers, evangelists, local congregations, children/youth ministries, training and publications.

Third, the governance of Elim is transferred from George Jeffreys to the Executive Council consisting of nine members.[123] As the founder of the movement, Jeffreys was still an *ex officio* member of the Executive and was also able to personally nominate three of its nine members. The other *ex officio* member of the Executive was the General Secretary (E. J. Phillips). Nevertheless, the remaining four members were to be chosen by the Ministerial Conference, consisting of Elim's increasing number of ministers. Thus, Jeffreys could no longer govern without the support of the Executive approved by its ministers. For Elim this began the process of sharing power within the wider Elim community, which would increasingly become the case through the movement's first and second epistemological crises (see chapters 5-6).

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[121] Jeffreys, *Deed Poll*, 2.
[122] Jeffreys, *Deed Poll*, 3.
[123] Jeffreys, *Deed Poll*, 4-6.

Thus, the Deed Poll can be seen as ending the first stage of Elim's tradition formation. That is, the Deed Poll seeks to articulate the purpose, nature and structure of Elim, and deliberately makes it difficult to change these going forward.[124] Elim had now 'come of age;' it had developed from the Elim Evangelistic Band to a denomination comprising of assemblies, ministers and ministries.

4.4.3. Publishing and Training: The Supporting Systems of the Elim Argument

As well as having an Evangelistic Band, assemblies, ministers and other ministries, Elim also developed additional systems to further sustain its argument, namely, publishing and training. In terms of publishing, the *Elim Evangel* was launched in December 1919. The *Evangel* was Elim's official organ of communication with the aim of promulgating the movement's theology, reflecting on and advertising Elim's various ministries (particularly the revivalistic meetings), and encouraging the Elim community to increasingly live out the Full Gospel. For the interested 'outsiders' the periodical also functioned as a window into Elim. Elim was also the first Pentecostal movement 'to move into independent publishing' when in April 1924 it opened its purpose-built printing press.[125] The press was used effectively to publish pamphlets/books and by 1936 it had published over 50 books.[126] Like the *Evangel*, these publications helped to consolidate Elim's Pentecostal message in the minds of its adherents and to introduce the movement's message to new audiences.

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[124] Maldwyn Jones believes that E. J. Phillips (the General Secretary of Elim) made the Deed Poll as 'inflexible as possible,' so that it could not be easily changed; Jones, 'An Assessment of the Leadership of E.J. Phillips,' 26.
[125] Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 18. The *EE* celebrated the opening of the publishing house; E. J. Phillips and Ernest C. W. Boulton, 'The New Publishing Office,' *EE* 5, no. 5 (May, 1924): 102.
[126] Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 18.

These early Elim books, pamphlets and articles were generally characterised by their biblicism and testimonial nature. This is not surprising *vis-à-vis* Elim's rationality. The reason being that Elim's epistemic *biblicism* demanded that the movement's argument be consistently supported, explained and developed in light of the Christian Scriptures. Its *pragmatism*, on the other hand, meant that experience accompanied with visible effects should also be central stage in its rhetoric, and the next best thing to personal experience is a second person account of such phenomena (i.e. testimony).

When it came to training, Elim opened its Bible College in 1925. As Elim expanded in England, there was an increasing need for new ministers to lead the recently established churches. Most of these ministers, however, had received little or no theological training, and thus it was deemed necessary for Elim to open its own Bible College.[127] The purpose of the college is made clear in an *Elim Evangel* notice titled 'Elim Bible College: Four Square on the Word of God.'[128] The notice states that 'studies in all things essential to the four square ministry of the Word will be given, as well as practical training in the ever increasing Elim centres in London and elsewhere.'[129]

Malcolm Hathaway observes that the early theological curriculum of the Elim Bible College 'was very basic, majoring on Pentecostal doctrines and practices, and evangelism.'[130] The early courses tended to be short (some students staying only for a few months), and the first

[127] Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 19.
[128] E. J. Phillips, 'Elim Bible College,' *EE* 6, no. 9 (May 1, 1925): 102.
[129] Phillips, 'Elim Bible College,' 102.
[130] Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 20.

tutors were not academically qualified theologians or biblical scholars.[131] Nevertheless, it was believed that there was a need to instruct future ministers in the Bible as well as in Pentecostal doctrines. The fact that the lecturers were not academically trained did not seem to be an issue, as long as they were considered to be well versed in the Bible, possessed a good understanding of the Full Gospel, and were perceived to be practically effective. Indeed, Elim's rationality of Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism and its message of the Foursquare Gospel did not require academic credentials of the college tutors, as long as they effectively exemplified the Elim ethos and were able to instruct others accordingly.

In summary, the Elim argument was socially embodied first in its revivalistic meetings facilitated by the Elim Evangelistic Band and then the Revival Party. This provided the space for Elim to demonstrate the strength of its arguments by drawing people to experience what it deemed as the biblical Full Gospel. Second, the assemblies, ministers and various ministries, which in the end constituted the Elim denomination, provided the structures for maintaining and discipling the faithful advocates of the Elim argument. Elim's various Constitutions from 1922 to 1934 sought to clarify and formalise these structures. Third, publishing and training institutions functioned as supporting systems to inspire and educate people in the ways of the Full Gospel.

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the Elim argument was directed at, and offered as, an alternative to liberal Christianity, cessationist fundamentalism and ritualistic religion. The

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[131] Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 20.

content of the argument was essentially the Foursquare Gospel ('hard core') surrounded by Elim's doctrinal statements ('auxiliary hypotheses'). The rationality of the argument was Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism; that is, Elim's epistemology was shaped by the wider Pentecostal tradition; Elim saw the Bible as the grounding document with respect to truth; and its theories of justification were effectively pragmatic with an emphasis on experience and 'results'/'effects.' The content and rationality of the Elim argument was socially embodied in revivalistic meetings, in the emerging Elim denomination consisting of local churches, ministers and various ministries, and in its publishing and training institutions.

The Pentecostal rationality articulated in this chapter is 'contextual' and thus follows in the methodological footsteps of Amos Yong, James Smith and William Oliverio, Jr. However, in identifying a tradition-specific rationality along MacIntyrian lines the chapter also makes its own contribution to the search for a Pentecostal rationality in four ways.

First, it acknowledges that Pentecostal rationalities need to be understood in their historical contexts and in relation to their dialogue partners and implied opponents. Consequently, Smith's point that early twentieth century Pentecostalism can be seen as a reaction to and within modernism is supported by the description of the emerging Elim argument.

Second, the theological guiding principle for Pentecostal rationality – or at least for Elim's Pentecostal rationality – has been identified as the Christological Foursquare Gospel. This is an important difference to those Pentecostal rationalities that start with pneumatology (e.g.

Yong's 'pneumatological imagination'). Although the reality of the Christological Foursquare Gospel was seen to be pneumatically mediated, the theological essence was still Christologically focused. The Foursquare Gospel also provides the 'hard core' for the Elim Pentecostal paradigm with the doctrinal statement functioning as 'auxiliary hypothesis.' So, what has been depicted in this chapter can be seen to propose a further articulation of what Oliverio's Pentecostal hermeneutical paradigm/research programme could consist of, albeit I do not claim that the content of the Elim argument is necessarily universal to all classical Pentecostals.

Third, Elim's rationality as *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism* underscores the need for (1) understanding Pentecostal epistemology in the context of its Evangelical and Pentecostal heritage (*Pentecostal*); (2) it highlights the centrality of the Bible, as articulated particularly in Smith's epistemology (*biblical*); and (3) it demonstrates the pragmatic nature of Pentecostal epistemology, a feature present in Yong's, Smith's and Oliverio's epistemologies (*pragmatism*). As a philosophical tradition, therefore, Elim is effectively a pragmatic tradition with a number of similarities to American Pragmatism.[132] In particular, it seems that the narrative nature of Elim and other (British) classical Pentecostals is closely connected to pragmatism to the extent that Pentecostals love to tell stories, because second person accounts are the best way of communicating personal 'experiences' and the effects of those 'experiences.'

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[132] For the pragmatic nature of American Classical Pentecostalism see Randall Holm, 'Varieties of Pentecostal Experience: Pragmatism and the Doctrinal Development of Pentecostalism,' *EJPT* (1996): no page numbers; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 13; Koo Dong Yun, 'A Metaphysical Construct of Experience: Concerning the Problematic Usage of 'Experience' within Pentecostal Horizons,' in *The Role of Experience in Christian Life and Thought*, 368.

Fourth, I have outlined that as a living tradition the content and rationality of the Elim argument is inevitably socially embodied, with institutions and epistemic systems both reflecting and supporting the tradition. These social embodiments are more varied, complex and organised than suggested by Smith's focus just on a Pentecostal worship service, even if these dynamic gatherings are also important social embodiments as seen *vis-à-vis* the revivalistic meetings of Elim.

As a final note, in this chapter I have not evaluated or developed Elim's tradition specific *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism*, but I will do so in Part III of the thesis. However, before this can be adequately done, I will need to narrate the Elim argument in light of its two major epistemological crises. To put it differently, this chapter has only provided the first scene (albeit a major scene) of the Elim narrative, and it is now time to narrate the next two major scenes.

CHAPTER 5 – THE ELIM ARGUMENT EXTENDED THROUGH TIME (I): THE RESIGNATION OF JEFFREYS AND ELIM'S FIRST EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRISIS

The previous chapter has outlined the birth of the Elim argument, with particular emphasis on the implied opponents, the content of the Elim argument, its tacit rationality and its social embodiment. In MacIntyrian terms this can be stated as the birth of the Elim tradition and the first stage of its tradition formation. However, after a tradition has been formed, MacIntyre sees traditions evolving and developing by going through two further stages.[1] As discussed in chapter two, at the second stage inadequacies and incoherencies are identified within the tradition, which can be fuelled by internal debates within, or external critique from outside, the community. This second stage can also be seen as an 'epistemological crisis' within the tradition, as it can cause the tradition to not just question its identity but also its existing beliefs, sources of knowledge and its practices regarding epistemic warrant.[2] The third stage provides a potential remedy for the epistemological crisis encountered during the second stage, resulting in reformulations and reinterpretations of the tradition.

For MacIntyre the degree to which the inadequacies can be resolved depends on the resources available within the community's tradition and on the community's inventiveness. Moreover, for the movement to continue after the reformulation, 'some core of shared belief, constitutive of allegiance to the tradition, has to survive,'[3] because without some continuity the tradition bears no resemblance to its authoritative origins and thus has been transformed altogether into

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[1] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 354-355.
[2] See MacIntyre, 'Epistemological crises, dramatic narrative, and the philosophy of science,' 3-23.
[3] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 356.

something else. As living traditions evolve and develop stages two and three are regularly revisited, and it is this continual process that makes a tradition effectively 'an argument extended through time.'

As has already been suggested in the previous chapter, by 1934 Elim had moved from its formational stage into a formalised tradition. The Elim Historian, Maldwyn Jones, points out that by 1934 Jeffreys had practically 'ceased his pioneering evangelistic crusades' and was now focusing on 're-visiting the larger churches that he had opened.'[4] In 1934 Elim also introduced the Deed Poll which cemented the movement's constitution and the young tradition's central tenets, as well as transferred its governance from Jeffreys and his group of overseers to the Executive Council approved by the Ministerial Conference. Thus, by 1934 it seems that as a tradition Elim had now 'come of age.'[5]

However, Jeffreys did not think that his work in Elim was done. On the contrary, in the 1930s he began his efforts to 'reform' the institutionalised movement which he had founded; an effort which eventually led to his own resignation from Elim and propelled the denomination into its first major epistemological crisis. The purported reasons for Jeffreys resignation, as well as the aftermath of his departure, are well documented by Noel Brooks (*circa* 1948),[6] Bryan Wilson (1961),[7] Desmond Cartwright (1986),[8] Albert Edsor (1989),[9] Malcolm

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[4] Jones, 'An Assessment of the Leadership of E. J. Phillips,' 61.
[5] The year 1936 was officially commemorated as Elim's 'Coming of Age Year;' P. N. Corry and D. Vanstone, 'The Coming of Age Year,' *EE* 17, no. 51-52 (December 25, 1936): 816-817.
[6] Brooks, *Fight for the Faith and Freedom*. This is a passionate defence of Jeffreys by one of his close associates.
[7] Bryan R. Wilson, *Sects and Society: The Sociology of Three Religious Groups in Britain* (London: William Heinemann, 1961). This is the first academic work on Elim's schism and it explores the issue in light of Max Weber's concept of 'routinization of charisma.'

Hathaway (1998),[10] Neil Hudson (1999),[11] Maldwyn Jones (2011),[12] and William Kay (2017).[13] My purpose in this chapter is not to revisit the various factors that led to the schism in Elim, such as, the potential personality clashes between E. J. Phillips and George Jeffreys, Phillips' and Jeffreys' respective illnesses, the tensions in the Irish Churches, the claimed financial difficulties in Elim, the formation of the World Revival Crusade, or even the major issue of Church government (although I will discuss the question of Church government to some extent in section 5.3.).[14] My focus will be, however, on the issue of British Israelism (BI) in the context of Elim's eschatological beliefs. The exploration of the BI controversy in the 1930s is important in not only appreciating a main, if not *the* main, reason for Jeffreys' resignation, but also in understanding how Elim developed its hard core doctrine of 'Jesus as coming King,' and thus the BI debate helps illuminate the very nature of the Elim argument in terms of its content and rationality.

In discussing Elim's first epistemological crisis, with a particular emphasis on the BI controversy, I will: (1) provide an overview of Elim's eschatological beliefs in the 1930s; (2)

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[8] Desmond Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists*. This is written by the former Elim historian and therefore broadly speaking, although not uncritically, reflects Elim's view on the matter.

[9] Albert W. Edsor, *'Set Your House in Order': God's Call to George Jeffreys as the Founder of the Elim Pentecostal Movement* (Chichester: New Wine Press, 1989). This is a partisan defence of Jeffreys by his secretary and long serving ally.

[10] Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 1-39. This is written by an academic Elim minister and offers a balanced, albeit brief, account of the events.

[11] D. Neil Hudson, 'A Schism and its Aftermath: an historical analysis of denomination discerption in the Elim Pentecostal Church, 1939-1940' (PhD dissertation, King's College, London, 1999). To date this is the most comprehensive academic account of the schism, and it is written by a critical insider of the Elim movement (i.e. an academically trained Elim minister).

[12] Jones, 'An Assessment of the Leadership of E. J. Phillips.' This dissertation is written by the current Elim historian and offers a defence of Phillips.

[13] Kay, *George Jeffreys* (2017). This is the most recent academic work on the topic by a preeminent British Pentecostal historian/theologian. It focuses particularly on the British Israel issue and my argument in this chapter is most closely aligned with its overall conclusion.

[14] Hudson provides a thorough and well-argued thesis on the various implicit and explicit reasons of the split; Hudson, 'A Schism and its Aftermath.'

narrate the BI debates from 1932 to 1937; (3) suggest that Jeffreys' attempt to reform Elim's church governance in 1938 to 1940 was largely motivated by his desire to bring BI teaching into Elim; and (4) argue how the crisis resulting from Jeffreys' resignation and its resolution substantiates my argument regarding the content (Foursquare Gospel) and rationality (Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism) of the Elim argument.

5.1. The Coming King: An Overview of Elim's Eschatology

In chapter four I have argued that the Foursquare Gospel of Jesus as Saviour, Healer, Baptiser in the Holy Spirit and coming King is the hard core of the Elim argument (see 4.2.4.). I will now argue that the question of rightly interpreting the fourth of these foundational beliefs, namely, the eschatological doctrine of Jesus as coming King, was central in the Elim debates of the 1930s and a key factor leading to the eventual resignation of Jeffreys in 1939. Noel Brooks and Albert Edsor (close associates of Jeffreys) claimed that BI, which was Jeffreys' particular understanding of eschatology and fulfilment of biblical prophecy, had nothing to do with him leaving Elim but instead he was simply driven by a divine mandate for 'setting his house in order' and redeeming the local Elim churches from the tyranny of central government.[15] Such interpretation of the events, however, is neither supported by Elim's Conference Minutes or Jeffreys' letter correspondence with Elim's Executive Council in the 1930s, both of which demonstrate his constant attempt to bring BI into Elim. Moreover, such a reading also fails to appreciate the importance eschatology played in constituting the Elim tradition, particularly during a period when the movement's apocalyptic senses were heightened due to the political uncertainties in Europe. To substantiate this argument, I will

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[15] Brooks, *Fight for the Faith and Freedom*, 74-77; Edsor, *'Set Your House in Order*,' 123-124. Brooks does acknowledge that the issue of British Israelism did highlight to Jeffreys the inherent problems with Elim's centrally governed structure, but the issue itself did not contribute to Jeffreys' desire to reform the movement.

first discuss Elim's basic doctrine of Jesus as coming King and then explore the BI controversy.

5.1.1. Dispensational Pre-Millennialism

The doctrine of Jesus as coming King is expressed in the 1934 Deed Poll Fundamental Truths as: 'We believe in the personal and pre-millennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ to receive unto Himself the Church and afterwards to set up His Throne as King.'[16] Four aspects regarding this statement are worth highlighting.

First, the return of Christ is believed to be 'personal.' The Elim literature from the period commonly articulates why Christ's second coming should not be spiritualised. For example, the Elim minister Charles Kingston at the outset of his book *The Coming of Christ and After* seeks to demonstrate that Christ's return is personal and physical, and he argues against any interpretation that tries to equate it with regeneration, Pentecost, or the soul of the Christian ascending to heaven after death.[17] This insistence on the literal and physical return of Christ is to a great extent due to Elim's Pentecostal reaction against the 'modernist teaching' on the spiritual and non-corporeal nature of the *Parousia*, although Elim always maintained that its view regarding the matter was simply 'biblical.'

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[16] Jeffreys, *Deed Poll* (1934), 3.
[17] Charles J. E. Kingston, *The Coming of Christ and After: Or What the Future Holds*. Revised and Enlarged Edition. (London: Victory Press, 1939), 3-6; cf. Jeffreys, *The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel – Doctrinal*, 60; M. L. Lowe, 'The Fact of Christ's Second Coming,' *EE* 20, no. 8 (February 24, 1939): 113-114; F. L. French, 'The Blessed Hope,' *EE* 20, no. 8 (February 24, 1939): 120-121.

Second, this 'personal' and 'physical' return of Christ is understood to be premillennial with two distinct stages. In the first stage Christ 'receives[s] unto Himself the Church.' This stage is equated with the 'rapture' where Christians, both those who have already died and those who are still alive, are taken up from the earth to meet Christ in the clouds (the common proof-text used here was 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). This is followed by the second stage where Christ 'will set up His Throne as King,' which means that he will return to the earth with the Church and begin his thousand year reign on earth (a literal understanding and chronological reading of Revelation 20 was generally assumed within Elim literature). The tribulation period is believed to take place between stages one and two, and the final judgment and the coming of the new heaven and the new earth is thought to succeed Christ's millennial reign.[18] Thus, Elim's eschatology of the period is effectively dispensational pre-tribulational premillennialism.

Third, linked to Elim's dispensational premillennialism, there is an assumption that 'things will get worse' before Christ returns. For example, W. G. Hathaway claims that as the return of Christ approaches, persecution of true Christians will increase and apostasy will be committed by many.[19] Kingston echoes this pessimistic outlook by arguing that optimism regarding world events is naïve as the current '*religious signs*' of 'false religions,' 'pleasure loving' and 'superstition;' '*social signs*' of 'infidelity' 'crime' and 'immorality;' '*providential signs*' of 'famines,' 'pestilences' and 'earthquakes;' and '*political signs*' of 'wars' and 'distress of nations' are all expected phenomena before the second coming.[20] This implies that

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[18] For interpretations along these lines see Jeffreys, *The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel – Supernatural*, 71-73; W. G. Hathaway, 'That Glorious Hope,' *EE* 20, no. 8 (February 24, 1939): 115.
[19] W. G. Hathaway, 'A Peep into the Future,' *EE* 16, no. 14 (April 5, 1935): 222.
[20] Kingston, *The Coming of Christ and After*, 15-49.

Elim's eschatological imagination seems to be dominated by apocalyptic destructionism, and hence it is unsurprising that the movement emphasises 'saving souls' rather than bringing social transformation. F. L. French's words in *Elim Evangel* are telling:

> To this day many in the high position in the professing Church see looming largely before them a 'social gospel' of an improved and bettered world... But God is not improving the world in this dispensation. He has judged and condemned it, and is gathering out of it a people for the Lord Jesus Christ, His Church.[21]

To put it simply, Elim's apocalyptic premillennialism assumes that the world is under judgment and therefore investing resources in trying to improve it in the current dispensation is at best futile and at worst going against the decrees of God.

Fourth, despite the dire apocalyptic understanding of world events, or perhaps exactly because of such dystopic view of the end times, the return of Christ is seen within Elim as the 'hope of the believer.'[22] In other words, the *parousia* is believed to complete the history of the world, and in contrast to the anticipated apocalyptic calamities, Christ's coming will initiate a harmonious existence between God, people and the whole of creation, which means that the new world will be free of death, war and injustice. It is in the light of this eschatological hope that Christians are encouraged to live holy lives and prepare the way for their coming King.[23]

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[21] F. L. French, 'The Blessed Hope,' 120.
[22] Jeffreys, *The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel – Doctrinal*, 60.
[23] See Jeffreys, *The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel – Doctrinal*, 60-63; Lowe, 'The Fact of Christ's Second Coming,' 113-114; W. G. Hathaway, 'The Glorious Hope,' 115-116.; French, 'The Blessed Hope,' 120-121; G. H. Clement, 'If Jesus Should Come To-night! What then?' *EE* 20, no. 8 (February 24, 1939): 126.

5.1.2. Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism and the Three Prophetic Schools

Elim's eschatological vision reflects and is informed by its rationality of *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism*. That is, the general premillennial framework is inherited from Elim's (pre-) *Pentecostal* roots, particularly shaped by the dispensational premillennialism of John Nelson Darby which was popular in British Holiness and Evangelical circles at the turn of the century.[24] However, although the influence of the late nineteenth century radical Evangelical eschatology is significant, Elim was always quick to highlight that its views were *biblical*; that is, the bible was maintained as the grounding document for its eschatological beliefs. M. L. Lowe represents Elim's perspective well when he writes that to rightly understand the nature of Christ's return one needs to simply '*take it to the Scriptures*.'[25] Correct exposition of the scriptures and its prophecies regarding the end times was then characterised by Elim's *pragmatism* with a focus on 'effects' and 'results.' To put it differently, Elim's eschatology was strongly characterised by an emphasis on biblical prophecies and an attempt to try to correlate them with real world events. Ernest C. W. Boulton, in an *Elim Evangel* editorial, went as far as to suggest that he could not think of a 'mightier or weightier argument' in the Church's 'conflict with atheism, agnosticism and modern criticism, than that of fulfilled prophecy.'[26] This 'fulfilled prophecy' referred to the promises that were believed to have been fulfilled during the biblical era, as well as those that were now supposedly being fulfilled before the very eyes of Boulton and his contemporaries. The point was that the pragmatic effects of biblical prophecy were allegedly visible in the unfolding history of the world.

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[24] Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 30-38; William K. Kay, *Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 12-13.
[25] Lowe, 'The Fact of Christ's Second Coming,' 113; cf. W. G. Hathaway, 'A Peep into the Future,' 216.
[26] Ernest C. W. Boulton, 'The Profit of Prophecy (Editorial),' *EE* 16, no. 14 (April 5, 1935): 218.

Elim's hard core doctrine of Jesus as Coming King understood in a pre-millennial framework was seen as a non-negotiable within the Elim tradition, not least as it seemed to be consonant with its rationality of *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism*. Nevertheless, within this agreed doctrinal framework, in the 1930s there were three interpretive schools of thought particularly with respect to understanding biblical prophecies. These were: (1) the Historicist School which saw biblical prophecies, particularly the Book of Revelation, being fulfilled during the different epochs of church history, with a view that the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 referred to the seven dispensations of the Church; (2) the Futurist School which saw many biblical prophecies, and Revelation especially, as being fulfilled just before the return of Christ; (3) the BI School which saw Celto-Anglo-Saxon people as the lost tribes of Israel with the British Empire having an important role in fulfilling biblical prophecies.[27]

At the risk of repetition, it is worth underscoring that all three schools utilised Elim's rationality of biblical pragmatism in seeking to identify and point out the 'effects' of biblical prophecy on past, present and future world events. However, despite the shared rationality by these three schools within Elim, it was the debate between them, and particularly the rejection of BI by the majority of Elim ministers as a reasonable school of eschatological interpretation, that contributed to Elim's first 'epistemological crisis.'

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[27] Hathaway only mentions the 'Historicist' and 'Futurist' Schools in an article explaining biblical prophecy to Elim readers; W. G. Hathaway, 'A Peep into the Future,' 217 & 222. However, the three views are discussed at Elim's Conferences suggesting that they are all represented by Elim ministers; Minutes of 'Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance: Ministerial Conference 18th September to 22nd September 1933,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 8; Minutes of 'Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance: Ministerial and General Conference. 21st October to 25th October, 1935,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 3-9.

5.2. The British Israel Controversy

The origins of modern BI can be traced to John Wilson and his work *Our Israelitish Origin* (1814).[28] The BI teaching gained particular prominence towards the late nineteenth century probably due to the increasing interest in biblical prophecy, 'abounding racial theories' in Europe, and the global dominance of the British Empire.[29] Indeed, at the beginning of the twentieth century BI had up to two million adherents,[30] and from 1919 onwards the British Israel World Federation functioned as the movement's leading society.[31] Some notable early Pentecostal pioneers, such as, the American Charles Fox Parham and the British William Oliver Hutchinson were followers of BI.[32] In Elim the three most vocal advocates of this doctrine were John Leech, George Jeffreys and James McWhirter.

There was no one official version of BI, and Jeffreys was in fact careful to distance himself from what he saw as the more extreme aspects of BI.[33] Nevertheless, the central feature of BI was the identification of the Celto-Anglo-Saxons as Israelites and Britain as Israel (or at least the Tribe of Ephraim).[34] To justify this 'identity' the following reasons were commonly offered by the advocates of BI.

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[28] John Wilson, 'British Israelism: The Ideological Restraints on Sect Organisation,' in *Patterns of Sectarianism*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson (London: Heinemann, 1967), 354 [Note: this is a different 'John Wilson' from the writer of *Our Israelith Origin*]; I. Hexham, 'British Israelism,' in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 174. Although BI ideas are already present in John Sadler's *Rights of the Kingdom* (1649); see John Wilson, 'British Israelism,' 349.

[29] John Wilson, 'British Israelism,' *The Sociological Review* 16 (March 1968): 41-42.

[30] Hexham, 'British Israelism,' 175.

[31] Wilson, 'British Israelism' (1968), 43.

[32] Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, 167; Malcolm R. Hathaway, 'The Role of William Oliver Hutchinson and the Apostolic Faith Church in the Formation of British Pentecostal Churches,' *JEPTA* 16, no. 1 (1996): 47.

[33] George Jeffreys, letter to E. J. Phillips (January 28, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern.

[34] A key chapter in McWhirter's book on BI is dedicated to trying to establish Britain as Israel; James McWhirter, *Britain and Palestine in Prophecy* (London: Methuen, 1937), chapter 4; In writing to Jeffreys on BI, Phillips also notes that: 'I know you differentiate between the teaching of the identity and the fanatical doctrines commonly associated with it, but let me remind you that our opposition and that of the majority of our people is

The BI proponents believed that God promised Abraham that until the end of the age the

people of Israel would survive and function as a nation. However, in light of the defeat and

exile of Israel's Northern Kingdom (722 BCE) and Judah's Southern Kingdom (586 BCE),

this promised continuity for Israel as a nation had not been realised in Palestine.

Consequently, it was suggested by the supporters of BI that this continuation of Israel as a

nation needed to be actualised elsewhere for God to have fulfilled his promise to Abraham.

Following from this assumption, it was then proposed that God had been faithful in fulfilling

his promise in the Celto-Anglo-Saxon people who were in fact Israel.

Equating Britain as Israel was maintained by a historical narrative which claimed that after

the destruction of Judah, Zedekiah's daughters escaped Egypt and took refuge in the 'isles of

the sea' (Jer. 31:10), which was understood to be the British Isles. The descendants of

Zedekiah's daughters were then believed to have become the royal house in Britain, meaning

that 'the British royal family is directly linked to the house of David.'[35] The common

Israelites followed the royal line to the British Isles gradually after wandering through Europe

following their initial exile to Assyria in 722 BCE.[36] A key proof-text used here was 2 Samuel

7:10 which supposedly referred to God 'planting' Israel to a 'place' interpreted as Britain

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the identity. That, in our view, is the basic error;' E. J. Phillips, letter to George Jeffreys (February 1, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern.

[35] Hexham, 'British Israelism,' 175.

[36] McWhirter boldly states that 'The wanderings of Israel in their migrations from Assyria across the Euphrates to the south of Russia, and from thence through Europe and the Scandinavian countries, until they reached the British Isles, is a well-authenticated story;' McWhirter, *Britain and Palestine in Prophecy*, 30.

where they would 'dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more.'[37] Thus, Britain was seen as the modern day Israel and the success of the British Empire, as well as other Celto-Anglo-Saxon nations (e.g. United States of America), was explained as God's divine favour on his chosen people.

A key assumption within BI was the distinction between 'Jews' and 'Israel'; that is, 'Jews' consisted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, whereas 'Israel' consisted of the remaining ten (or eleven) tribes. This distinction was important for BI because it allowed its adherents to argue that those who returned to Judah from 538 BCE onwards as recorded in Ezra-Nehemiah were primarily the 'Jews' rather than the ten tribes of 'Israel.'[38] The tribes of 'Israel,' according to BI, did not return to Palestine but made their way to Britain. Furthermore, there was a common assumption that it had been the 'Jews' in Palestine during the first century rather than 'Israel' who had rejected Christ, and 'Israel' as the Celto-Anglo-Saxon peoples had on the whole accepted Christ. James McWhirter went as far as to suggest that this meant that the 'spiritual blessing' promised to Judah had now been transferred to 'Israel' (read: Britain), as apparently indicated by Jesus in Matthew 21:43.[39]

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[37] This was a central verse used by John Leech in his Elim Conference Debate on BI with E. J. Phillips in 1934. Regarding the promise that Israel would no longer be 'disturbed,' Leech maintained that Britain could not be defeated because of this Scriptural promise. In his words: 'The last [people to invade] were the Normans in 1066 and from that date we have never been invaded. Napoleon planned an invasion; the Spanish Armada had also planned an invasion; the Kaiser had his liners ready to invade us, and none of them came off. God's word has kept true;' Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 28.

[38] E. J. Phillips spent much of his speech in the debate with John Leech to try to undermine the distinction between 'Israel' and 'Jews;' Notes of the 1934 Conference Debate, 48-57.

[39] McWhirter, *Britain and Palestine in Prophecy*, 31.

5.2.1. The First Round of the British Israel Controversy: The Elim Conferences 1932-1934

Although Jeffreys seems to have adopted the BI position from around 1920 onwards – most likely due to the influence of John Leech – BI does not really feature within Elim literature until the early 1930s.[40] There seems to be no single reason why all of a sudden Jeffreys began to advocate strongly for BI. Nevertheless, it appears that for Elim as a movement the uncertain political climate of 1930s Europe brought eschatological questions increasingly to the forefront of its psyche. Moreover, by the 1930s the hard-core of the Elim argument (read: Foursquare Gospel) and its Fundamental Truths had been firmly established, which means that there was a growing need to further develop the auxiliary hypotheses surrounding these core doctrines.

Whatever the reasons for the emergence of BI in Elim, it was seen as a significant doctrine by its advocates. Although in some correspondence Jeffreys refers to BI as a secondary doctrine and a 'minor question' in relation to Elim's Fundamental Truths,[41] his persistence, despite the strong opposition, in trying to make BI an acceptable prophetic interpretive school within Elim suggests that it had greater significance for Jeffreys than he publicly indicated. Indeed, James McWhirter – Jeffreys' close associate, member of his Revival Party and fellow supporter of BI – believed that:

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[40] Malcolm Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 22; cf. Desmond Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists*, 120. Although in 1925 Boulton already writes to Phillips raising his concern about BI infiltrating Elim. In the words of Boulton, 'I feel that this is a more serious matter than we realize... We cannot afford to have our men steeped in this heresy; it will be sure to have an undesirable effect upon their ministry. I hope that you will take this matter up and use your influence to prevent our work being permeated with it; if left untouched it will in time leaven the whole of the work'; Ernest C. W. Boulton, letter to E. J. Phillips (November 30, 1925), Elim Archives, Malvern. Kingston also mentions BI in passing in a 1925 *Elim Evangel* article, although he neither condemns nor endorses it; Kingston, 'The Coming of Christ – and After,' 255.

[41] George Jeffreys, letter to J. I. MacDonald (May 9, 1935), Elim Archives, Malvern; Jeffreys, letter to E. J. Phillips (January 28, 1937).

The greatest spiritual awakening that has ever been will come with the realization of our identity with Israel. The psychological effect will be that the nation will begin to live up to it, and at that time the nation will be re-born. When our national privilege is understood it will beget in us a sacred sense of responsibility. The result will be transforming reaction from materialism to new spiritual life. That is Paul's argument to the Romans. 'Now if the fall of them (Israel) be the riches of the world, and the *loss* of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness.' – Rom. Xi. 12 (R.V.).[42]

If Jeffreys shared these sentiments and believed that BI was the missing key in initiating 'the greatest spiritual awakening,' it is no wonder why he passionately attempted to make Elim a BI movement.[43] Jeffreys first attempt to bring BI into Elim came in 1932 at Elim's 'Northern Division Conference' at Glossop.[44] BI received a cold reception among the Elim ministers present, so Jeffreys decided to bring up the issue again in Elim's first ever national ministerial conference in 1933. The minutes of the 1933 conference note that the question of BI, Futurist and Historicist Interpretations of Prophecy were discussed under 'Supplementary Statement of Belief,' and regarding BI the Conference 'agreed that it should neither be preached nor attacked in our churches, and that it should be referred to in the Supplementary Statement of Belief.'[45]

The 1933 conference decision, however, did not weaken Jeffreys' resolve, and for the 1934 conference he requested that BI would be debated by the conference and almost two days was dedicated for this debate.[46] The 1934 conference debate proved to be a watershed moment for

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[42] McWhirter, *Britain and Palestine in Prophecy*, 80.

[43] Hudson and Kay support this view by maintaining that Jeffreys effectively shared McWhirter's view on the matter; Hudson, 'A Schism and its Aftermath,' 193; Kay, *George Jeffreys*, 264.

[44] Minutes of the 'Northern Division Conference, 24th to 26th October, 1932,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern.

[45] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1933), 8.

[46] Kay, *George Jeffreys*, 274. In February 1934 Phillips wrote to Jeffreys how he and Hathaway had decided that due to Leech's involvement in BI organisations 'He could not hold the position in our Crusader Movement... nor could he take series addresses in our churches'; E. J. Phillips, letter to George Jeffreys (February 13, 1934), Elim Archives, Malvern. Jeffreys responded by saying that 'I am sorry his great services in the Youth movement are

BI in Elim, albeit not for the reasons hoped for by Jeffreys. On the Tuesday morning of the conference, John Leech – a well-educated and established debater –[47] 'spoke on the subject of British-Israelism, and his address was discussed for the remainder of the morning.'[48] The rest of Tuesday focused on other matters, and the debate continued on Wednesday with the whole day devoted for the topic. Leech started the morning by presenting the case for BI, after which 'he was questioned, and his address was discussed.'[49] This was followed by E. J. Phillips presenting his reasons against BI,[50] 'and he was questioned and his address discussed.'[51]

The content and nature of the conference BI debate is a practical demonstration of Elim's biblical pragmatism in action. Unfortunately the official notes from the debate do not include Leech's opening speech.[52] Nevertheless, the questioning and criticism of Leech which have been preserved indicate what he probably covered in his initial presentation.[53] Based on these notes William Kay reasonably suggests that Leech seemed to focus first in trying to provide evidence for the distinction between 'Jews' (Judah) and 'Israel' (the ten northern tribes), and

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going to be lost to us. We can use him in all other Sections except A for the present, and, of course, Ireland where he stood by me in the early days. As I get older I appreciate the life-long association the more;' George Jeffreys, letter to E. J. Phillips (February 15, 1934), Elim Archives, Malvern. The marginalisation of Leech within Elim due to his views on BI may have been an important contributing factor of Jeffreys insisting that BI be discussed at the 1934 Elim Conference.

[47] Kay notes that Leech 'had high-flying credentials from Trinity College, Dublin, and was the Plunkett Gold Medallist for oratory in the field of legal debating. He was a member of the bar of Ireland, had 'taken silk' as King's Counsel and was senior Crown prosecutor for County Longford and chairman of the Incorporated Council of Law reporting for Northern Ireland. He judged at Belfast Recorder's Court and the County Court of Antrim;' Kay, *George Jeffreys*, 266; cf. Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists*, 121; Hudson, 'A Schism and its Aftermath,' 199.

[48] Minutes of the 'Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance: Ministerial and General Conference, 17th to 21st September 1934,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 2.

[49] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1934), 3.

[50] Initially Percy Corry, the Dean of Elim Bible College, was meant to debate John Leech, but he pulled out just before the event, which meant that E. J. Phillips had to step in at the last minute. Apparently, Phillips 'stayed up all night to prepare'; Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists*, 121.

[51] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1934), 3.

[52] The first 19 pages are missing from the Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism. The debate discussed below is primarily constructed from these notes.

[53] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 20-47.

the notion that Israel did not return to Palestine with Judah after the exile. Secondly, Leech attempted to show that the ten tribes of Israel made their way to Britain.[54]

To substantiate these two points, Leech appears to have argued primarily from the Bible and secondarily from history/ethnography. His biblical arguments explored 2 Samuel 7:10 which he saw as a reference to Israel being planted in Britain, and Isaiah 41, 49:1 which he claimed spoke of the British Isles. At the risk of oversimplification, the logic of Leech's pragmatic biblical argument went along the following lines: (1) 2 Samuel 7:10 refers to God richly blessing his people by planting them to 'another place;' (2) the Isaiah passages indicate that this 'place' is the (British) Isles far away from Palestine; and (3) in light of God's perceived blessing of Britain and its current Empire, Britain must be the place referred to in these passages and the British people must be the lost tribes of Israel. He further supported his 'biblical' argument by historical/ethnographical claims that the British people are a pure nation, implying their ethnic purity as Israelites. In his own words, 'I can assure you that our people here are not a mixed people; they come from one stock, and all modern and learned ethnologists agree on that.'[55]

The conference members, however, were not convinced of Leech's arguments. They not only challenged his historical and ethnographical claims,[56] but they particularly critiqued his biblical statements in two ways. First, they pointed out that his BI interpretations were not the natural reading of the texts. For example, W. G. Hathaway stated that 'the place' of 2 Samuel

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[54] Kay, *George Jeffreys*, 275.
[55] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 21.
[56] J. Mullan was particularly unimpressed with Leech's ethnological statements; Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 20-21.

7:10 probably simply refers to Palestine and actually in the text there is no reference to 'another place;'[57] E. J. Phillips noted that in light of the context of 2 Samuel 7:10, the promise applies to all tribes of Israel, not just to Leech's proposed ten northern tribes, and so challenged the assumed distinction between 'Israel' and the 'Jews';[58] and Charles Kingston remarked that Isaiah was actually written to Judah and not to the ten tribes of Israel, undermining Leech's idea that Isaiah somehow referred to the ten Northern tribes dwelling in the far away Islands.[59] Moreover, Leech's interpretation of certain Hebrew words and verb tenses were questioned.[60] This interaction between Leech and his critics shows the centrality of the Bible within the debate, as well as the conference members' deep knowledge of the Bible and their ability to wrestle with hermeneutical questions. It also demonstrates that the Elim ministers did not accept beliefs blindly but evaluated doctrines in light of Scripture.

Second, as well as criticising Leech's biblical exegesis, the conference also challenged the logic of Leech's argumentation. As already alluded to, Leech effectively utilised a pragmatic rationality to justify BI; that is, he maintained that the 'results' which for him was the superiority of Britain and its Empire demonstrated the truth of BI. However, both E. J. Phillips and Charles Kingston objected to what they saw as inappropriate circularity and 'question begging' in Leech's argument.[61] Phillips and Kingston had a fair point, as in terms of propositional logic Leech seemed to suffer from the logical fallacy of 'affirming the consequent' (i.e. the 'converse error'). To spell this out, a pragmatic BI argument in a valid *modus ponens* format would probably have gone something along the lines of 'If Britain is

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[57] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 21.
[58] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 24.
[59] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 36.
[60] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 24-25, 28.
[61] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 23, 36.

Israel, then Britain experiences global dominance.' However, this need not imply the converse, namely, 'If Britain experiences global dominance, then Britain is Israel,' since there could be various reasons why Britain could experience global dominance with no relation whatsoever to its identity as Israel. In fairness to Leech's logic, all pragmatic arguments are susceptible to this type of circularity. Therefore, as pointed out by Bruce Marshall, a pragmatic thesis can at best only falsify rather than verify a belief.[62] In other words, and in relation to Leech's BI argument, Britain's global dominance cannot verify the truth of BI, because there could be other reasons to explain this phenomenon. But, if Britain does not experience global dominance, then this lack of dominance may well falsify the BI doctrine (assuming of course that British dominance is a necessary sign for its identity as Israel). Consequently, the best that Leech's pragmatic argument could ever do by the very nature of being pragmatic was to suggest that BI was not false, but strictly speaking it could never prove the truth of BI.

This accusation of 'question begging', as well as the inability for Leech to *prove* his BI position, on their own would have probably not sufficiently undermined the BI position among the conference members, not least as the Elim tradition as whole embodied a pragmatic rationality not dissimilar to the one used by Leech. However, Leech's supposed 'question begging' combined with (1) the more natural and anti-BI readings of the biblical texts in question, (2) the more plausible eschatological schools of interpretation already within Elim (i.e. Futurist and Historicist), and (3) the possible falsifying evidence against BI provided by Phillips in his upcoming speech, ensured that BI doctrine remained unconvincing to the conference members.

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[62] Bruce Marshall, *Trinity and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 188.

Indeed, Phillips in his presentation was determined to provide this falsifying evidence against BI. Appreciating the centrality of the Bible within the Elim constituency, he maintained that 'in my arguments against [BI] I am going to confine myself entirely to the scriptures.'[63] Neil Hudson has suggested that Phillips' reasoning was primarily 'pragmatic' rather than 'theological.'[64] This inference, however, is not supported by the notes from the debate, where Phillips fundamentally produces biblical and theological arguments. In fact, Phillips produces eight distinct theological arguments. In the first argument, which is by far the most detailed, he states that the BI distinction between 'Jews' and 'Israel' cannot be maintained in light of Scripture. He systematically explores passages from 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Acts, with the following conclusion:

> I say [that] from these Scriptures we have overwhelming proof that the Jews and the Israelites are one people, and consequently it is useless to look for the 10 tribes outside the people today who are called Jews and generally known as Jews. There may be a few odd ones outside; I do not deny it; they have been scattered and left behind, but the Jews generally embrace the whole of Israel.[65]

His second argument notes that many of the promises to Israel, like 'growing in number,' are actually conditional on Israel 'obeying the voice of the Lord and keeping His commandments.'[66] He does not think that any 'sanctified Christian' would suggest that Britain as a nation is obedient to God, and therefore many of the so-called 'blessings' claimed by the advocates of BI to currently 'rest on' Britain (e.g. growing population) due to its

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[63] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 48. John Smyth who worked for five years under Phillips at the Elim Head Quarters identified Phillips as a skilled debater. In answering Smyth's question regarding what enabled him to win most debates at the Elim Conferences, Phillips remarked that he would find the weakest link in the argument and 'hammer it' until it would break. In the BI debate Leech's scriptural interpretation seemed to be the weakest link in his chain of argument; John C. Smyth, interview by author, Plymouth, UK, September 15, 2017.
[64] Hudson, 'A Schism and its Aftermath,' 206.
[65] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 62.
[66] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 62.

identity as Israel cannot be right. To the contrary, argues Phillips, if Britain were Israel due to the nation's current disobedience to Christ they should actually be experiencing punishment (e.g. decline in population) rather than blessing (e.g. growth in population).[67]

The third and fourth arguments simply pointed out that unlike the Jews, Britain does not follow Israel's mandate of the Sabbath or circumcision.[68] The fifth proposed that according to James 1:1 and Acts 26:6-7 the ten tribes were never lost in the first place (contra BI). The sixth claimed that Amos 9:8 suggests that God never intended just to restore the ten tribes of Israel;[69] the seventh argued that the Jews alone have remained as a distinct people group according to Numbers 23:9, not the British;[70] and the final argument maintained that Britain cannot be Israel because it has 'borrowed millions of pounds' and has a significant national debt, and therefore does not fulfil the promise of Deuteronomy 15:5 given to Israel.[71]

After making his speech, Phillips was questioned by the members of conference. Much of the questioning focuses on whether the 'bulk' of the ten tribes returned to Palestine with Judah, and whether the ten tribes had ever been reunited with Judah after the exile.[72] Leech also tried to explain how James, Peter and Paul in the NT could refer to the twelve tribes, but that did not mean that the bulk of the ten tribes were not lost.[73] The most vocal critics of Phillips' presentation seemed to be Leech (naturally), Robert Mercer and James McWhirter. Jeffreys

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[67] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 64.
[68] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 64-65.
[69] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 66.
[70] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 68.
[71] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 70.
[72] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 71-117.
[73] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 73-74.

functioned as the moderator of the debate, and although on the whole he chaired the debate objectively, on occasions his BI bias is apparent in his comments.[74]

After the debate, it was discussed whether BI should be taught in Elim churches. According to the conference minutes:

> ...it was decided, evidently [and] unanimously that it [BI] should neither be preached nor attacked in any Elim Church under Direct Government, nor should any Minister under direct Government on any B.I. platform. As regards Elim Churches not under Direct Government the majority were apparently of the opinion that it should be permissible to preach it within certain limits provided that it would not harm in any way the rest of the work.[75]

A vote was also taken on the notion of BI 'identity.' Of the 131 eligible to vote: 17 accepted BI, 73 rejected it, and 41 were neutral.[76] The conference decision to ban the teaching of BI in the main Elim churches and the vote with a majority of the conference rejecting BI indicates that Phillips was the clear winner of the debate, although based on the 1932 and 1933 conferences it seems that majority of Elim ministers were already predisposed against BI before the debate. Nevertheless, the biblical *tour de force* provided by Phillips seemed to provide a blow for BI within the Elim movement from which it would never recover. The potential appeal of Leech's faltering pragmatic logic and his questionable scriptural interpretations, were dismantled by Phillips' systematic biblical arguments.

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[74] Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 113-114.
[75] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1934), 3.
[76] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1934), 3-4.

The debate underscores an important aspect of Elim's biblical pragmatism. That is, Elim's rationality is not just pragmatism. If its rationality would have simply been characterised by pragmatism, Leech may have been able to muster greater support for BI with his pragmatic arguments. However, he was not able to do so because Elim's rationality is *biblical* pragmatism. This means that a belief's 'effects' and 'results' on their own are not sufficient to convince an Elimite of its 'truth', if the belief does not also have sufficient grounding in Scripture. In other words, pragmatic effectiveness needs to be married with scriptural faithfulness within Elim's *biblical pragmatism*. Indeed, Leech was not criticised as such for his pragmatism by Phillips but for his poor biblical hermeneutics.[77] This suggests that within Elim's *biblical* pragmatism a text has certain interpretive limits and a text cannot be made to mean anything even if such an interpretation might have pragmatic potential. Some assumed hermeneutical principles need to guide the scope of possible interpretations. As discussed in the previous chapter, and as seen in this debate, these hermeneutical principles are informed by Elim's common sense 'Bible Reading Method.' That said, this does not mean that Elim's rationality is thus simply characterised by *biblicism*. Phillips' own rhetoric and biblical interpretation regarding the history of the Jewish people carried pragmatic elements, and as an experienced debater Leech most certainly would have not utilised pragmatic arguments if he believed them to carry no weigh with his audience. In sum, Elim's tacit rationality in the 1934 conference debate was *biblical pragmatism*.

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[77] In relation to Leech's interpretation of Nehemiah 11:3, Phillips remarks that 'Mr. Leech is trying to distinguish between Israel in v. 3 and Judah. I say he is wholly unjustified in doing it and there is no proper system of Bible exegesis that would allow such a thing;' Notes of the 1934 Elim Conference Debate on British Israelism, 90.

5.2.2. The Second Round of the British Israel Controversy: The Elim Conferences in 1935-1939

Although in 1934 Leech was defeated by Phillips in the BI debate and the doctrine of BI was clearly rejected by the Elim conference, Jeffreys brought up BI once again in the 1935 Elim conference. Jeffreys' motivation for doing so seems to have been at least partly influenced by certain members of the conference being dissatisfied about not being able to preach BI within the centrally governed Elim churches. To that effect, the minutes of the 1935 conference note that Jeffreys 'suggested that there should be liberty to preach British-Israelism in Direct Government Churches and outlined the points of agreement in Futurist, Historicist, and British-Israel Schools.'[78] This was followed by a vote about these three main schools of prophetic interpretation. The question put to the conference was whether it accepted, rejected or was neutral with respect to these three schools. When it came to the 'Futurist Interpretation' of the 102 total votes: 68 accepted it, 11 rejected it and 23 were neutral; regarding the 'Historicists Interpretation' of the 103 total votes: 59 accepted it, 13 rejected it and 31 were neutral; and with respect to BI of the 107 votes: 22 accepted it, 45 rejected it and 40 were neutral.[79]

The voting results indicate that the 'Futurist Interpretation' regarding biblical prophecy was the most popular within Elim and the 'Historicist Interpretation' a close second. Both of these schools were also accepted by more people than the combined numbers of those who rejected or held neutral positions regarding them. This suggests that both positions were broadly accepted within Elim and the two interpretations were not necessarily seen as being mutually

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[78] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1935), 3.
[79] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1935), 3.

exclusive; that is, the numbers in favour of both suggest that indeed some accepted both interpretative frameworks.

BI, however, was not affirmed by the conference. In fact, more people rejected the position than affirmed it or expressed neutrality regarding it. This general acceptance of the Futurist and Historicist Interpretations and the rejection of BI is also reflected in the vote *vis-à-vis* which schools of prophecy should not be taught in Elim. Of the 84 who voted on this particular issue, five were against the Futurist School, seven against the Historicist School, and 72 against BI.[80] The numbers speak for themselves.

These votes were followed by further discussion and debate on the question of BI, until the following resolution was proposed by E. J. Phillips and carried by the conference:

> ...this Conference desires to place on record that while it has never imposed any definite ban on the teaching of British-Israel in any Elim Church, its Ministers mutually agree that for the purpose of preserving unity it shall treat the teaching of British-Israel in the same way as is the custom with other matter on which there is an acute difference of opinion, viz: neither to propagate it nor attack it in any Direct Government Church. It further puts on record that for the same reason it considers it inadvisable for any Elim Minister under Direct Government to appear on any B.I. platform.[81]

So, yet again Jeffreys and his proposals in favour of BI were rejected by the Conference. The defeat of BI at the 1934 conference could not be reversed by Jeffreys in 1935. In fact, the

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[80] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1935), 4.
[81] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1935), 9.

conference minutes read that after his defeat Jeffreys promised 'that he would never bring up

the subject of B.I. again at the Conference.'[82]

Indeed, the question of BI seems not to have been discussed at the 1936 Elim Conferrence.[83]

Nonetheless, Jeffreys had not yet given up on bringing BI into Elim. In 1937 from January to

March there was an extended letter correspondence between Jeffreys and Phillips/Elim's

Executive Council on the question of BI.[84] It was initiated by Phillips' concern that if Jeffreys

was to launch his 'World Revival Crusade,'[85] he would be leading an organisation which

'would propagate doctrines which are considered unscriptural by the majority of Elim

people,'[86] and by these 'unscriptural' doctrines Phillips meant BI.[87] Jeffreys appears to have

been offended by Phillips' allegation of him holding 'unscriptural' beliefs,[88] which is not

surprising for a leader of movement that prides itself on being biblical.

Jeffreys then tried to justify the validity of his BI position and he pleads with Phillips that he

should be 'given the same liberty in the pulpit and in the press, as is given to the other views

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[82] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1935), 9.

[83] Minutes of the 'Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance: General and Ministerial Conference, 7th to 11th September 1936,' archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern.

[84] Jeffreys and Phillips both confirmed that their letter correspondence was not just between them as individuals but between Jeffreys and Elim's Executive Council; George Jeffreys, letter to E. J. Phillips (February 2, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern; George Jeffreys, letter to E. J. Phillips (February 19, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern; E. J. Phillips, letter to George Jeffreys (February 23, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern.

[85] The World Revival Crusade was to be Jeffrey's new evangelistic organisation with the aim of having a global and interdenominational audience. Phillips and Elim's Executive Council from the outset feared that Jeffreys would focus on his new organisation at the expense of Elim.

[86] E. J. Phillips, letter to George Jeffreys (January 25, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern.

[87] E. J. Phillips, letter to George Jeffreys (January 26, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern.

[88] George Jeffreys, letter to E. J. Phillips (January 26, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern; Jeffreys, letter to Phillips (January 28, 1937).

on prophecy in Elim.'[89] He later also argues that if one was to follow 'strict neutrality'

regarding BI, as suggested by the 1933, 1934 and 1935 conference decisions, then

> large proportion of Futurist Teaching would have to be cut out to maintain a neutral attitude. For example: There must be no suggestion that the Jews constitute all Israel, or that the Jews have a special place in the Tribulation and the Millennium.[90]

In Jeffreys letters there is also an increasing undertone that if he will not have his way,

he will resign from Elim.[91] The correspondence effectively finishes with Phillips

frustratingly stating that Jeffreys seems to have given the Executive only two options:

(1) for Jeffreys to resign as the leader of the movement or (2) allow the teaching of BI

in all Elim churches. Phillips thinks that both options would 'split the work.'[92] Phillips

surmises that the Executive is uncomfortable with both of these options, and thus the

matter must be deferred to the Elim Conference.[93]

Phillips was not able to attend the September 1937 Elim Conference due to illness,

caused predominantly by years of overworking and stress exacerbated by the BI

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[89] Jeffreys, letter to Phillips (January 28, 1937).

[90] E. J. Phillips, 'Notes from a Meeting with Principal George Jeffreys' (February 17, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern. Jeffreys reinforces this point about 'strict neutrality' in a letter to Phillips where he highlights 12 issues that should not be discussed by any minister in Direct Government Church if such policy were truly adopted (e.g. 'British people are Gentiles' and 'the words 'Jew' and 'Israelite' must be cut out of the vocabulary of Elim preachers'); Jeffreys, letter to Phillips (February 19, 1937).

[91] Jeffreys first clear articulation of stepping down as the leader of the movement is made in December 1936; George Jeffreys, letter to E. J. Phillips (December 12, 1936), Elim Archives, Malvern.

[92] Phillips, letter to Jeffreys (February 23, 1937).

[93] E. J. Phillips, letter to George Jeffreys (March 3, 1937), Elim Achives, Malvern. Jeffreys did agree to meet the Executive to discuss the issues in more detail; George Jeffreys, letter to E. J. Phillips (March 11, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern. The notes from the meeting indicate that Jeffreys 'assured the meeting that he was satisfied with the position now we had assured him of his freedom re B.I'; E. J. Phillips, 'Notes from an Unofficial Executive Meeting' (March 12, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern, 2. However, the Elim Conference of 1937 makes it clear that Jeffreys in the end was not 'satisfied with the position.'

controversy.[94] Nevertheless, before the conference he wrote a letter from his hospital bed to Boulton, Hathaway, Corry, Kingston and Smith and advised them how to repudiate Jeffreys' attempts to make BI acceptable in Elim. Phillips also wrote a letter to Jeffreys where he pleaded with his old friend not to split Elim over BI. He states frankly that due to Jeffreys' insistence on making BI acceptable in Elim, there is a 'present crisis in the work' and the whole movement is now 'on the edge of a precipice.'[95]

The 1937 conference was made aware of the correspondence earlier in the year between Jeffreys and the Executive Council on the question of BI.[96] The minutes of the conference also note how,

> After much discussion, Principal suggested that possibly the only way to come to a satisfactory solution of the question of doctrine would be to cut out all three schools of thought, viz: Historicist, Futurist and National Historicists (British Israel).[97]

This debate continued the following day and there seemed to be a genuine desire to keep the movement united. Samuel Gorman followed Jeffreys' thinking and

> suggested that if the subject of Prophecy was likely to cause any division in our Churches, he considered it would be best to drop the question of Prophecy altogether, and limit our preaching to the pure Evangelical message of the Gospel.[98]

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[94] Writing to Jeffreys, Phillips states that 'the Doctor has told me that he considers my illness was brought about by the mental strain of the past few months following years of overwork'; E. J. Phillips, letter to George Jeffreys (September 7, 1937), Elim Archives, Malvern.

[95] Phillips, letter to George Jeffreys (September 7, 1937).

[96] Minutes of the 'Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance: Annual Ministerial and General Conferences, 13th September 1937,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 2-3.

[97] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1937), 3.

[98] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1937), 7.

This view, however, was challenged by Robert Mercer, who argued that if Gorman's proposal was adopted 'some feeling would remain that we were cutting out about one third of the Bible.' Consequently, argued Mercer who seemed to be an advocate of BI, a more conducive way forward was to lift the conference ban of 1935 on BI.[99]

Despite the willingness of the conference to seek a compromise, not teaching biblical prophecy would have impinged on Elim trying to articulate one of its core doctrines (i.e. Jesus as coming King) and thus this option could not be accepted. However, at the same time allowing for the teaching of BI in Elim would have meant that doctrines that were considered unscriptural and divisive by a majority of the movement's ministers could be taught within Elim, which made it an implausible option for the conference. In other words, the content and rationality of the Elim argument could not allow for either of these two options to be adopted. Thus, the following two resolutions were passed. First, it was

> RESOLVED that this Conference is of the opinion that there is sufficient common ground in the main schools of Prophecy to allow scope for teaching on this point without encroaching on debatable ground of Prophetical interpretation, and that where difficulties arise in a local Church over the teaching of debatable points of Prophecy, the Minister of such Church should be requested by the Council to keep to the common ground.[100]

This resolution acknowledged that the three schools of prophecy within Elim effectively still shared Elim's Fundamental Truth of dispensational pre-millennialism, it encouraged ministers to focus on this key doctrine, and steer away from the more debatable points. However, the second resolution reaffirmed the 1935 Conference ban

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[99] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1937), 7.
[100] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1937), 8.

on the teaching of BI in Elim's Direct Government Churches and advised against Elim ministers appearing on BI platforms. This clearly still identifies BI as the minority and opposed prophetic school in Elim. Both of the resolutions were passed with 59 in favour, 21 against and six abstaining.[101]

Therefore, in the 1937 conference Elim once again confirmed its rejection of BI and Jeffreys had now for the fifth time (1932, 1933, 1934, 1935 and 1937) to bring BI teaching into Elim in an Elim Conference, despite his promise at the 1935 conference that he would never do so again. The conference discussion and decision also point out how Elim could not do away with its core doctrine of Jesus as coming King, including the auxiliary hypothesis of biblical prophecy surrounding it, but in light of its rationality neither could it accept BI which it believed to be unscriptural and therefore irrational.

BI would not be discussed at the 1938 or the 1939 Elim Conference, despite there being a real threat of Jeffreys resigning from Elim. Nevertheless, a resolution was passed in the 1938 conference where all ministers and probationers needed to sign Elim's Fundamental Truths.[102] Moreover, it was agreed that 'doctrinal questions [were] to be decided by the Conference with power in the hands of the Executive to deal with any matter between Annual Conference.'[103] The first resolution guaranteed that all Elim ministers would support the essential Elim argument and the second resolution ensured that no local Elim church could alter the doctrinal statements of the movement or its agreements about teaching certain doctrines (e.g. BI)

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[101] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1937), 8.
[102] Minutes of the 'Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance: Ministerial Conference Meeting, 12th September 1938,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 1.
[103] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1938), 5.

without the conference's approval. The second resolution, namely, the notion that 'matters of doctrine be decided by the Ministerial Conference and not by the local church' was also reaffirmed at the 1939 Elim Conference.[104]

5.3. 'Set Your House in Order:' The Question of Church Government

Although Jeffreys had expressed a need to reform aspects of Elim government ever since the 1934 Deed Poll,[105] in 1937 he became determined to do so. In January 1937 Jeffreys wrote to Phillips that 'I am more convinced than ever that the message I told you of, "set your house in order," is a Divine command which I personally dare not disobey.'[106] In other words, Jeffreys believed that he now had a divine mandate to reform Elim.

In fairness to Jeffreys, despite the introduction of the Deed Poll in 1934 with the attempt to provide a coherent constitution and working governance for Elim, the structure of Elim remained complex. There were churches that were part of the central government (i.e. Direct Government Churches), churches that were governed by a founding minister of the local church, and churches governed by deacons of the local church. Desmond Cartwright estimates that in 1938 there were 89 churches ('most of the larger churches') under Direct Government and 90 in the other two groups.[107] The churches and ministers under central government were effectively the inner circle of Elim and there was a sense among the other ministers that they

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[104] Minutes of the 'Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance: Ministerial Conference November, 20th November to 1st December, 1939,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 5, 8.
[105] Indeed the Deed Poll itself was an attempt to reform Elim's government.
[106] Jeffreys, letter to Phillips (January 26, 1937).
[107] Cartwright, *The Great Revivalists*, 119.

were not a central part of the movement.[108] Furthermore, as reflected in the Elim Conference

minutes, from the mid to late 1930s there was a desire among Elim ministers to make the

Conference (rather than the Executive Council) the governing body of Elim; there were

discussions about increasingly including the local churches in the Conference through lay

representation (this was particularly driven by the tensions in the Irish churches); devolving

some responsibilities of the central headquarters to district presbyteries; attempts to give the

local church greater autonomy *vis-à-vis* its leaders (Local Church Officers); and clarifying the

ownership of property. Therefore, Jeffreys did have some justification to reform Elim's

institutions. Indeed, he believed that by making these structural changes the Elim argument

would gain new ground. Or in his own words:

> I am persuaded that if we can consolidate our Ministerial Conference as the heart of
> Elim and at the same time include all in the new 'Elim Church', and rules broad
> enough to include all, we shall see a greater move for God in this country and foreign
> lands.[109]

However, as seen in Phillips' 1939 Conference speech, Jeffreys suffered from two main

weaknesses as the potential reformer of Elim. First, he was inconsistent in his proposals.

Phillips bluntly remarked that Jeffreys was bringing 'something different every year' and

some of these proposals 'are totally opposed in principle to others.'[110] This statement is

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[108] The 1936 Conference minutes read that 'Some felt that the L.C.G. ministers had not the same status as D.G., but this was denied'; Minutes of the Elim Conference (1936), 2. Presumably those who felt this way were the local church government ministers and those who denied this were the Executive Council and ministers of the Direct Government churches.

[109] George Jeffreys, 'Typed Manuscript of 1938 Conference Speech,' (September 12, 1938) Elim Archives, Malvern, 4.

[110] E. J. Phillips, 'Typed Manuscript of 1939 Conference Speech on George Jeffreys,' (November 21, 1939), Elim Archives, Malvern. 4.

supported by a simple reading of the correspondence between Jeffreys and Phillips, as well as the Conference minutes from 1933 to 1939.[111]

Second, and more importantly for my argument in this chapter, many in Elim believed that Jeffreys attempted to revise the movement's structure primarily to bring in BI. Based on Phillips' notes this was certainly his view, as well as the view of the elected members of the Executive Council.[112] Although Jeffreys always publicly denied that this was his motivation, Phillips claimed that Jeffreys personally told him in 1937 that he had introduced the Local Church Government scheme for the 'purpose of making an outlet for B.I.'[113] This would certainly explain Jeffreys attempt to disband Elim's Direct Government Structure by introducing a new more inclusive body consisting of all ministers and lay representatives, as the ban on BI applied to Direct Government churches and BI was primarily opposed by its ministers. This interpretation is also made more plausible by the fact that in the conference debates the question of BI and church government were often closely discussed.[114] Furthermore, Jeffreys' aired 'dissatisfaction' with the Deed Poll of April 1934 does only seem to come after the Elim Conference in September 1934 when Leech lost the BI debate to Phillips and when the Conference issued a ban on BI.

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[111] Cartwright writes that Jeffreys 'basic problem was... his constant change of mind;' Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists*, 139. Canty reflected that Jeffreys 'kept changing things simply because he could not express in these constitutions what he wanted;' George Canty, letter to Desmond Cartwright (July 3, 1992), Elim Archives, Malvern. Canty's reading of the events suggests that Jeffreys rightly saw the need to bring greater freedom in Elim but ironically he sought to do so with constitutions, which Canty implies are restrictive by nature.

[112] Phillips, 'Conference Speech Notes' (1939), 2-3.

[113] Phillips, 'Conference Speech Notes' (1939), 3.

[114] For example, in Elim's 1935 Conference, Local Church Government is discussed under the same subheading as BI; Minutes of the Elim Conference (1935), 9-10. And in Elim's 1937 Conference, Jeffreys proposal for Elim's new structure under two divisions of 'Jubilee Concentration' and 'Forward Movement' led to the discussion on BI; Minutes of the Elim Conference (1937), 7.

Now, it would be inappropriate to simply dismiss the various other reasons for Jeffreys aspiration to reform Elim's structures. Nevertheless, it does appear that BI was a major (perhaps *the* major) contributing factor for Jeffreys' desire to reform Elim with a view of making BI acceptable in Elim. Jeffreys managed to initiate a number of institutional changes in Elim (see below), but these reforms failed to make room for BI; hence, he resigned.[115]

5.4. The 'Epistemological Crisis' and its Resolution

In writing to Phillips on 9th December 1936 Jeffreys seems to have first explicitly mentioned his plan to step down as the leader of Elim.[116] At the 1938 Elim Conference he expressed this view publicly when he gave 'the Conference an ultimatum, stating that the Conference must introduce a new legislative body with lay representation or else he would have no alternative but to resign in six months time.'[117] Despite this threat, the Conference did not agree to Jeffreys' demand. However, rather than resigning, Jeffreys withdrew his resignation. Nonetheless, Jeffreys threat was a sign of things to come.

When the next Elim Conference commenced in 20th November 1939,[118] Jeffreys and the Executive Council were at loggerheads. Prior to the Conference both sides had sent various circular letters to the ministers presenting their opposing views on church governance. Indeed, the relationships seem to have deteriorated to the point that Jeffreys decided not to attend the Conference in person. Instead he was represented by a group of close allies and on occasions

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[115] Kay shares this view; Kay, *George Jeffreys*, 348.
[116] George Jeffreys, letter to E. J. Phillips (December 9, 1936), Elim Archives, Malvern.
[117] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1938), 2.
[118] The Conference had been postponed due to the start of the Second World War.

he appeared in person to make a statement to the Conference. His decision to absent himself in a time of looming crisis was, to say the least, unappreciated by the delegates.[119]

A key event at the Conference was Phillips' carefully crafted response to Jeffreys' circular letter to the ministers. As already discussed, Phillips identified that he and the elected members of the Executive Council were of the view that Jeffreys' motivation to change Elim's governance was to bring BI into Elim. However, he also spelled out Jeffreys' inconsistencies on matter of policy over the years. After judicially providing a number of historical examples to support this assertion, Phillips bluntly concluded that the 'troubles in our work to-day [are] entirely caused by G.J' and that 'G.J. [is] totally unfitted for the business side of the work of God.'[120] By any standards, this was a devastating speech for Jeffreys. Indeed, Neil Hudson notes that in the speech Phillips essentially destroyed 'Jeffreys' credibility' in front of the whole Conference.[121] William Kay echoes this sentiment when he writes that in Phillips' speech 'the mystique of Jeffreys was stripped way and he was shown as a demanding and inconsistent boss capable of making costly mistakes.'[122]

Nevertheless, despite Phillips' damning analysis of Jeffreys the reformer, the Conference worked for days to accommodate Jeffreys' demands on restructuring Elim. But in the end, this was to no avail. Although the Conference had accommodated many of Jeffreys' proposals, on

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[119] The conference appointed 'a deputation of four to wait on the Principal to impress on him the necessity of his being present on Tuesday evening,' but Jeffreys still 'declined to come to the conference'; Minutes of the Elim Conference (1939), 2.
[120] Phillips, 'Conference Speech Notes' (1939), 4.
[121] Hudson, 'A Schism and its Aftermath,' 289.
[122] Kay, *George Jeffreys*, 350.

1st December 1939 Jeffreys resigned from Elim.[123] In response the Conference unanimously

passed the resolution:

> That this Ministerial Conference of the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance on learning
> of the resignation of its President, Principal George Jeffreys, wishes to place on record
> its deep and heartfelt gratitude to him under God for his untiring and loyal service to
> the cause of Christ during the 25 years of his labours as Founder and Leader of the
> Alliance.[124]

Jeffreys was also asked to consider a new 'office as Moderator and spiritual leader of the

Alliance, and remain Principal of the Elim Bible College.'[125] Discussions soon began between

Jeffreys' and the Executive to realise the Conferences wishes regarding Jeffreys' new

honorary role within Elim, and the plan was to do so at the next Elim Conference (May 1940).

However, despite the desire for unity on both side, Jeffreys was not planning to simply

become an ornamental figurehead. To the contrary, even before Jeffreys had been accepted

into his new role at the Conference, he rocked the Elim boat by yet again bringing up BI.

On 29th April 1940, W. G. Hathaway circulated the agenda for the 20th – 24th May 1940 Elim

Conference to ministers and the lay representatives from churches.[126] One of the five agenda

items focused on 'matters of doctrines outside the Fundamentals' (item 2) and another one on

'the attitude of the Elim movement to British-Israel teaching' (item 3). Days before the

Conference was due to start, Jeffreys unannounced circulated a commentary pamphlet on the

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[123] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1939), 6. For Jeffreys' personal reasons for resigning and the Executive
Council's response see; George Jeffreys, *Why I Resigned from the Elim Movement* (Ward & Foxlow, December,
1939); The Executive Council of the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance, *A Reply to the Pamphlet by Principal
George Jeffreys, entitled: 'Why I Resigned from the Elim Movement'* (London: Elim Publishing Company,
December, 1939).
[124] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1939), 7.
[125] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1939), 7.
[126] W. G. Hathaway, letter to Ministers and Lay Representatives (April 29, 1940), Elim Archives, Malvern.

agenda items to the Conference attendees in which he specifically focused on supplementary

matters of doctrine and BI, and he argued that these matters should be decided by local

churches rather than by Elim's central government.[127] This caused the Elim Headquarters to

immediately issue a letter to the recipients of Jeffreys' commentary in which Hathaway

expressed his disappointment that Jeffreys had circulated this pamphlet.[128] Hathaway also

identified six reasons why all doctrinal matters should be decided by Elim's central

government, and he seems to refer to BI as *the* cause of Elim's troubles when he writes that

'these doctrinal issues which have been at the root of our troubles are now brought to the

fore.'[129] This incident firstly highlights that Jeffreys had not changed in his conviction to

reform Elim, and secondly that BI was again at the heart of Elim's crisis.

The 1940 Elim Conference was less dramatic than the circulated letters may have suggested.

It continued a reforming agenda by deciding that (1) the Conference consisting of Ministers

and lay representatives was 'to become the Governing Body of the Movement'; (2) District

Presbyteries would be set up; (3) the Executive Council would be elected by postal votes

before the Conference; (4) a new Property Board would be introduced; and (5) the Deed Poll

would be revisited.[130] In terms of BI and other supplementary doctrines, after 'considerable

discussion' the following resolution was passed (with 83 voting for and 72 against) that 'all

questions of doctrine outside the Fundamentals be decided by the Governing Body, with

liberty of expression for different interpretations of prophecy in the churches.'[131] This

resolution with a small majority may have been a compromise in that it maintained the

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[127] George Jeffreys, 'The Forthcoming Elim Conference: The Agenda' (May 1940), Elim Archives, Malvern.
[128] W. G. Hathaway, letter to Ministers and Lay Representatives (May 17, 1940), Elim Archives, Malvern.
[129] Hathaway, letter to Ministers and Lay Representatives (May 17, 1940).
[130] Minutes of the 'Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance Conference, May 1940,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 2.
[131] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1940), 1.

Resolutions of 1938 and 1939 that the 'Governing Body' should decide supplementary

doctrines against Jeffreys' proposal, but it also allowed the possibility to express 'different

interpretations of prophecy,' although it is unclear whether this would have actually allowed

for the teaching of BI. Nevertheless, after these decisions Jeffreys accepted the invitation from

the Conference to re-join Elim as the President and its spiritual leader, and the Conference

confirmed this with a vote.[132]

Although on a surface level the Conference seemed to have reconciled Jeffreys with Elim, this

reconciliation was short-lived as on 12th November 1940 Jeffreys resigned for the second and

final time from Elim. Jeffreys offered a number of reasons for his resignation, one of them

being the inability for a local church to decide its own supplementary doctrines.[133] Elim's

Executive Council responded with a pamphlet where they expressed their frustration that

Jeffreys seemed only to be satisfied if the Conference and the Executive Council would

become 'Yes-men' and simply agree to all of his demands. They also pointed out that if

Jeffreys' so-called biblical pattern for church government were followed through, among

other things, ministers would be able to adopt 'their own peculiar doctrine or theories, as they

may wish.'[134] This war of words, primarily in the form of pamphlets, continued for some time

between the two sides.[135] Moreover, a handful of Elim ministers followed Jeffreys out of Elim

and joined a competing movement that Jeffreys started: the Bible Pattern Church Fellowship.

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[132] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1940), 4-5; see also No author, 'Unity in Elim: Mutual Recommendations,' *EE* 21, no. 11 (March 15, 1940): 173; No author, 'The Elim Conference of May, 1940,' *EE* 21, no. 24 (June 10, 1940): 379.
[133] George Jeffreys, letter to the Executive Presbytery (November 12, 1940), Elim Archives, Malvern.
[134] The Executive Council of the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance, *Elim and George Jeffreys* (January, 1941), 1-5.
[135] Cartwright refers to '34 separate leaflets;' Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists*, 138. Many of these can be accessed at the Elim Archives.

Reflecting on Jeffrey's resignation from Elim, Neil Hudson states that 'there could be little disguising that the Movement was in the gravest danger of extinction.'[136] Or to put in MacIntyrian terms, the resignation of Jeffreys propelled Elim into its first 'epistemological crisis.' So, why did Jeffreys' resignation cause an epistemological crisis in Elim? Jeffreys departure from Elim led to its epistemological crisis, because up until his resignation Jeffreys was the human embodiment of the Elim argument; that is, he was effectively the exemplification of the content (Foursquare Gospel) and rationality (Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism) of the Elim tradition. After all, Jeffreys had founded Elim, he had been its primary leader for 25 years, planted many of its churches, and brought a number of Elim ministers and members to the Pentecostal experience through his campaigns. Thus, when Jeffreys left the essence of the Elim tradition was challenged. It would have been difficult for Elim's faithful adherents to avoid thinking that if they had been wrong about Jeffreys (read: the human embodiment of the Elim argument), perhaps they were also wrong about the viability of the Elim tradition as a whole?

As already discussed, according to MacIntyre, the degree to which an epistemological crisis can be overcome by a tradition depends on the resources available within the tradition, upon its inventiveness, and their needs to be continuity within the tradition's past.[137] So how did Elim overcome this internal crisis and how was its tradition reformulated in the process?

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[136] Hudson, 'A Schism and its Aftermath,' 312.
[137] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?*, 356.

5.4.1. Returning to the Bible, the Foursquare Gospel and Evangelism

Elim's response to the crisis was effectively *ad fontes*; that is, Elim quickly reaffirmed the Bible as its grounding document. Shortly after the public announcement in *Elim Evangel* of Jeffreys' final resignation,[138] a series of articles appeared on 'Scriptural Principles of Church Government' written by senior Elim leaders with the aim of providing biblical justification for Elim's position on church governance.[139] The question of church governance was a contentious issue between Elim and Jeffreys and thus Elim needed to make sure that its argument was biblically grounded. Furthermore, when the *Elim Evangel* reported on the Conference discussion on church property, another contentious issue between Elim and Jeffreys, the resolutions of the Conference were apparently passed 'after careful and prayerful consideration, during which *Bibles were open* and *many scriptures quoted*' (my italics),[140] highlighting again the centrality of the Bible in providing epistemic warrant for the Elim tradition as it sought to overcome its crisis.

However, Elim secondly also sought return to the main content of the movement's argument. The 1941 Elim Conference issued a 'Declaration,' which was then published in *Elim Evangel* that:

> …the strife and contention that has lately arisen among us has not been engendered by
> the Spirit of God, but rather by the Adversary, in an endeavour to divert and distract
> our attention from the main purpose for which God Himself brought this work into

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[138] E. J. Phillips, 'Editorial: Principal George Jeffreys,' *EE* 22, no. 6 (February 10, 1941): 90.

[139] Charles J. Kingston, 'Scriptural Principles of Church Government – No. 1. Decisions on Doctrinal Matters,' *EE* 22, no. 13 (March 31, 1941): 203-205; J. T. Bradley, 'Scriptural Principles of Church Government – No. 2. The First Church Council,' *EE* 22, no. 15 (April 14, 1941): 227-228; Ernest C. W. Boulton, 'Scriptural Principles of Church Government – No. 3. The Call and Appointment of Ministers,' *EE* 22, no. 16 (April 21, 1941): 242-243; Joseph Smith, 'Scriptural Principles of Church Government – No. 4. Discipline in the Church,' *EE* 22, no. 17 (April 28, 1941): 267-269.

[140] E. J. Phillips, 'An Epoch in the History of Elim: A Report of the Conference of September, 1941,' *EE* 22, no. 38 (September 22, 1941): 566.

being, namely the preaching of the *Gospel* of God to all men, the dissemination of the *Pentecostal doctrines* for the edifying of believers, the proclamation and practice of the highest standard of *Christian discipleship*, the teaching *of Divine Healing*, and the quickening among true believers of the Blessed Hope of the *Return of our Lord* and Saviour Jesus Christ [my italics].[141]

What is clear here is not only the reiteration of the Foursquare Gospel (or Fivefold-Gospel with the inclusion of 'highest standard of Christian discipleship'), but also of the theological interpretation of Jeffreys' actions as orchestrated by the 'Adversary' in diverting Elim from its *raison d'être*. Thus, the Foursquare Gospel is not only reaffirmed as central to the tradition, but the actions of Jeffreys are also condemned in light of the Full Gospel. In fact, the Conference made a decision to disassociate itself completely from Jeffreys,[142] because he was seen as distracting Elim from focusing on the essence of its argument.

This attempt to take Elim back to the Foursquare Gospel during its moment of crisis is also seen in W. G. Hathaway's fourteen *Elim Evangel* articles under the title 'This Pentecost' written predominantly after Jeffreys' first resignation.[143] Furthermore, reports from the 1944 Elim Conference indicate that in trying to come to terms with the departure of its leader, the movement returned to the Full Gospel, as the members of the Conference were encouraged to 'think back again to those first principles of the early days' (W. G. Hathaway), to 'get back to

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[141] Minutes of the 'Elim Conference Representative Session, September, 1941,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 6; 'Declaration by the Elim Conference, 1941,' No author, 'Declaration by the Elim Conference, 1941,' *EE* 22, no. 38 (September 22, 1941): 569.
[142] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1941), 8.
[143] The first and last articles were W. G. Hathaway, ''This Pentecost.' I. The Pentecostal Revival,' *EE* 21, no. 20 (May 13, 1940): 305-306, and W. G. Hathaway, 'This Pentecost - No. 14: Are 'Tarrying Meetings' Necessary?' *EE* 21, no. 49 (December 16, 1940): 770-771.

Pentecost' (L. C. Quest), to restore the 'message of Pentecost' (G. L. W. Ladlow), and to not just emphasise the Pentecostal message but its 'practice' (S. Gorman).[144]

Although the doctrine of Jesus as coming King had been at the heart of the schism due to the BI controversy, this did not deter Elim from continuing to advocate its eschatological theories. The futurist and historicist interpretations of prophecy continued to capture the imaginations of Elim ministers, and during the war years Britain, Germany and Russia were boldly identified within the pages of Scripture.[145] That said, there is also some evidence to suggest that there was some movement away from making specific prophetic predictions and a desire to stick to the bare minimum of Elim's dispensational premillennialism. For example, J. Dyke urged Elim not to merely speculate within its various prophetic schools, but for its members to examine their lives to see if they 'reflect the characteristics of a sincere Christian life, for the privilege of foreknowledge carries with it the responsibility for practical Christian living.'[146]

Third, as well as seeking to ground itself anew on Scripture and reaffirm the Foursquare Gospel, Elim sought to reclaim its evangelistic and revivalist mandate. Phillips firmly stated in an editorial titled 'Elim's Task – Evangelise!' that evangelism was 'the greatest task of the Elim Movement.'[147] In another article he noted that 'Elim was founded on aggressive

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[144] No author, 'A Touch from God at the Conference,' *EE* 25, no. 23 (June 5, 1944): 178-179, 182-183.
[145] E.g. Joseph Smith, 'Will this War End in Armageddon?,' *EE* 21, no. 48 (December 9, 1940): 765; Herbert E. Ward, 'Will the British Empire Fall?' *EE* 22, no. 8 (February 24, 1941): 113-115; Frederick G. Cloke, 'Bible Study Course on the Book of Daniel – No. 6. European Government Antecedent to the Second Advent of Christ – Chapter VIII,' *EE* 22, no. 31 (August 4, 1941): 477-479.
[146] J. Dyke, 'A Personal Warning: A Devotional Address at the Annual Elim Conference at Clapham, London, in September, 1941,' *EE* 22, no. 39 (September 29, 1941): 574.
[147] E. J. Phillips, 'Editorial: Elim's Task – Evangelise!,' *EE* 22, no. 40 (October 6, 1941): 592.

Evangelism,' highlighted by the names of 'Elim Evangelistic Band' and *Elim Evangel*.[148]

Indeed, when in 1945 the Evangelistic Council was established, P. S. Brewster emerged as

Elim's leading pioneer evangelist, and between 1944 and 1954 up to 34 new churches were

established.[149]

However, it seems that evangelism was not only to be the prerogative and responsibility of a

few individuals, but a new found emphasis was placed on each member to engage in personal

evangelism.[150] Samuel Gorman, Elim's Evangelistic Secretary, argued that Elim members and

ministers should not leave evangelism 'to the recognised leading preachers and evangelists of

to-day – get on with the job yourself, and God will bless you in the doing of it.'[151] This theme

of personal evangelism is very visible in the *Elim Evangels* of the period and there was even a

'Special Personal Evangelism Number.'[152] Some of this change of emphasis from evangelistic

campaigns to personal evangelism was certainly necessitated by the Second World War and

the restrictions to hold major public gatherings.[153] Nevertheless, it appears that after Jeffreys'

departure there was also a genuine desire by the senior leaders in Elim to see its argument

being embodied and promulgated by all within Elim, not just by some.

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[148] E. J. Phillips, 'The Need for Evangelism,' *EE* 22, no. 42 (October 20, 1941): 613.
[149] Hudson, 'A Schism and its Aftermath,' 319-324.
[150] See E. J. Phillips, 'Editorial: Personal Evangelism,' *EE* 22, no. 45 (November 10, 1941): 652; E. J. Phillips, 'Editorial: Evangelism,' *EE* 22, no. 48 (December 1, 1941): 688.
[151] Samuel Gorman, 'Evangelism,' *EE* 22, no. 26 (June 30, 1941): 409.
[152] *EE* 22, no. 33 (August 18, 1941); cf. J. F. Hardman, 'A Plea for Personal Evangelism,' *EE* 21, no. 47 (December 2, 1940): 744-745, 749.
[153] E. J. Phillips, 'Editorial: Pioneer Evangelism,' *EE* 22, no. 9 (March 3, 1941): 138.

5.4.2. Reforming the Structure: Democratising the Embodiment of the Elim Argument

So, it seems that Elim overcame its 'epistemological crisis'' by restating the centrality of the Bible as its foundational document, reiterating its Pentecostal mandate of proclaiming the Foursquare Gospel, and re-engaging in evangelism. However, aspects of the Elim tradition were also reformulated. Its founder, Jeffreys, who had been the face of the movement, was erased. Symbolically this 'erasing' of Jeffreys from Elim is evident in the pages of *Elim Evangel* where his picture still appears at the front page on 22nd December 1940 as the movement's central figure, but then completely disappears from 5th January 1941 onwards.[154] Linked to this, there was also an attempt to downplay the significance of Jeffreys for Elim. In other words, the movement needed to self-identify itself as more than the figure and persona of Jeffreys.[155]

Although it needs to be acknowledged that Elim did have its new champions to replace Jeffreys (particularly Phillips, W. G. Hathaway, Boulton, Smith and the new evangelist Brewster); nevertheless, Elim also reformulated its structure so that the essence of the movement would no longer be embodied in one particular person (as had been the case with Jeffreys) or even in a small group of leaders (as was the case with the Executive Council), but rather in the Conference that consisted of Elim's ministers and lay representatives of the local churches. Thus, Elim sought to move from an autocratic form of government to a democratic one, as it renewed its constitution.

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[154] See No author, 'The Elim Evangel and Foursquare Revialist,' *EE* 20, no. 51 (December 22, 1939): 801; No author, 'The Elim Evangelist and Foursquare Revivalist,' *EE* 21, no. 1 (January 5, 1940): 10.
[155] Cf. Hudson, 'A Schism and its Aftermath,' 309-310.

Ironically many of the constitutional changes towards the democratisation in Elim had been initiated by Jeffreys. Moreover, the Conference had already proven its ability to govern and make reasoned decisions from 1933 onwards, not least as it had consistently rejected the attempts of its leader to bring BI into Elim. Therefore, to make the Conference, rather than the Executive Council, the governing body of Elim was reasonable and particularly important when the movement sought new ways of embodying its argument after Jeffreys' departure.

As noted above, after Jeffreys' first resignation, the process for reform had already been actioned by the 1940 Conference with particular emphasis on making the Conference – consisting of Ministers and lay representatives – Elim's governing body and thus changing the Deed Poll. A draft of the new constitution was circulated to ministers and churches on May 1941,[156] and discussed and agreed in principle at the September 1941 Elim Conference.[157] The new constitution came into effect on January 1942 when the Deed of Variation was issued,[158] and the 1942 Elim Conference was the first under the auspices of the new Constitution.[159]

There were three main changes brought by Elim's new constitution through the Deed of Variation.[160] First, the Conference consisting of Ministers and lay representatives on an equal

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[156] E. J. Phillips, letter to Ministers and Lay Representatives (May 16, 1941), Elim Archives, Malvern.
[157] Minutes of the Elim Conference (1941), 3.
[158] Ernest J. Phillips, Joseph Smith, Ernest C. W. Boulton and W. G. Hathaway, *Elim Foursquate Gospel Alliance. Deed of Variation – of – Deed Poll by George Jeffreys dated 10th April 1934* (London: Electric Law Press, January 14, 1942).
[159] Minutes of the 'Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance. Annual Conference 1942. Representative Session,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern; Selwyn Homer, 'The Elim Conference of 1942,' *EE* 23, no. 40 (October 5, 1942): 471.
[160] These are summarised well in No author, 'What is Elim's New Constitution?' *EE* 22, no. 24 (August 25, 1941): 521, 523.

basis, rather than the Executive Council, became the Governing body of the movement. This move continued the democratisation of Elim's governance as the movement had initially been governed by Jeffreys, from 1934 onwards by the Executive Council (albeit with Jeffreys still possessing significant prerogatives), and now by the Conference. With the inclusion of lay representatives Elim could boldly claim that 'the voice of the people will be heard on the central governing body of the Movement.'[161] Second, the local church structure was changed so that it was now 'controlled by the 'Church Officers,' who will consist of the deacons together with the elders (if any) and the minister.'[162] The deacons would be elected by the members of the church and the elders by the ministers and the District Superintendent. This also signified a move from an autocratic model to a more democratic model of governance, because for much of Elim's history (the first 12 years) the local church ministers had been in complete control of their congregations. Third, a new body of managing trustees was set up to oversee church buildings. This group would be elected by the Conference and would consist of three ministers and three laymen. Furthermore, the new Constitution would ensure that the local 'church cannot take it [the building] from the denomination nor can the denomination take it away from the church.'[163] Again this was a move of sharing power as up until 1934 Jeffreys had been the 'managing trustee', from 1934 this role had been carried by the Executive Council, and now it would be an elected body of ministers and lay men.

In sum, like Elim's revised evangelism strategy that focused on empowering all within Elim to evangelise, the constitutional changes *vis-à-vis* central denominational governance, local church governance and management of buildings resulted in increasing democratisation

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[161] 'What is Elim's New Constitution?' 521.
[162] 'What is Elim's New Constitution?' 521.
[163] 'What is Elim's New Constitution?' 523.

within Elim. The Elim argument would no longer be embodied by one person (i.e. Jeffreys) or even by a group of people (i.e. the Executive Council) but by Elim's members, lay representatives and Ministers. This was the major reformulation of Elim resulting from its first 'epistemological crisis.'

5.5. Conclusion

In this section I have narrated the first 'epistemological crisis' in Elim, which was caused by Jeffreys' resignation from the movement he had founded. I have argued that at the heart of the conflict between Jeffreys and the Executive Council was Elim's hard core doctrine of Jesus as Coming King and Jeffreys' particular BI hypothesis regarding it. Thus, although I have acknowledged the various reasons that led to the schism in Elim (including the question of church governance), I have tried to demonstrate that the eschatological issue of BI was central. The general disagreement on the issues of BI between the two parties, and especially the 1934 BI Conference debate between Leech and Phillips, exemplifies the practical outworking of Elim's Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism identified in the previous chapter as Elim's tradition-specific rationality, and so also underscores that Elim's rationality is precisely biblical pragmatism with Pentecostal assumptions. That is, Elim's rationality is not mere *biblicism* nor mere *pragmatism*, but any pragmatic argument within Elim must also have some kind of prior justification based on a justified reading of a biblical text, and likewise a warranted interpretation of a biblical text must produce pragmatic results.

The resolution of Elim's epistemological crisis further underscores the essential content and method of the Elim argument. In other words, in the process of coming to terms with Jeffreys'

departure Elim deliberately utilised its biblical reasoning, reclaimed its Pentecostal (i.e. Foursquare Gospel) heritage, and sought to recapture is evangelistic zeal in promulgating the Elim argument. However, in the process Elim was also transformed structurally into a more democratic movement. To put it differently, the primary embodiment of the recalibrated Elim argument was now to be the Elim conference consisting of Ministers and lay representatives of local churches, rather than being vested in one man (i.e. Jeffreys) or a selected group of leaders (i.e. the Executive Council). In MacIntyrian terms, Elim successfully moved from stage two (epistemological crisis) to stage three (resolution) and the Elim argument continued, albeit in a modified institutional embodiment.

In summation, my narration of the Elim argument through its first epistemological crisis has not only proposed fresh historical insights into understanding Jeffreys' resignation from Elim *vis-à-vis* Elim's wider eschatology, but more importantly for my overall thesis it has substantiated my claim that the *content* (read: hard core) of the Elim tradition is the Foursquare Gospel and the tacit *rationality* is Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism.

CHAPTER 6 – THE ELIM ARGUMENT EXTENDED THROUGH TIME (II): THE CHARISMATIC/RESTORATION MOVEMENTS AND ELIM'S SECOND EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRISIS

Up until the 1960s Elim and other classical Pentecostal denominations (e.g. Assemblies of God and the Apostolic Church) could claim uniqueness in British Christianity when it came to baptism in the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts and divine healing. This, however, changed when the Charismatic movement emerged within mainline British churches from the 1960s onwards. Although many within Elim initially welcomed what they saw as the renewing work of the Spirit in the established Churches,[1] the Charismatic Renewal, and particularly the Restoration movement which flowed from it, [2] collectively instigated Elim's second epistemological crisis.

In narrating Elim's second epistemological crisis, I will: (1) briefly outline the birth of the Charismatic movement in Britain with particular emphasis on the 'Restoration Charismatics;'[3] (2) discuss how the Restoration Charismatics challenged the Elim argument by seemingly providing an updated and improved version of it; and (3) analyse how Elim resolved its crisis

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[1] John Lancaster, interview by author, Leeds, United Kingdom, August 6, 2015; Julian W. Ward, interview by author, Crewe, United Kingdom, August 7, 2017; K. John Cave, interview by author, Malvern, United Kingdom, August 17, 2017; Smyth, interview by author.

[2] I will use the terms Restoration movement, Restoration Charismatics, House Churches, British New Church movement, etc. more or less interchangeably.

[3] A distinction is commonly made between 'Renewal Charismatics' and 'Restoration Charismatics.' The first were those who believed that the purpose of the charismatic revival was to 'renew' existing churches and thus they remained within the established churches, whereas the latter were those who believed that the charismatic revival could not be fully realised within existing church structures and thus they formed new churches; William K. Kay, *Apostolic Networks in Britain: New Ways of Being Church* (Paternoster: Milton Keynes, 2007), 21; Nigel Scotland, 'From the "not yet" to the "now and the not yet:" Charismatic Kingdom Theology 1960-2010,' *JPT* 20, no. 2 (2011): 274.

by returning to the essential content and rationality of its argument, and by also reformulating its structures and re-interpreting one of its hard core doctrines. In exploring these three themes, my aim is again to provide an exemplification of the Elim argument, and therefore substantiate and develop my overall argument regarding the content, rationality and embodiment of the Elim tradition.

Like in the previous two chapters, the primary sources used in this chapter are Elim publications, reports, constitutional documents and doctrinal statements. However, to supplement the limited written material on Elim's history during this period, I have conducted five semi-structured interviews for the purpose of 'oral history.' As stated by John Creswell, '*oral history* consists of gathering personal reflections of events and their causes and effects from one individual or several individuals.'[4] Thus, these five recorded interviews are treated as individual sources which provide description and interpretation of Elim in the late-1970s and early 1980s. I do not claim that they provide a comprehensive account of how Elim ministers and members experienced Elim's second epistemological crisis; that is, I have not engaged in 'phenomenological' or 'grounded theory' empirical research.[5] That said, the five Elim ministers interviewed, namely, John Lancaster,[6] Maldwyn Jones,[7] Julian Ward,[8] John Cave,[9] and John Smyth,[10] all had influential roles within Elim during the period, and therefore

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[4] John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 3rd ed. (London: Sage, 2013), 73. For further discussion on 'oral history' see Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*. 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012),488-491; Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*. 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[5] Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 76-81, 83; Rithie, *Doing Oral History*, 123.

[6] Lancaster was a member of Elim's Executive Council from early-1960s until mid-1980s. He also contributed to the 1981 Southport Conference; Lancaster, interview by author.

[7] Jones is the official Elim historian and he contributed to the 1981 Southport Conference; Maldwyn Jones, interview by author, Malvern, United Kingdom, July 25, 2016.

[8] Ward was the Director of Studies at Elim Bible College (now Regents Theological College) and he contributed to the 1981 Southport Conference; Ward, interview by author.

[9] Cave was the host of the 1981 Southport Conference; Cave, interview by author.

their first-person accounts provide valuable individual insights into this phase of Elim's

history.

6.1. The Charismatic Movement: The 'Renewal Charismatics' and the 'Restoration Charismatics'

A key event in the emergence of the Charismatic movement in Britain occurred in 1962 when

the Anglican minister Michael Harper was 'baptised in the Holy Spirit.' Following from this

spiritual experience, Harper went on to establish the Fountain Trust in 1964, an ecumenical

organisation with the purpose of bringing charismatic renewal to British churches. Over the

1960s and 1970s the Fountain Trust was relatively successful in encouraging the established

churches to embrace charismatic spirituality and theology.[11] It did this by holding a number of

conferences, publishing its *Renewal* magazine, and bringing together Christian leaders and

theologians from various church traditions.[12]

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[10] Smyth was the Field Superintendent, member of the Executive Council, and keynote speaker at the 1981 Southport Conference; Smyth, interview by author.

[11] David Hilborn, 'Charismatic Renewal in Britain: Roots, Influences and Later Developments,' *Evangelical Alliance: Better Together*, accessed June 20, 2015, http://www.eauk.org/church/resources/theological-articles/charismatic-renewal-in-britain.cfm; Peter Hocken, *Streams of Renewal: The Origins and Early Development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain.* Revised Edition (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), 115-122.

[12] The Elim Minister and the previous Director of Studies at the Elim Bible College (now Regents Theological College), Julian Ward, was a member of the Consultative Council of the Fountain Trust. In 1979 Ward was asked by Tom Smail to become a member of its Executive Council but was told not to accept this position by Elim's General Secretary, Ron Jones. Jones was concerned how Elim's Northern Irish Churches would react in Ward being an Executive member of a body that held some of its meetings in Roman Catholic Churches. This demonstrates some of the concerns that Elim had about the Charismatic movement, particularly when it included Roman Catholics; Ward, interview by author.

While reflecting on this period, the Elim veteran John Lancaster points out the challenge the Charismatic movement posed for Elim, as there now was a fresh movement within the historic churches which appeared to be 'outdoing' Elim in being Pentecostal. Lancaster notes that the situation was exacerbated by the fact that by the early 1960s Elim had become increasingly Evangelical at the expense of its Pentecostal ethos.[13] These two aspects, the arrival of the Charismatic movement and Elim's increasing evangelicalisation, surmises Lancaster, forced Elim to ask questions about its identity as a movement, or in MacIntyrian terms revisit the exact nature of its current argument.[14]

Nevertheless, in the end it was not the Charismatic Renewal *per se*, but the Restoration movement which flowed from the Charismatic movement that led Elim to its second major epistemological crisis. Unlike the 'Renewal Charismatics' within the Charismatic movement who emphasised the revitalisation of existing denominations, the 'Restorationist Charismatics' not only argued for the need to establish new churches freed from the structures of existing denominations, but encouraged existing Christians to leave their denominations to join what they saw as a 'fresh' move of God.[15]

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[13] By Pentecostal Lancaster means focus on baptism in the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts; Lancaster, interview by author. It is also worth noting that Elim joined the Evangelical Alliance in 1964 which fits well with Lancaster's historical analysis of Elim.

[14] Lancaster, interview by author.

[15] The difference between 'Renewal Charismatics' and 'Restorationist Charismatics' is well captured in the debate between David Watson and Arthur Wallis in *Renewal* magazine under the title 'stay in or come out.' Watson argued for 'staying in' and Wallis for 'coming out'; David Watson, 'Stay In or Come Out? New Life From Inside,' *Renewal* 52 (August/September, 1974): 10-13; Arthur Wallis, 'Stay In or Come Out? The Church in the House,' *Renewal* 52 (August/September, 1974): 14-16.

The main theological architect of the 'Restoration Charismatics' was Arthur Wallis.[16] Wallis had an Open Brethren background and thus had been nurtured in an environment emphasising the primacy of local congregations and the ineffectiveness of denominations.[17] In 1951 he was 'baptised in the Holy Spirit,' but rather than joining a Pentecostal denomination he began advocating for a revival which would break down denominational walls and unite the universal Church ready for the second coming of Christ.[18] From the early 1970s onwards he began to increasingly work towards the achievement of this restorationist goal, and in 1972 he invited five men (Bryn Jones, Peter Lyne, David Mansell, Graham Perrins and Hugh Thompson) to his home to discuss eschatology.[19] This gathering proved to be momentous by bringing together key leaders with a shared vision for the charismatically restored church and can in effect be seen as the birth of the British Restoration movement. The six men formed covenant relationships with each other and after John Noble joined their ranks they became known as the 'magnificent seven' (John Noble joined the group after Bryn Jones prophesied that 'seven shall be your number, and thrice you shall meet').[20]

The so-called 'magnificent seven' met at least three times and then decided to broaden the leadership by inviting seven others (Gerald Coates, Barney Coombs, John MacLaughlin, Campbell McAlpine, Ian McCullogh, Maurice Smith and George Tartleton) into their number

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[16] Andrew Walker identifies Wallis as the 'theological architect' of Restorationism together with David Lillie; Andrew Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom: The Radical Christianity of the House Church Movement*. Fully Revised and Expanded Edition (Guildford: Eagle, 1998), 21.

[17] Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 52. Walker is of the view that the roots of Restorationism can be identified in the Brethren Movement, the Catholic Apostolic Church and classical Penteecostalism; Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 51-53.

[18] See Arthur Wallis, *In the Day of Thy Power* (London: Christian Literature Crusade, 1967). The first edition was published in 1956.

[19] Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 75; Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 24.

[20] Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 76.

and so making the 'magnificent seven' the 'fabulous fourteen.'[21] However, as early as 1974

onwards the 'fabulous fourteen' began to show signs of having two factions, with John Noble

leading in the south and Bryn Jones in the north.[22] This was not just a geographical divide but

there appears to have been personality differences and stylistic preferences between the

northern and southern 'brothers.' Moreover, the northern leaders were becoming worried that

their southern colleagues were falling into antinomianism.[23] Indeed in 1976 Wallis, part of the

northern group, wrote a letter to the southern brothers (probably with the approval of Bryn

Jones) questioning their motives, raising concerns about their approach to 'law and grace,'

and even suggesting that they were being deceived by demonic forces.[24] This letter seriously

severed the relationships between the two groups and eventually led to a split between them.

Andrew Walker has famously called the northern group, albeit it included the likes of Terry

Virgo from the South East of England, as Restoration 1 (R1) and the southern grouping as

Restoration 2 (R2).[25] It is worth noting that from the beginning differences already existed

between the leaders of the Restoration movement. Nevertheless, after the split they became

clearly expressed and embodied in the two factions. The differences between R1 and R2 are

succinctly summarised by William Kay:

> R1 was the more exclusive, organised, authoritarian and radical of the two groups, and
> R2, centred largely in London, was more flexible, more expressive and more willing to
> work in conjunction with other Christian groups and agencies.[26]

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[21] Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 76; Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 24.
[22] Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 81-82. Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 25.
[23] Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 88-92, 103-108.
[24] Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 25.
[25] Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 38-42.
[26] Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 20.

Interestingly, it was R1 as the more radical wing of 'Restoration Charismatics' which seemed to pose the greater threat to Elim. Indeed, R1 appeared to directly challenge the Elim argument by providing a theologically improved expression of Pentecostalism.

6.2. The Restoration Charismatic Movement: Ecclesiologically and Eschatologically Updated Elim Argument

The theological similarities between the 'Restorationist Charismatic' (particularly R1) and Elim are noteworthy. Like Elim, the Restorationists saw the Bible as the grounding document for beliefs and practices and their outworking of biblical exposition was effectively pragmatic.[27] Their theology was also mainly Christocentric with an emphasis on conversion and believers baptism (read: Jesus as Saviour). Baptism in the Holy Spirit was also seen along Pentecostal lines as a subsequent experience to conversion, and spiritual gifts were believed to be for the contemporary Church (read: Jesus as Baptiser in the Holy Spirit and Jesus as Healer). Moreover, their theology was characterised by adventism (read: Jesus as coming King).[28]

However, despite these significant theological similarities, there were also important differences, particularly when it came to (1) ecclesiology and (2) eschatology. In terms of *ecclesiology*, Arthur Wallis consistently argued that there is only one Church which consists of people who have had a true revelation of Christ and have confessed him as their Lord.[29] Wallis further maintained that this universal Church is expressed in local congregations which

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[27] Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 134.
[28] Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 134-135.
[29] Wallis, 'Stay In or Come Out?,' 14. Wallis used Matthew 16:15-19 as his proof text.

he identified as a 'company of committed believers who could act together.[30]' In the words of Bryn Jones, 'the [local] church is the representative community of the cosmic kingdom [or universal church] in a given locality.'[31] The implication of having only one universal church expressed simply in local congregations was that there was no place for denominations. As Wallis put it:

> Our only loyalty is to Christ, and then to the local church where He wants us to be...
> But *denominational* loyalty (as distinct from loyalty to a local church that may happen to be denominational) only weakens the unity of the body as a whole.[32]

This universal Church of Christ embodied in the local church (not institutions or denominations) was understood to be a charismatic community which should manifest the four/five offices ('gifts') of Ephesians 4:11, as well as the 'spiritual gifts' of 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11.[33] These charismatic congregations were believed to be living organisms which would freely worship together and function naturally under the governance of leadership teams consisting of apostle(s), prophets, evangelists and pastor teachers. The 'glue' that would hold the members of a congregation together, unite the various local congregations, and allow the leaders to lead at local and national level, was not to be a constitution or a doctrinal statement, but 'covenant' relationships between the various members of the congregation and their leaders.[34]

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[30] Wallis, 'Stay In or Come Out?,' 14.
[31] Bryn Jones, 'What is the Church?,' *Leadership Today – a supplement to Restoration magazine*, 3 (no date), accessed August 26, 2017, http://storage.cloversites.com/shakedesign/documents/Leadership%20Today%20Supplement%203.pdf.
[32] Wallis, 'Stay In or Come Out?,' 16.
[33] Jones, 'What is the Church?'; Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 173.
[34] Jones, 'What is the Church?' Walker rightly points out that the apostles in restorationist ecclesiology in having authority over the local churches which they had established and local churches which had willingly submitted to their 'authority' means that the leadership can be 'described as charismatic apostolate;' Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 151.

The Restorationist ecclesiological vision challenged Elim on three fronts. First, it questioned

Elim's denominationalism. This anti-denominational stance would have found at least some

resonance within Elim, if for no other reason that Elim itself had developed into a

denomination by default rather than by design (see chapter 3), and its founder George Jeffreys

had himself boldly proclaimed in the halls of Royal Albert Hall that

> Thank God we are living in days when, as far as spiritual people are concerned,
> denominational walls are falling flat before the trumpet call to stand uncompromisingly
> for the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible.[35]

Second, the biblical emphasis on (local) church governance managed by an apostolic team in

line with Ephesians 4:11 and united by deep relational connections, would have made Elim

question its local church leadership structure. In fact, already in 1972 Elim's 'Doctrine of the

Church Committee' had concluded that the movement's leadership structures were too

clerical and that its concept of deacons in local churches was unbiblical.[36] Third, the freedom

and charismatic enthusiasm flowing from the Restorationist ecclesiology provided new

vibrancy compared to the seemingly old-fashioned subculture of Elim and its diminishing

Pentecostal fervour (see Lancaster's comments above).[37]

However, it was not *just* the ecclesiology of the Restoration movement that challenged Elim,

but its *eschatology* also seemed to provide 'greater hope'. In other words, the Restorationist

Charismatics provided a more optimistic eschatological imagination regarding the future. As

discussed above, Elim's eschatology was essentially dispensational premillennialism that

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[35] Jeffreys, *The Miraculous Foursquare Gospel: Supernatural*, 2.
[36] No author, 'First Interim Report of the Doctrine of the Church Committee' (1972), Elim Archives, Malvern, 5.
[37] Maldwyn Jones also notes that by the arrival of the Restoration movement there was increasingly a 'dryness' in Elim regarding the 'gifts of the Spirit'; Jones, interview by author.

expected 'things to get worse' before Christ would return (see 5.1.1.). In contrast, the

Restorationist eschatology was post-millennial or amillennial.[38] As pointed out by William

Kay, the basic difference was that 'restorationism exchanged stoic pessimism for charismatic

optimism.'[39] This positive eschatology is well captured by Andrew Walker when he writes

that

> The 'end-time', which Restorationists believe is now, will be characterized not so
> much by world chaos and 'wars and rumours of wars,' but by an outpouring of God's
> Spirit, culminating in the establishment of the Kingdom that is ready and fit for the
> return of the King.[40]

The appeal of this 'charismatic optimism' for Elim was not only in the Charismatic

Restorationists providing biblical arguments for their perspective, but it also fitted better with

the 'popular mood of the 1970s and 1980s.'[41] That is, for the experientially and pragmatically

minded Elim members and ministers, postmillennialism seemed a good way forward, not least

when after 60 years the assumed imminent apocalyptic destruction of the world had not yet

taken place despite the Elim tradition going through World War I, World War II, and three

decades of the Cold War.

In conclusion, the Restoration Charismatic movement in many ways appeared to be providing

an updated version of the Elim tradition. On one hand, it shared to a great extent Elim's

rationality of biblical pragmatism and theological emphasis on aspects of the Foursquare

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[38] See Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 141; Scotland, 'From the 'not yet' to the 'now and not yet',' 277;
Andrew Ewen Robertson, 'The Distinctive Missiology of the New Churches, an Analysis and Evaluation' (PhD
dissertation, University of Wales, 2014), 8.
[39] Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 29.
[40] Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 40. Arthur Wallis was already expressing these sentiments in 1956; see
Wallis, *In the Day of Thy Power*, 35-42.
[41] Malcolm Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 29.

Gospel, which would have made Elim members and ministers feel at home in the Restoration movement. On the other hand, in light of this shared rationality, it also provided ecclesiological and eschatological modifications which could be seen as improvements to the existing Elim tradition. These improvements on first appearance were justified in light of the Bible, and pragmatically seemed to have strong warrant as the Restorationists were growing as a movement and manifesting charismatic 'signs' in their activities, while Elim appeared to have lost much of its Pentecostal focus and was not presently experiencing significant growth.[42] In other words, *prima facie* the Restoration movement provided an updated Elim argument and so presented itself as a more progressive tradition.

6.3. The 'Epistemological Crisis' and its Resolution

The Restoration movement was not only presenting itself as a 'restored' and 'renewed' expression of the Elim argument, but it also invited Elim churches and ministers to join its ranks in building what is saw as the restored Church. For example, the Dales Bible Week organised by Bryn Jones was in the words of Walker a 'successful recruitment office for R1' with respect to 'Baptist, Elim and Assemblies of God churches.'[43] Kay also points out how the first edition of Bryn Jones' *Restoration* magazine was 'sent out free of charge to various

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[42] Julian Ward is of the view that in the 1970s Elim was becoming stagnant; Ward, interview by author. This view is corroborated by Philip Walker who refers to years 1961-1980 as one of Elim's 'least productive as far as the planting of new churches is concerned;' Phillip L. Walker, 'Church Growth Report,' *1993 Elim Conference Reports*, Elim Archives, Malvern, 70.

[43] Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 115. Ironically the Dales Bible Week had developed from the Capel Bible Week held at the ground of the Elim Bible College. Walker states that Elim did not have 'much to do with the whole enterprise.' Philip Hidderley supports this by noting that although the college Principal Wesley Gilpin spoke on occasions at some of the meetings, he was not involved in organising the Bible Week. In fact, Hidderley notes that in a personal conversation Gilpin raised concerns about the Bible Week due to its anti-denominational and anti-bible college rhetoric. Apparently his concerns were also shared by Elim's Executive Council; Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 84-85. Philip Hidderley, conversation with author, Malvern, August 30, 2017.

people including ministers of Elim Pentecostal churches,'[44] and John Cave remembers leaders of R1 directly asking Elim ministers to join them (although he was not personally approached).[45] Indeed, by the early 1980s Elim had lost some of its ministers and congregations to the Restoration movement,[46] and Elim's national leaders feared that if nothing was done a schism within Elim was imminent.[47]

It was the Southport Conference of 1981 that launched the process of instigating new reforms within Elim, with the aim of overcoming the potential crisis.[48] This two and a half day Conference gathered 200 Elim ministers and allowed the movement to discuss the current state of Elim in groups and subgroups.[49] John Smyth set the context for the Conference in his opening keynote speech by articulating how the 'House Church Movement' (i.e. Restoration movement) was posing a challenge for Elim and he advised Elim to reform.[50] The agenda for the discussion groups was clearly influenced by the Restorationist themes and were: (1) 'Ministry and Leadership' with respect to its 'purpose' (Section A), role 'in the local church' (Section B) and 'in the Church as a whole' (Section C); (2) 'Law and Grace' (Section D); (3) 'Church Membership' (Sections E and F); (4) 'Worship' (Section G); and (5) 'The Basis of

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[44] Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 22.

[45] Cave, interview by author.

[46] Maldwyn Jones believes that by 1980 Elim had lost six congregations; Jones, interview by author, 2016. John Smyth in his 1981 Southport address refers to four Elim congregations joining the Restoration movement; John C. Smyth, 'Southport Conference: Keynote Address,' in *Southport Papers: Discussion Document* (1981), Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 4.

[47] Maldwyn Jones reckons that without the Southport Conferences 'without a doubt' Elim would have lost at least 100 churches to the Restoration Movement; Jones, interview by author.

[48] Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 30. The Conference was called for by Elim's General Secretary Ron Jones in his 1981 Elim Conference report and this was confirmed at the 1981 Conference; W. R. Jones, 'Secretary General's Report,' in Elim Pentecostal Church: Annual Conference 1981. Conference Agendas and Reports, 6; Minutes of the 'Elim Pentecostal Church: Annual Conference 1981. Ministerial Session,' Elim Archives, Malvern.

[49] One of the strengths of the Southport Conference was that it allowed a multiplicity of voices to be heard; that is, as well as their being keynote sessions from John Smyth, Eldin Corsie and Wesley Gilpin, 32 speakers gave papers and group discussion was effectively facilitated; see Tom W. Walker, 'Introduction,' in *Southport Papers* (1981), Elim Archives, Malvern, 1.

[50] Smyth, 'Southport Conference: Keynote Address,' 3-13.

Fellowship' (Section H) with other Christians.[51] John Lancaster refers to this period as a 'vital part' in Elim's history. He states that it was during this time that the movement yet again subjected itself to close self-analysis by asking what Elim was really about, what it believed, and how it practised those beliefs.[52] So, how did Elim conduct its self-analysis and seek to resolve its second major epistemological crisis?

6.3.1. Returning to Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism and the Foursquare Gospel

Interestingly but not surprisingly, this self-evaluation was primarily conducted through a biblical lens. For example, when Ron Jones, Elim's General Secretary at the time, called for the Southport Conference he made it clear that in exploring the issues Elim must have 'the Bible as our text book.'[53] This biblical focus is further reflected in the 1981 Southport Papers, as much of the analyses of the issues focuses on exposition of key biblical concepts and passages. Moreover, Elim's biblicism is also evident in the ensuring discussion when the report of the steering committee on church leadership at local and national levels presented its findings to the Elim Conference in 1982 on what it called the '*irreducible minimum of Scriptural guidance*' (my italics) regarding the topics in question.[54] Therefore, as with the crisis of 1939-1940, Elim again sought to ground its argument on the Bible.

However, these biblical principles were intended to be applied through the 'leading of the Holy Spirit.' Ron Jones noted that as Elim evaluated its present condition and future direction,

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[51] The Southport Papers (1981).

[52] John Lancaster, 'Elim 100,' accessed June 26, 2015, http://www.elim.org.uk/Groups/243516/ELIM_100.aspx.

[53] W. R. Jones, 'Secretary General's Report' (1981), 6.

[54] Tom W. Walker, ed.,'Report from the Steering Committee appointed by the Executive Council,' April 31, 1982, Elim Archives, Malvern, 1.

'there should be a constant freshness and awareness of the moving of the Holy Spirit.'[55] This view was shared by Jones' successor as General Secretary, Tom Walker, when he wrote that 'as we continue to search the Word and *seek the mind of the Holy Spirit*, God will surely lead us on' (my italics).[56]

Now, neither Jones nor Walker define what being 'Spirit led' looks like. Nevertheless, it is not hard to argue that in practice it is analogous with *Pentecostal pragmatism*, which I have argued in chapter four consists of *experientialism* and *experimentalism*. The *experiential* aspect expects the Spirit to lead individuals, local gatherings and Elim as a movement through an inner witness, (supernatural) wisdom, prophecy, tongue, word of knowledge, or something similar. And the *experimental* aspect then subjects the charismatic experience to pragmatic criteria of 'effects' and 'results' that ought to have been produced by a genuine leading of the Spirit; that is, the 'prophet' and the 'leading of the Spirit' is judged by its 'fruits.'

This rationality of *experiential experimentalism* (read: Pentecostal pragmatism) can be shown to be at work in Tom Walker's thinking when he writes that the 'Steering Committee [for the Southport Conference 1981] were obviously led by the Holy Spirit in the plans and format produced.'[57] So, what made Walker think that the Committee were led by the Spirit? Well, in his own words: 'That the Groups and Sub-Groups [at Southport] where the right approach *manifested itself in one of two resolutions passed by the final Plenary Session*' (my italics).[58]

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[55] W. R. Jones, 'Secretary General's Report' (1981), 8.
[56] Tom W. Walker, 'Introduction,' in Elim Pentecostal Church – Annual Conference 1982 – Conference Minutes, Elim Archives, Malvern, 1.
[57] Walker, 'Introduction,' Southport Papers (1981), 1.
[58] Walker, 'Introduction,' Southport Papers (1981), 1.

In other words, for Walker the Committee must have been led by the Spirit because the 'results' of the Conference, despite the present challenges, produced desired 'fruit.'

To give another example of Elim's Pentecostal pragmatism at work during this phase, before the second and final Southport Conference in 1984, an Elim minister called Johnny Barr apparently had a spiritual 'revelation' from 'the Lord' where Elim was called to repent regarding its 'morality, party spirit and money' or else 'the Lord' would 'remove their candlestick from its place.'[59] Barr shared this prophecy at the second Southport Conference in 1984,[60] and as a result 'scheduled business was dispensed with as the implications of the message were assimilated and responded to.'[61] Reflecting 30 years later, John Glass, who was present at the meeting and later became Elim's General Superintendent, notes that 'it is my belief that it is because of those actions [i.e. Barr's prophecy and the following repentance within Elim] that the Lord has allowed us, thirty years later, to be able to acquire the level of prime properties that we own today.'[62] Thus, again the same pragmatic rationality seems to be at work, namely, spiritual experience (i.e. prophecy) is justified by its effects (i.e. repentance by Elim ministers and future financial integrity of Elim).

However, as well as falling back on its rationality of Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism, Elim also sought to return to the essence of its argument. Wesley Gilpin – an Elim statesman and Principal of the Elim Bible College from 1958 to 1980 – gave the final speech at the 1981

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[59] John Glass, 'Southport Conference 1984,' in *Defining Moments: 100 Years of the Elim Pentecostal Church*, ed. Christ Cartwright (Malvern: Elim Pentecostal Church, 2014), 104.
[60] Altogether there were two Southport Conferences in 1981 and 1984. Between these Conferences there were obviously the Annual Elim Conferences.
[61] Glass, 'Southport Conference 1984,' 104.
[62] Glass, 'Southport Conference 1984,' 105.

Southport Conference.[63] In his speech he referred to the events surrounding the Southport

Conference as the second 'significant crisis' within Elim (implying that the resignation of

Jeffreys had been the first). He continued by pointing out that during both of these crises the

raison d'etre of Elim and its 'confessed purpose for the future' was under scrutiny. He then

went on to reflect on Elim's destiny by claiming that

> we are challenged to take the lead, with vision and inspiration, before our own people,
> in the vanguard of the cause of the *Full Gospel* and, indeed, as a significant and potent
> force in the Evangelical world [my italics].[64]

Two years later, as the movement had made important steps to recovering from its crisis, Tom

Walker highlighted to Elim's ministers and churches how Gilpin's wish had in effect been

fulfilled as the movement was now back 'in the vanguard of the cause of the Full Gospel'

(although he does not actually mention Gilpin). Writing to the 1983 Elim Conference, Walker

states that 'the ministry of the Word throughout was of high quality and clearly indicated our

determination always to stand *foursquare on the Word of God*' (my italics).[65] He then

remarked that:

> The many *saved*, *healed* or *filled with the Holy Spirit*, the large number receiving their
> call to commitment, renewal or ministry, the tremendous spirit of worship – all these
> and more made it a splendid Conference.[66]

Thus, it seems that in overcoming its moment of crisis, Elim had again returned to the essence

of its argument, that is, the Foursquare Gospel, at least if the rhetoric is anything to go by. It

was also this reaffirmation of Foursquare Gospel as the *raison d'etre* of Elim that helped it

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[63] G. Wesley Gilpin, 'Wholehearted Affirmation,' in *Southport Papers* (1981), Elim Archives, Malvern.
[64] Gilpin, 'Wholehearted Affirmation.'
[65] Tom W. Walker, 'In His Name to All Nations,' Elim Pentecostal Church – Annual Conference 1983 – Minutes of the Representative Session, Elim Archives, Malvern, 1.
[66] Tom Walker, 'In His Name to All Nations,' 2.

fend off the anti-denominationalism of the Restorationists, because Elim could maintain that as a denomination it had a special argument to make to the wider Church and the world.[67]

6.3.2. Structural and Theological Reformulations

However, Elim also changed in and through the process of overcoming its epistemological crisis. These reformulations of the Elim tradition were primarily to do with (1) *ecclesiology* and (2) *eschatology*.

Structural Changes

With respect to Elim's *ecclesiology*, or church governance structures, there were two important modifications. First, Elim devolved increasing powers to the local churches so that they were able to agree their own leadership structures, albeit with certain biblical and constitutional caveats. Before Southport 1981, Elim's local church governance was constitutionally restricted to simply adopting a diaconate Church Session that left no real room for elders.[68] This was not only considered to be ineffective but more worryingly unbiblical.[69] Consequently, the Elim Conference amended its Constitution by stipulating that the Church Session would now consist of pastor(s), elders and deacons and provide 'oversight' for the local church. Local congregations were also given freedom to appoint

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[67] Gilpin stated that given Elim's God given mandate, 'I have never participated in the prayer: 'Forgive us our denominations';' Gilpin, 'Wholehearted Affirmation.' Another fact that helped Elim rebuff the anti-denomination rhetoric of the Restorationists was that after a few years the Restoration movement could not avoid itself starting to build structures that were analogous to those of denominations; Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom*, 212-227.

[68] Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 30; Jones, interview by author, 2016.

[69] The unbiblical nature of Elim's concept of deacons governing the local church was of great concern in Southport; Southport Papers 1981, A1, B1, B13.

elders and deacons in a manner of their choosing, although the method of appointing elders and deacons needed to be approved by Elim's Head Quarters.[70] This constitutional change had been clearly influenced by the Restoration teaching on Ephesians 4:11 and the importance it gave to elders in a local church. Hence, in a sense Elim simply adopted the Restorationist local church structure, although the justification for Elim's change was always made on biblical grounds, as well as the pragmatic hope that perhaps 'greater spiritual renewal would ensue' as a result of this more biblical model of governance.[71] The local churches also now had greater autonomy, which in turn gave them greater freedom to adopt Restoration style of worship and an ability to more effectively manage their church members.[72]

The second modification regarding Elim's church structure came with regionalisation in 1985.[73] The Restoration movement had a huge emphasis on (covenant) relationships, including relationships between 'elders' and 'apostolic leaders.' This was seen as lacking within Elim and as a result many ministers felt isolated, despite the districts that had been introduced during the 1940s.[74] Thus, the idea of introducing regions and regional leaders was to help ministers connect better with each other and also for them to have a personal pastor in

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[70] Elim Pentecostal Church: Annual Conference 1983. Conference Agenda and Report, Elim Archives, Malvern, 2-3. Malcolm Hathaway notes that that 'three main styles emerged' regarding choosing local church leadership structures. 'Those keeping the original structure elected deacons; some chose to have elders, nominated by the church session and confirmed by a vote of the members; while other chose to have elders appointed without a vote of the members;' Malcolm Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 30.

[71] Malcolm Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 30.

[72] Worship and church membership where two other major themes discussed at Southport; Southport Papers 1981, Sections E, F and G.

[73] John C. Smyth, 'Formation of Regions,' in Elim Pentecostal Church: Annual Conference 1985. Conference Agendas and Reports, Elim Archives, Malvern, 75-77; Minutes of the 'Elim Pentecostal Church: Annual Conference 1985. Representative Session,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 8-9.

[74] See Southport Papers (1981), B13.

the regional leader.[75] The process of regionalisation was rolled out gradually and, according to the Elim Conference Minutes, provided welcome improvements,[76] although Malcolm Hathaway has suggested that in the end the 'result was a rather bureaucratic structure which inhibited the original objective.'[77] Either way, the aspiration at least was to make Elim more relationally connected and devolve power from the centre to the regions.

In sum, both of the ecclesiological changes (i.e. local church governance and regionalisation) demonstrated Elim's flexibility to reform its structures, if there were good biblical and pragmatic reasons for doing so. Moreover, they both show increasing devolution of power within Elim from the Headquarters/Conference to the local churches and regions.

Eschatological Changes

The change in Elim's *eschatology* is the second major modification following from its second epistemological crisis. As has been noted above, the Restoration movement was characterised by a more optimistic post-millennial and/or amillennial eschatology in comparison to Elim's apocalyptic premillennialism. This, however, changed in 1993 when the Elim Conference adopted a revised Statement of Fundamental Truths and deleted premillennialism as one of its Fundamental Truths.[78] Apparently the removal of premillennialism was 'decided upon on the

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[75] However, it should be noted that Elim did have districts and district superintendents at the time, which arguably could or should have fulfilled this function.

[76] T. Gordon Hills, 'Regionalisation Report,' Elim Pentecostal Church: Annual Conference 1987. Conference Agendas and Reports, Elim Archives, Malvern, 64-65.

[77] Malcolm Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 31.

[78] Minutes of the 'Elim Pentecostal Church: Annual Conference 1993. Representative Session,' Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, Item No. 19 and 27. The revisions were substantial. The significant change from the previous Fundamentals was to provide fuller theological statements covering main theological themes, such as, theology (proper), christology, pneumatology, hamartiology, soteriology,

grounds that the Fundamental truth is that He [Jesus] will return and not the context of that coming in relation to a fixed period of time.'[79] What is interesting about the revision is that the previous precision regarding the doctrine of the second coming was removed. Therefore, although the hard core doctrine of Jesus as coming King was upheld by the Conference, the interpretation of this doctrine (or auxiliary hypothesis) of premillennialism was removed. Moreover, the nature of Christ's return was left vague with simply affirming that He will return to 'reign in power and glory' in a 'personal,' 'physical' and 'visible' manner.[80] This does raise the question whether Elim, by removing premillennialism and expressing general vagueness about its eschatology, was starting to show signs of becoming in the words of Lakatos a 'degenerative scientific research programme' regarding one of its hard core doctrines.

It has been suggested that the removal of premillennialism was not directly connected to Elim's epistemological crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s as such.[81] However, if there were no connection between the two, it would seem like an amazing coincidence of history for Elim to change its eschatological views to allow Elim ministers to subscribe to postmillennialism and amillennialism after a direct challenge from the Restoration movement on this very issue few years previously. The fact that this change happened only twelve years after the first Southport Conference is not surprising, as it is not uncommon for *official*

ecclesiology, missiology and eschatology, even if these technical terms are not used. The Foursquare Gospel element is no longer explicitly stated compared to the 1934 document, but it is still present in the various articles.

[79] John C. Smyth, 'Fundamental Committee Report,' in 1993 Elim Conference Reports, Archives of the General Superintendent, Elim International Centre, Malvern, 63. The Committee consisted of W. Crawford, E. R. Corsie, M. Jones, J. Lancaster, I. W. Lewis, J. C. Smyth, J. Ward and K. Warrington.

[80] Elim Pentecostal Church: Annual Conference 1993. Conference Agenda and Reports, Elim Archives, Malvern, 91; cf. *The Constitution of the Elim Pentecostal Church (Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance)*. 2016 Edition. The Elim Pentecostal Church, Malvern, United Kingdom, 2.

[81] E.g. Ward did not see an explicit connection between the two; Ward, interview by author.

doctrines to be changed after and in response to the *actual* doctrines having changed in practice some time before. Thus, it is proposed that Elim changed its interpretation of Jesus as coming King as part of its reformulations in overcoming its second epistemological crisis. This is also further evidence to suggest that it is not the Fundamental Truths (e.g. premillennialism) that is the hard core of the Elim tradition, but the hard core is the Foursquare Gospel (e.g. Jesus as coming King) implicit in the Fundamental Truths. That said, as has already been suggested, this particular modification in the Fundamental Truths does raise questions whether something in the hard core of Elim was also altered.

6.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to establish that it was the Charismatic movement, and the Restoration Charismatics particularly, that caused Elim's second epistemological crisis. By the late 1970s Elim had lost some of its Pentecostal zeal and as a movement was not really growing. This made it vulnerable to the emergence of the Restoration movement which not only shared Elim's basic Pentecostal rationality and theology, but also offered novel views on ecclesiology and eschatology. In other words, Restorationism seemed to provide an improved and updated version of the apparently stagnant Elim argument. Elim, however, responded to this challenge by reaffirming its rationality of Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism and theology of the Foursquare Gospel. It also reformulated its ecclesiological structures, and was ready to reinterpret one of its hard core doctrines of Jesus as coming King by removing its insistence on premillennialism. Therefore, in MacIntyrian terms Elim successfully moved from stage two (epistemological crisis) to stage three (resolution) by remaining true to its core beliefs and

rationality, while demonstrating creativity and flexibility in recalibrating aspects of the Elim tradition.

In providing a historical narration of Elim's two epistemological crises in this and the previous chapter, I believe I have substantiated my claim that the *content* of the Elim *argument* is indeed the Foursquare Gospel and its *rationality* is Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism. However, the historical analysis provided seems to also suggest that the *implied opponents* of the Elim argument have broadened; that is, the 'opponent' instigating the first crisis came from inside the movement, whereas the second 'opponent' came from likeminded Charismatic Christians. The change in the implied opponents, as well as the changing context of the argument, has meant that Elim has had to revise and reformulate aspects of its argument to maintain itself as a progressive tradition. This reformulation has particularly been demonstrated in the changing *embodiment* of the Elim argument. In other words, through these crises Elim has significantly changed its institutional structures. The trajectory of the change in the embodiment of the Elim argument has been from *the few to the many*; that is, the initial Elim argument can be seen to be primarily embodied in one man (i.e. George Jeffreys), in 1934 this moved to few key leaders (i.e. the Executive Council), in 1942 it progressed to Elim ministers and representatives of congregations (i.e. the Elim Conference), before increasingly shifting to leadership teams and members of local churches (i.e. approved Church Sessions).[82] To put it in political language, there has been an increasing democratisation and devolving of power in Elim. Interestingly, this change in Elim is also reflective of the developments in western democracies. Nevertheless, this change in the way

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[82] Although it should also be noted that strengthening of the local church leadership teams has sometimes been done at the expense of consulting the local church members, and so this does also have the potential of actually creating a divide between the local church leaders and its members and thus in fact disempowering the laity.

the Elim argument has been embodied has not been done at the expense of the argument's content or its rationality, if anything it seems to have been informed by them, particularly by Elim's biblical pragmatism.

Chapters five and six have also raised some interesting questions about Elim's rationality and the hard core doctrines of its argument. Regarding Elim's rationality, the BI debate of 1934 highlighted how Elim's rationality is not *merely* biblicism or pragmatism but *biblical pragmatism*. This means, among other things, that the pragmatic beliefs of Elim must 'naturally' arise from the biblical text, which in turn begs the question what is a 'natural' reading of a text? This hermeneutical matter needs to be addressed to help clarify Elim's biblical pragmatism, and it is something that I will seek to do in chapter eight.

In terms of Elim's *hard core doctrines*, the deleting of premillennialism as a Fundamental Truth should not be quickly passed by, not least when during the movement's first epistemological crisis premillennialism was a central tenet of Elim's eschatology. To put it differently, has Elim effectively changed one of its hard core doctrines, namely, Jesus as coming King, by moving from a premillennial position to a general eschatological position? Or at least in generalising its eschatology is Elim showing signs of becoming in Lakatosian terms a 'degenerative' tradition by no longer being able to predict 'novel facts'? I will return to this question in the conclusion of the thesis.

PART III – (RE)CONSTRUCTING PENTECOSTAL BIBLICAL PRAGMATISM

I began the thesis with a search for a Pentecostal rationality, epistemology and/or theological hermeneutics that would stem from and/or be compatible with Pentecostal spirituality, beliefs and practices. In doing so I evaluated the Pentecostal rationalities of Amos Yong, James Smith and William Oliverio, Jr (chapter 1). After engaging with the valuable contributions of Yong, Smith and Oliverio, I concluded that despite the various strengths of their proposals, their rationalities and epistemologies seem to suffer from being ahistorical and non-narrative and thus are in danger of not necessarily being Pentecostal, or at least not representing any particular Pentecostal/charismatic tradition. Following from this concern, I suggested that Alasdair MacIntyre's concepts of 'tradition' and 'tradition-dependent rationality' provides a useful way forward for articulating a more historical, narrative and tradition-specific Pentecostal rationality (chapter 2).

Utilising MacIntyre's philosophical insights in constructing a tradition-specific Pentecostal rationality, however, cannot be done apart from historically exemplifying an existing Pentecostal tradition, or in MacIntyring terms articulating a Pentecostal 'argument extended through time.' Consequently, chapters three to six of the thesis have tried to narrate along MacIntyrian lines the Elim Pentecostal tradition as an example of a classical Pentecostal tradition, with particular emphasis on the context and roots of Elim (chapter 3); the early opponents, content, rationality and embodiment of the Elim argument (chapter 4); and Elim's two major epistemological crises (chapters 5-6). The underlying argument from this narration

has been that Elim's tacit Pentecostal rationality is best described as *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism* and the theological hard core constituting this rationality is the *Foursquare Gospel*. Moreover, I have tried to demonstrate that Elim has shown flexibility regarding the 'embodiment' of the argument by revising its constitution and institutional structures in order to more effectively live out the Full Gospel. This narration has not only enabled me to provide a historical, narrative and tradition specific Pentecostal rationality, but in doing so I have also presented the first intellectual history of Elim.

The purpose of the last section is to focus explicitly on Elim's tradition-dependent rationality with the aim of developing it along theological and philosophical lines. Consequently, the last section is significantly narrower in its focus compared to the previous section. In other words, whereas in section two of the thesis I have focused on the wider social, intellectual and religious context of the Elim argument (chapter 3), before narrating it with respect to its implied opponents, content, rationality and embodiment (chapters 4-6), my focus will now be explicitly on Elim's rationality of Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism. This is not because I do not consider it important to explore these other facets of the Elim argument (in fact, I will make brief comments about them in the conclusion of the thesis), but simply because I am not able to do all of this with sufficient detail within the word restrictions of the thesis. Furthermore, I believe that the broader historical narration of section two has provided the needed theological and philosophical resources to (re)construct a truly tradition-constituted Pentecostal rationality.

Therefore, section three will exclusively discuss Elim's *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism* by first exploring the *Pentecostal* aspect with particular emphasis on Elim's concept of truth (chapter 7). This I believe is a necessary precursor for a working theological rationality. After this I will bring Elim's *biblicism* under closer scrutiny with the aim of proposing an appropriate biblical hermeneutic for Elim in light of its doctrine of Scripture (chapter 8). As has become clear in chapters three to six throughout Elim's existence the Bible has remained the grounding document for its beliefs and practices, and thus the question of biblical hermeneutics cannot really be ignored when developing Elim's rationality. Finally, I will focus on Elim's *pragmatism* which is the underlying ethos of the movement's rationality. I will do so by suggesting a pragmatic theory of epistemic justification with an emphasis on both 'experientialism' and 'experimentalism.'

In doing the above, I do not claim to provide the official Elim views on Pentecostal truth, biblical hermeneutics or pragmatic justification. However, I do believe that my proposals are compatible with, and flow out of, the Elim tradition. Moreover, they are suggestive (if nothing else) of what a theological/philosophical articulation of Elim's explicit rationality and epistemology should look like, and therefore will hopefully serve as a constructive contribution in the search for a Pentecostal rationality and epistemology.

CHAPTER 7 – *PENTECOSTAL* TRUTH: PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGICAL REALISM

In chapter three I have argued that the basic theological and intellectual assumptions of Elim's rationality have been inherited from its Pentecostal and Evangelical forefathers. In other words, the underlying 'spirituality' (Land), 'social imaginary' (Taylor) and/or 'worldview' (Smith) of Elim has been significantly informed by late nineteenth and early twentieth century British Evangelicalism (particularly the Holiness movement and the Welsh Revival),[1] as well as the early British Pentecostalism exemplified in Boddy's Sunderland Conventions (1908-1914) and *Confidence* magazine. It is important to stress, not least in light of the Pentecostal scholarship that tries to distance Pentecostalism from Evangelicalism,[2] that for Elim the question has never been whether the movement is Pentecostal *or* Evangelical, but Elim has always been Pentecostal *and* Evangelical. As I have pointed out, the early Elim pioneers came predominantly from Evangelical backgrounds (chapter 3) and saw their movement as being Evangelical (chapter 4). Elim was also keen to join the Evangelical Alliance in 1964 (chapter 6), and throughout its history has shared key doctrines with British Evangelicals (chapters 4 and 6). Nevertheless, as well as being Evangelical, Elim has also identified itself (primarily) as a Pentecostal movement with certain distinctive and specific emphases implying that Elim has also gone beyond mainline Evangelicalism, although this 'going beyond' has not been perceived as going against Evangelicalism.

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[1] See Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*; Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*; Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*.
[2] See Daniel Castelo, *Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 83-125. For further discussion on whether Pentecostals are Evangelicals see Terry L. Cross, 'The Rich Feast of Theology: Can Pentecostals Bring the Main Course or Only the Relish?,' *JPT* 8, no. 16 (2000): 33-34; McGee, 'More Than Evangelical,' 289-300.

Elim's *Evangelical* Pentecostalism has naturally shared a number of basic theological beliefs with Evangelicalism *vis-à-vis* the nature of God, creation, humanity, sin, redemption and final consummation, although Elim's Evangelical *Pentecostalism* has also interpreted some of these doctrines in a distinct way. For example, the doctrine of God has increasingly been perceived through Christological and pneumatological lenses, redemption has been viewed 'holistically' with an emphasis on both the salvation of the soul and the healing of the body, and the final consummation has been understood as an immanent eschatological event.

These Evangelical and Pentecostal theological convictions have not just been seminal in constituting Elim's rationality of *biblical pragmatism*, but also in shaping Elim's tacit assumptions about the nature of *truth*. However, despite the importance of 'truth' in formulating a working rationality,[3] thus far I have paid little attention to Elim's concept of truth. Consequently, this chapter's discussion on the *Pentecostal* aspect of Elim's rationality will focus explicitly on Elim concept of truth. In exploring this, my aim is not to argue for the truth of Elim's theory of truth *vis-à-vis* its theological and philosophical competitors, but to provide a working definition of truth that is 'truthful' to the Elim tradition and thus sufficient in grounding Elim's rational enquiry according to its own standards.

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[3] It seems that even if 'truth' is not the primary epistemic goal, it certainly is a central goal of epistemic enquiry, and therefore a working definition of 'truth' is central for any epistemology and/or rationality; see Jonathan Kvanvig, 'Truth Is not the Primary Epistemic Goal,' in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, ed. Matthias Steup and Ernest Sosa (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 285-296; Marian David, 'Truth as the Primary Epistemic Goal: A Working Hypothesis,' in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, 296-312.

7.1. Pentecostal Theological Realism

Truth matters for Elim. The importance of the concept of truth for Elim was highlighted in a 2013 Elim Conference debate on changing the name of the 'Fundamental Truths' to 'Core Beliefs.'[4] Much of the rhetoric defending the phrase 'Fundamental Truths' appealed to Elim standing on theological 'truth(s),' which the majority of the Conference seemed to understand as referring to universal and objective reality, rather than on 'mere beliefs' which were taken as relative and subjective opinions. After the debate, the Conference voted in favour of maintaining the language of 'Fundamental Truths' because it concluded that 'truth' as an idea was too important to be jettisoned, even if the term 'Fundamental' was seen by many as unhelpful in the contemporary religious climate of militant religious *fundamentalism*.[5]

Nevertheless, despite the purported importance of truth for Elim, the nature of truth has received little discussion within the movement (although see 4.3.2.). Consequently, I will now try to suggest a theological concept of truth that emerges from the Elim tradition and is coherent with it. My basic assumption is that a theory of truth that is both informed by and compatible with the Elim tradition needs to be grounded in Elim's Pentecostal beliefs, it needs to be biblically based, realist in nature, and eschatological in its disposition. In light of this, I will argue that truth for Elim ought to be characterised as *Pentecostal theological realism*. Elim's theological realism can be seen to maintain and share the three common theses of realism, namely,

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[4] Elim Pentecostal Church: Annual Conference, 2013. Conference Agenda and Reports, Elim Archives, Malvern, 15. The author was present at the Conference.
[5] Indeed, the phrase 'Fundamental Truths' was changed to 'Foundational Truths' in 2015/2016; Elim Pentecostal Church: Annual Conference, 2015. Conference Agenda and Reports, Elim Archives, Malvern, 23; Elim Pentecostal Church: Annual Conference, 2016. Conference Agenda and Reports, Elim Archives, Malvern, 24. The author was present at both Conferences.

1. Reality exists independently of the human mind (Thesis 1);

2. A sufficient relationship between truth and 'beliefs' can be established; that is, true beliefs are those that 'correspond,' in one way or another, with reality (Thesis 2);

3. 'Beliefs' and 'propositions' about God and the world are either true or false (i.e. principle of bivalence) (Thesis 3).[6]

It is worth clarifying that I will not discuss the various options for 'truth-bearers' but will simply assume that 'beliefs' and 'propositions' are sufficient bearers of truth,[7] and my focus is primarily on theological truth, even if there are obvious overlaps with 'truth' generally speaking. I will begin by trying to theologically ground Thesis 1, before more explicitly focusing on thesis 2 and 3. I will seek to justify the three theses from a biblically based 'Elim' theology with particular emphasis on the doctrines of God, creation, humanity, sin, revelation, and eschatology.

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[6] These three aspects constitute William Alston's 'alethetic realism;' William Alston, 'Realism and the Christian Faith,' *IJPR* 38, no. 1 (Dec. 1995): 39. For further categorisation of the realist/anti-realist debate; see Michael Glanzberg, 'Truth,' in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed October 20, 2017, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/truth/; Christopher J. Insole, 'Realism and Anti-Realism,' in *The Oxford Handbook of The Epistemology of Theology*, 274-289.
[7] For further discussion see William P. Alston, *A Realist Conception of Truth* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 9-22; Glanzberg 'Truth.'

7.2. God as Ultimate Reality

In line with other Christian and Evangelical traditions, the basic assumption in Elim appears to be that God is the 'ultimate truth.'[8] The theological justification for believing this is based on the concept of God ontologically being *the* 'ultimate reality' as *the creator and ground of being* (see Gen. 1:1; Jn. 1:3).[9] God as creator is conceived as the only necessarily existing being, implying that everything else that exists is contingent on his existence. As the unique creator God is perceived as the source of all things and hence all of creation is dependent on God for its existence. This leads to an asymmetrical relationship between God and creation; that is, the created order is dependent on God for its existence, but God is not dependent on creation for His existence. In the language of realism, this means that the transcendent God as the ultimate reality exists independently of the creation's perceiving of Him. Or to put it differently, ultimate reality (read: God) exists independently of the human mind (Thesis 1).

In a theistic worldview affirming *theological realism* with respect to Thesis 1 is generally uncontroversial. Even James Smith – who is no supporter of 'realism as correspondence' – acknowledges 'the reality and *in*dependence of the transcendent God on whom creation depends for its existence.'[10] However, even if Thesis 1 one is believed and God is seen as the 'ultimate reality,' this need not mean that humans can have access to this 'reality' to the extent of enabling them to have sufficiently corresponding 'beliefs' about it (Thesis 2), nor allowing them to articulate truthful statements about this reality, at least not in the realist

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[8] See Hicks, *Evangelicals and Truth*, 179; Marshall, *Trinity and Truth*, 2; Mark A. McIntosh, *Discernment and Truth: The Spirituality and Theology of Knowledge* (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004), 4.

[9] However, it should be noted that Elim's Foundational Truths lack an explicit article on creation.

[10] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 106.

sense (Thesis 3). Indeed, John Hick has argued that there is the 'Real' (i.e. 'Ultimate Reality'), but the human experience of the Real is always informed by specific religious contexts and cultural-linguistic frameworks to the extent that the 'truth' of one's beliefs and propositions of the Real are found significantly wanting. To use Hick's own example, it is impossible to discern whether the Real is in fact personal or non-personal; the best one can do is to speculate that the Real is 'good or gracious, namely as the necessary condition of our highest good.'[11] In other words, there is, or at least could be real theological truths out there, but human beliefs and statements cannot accurately correspond with them.[12]

The denial of Thesis 2 and 3, despite accepting Thesis 1, however, does not seem to be justified in light of Elim's broader Evangelical/Pentecostal theology with respect to the doctrines of creation, *imago dei* (despite human 'sin'), and special revelation in Christ through the Holy Spirit. In fact, these doctrines provide good theological reasons for Elim to embrace the two remaining realist theses, namely, the possibility of human beliefs to sufficiently correspond with reality and for humans therefore to be able to make sufficient truths claims about God and his relationship with the world.

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[11] John Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 16. For a full articulation of Hick's thesis see John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*. 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
[12] Smith seems to be leaning towards this position; Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 107.

7.3. The Possibility for Beliefs and Talk about Reality

Although Elim does not have a developed theology of creation and/or humanity,[13] the movement appears to share the basic principles of other Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions. For example, Julian Ward notes in a recent official Elim publication that,

> ...all human beings were and are created in the image and likeness of God and intended to be the summit of God's creative acts (Gen. 1:26-28; Ps. 139:13, 14). We have been created as rational, moral and spiritual beings, with distinctive personalities endowed with intellects, emotions, creativity and the capacity to love and communicate.[14]

Regarding human ability to have 'true' beliefs and make 'truthful' propositions about God, even if not explicitly stated here, this seems to be assumed in Ward's statement of humans being 'created in the image and likeness of God' as 'rational' beings with intellects and communicative abilities. Indeed Peter Hicks surmises that the basic Evangelical doctrine of *imago dei* implies, among other things, that humans can relate to God and have sufficiently realist knowledge of Him. Moreover, stemming from humanity's 'God like' status there are reasons to assume that humans are also able to experience the world and interact with other people with sufficient accuracy.[15] Thus, the Evangelical and Pentecostal concept of *imago dei* seems to provide a *prima facie* theological grounding for humans to be able to have true beliefs that correspondence with the reality about God (Thesis 2), and also to be able to state and communicate these beliefs in a manner that reflects reality (Thesis 3).

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[13] Although see George Canty, *In My Father's House: Pentecostal Expositions of the Major Christian Truths* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1969), 11-20; cf. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World, Volume 3: Creation and Humanity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015).

[14] Julian Ward, 'Humanity and Sin,' in *The Message: Elim's Core Beliefs*, ed. Keith Warrington (Malvern: Elim Training, n/d), 43.

[15] Hicks, *Evangelicals and Truth*, 152-154.

That said, the concept of *imago dei* also appears to cause some limitations for the human ability to grasp truth. For a start, humans are made as *embodied* beings in the *image* of God, and as such embodied creatures and *mere* images of 'God' (rather than 'gods'), humans are not able to have 'God's point of view' on truth but are limited by their very humanness (see Gen. 3:5-6). Consequently, both Amos Yong and James Smith rightly emphasise the partial and perspectival nature of human comprehension of truth.[16]

These natural human limitations to know the truth are further exacerbated by the doctrine of 'sin.' To quote Ward again:

> Sin darkens our understanding and corrupts the image of God in us and makes us self-centred... Sin has the unfortunate consequence of turning people away from the truth.[17]

These sentiments expressed by Ward are not without support from NT theology. For example, Paul speaks of the hardening of the human hearts due to sin as resulting in people being 'darkened in their understanding' (Eph. 4:18),[18] as well as the 'ungodliness and unrighteousness' of people leading to the 'suppressing of truth' (Rom. 1:18).[19] In John's Gospel the effects of human sin *vis-à-vis* knowing the truth are equally stark, as the world is portrayed to be in 'epistemic darkness' when it comes to knowing the 'truth' about God (Joh.

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[16] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 176, 180, 182; Smith, *The Fall of Interpretation*, 10.
[17] Ward, 'Humanity and Sin,' 44-45.
[18] I am assuming Pauline authorship of Ephesians.
[19] For further analysis of Pauline theological epistemology see Richard B. Gaffin, 'Some Epistemological Reflections on 1 Cor. 2:6–16,' *WTJ* 57, no. 1 (1995): 103–124; Ian W. Scott, *Implicit Epistemology in the Letters of Paul: Story, Experience and the Spirit* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2006); Mary Healy, 'Knowledge and Mystery: A Study of Pauline Epistemology,' in *The Bible and Epistemology: Biblical Soundings on the Knowledge of God*, ed. Mary Healy and Robin Parry (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 134-158; Simo Frestadius, 'The Spirit and Wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2:1-13,' *JBPR* 3 (Fall 2011): 52-70.

8:12, 12:46).[20] Therefore, from a biblical perspective at least, Alvin Plantinga is justified in stating that 'the most serious noetic effects of sin have to do with our knowledge of God.'[21]

Following from the epistemic limitations based on humans being both embodied and 'fallen,' at least two alethiological implications can be drawn.[22] First, as well as being able to have true beliefs and to make true statements about God, humans are equally 'able' to have false beliefs and to make false statements about God. This does not undermine 'realism' (Thesis 2 or 3) as such, but it does point towards the significant likelihood of humans having false beliefs about God. In light of this, any theory of truth that takes the biblical concept of *imago dei* and human sin seriously should probably embrace some kind of fallibilism in its epistemology.

Second, and following closely from the first implication, the doctrines of creation and sin suggest that simplistic or naïve correspondence theories of truth should be avoided. To put it differently, human beliefs and articulations of reality will always be characterised by their partiality and perspectivism because humans are limited in their access to absolute truth by the very fact of being the created. To be created means to have perspectival and contextual knowledge, as there is 'no view from nowhere' or 'God's point of view' for humanity. As contextual beings humans are therefore inevitably also shaped by their (limited) experiences,

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[20] See Cornelis Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007); Cornelis Bennema, 'Christ, the Spirit, and the Knowledge of God: A Study in Johannine Epistemology,' in *The Bible and Epistemology*, 107-133.
[21] Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 214.
[22] Strictly speaking the limitations from creation are part of the 'goodness' of creation (Gen. 1:31) and therefore arguably something that humans should not try to transcend, whereas the limitations from the 'fall' are distortions to be corrected in redemption.

history, culture and linguistic abilities, and there is no obvious way of transcending these limitations. When these natural limitations are coupled with those arising from human sinfulness, human ability to have beliefs that really correspond with reality is further weakened. Consequently, a Pentecostal correspondence theory of truth should probably follow a version expressed by Amos Yong in which correspondence is seen as 'correlation,' rather than 'congruence,' meaning that true propositions need not be identical with their referents but should, nevertheless, resemble them sufficiently. Therefore, a theologically responsible 'Elim correspondence theory of truth' should acknowledge the perspectival and mediated nature of all human knowing, and thus some form of 'critical realism' is probably in order.[23]

This does re-raise the issue that are the alethiological limitations stemming from human (fallen) nature too great to be able to sustain any meaningful theory of realism (apart from Thesis 1)? And thus should Elim's realism simply accept Smith's concept of ''realism' without correspondence''?[24] Surrendering Thesis 2 and 3, however, would be moving away from what seems to be implicitly assumed within the Elim tradition. Of course having these tacit realist assumptions does not necessarily mean that one should not significantly revise or even reject them, particularly if there are good theological reasons for doing so. Nonetheless, it seems that theologically rejecting Thesis 2 and 3 would in Elim's case be a premature step. That is, once Elim's Pentecostal theology of special revelation is added into the theological mix of doctrines, with particular emphasis on the revelation of Christ mediated through the Spirit, there seems to be no reason for Elim to abandon Thesis 2 and 3.

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[23] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 167-168, 185.
[24] Smith, *Who's Afraid of Relativism?*, 101.

Like other Evangelicals and Pentecostals, Elim believes that God has and continues to make Himself known through *general* and *special revelation*. The first refers to God *generally* revealing himself 'in the things that have been made' (Rom. 1:20; cf. Ps. 19:1-6), and the latter of God *specially* revealing himself through specific actions, interactions and communicative events. These special revealing acts in a biblical framework are fundamentally culminated in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 1:3). In fact, it is the special revelation found in Christ and illuminated by the Spirit that should be essential in Elim's theory of truth, not least as the movement is Christologically focused on the pneumatically experienced Foursquare Gospel. To try sketch out the repercussion of the pneumatically mediated special revelation in Christ for Thesis 2 and 3, I will briefly interact with Johannine theology as a biblical example of what this might mean for Elim's theory of truth.

In the Gospel John, Christ is not only presented as the one who 'bears witness to the truth' (Jn. 18:37), but also as 'the truth' (Jn. 14:6).[25] That is, He is portrayed as the perfect revealer of God because He is in fact the divine *Logos* (Jn. 1:1) who was and is incarnated in human 'flesh' (Jn. 1:14). While being the embodied point of contact between humanity and 'ultimate reality,' Christ maintains His full humanity with all its corollary limitations (Jn. 4:6, 19:28), but simultaneously remains one with God (Jn. 10:30). Consequently, ultimate reality is brought to the epistemic domain of humanity as to 'perceive' Jesus is to perceive God (Jn.

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[25] See Andrew T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000).

14:9). This means that the revelation of God in Christ enables one to experience 'Ultimate Reality' by experiencing the person of Christ, despite the experiencer's limitations resulting from their (fallen) human nature. Therefore, it is not hard to argue theologically that the revelation of God in Christ enables one to form in a manageable way beliefs about God which correspond sufficiently with His 'Ultimate Reality' (Thesis 2).

Moreover, according to John, the possibility of coming face to face with the revelation of God in Christ is not just available to those who physically encountered Jesus of Nazareth in first century Palestine, but is a genuine possibility for others through the work of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the 'Paraclete' and 'Spirit of Truth' will 'teach' and 'remind' Christians about the 'truth' that is embodied in Christ (Jn. 14:26, 16:12-15); and when it comes to other humans, the Spirit will also bear 'witness' to the 'truth' (Jn. 15:26) and 'convict' them in accordance with the truth (Jn. 16:7-11). A major vehicle for the Spirit to continue this revelatory work seems to be through the witness of the written Gospel(s) (Jn. 20:31). In sum, for John the revelatory ministry of Jesus continues to have efficacy through the agency of the Spirit and thus the possibility of forming appropriately corresponding beliefs about God remains a theological possibility even after the ascension of Christ.

Interestingly in the Gospel of John, those who encounter Christ are not only expected to be able to form sufficiently accurate beliefs about Him and God (Thesis 2), but are also expected to be able to make true or false statements about God through human language (Thesis 3). For example, in the Gospel there are those who are depicted as making 'true' statements about

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God; that is, statements that correspond with the reality of God revealed in Christ. This includes figures such as John the Baptist (Jn 1:29, 34), the healed blind man (Jn. 9:38), Thomas (Jn. 20:28) and most importantly for the Gospel the 'beloved disciple' (Jn. 21:24). However, there are also those who are depicted as making false claims that do not correspond with the reality revealed by Christ, most notably 'the Jews' (Jn. 8:48) and the Pharisees (Jn. 9:24). Thus, the Johannine record seems to suggest that statements about God can be either true or false, indicating that a biblically informed Pentecostal theology can comfortably embrace the principle of bivalence regarding theological truth (Thesis 3).

Now without a doubt the revelatory role of Christ and the Spirit from a Pentecostal and Elim perspective merits further discussion and development. Nevertheless, the rudimentary sketch provided based primarily on Johannine theology is at least suggestive for why Elim – a movement which boasts of being biblically, as well as Christologically and pneumatologically focused – has theological grounds for maintaining its theological realism not just regarding Thesis 1 but also regarding Thesis 2 and 3. To put it differently, the doctrine of special revelation with particular emphasis on Christ and the Spirit seems to mitigate against elements of anti-realism potentially inherent within (fallen) humanity. In fact, such is the 'truthfulness' of the revelation in Christ mediated by the Spirit for humans to embrace, that for John those who encounter 'the truth' in Christ but fail to form sufficiently corresponding beliefs stand judged before 'ultimate truth' (Jn. 3:17-21; 9:39-41; 12:48-49).

7.4. (Under-)Realised Realism

So far the discussion on Elim's concept of truth has focused on *Pentecostal theological realism* with a proposal that theological true beliefs should be understood as beliefs that appropriately correspond with the reality of God. Such theological realism has been argued for in light of Pentecostal doctrines of God, creation, *imago dei*, sin, and revelation of God in Christ as illuminated by the Spirit. However, Pentecostal realism thus conceived lacks a crucial element within Pentecostal theology, namely, eschatology. Indeed, Pentecostal eschatology is necessary to 'complete' the concept of *Pentecostal theological realism*.

As has been suggested the notion of God as 'ultimate reality' is based to a great extent on the idea of God as the *creator* and *ground of being*. However, despite God grounding the existence of His creation, eschatologically speaking the 'ultimate reality' of God has not yet been fully 'realised' on earth. As Paul puts it, in the end God will be 'all in all' (1 Cor. 15:28), suggesting that currently creation is not experiencing the fullness of God. A similar idea is depicted in the Book of Revelation where the final consummation of the created order is characterised by God saturating the (new) world with his presence and reality (Rev. 21:1-8), which again implies that as things stand the 'reality' of God is under-realised. Indeed, Paul seems to draw a direct epistemological conclusion regarding one's limited access to truth in the current dispensation when compared to the age to come. In his words: 'For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully...' (1 Cor. 13:12; cf. Isa. 11:9).

This kind of eschatological vision has two important repercussions for an Elim concept of truth and realism. First, as already implied, the fact that God is not yet 'all in all' within His creations means that in the current dispensation any human access to God as 'ultimate reality' is in fact incomplete, which suggests that eschatologically sensitive Pentecostal realism should be *mitigated realism*. To put it more strongly, the realist Thesis 2 and 3 are not only weakened by the limits of human (fallen) nature but also by the not yet fully realised reality of God in the present age.[26]

Second, as well as God being the *creator* and *ground of being*, according to New Testament eschatology he also seems to be the *completer* and *goal of being*. For a Pentecostal realist concept of truth this means that one should not only focus on 'what is' but what 'will be.' In other words, truth can be seen to be the *telos* of enquiry in a double sense: (1) it is the *goal* of enquiry in terms directing one towards the full realisation of ultimate reality in creation; and (2) it is the *end* of enquiry at the moment of this full realisation. In sum, 'truth' is eschatological.[27]

7.5. Conclusion

In this short chapter I have tried to sketch an Elim concept of truth that stems from the implicit assumptions within the Elim tradition, as well as being explicitly informed by biblical and Pentecostal theology regarding God, creation, *imago dei*, sin, revelation, and eschatology.

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[26] Indeed, according to the biblical eschatological vision there seems to be a direct correlation between 'sin' and 'under-realised presence of God', as well as 'absence of sin' and 'fully-realised presence of God.'

[27] See Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion,* 5; Yong, 'The Demise of Foundationalism...', 580; Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 342.

In doing so, it seems that despite the various theological obstacles for a realist theory of truth, there are adequate reasons for Elim to continue with its assumed theory of truth as *Pentecostal realism* consisting of the three realist theses. However, in light of the epistemological limitations caused by human (fallen) nature and eschatology, Elim's theological realism should be strongly characterised by fallibilism regarding its beliefs (Thesis 2) and propositions (Thesis 3). Moreover, when it comes to the correspondent aspect of its theory of truth (Thesis 2), correspondence should be seen as 'correlation' rather than 'congruence' (see Amos Yong). Finally, 'truth' should not just be seen as that which corresponds with reality, but also as the telos of enquiry.

This 'Elim' theory of truth has important similarities with the theory of truth offered by Alasdair MacIntyre (see 2.2.1.). That is, MacIntyre's theory of truth has two major characteristics: (1) it adopts a Thomistic correspondence theory of truth as *adaequatio intellectus ad rem*, which means that MacIntyre holds to a version of correspondence but rejects any theories of 'truth as correspondence-to-fact;'[28] (2) for MacIntyre truth is 'the *telos* of rational enquiry.'[29] This similarity is noteworthy as it suggests that utilising a MacIntyrian methodology for constructing the Elim tradition and rationality (chapters 3-6) is not forcing Elim into an alien framework, at least when it comes to the concept of truth.

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[28] MacIntyre, 'Truth as a good: a reflection on *Fides et Ratio*,' 200, 203.
[29] MacIntyre, 'Moral Relativism; truth and justification,' 68-69.

Elim's *Pentecostal theological realism* outlined in this section also serves as the ontological

backdrop for understanding the *biblicist* and *pragmatist* elements of Elim's rationality.

Indeed, I will now focus on each of these elements in the following two chapters of the thesis.

CHAPTER 8 – *BIBLICAL* HERMENEUTICS: COMMUNITY DISCERNMENT OF MEANING IN A DIALECTICAL BIBLE

From its inception Elim has seen the Bible as the grounding document for its beliefs and practices. As discussed in chapter three, the Bible's primacy as a theological source of knowledge for Elim is based on the concept that God is the foundation of all truth (see also chapter 7), and He has revealed the truth about Himself and the world in the Bible by inspiring its very words. Since the (Protestant) Bible as a whole is considered to be verbally inspired by God, and since God is believed to be perfect, it naturally follows for Elim that the Bible is seen as an infallible document. Indeed, the centrality of the Bible has been underscored when Elim navigated through its two epistemological crises (chapters 5 and 6), as during both of these crises Elim was adamant about the need to recalibrate its tradition in light of the Scriptures. Therefore, it is no surprise that Elim's latest Foundational Truths affirm the Bible's authority, inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy. The current statement reads:

> We believe the Bible, as originally given, to be without error, the fully inspired and infallible Word of God and the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.[1]

So, why does Elim believe that the Bible is 'the fully inspired and infallible Word of God' and thus the supreme epistemic authority regarding Christian beliefs and practices? In chapter four I noted that the primary reasons offered by Elim have been

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[1] Minutes of Elim Conference (1993), Item No. 27. For recent official interpretation of the article on the Bible see Geoff Richardson, 'The Bible,' in *The Message*, 11-18.

pragmatic. In other words, Elim has historically offered *arguments from transformed lives*, emphasising the ability of the Bible to produce 'results' in the lives of individuals and communities, and *arguments from the uniqueness of the Bible*, highlighting (among other things) the uniqueness and force of the Bible's divine message.[2] These two pragmatic arguments have then supposedly given credence for Elim to accept the *argument from the Bible's own testimony*, which is claimed to support the concept of divine inspiration and infallibility of the whole Bible, not just parts of it (e.g. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).

I will further explore and develop Elim's pragmatic theory of justification (see chapter 9). However, before doing so, what surfaced in the narration of Elim's first epistemological crisis (see particularly the BI debate in chapter 5) was that despite Elim's pragmatic approach to the Bible, the biblical text is believed to have certain interpretive limitations and thus cannot be made to mean anything in Elim, even if such a reading may possess pragmatic potential. In other words, for Elim certain hermeneutical principles need to guide the scope of what the biblical text *can* and *cannot mean*. Elim's 'hermeneutical principles' will therefore be the focus of this chapter, since it seems to be meaningless to simply state that Elim's rationality is characterised by biblicism without reflecting on how the Bible *has* and *should be* interpreted within the Elim movement.

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[2] Elim's pragmatic arguments are masterfully demonstrated by the Elim Minister and Evangelist George Canty when he writes 'If it were possible to know that the Bible is the authentic Word of God, outside of personal experience, it would be no more use than knowing Mars is made of red sandstone. Such knowledge will not help us live or go places... Let the passage[s] prove itself as inspired;' Canty, *In My Father's House*, 66-67. Interestingly the more recent articulation on the authority of the Bible by Geoff Richardson does not really identify reasons why one should believe in a divinely inspired Bible; Richardson, 'The Bible,' 11-18.

8.1. Historical Reflections on Elim's Hermeneutics

It seems that a community's concept of the Bible, as well as their purpose for reading it, will inevitably influence their hermeneutical approach.[3] For Elim the Bible has been primarily conceived as the 'Word of God,' rather than *just* ancient literature or history, and as such it has been believed to be 'the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.'[4] This characterisation implies that for Elim the Bible is and consists of the very 'words God has spoken to man,'[5] and therefore the purpose of engaging with it is to inform 'faith' (read: theology) and to transform 'conduct' (read: practice). So, if this identifies for Elim *what* the Bible is and *why* it should be interacted with, the question then becomes: *how* should it be read?

The 'Bible Reading Method'

Elim's early hermeneutical method can be identified in the words of Kenneth Archer as 'the Bible Reading Method' (see 4.3.2.). Although Archer is referring to the early classical Pentecostal hermeneutics in the United States, his description, nevertheless, accurately reflects Elim's early hermeneutics:

> The 'Bible Reading Method' was a modified form of the proof-text system. It involved looking up a specific word in an English Bible concordance, compiling an exhaustive

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[3] See Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical reflection on the claim that God speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 17; Craig S. Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 139.

[4] Elim Conference Minutes (1993), Item No. 27.

[5] G. W. Gilpin, 'The Inspiration of the Bible,' in *Pentecostal Doctrine*, ed. P. S. Brewster (No city: P. S. Brewster, 1976), 127-136.

list of its occurrences, and deducing a biblical truth based on the reading of the texts… the focal point and primary concern of the Bible Reading Method was to synthezise concerning the data into a doctrinal statement and thereby produce a biblical understanding concerning the topic or theme under investigation… The Pentecostal reading scheme was thoroughly popularistic, thus a 'pre-critical', canonical and text centered synchronic approach from a revivalistic-restorational biblicist perspective.[6]

As pointed out by French Arrington this hermeneutical approach was to a great extent based on the assumption of divine 'inspiration as dictation.'[7] To put it differently, it was believed that since the words of the Bible were directly dictated by God, the Bible could effectively be viewed as one book (not 66 books) and therefore could also be interpreted at face value without focusing on the socio-historical contexts of its various writings. For example, Elim's J. Robinson surmised that 'by *verbal inspiration* we mean that not only was the general sense of the message inspired, but that the writers were actually guided as to their various modes of expression and choice of words.'[8]

The concept of direct dictation, however, is no longer maintained within Elim, or in most other classical Pentecostal traditions. In fact, in Elim's latest official explanatory document regarding the doctrine of the Bible, Geoff Richardson explicitly writes that 'we do not believe

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[6] Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century*, 74-75. However, it should also be pointed out that the goal of Pentecostal/Elim biblical interpretation was not merely doctrinal data but also personal transformation. Indeed, the devotional reading was arguably the most common approach to reading the Bible within early Pentecostalism and Elim. For helpful analysis of early Pentecostal hermeneutics see; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, 'Pentecostal Hermeneutics in the Making: On the Way from Fundamentalism to Postmodernism,' *JEPTA* 18, no. 1 (1998): 77-80.

[7] French Arrington, 'Hermeneutics, Historical Perspectives on Pentecostal and Charismatic', in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. M. Burgess, G. B. McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 380.

[8] Robinson, 'Why I Believe in Verbal Inspiration,' 413. Similar view is expressed in *Elim Evangel* by F. E. Marsh, 'The Holy Spirit and the Bible,' *EE* 13, no. 45 (November 4, 1932): 705. However, more room is given to the authors' distinct styles by Parker, 'To What Extent *is the* Bible Inspired?,' 27, Bradley *et al*, *Elim Lay Preachers' Handbook*, 6.

that God *dictated* the words of the Bible to those who wrote it, since that would deny the writers any significant role in the process.'[9]

'Evangelical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic'

The change from direct dictation to increasingly acknowledging the role of the human authors in the writing process has also resulted in Elim changing its hermeneutical approach. Like other classical Pentecostal denominations, Elim has moved towards what William Oliverio calls the 'Evangelical-Pentecostal hermeneutic.'[10] This method of interpretation is primarily historical-grammatical with a focus on both the internal and external contexts of the text. In this approach the human author's intent is commonly identified as fundamental in discerning the meaning of the text. Gordon Fee has been an influential champion of this interpretive method among Pentecostals.[11] For example, Fee's jointly authored book with Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, has been the main textbook on hermeneutics within Elim's national training centre (Regents Theological College) in the 21st century.[12]

In *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, Fee and Stuart make a distinction between what the text meant in its original context (*'then and there'*) and what it means in the reader's context ('*here and now'*). They call the first task 'exegesis' and the second task

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[9] Richardson, 'The Bible,' 11; cf. Gilpin, 'The Inspiration of the Bible,' 130; Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 182.

[10] Oliverio *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition*, 16; cf. Kärkkäinen, 'Pentecostal Hermeneutics in the Making,' 80-83; Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 131-137.

[11] See Gordon D. Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 7-8.

[12] See Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth. 3rd ed.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).

'hermeneutics.'[13] This distinction is more or less identical with E. D. Hirsch's concepts of 'meaning' and 'significance.'[14] For Fee and Stuart an appropriate interpretation of a text must always start with 'exegesis' (Hirsch's 'meaning') which explores the 'historical context,' 'literary context' and 'questions of content' regarding 'the meaning of words, the grammatical relationships in sentences, and the choice of the original text where the manuscripts... differ from one another.'[15] The second task of 'hermeneutics' (Hirsch's 'significance') apparently can then only arise from the '*original intent of the biblical text*.'[16] Fee and Stuart go as far as to argue that a '*text cannot mean what it never meant*,' and the role of the Spirit seems to be to simply help the reader to discern first this 'original intent' and to then secondly apply it to their own situation.[17]

Although Fee and Stuart helpfully acknowledge that the Bible is simultaneously a human and divine text,[18] in practice their hermeneutics seems to have shifted the focus from the divine author to the human author. So, if the early Pentecostal hermeneutic underplayed the role of the human author in interpretation, Fee's 'Evangelical-Pentecostal hermeneutic' appears to underplay the role of the divine author in the interpretive process. In other words, by assuming that the biblical text can only mean what the human author meant when they wrote it to their first audience, the text's possible domain of meaning(s) is limited to the intentions of the human author. This kind of *hermeneutical humanism* seems to have two inherent problems for the Elim tradition.

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[13] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read*, 23.
[14] E. D. Hirsch, Jr. *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967).
[15] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read*, 26-28.
[16] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read*, 29.
[17] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read*, 30.
[18] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read*, 21.

First, it does not accurately reflect Elim's theology of the Bible being an inspired 'living and acting' Word of God (Heb. 4:12). That is, the excessive emphasis on the human author at the expense of its divine author is in danger of effectively demythologising the text. To put it simply, the Bible within Elim is maintained as 'the fully inspired' and 'the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct,' which strongly suggests that the Bible should probably be seen as ontologically different from other writings, and thus the hermeneutical method utilised for interpreting it should reflect this ontological difference. However, Fee's and Stuart's claim that '*a text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its* [human] *author or his or her readers*' does not seem to fully appreciate the divine nature of the Bible.[19]

Secondly, the 'Evangelical-Pentecostal hermeneutic' is at odds with the hermeneutical approach of the New Testament writers. To give just one example, Fee and Stuart note that in 1 Corinthians 10:4 the Apostle Paul interprets Exodus 17:1-7 and Numbers 20:1-13 in a way that could have not been meant by its human author(s) or first readers when Paul identifies the 'rock' as Christ.[20] However, rather than acknowledging that under certain circumstances such a *sensus plenior* (fuller meaning) interpretive approach could be acceptable for contemporary readers due to the texts divine nature, Fee and Stuart write that Paul was unique in his ability to interpret the texts in this way because he was 'inspired' by the Spirit, but 'what Paul did we

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[19] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read*, 74. Fee's hermeneutics also underplays the dynamism of a Pentecostal reading of the text where it is assumed that the Spirit who inspired the text is also present illuminating the text to the Pentecostal believer in the reading process. Consequently, in light of Pentecostal spirituality it is difficult maintain this clinical and chronological distinction between 'exegesis' and 'hermeneutics;' see Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 142.
[20] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read*, 202.

are not authorized to do.'[21] In other words, for Fee and Stuart the *sensus plenior* 'is a function

of inspiration, not illumination.'[22] Although one can see the practical wisdom of deterring

Christians, and particularly Pentecostals, from overly subjective readings of the text, it seems

surprising that the divine author's ability to communicate to the contemporary believer

through the text in a manner apparently communicated to Paul is seen as a hermeneutical

impossibility. For a Pentecostal movement like Elim that seeks to restore the fullness of NT

Christianity, this kind of *hermeneutical cessationism* appears unwarranted. This also seems to

contradict Elim's Foundational Truth of allowing the Bible to be the authority 'in matters of

faith and conduct;' that is, why should the example of the Apostles and the Early Church as

recorded in Scripture not function as a guide for 'conducting' Pentecostal hermeneutics?[23]

Indeed, Craig Keener has recently argued that Scripture itself should be allowed to model

hermeneutical approaches for Pentecostals.[24]

8.2. A Proposal for Elim's Hermeneutics

In light of this seeming *hermeneutical humanism* and *hermeneutical cessationism* of the

'Evangelical-Pentecostal hermeneutic,' a different hermeneutical approach needs to be

articulated that is more attuned with both (1) the hermeneutics of the New Testament and (2)

the concept of the Bible reflecting both its human and divine authors. To this end, I will first

propose that John Christopher Thomas's hermeneutical method based on Acts 15 is a useful

overarching biblical hermeneutical model for Elim to utilise. Secondly, I will suggest how a

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[21] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read*, 202.
[22] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read*, 202-203.
[23] Fee and Stuart would probably respond by noting that the Scripture does not explicitly encourage Christians to adopt this hermeneutical approach; Fee and Stuart, *How to Read*, 202. See also Fee's distinction between what is 'normal' and 'normative.'
[24] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 1.

biblical text as 'divine discourse' through 'human discourse' can 'mean' more than its human author meant without either violating the human author or assuming that the text can mean anything.

8.2.1. Experiential and Community Based Hermeneutic

John Christopher Thomas' 1994 article 'Women, Pentecostals and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics,' in the words of Jacqueline Grey, 'has been one of the most influential writings on Pentecostal Hermeneutics.'[25] In his article Thomas explores the possibility of utilising the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15:1-29 as a hermeneutical paradigm for Pentecostals.

To give some textual context for Thomas' hermeneutical ruminations, in Acts 15 the Council of 'apostles and elders' gathers to consider whether the newly converted Gentiles need to be circumcised (i.e. become Jews) to be part of the Christian Church (Acts 15:1-6). After serious discussion, the Council decides that the Gentiles who have converted to Christianity need not become Jews but abstain from food associated with 'idol worship' and refrain from any acts of 'sexual immorality' (Acts 15:29). The decision is a watershed moment in the history of the

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[25] John Christopher Thomas, 'Women, Pentecostals and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics,' *JPT* 2, no. 5 (1994): 41-56; Jacqueline Grey, 'When the Spirit Trumps Tradition: A Pentecostal Reading of Isaiah 56:1-8,' in *Constructive Pneumatological Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Christianity*, ed. Kenneth J. Archer and L. William Oliverio, Jr. (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 143; For Thomas' more recent hermeneutical articulation see John Christopher Thomas, '"What is the Spirit Saying to the Church" – The Testimony of a Pentecostal in New Testament Studies,' in *Spirit and Scripture: Exploring a Pneumatic Hermeneutic*, ed. Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 115-129.

early Church as recorded in Acts, because it means that Gentile Christians are now officially accepted into the household of God without having to embrace Judaism (cf. Acts 10).[26]

In reflecting on the Council's deliberations, Thomas draws three hermeneutical conclusions. First, he emphasises the role of the '*community*' (in this case the Council of apostles and elders) in making sense of both the Church's experience (e.g. conversion and Spirit baptism of the Gentiles) and the interpretation of Scripture (e.g. Amos 9:11, 12). Second, the '*experience*' of the Spirit is seen as an important precursor in how Scriptures are interpreted; that is, Peter refers to his experience of seeing the Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:7-11), and Barnabas and Paul describe the 'signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles' (Acts 15:12). Third, the *Scriptures* are referred to as confirming the community's interpreted experience of the Spirit (Acts 15:15-19).[27] In sum, Thomas argues that for discerning the voice of God one needs to have an interpretive *community* that reflects both on pneumatic *experiences* and the *Scripture*.

The strength of using Acts 15 as a paradigm for Elim's biblical hermeneutics is not just that it provides a biblical model for hermeneutics, and thus allows the Bible itself to be an epistemic authority in how it should be interpreted, but it also reflects closely Elim's own *rationality* and *historical practice*. Regarding Elim's *rationality*, the Acts 15 methodology acknowledges the role of the 'community (read: living tradition), 'experience' (read: pragmatism) and

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[26] F. F. Bruce refers to Acts 15:1-29 as 'epoch-making'; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 298. Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Anchor Bible. Vol. 31 (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1998), 543-545; Darrell. L. Bock, *Acts*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 507-508.
[27] Thomas, 'Women, Pentecostals and the Bible,' 54-56.

'Scriptures' (read: the Bible). So, it corresponds closely with Elim's rationality of Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism. In terms of Elim's *historical practice*, the Acts 15 hermeneutical model resembles Elim's approach in resolving both of its epistemological crises. When it came to the first crisis, the Elim Conference consisting of ministers ('elders') and members of executive council ('apostles'?) was central in rejecting British Israelism, as well as helping Elim to come to terms with the experience of Jeffreys' leaving (see chapter 5). Moreover, both the British Israel controversy and the explanation for Jeffreys' departure were interpreted in the light of Scripture. During Elim's second epistemological crisis, again the Conference played a crucial role, particularly at the Southport Conference of 1981, in recalibrating the Elim tradition *vis-à-vis* its experience of the Restoration movement and by reflecting on Scripture.

In fact, although there are obviously also differences between the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 and the Elim Conferences during the two epistemological crises,[28] the similarities regarding the epistemic practice of discernment are striking. Therefore, my first proposal for Elim's future hermeneutics in an attempt to move *beyond* (note: not *against*) 'Evangelical-Pentecostal hermeneutic' is for Elim to increasingly embrace the model represented in Acts 15, as it provides a biblical precedence for its hermeneutics and also naturally fits with Elim's rationality and historical practice.

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[28] For example, the Jerusalem Council seemed to represent the universal Church of its day and was dealing with a major shift in salvation history with the inclusion of Gentiles.

8.2.2. Discerning Divine Meaning(s) in 'Dialectical Relations'

However, adopting the Acts 15 hermeneutical model with particular focus on community, pneumatic experience and the Bible has still not explicitly answered the question what the biblical texts *can* and *cannot 'mean.'* Thus, I will now offer brief hermeneutical discussion on how Elim should construct 'meaning' from the Bible which is simultaneously divine and human word(s). I will suggest that *pace* Fee and Stuart the text can mean more than its human author meant, but this need not result in undermining the text's 'humanity' or for allowing the text to simply mean anything. However, this can only be done by appreciating the text's dialectical relation(s) stemming from its divinity and humanity.

The Text's 'Dialectical Relation(s)'

Merold Westhphal points out that the notion of the Bible being simultaneously divine and human creates a 'dialectical relation' not dissimilar to the Christological concept of Christ's two natures.[29] Westphal notes that

> ...the Docetists and Ebionistes fell into heresy by trying to ease the tension by
> emphasizing one pole to the effective elimination of the other. We have a similar
> dialectic in Scripture itself. It is both human and divine, and the church has often
> pendulumed between affirming the divine at the expense of the human and then the
> human at the expense of the divine.[30]

Indeed, the pendulum swing identified by Westphal is perceivable in Elim's historical approach to Scripture; that is, Elim initially emphasised the divine at the expense of the

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[29] Merold Westphal, 'Spirit and Prejudice: The Dialectic of Interpretation,' in *Constructive Pneumatological Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Christianity*, 17.

[30] Merold Westphal, 'Spirit and Prejudice: The Dialectic of Interpretation,' 17.

human, and then seems to have emphasised the human at the expense of the divine. If the

Christological comparison has any merit for understanding the nature of Scripture – and I

think it does have due to Christ being identified as *the* 'Word of God' and pinnacle of divine

revelation (Jn. 1:1; 14:9; Heb. 1:3) –[31] it would seem that a sufficient concept of Scripture

should also adopt a Chalcedonian type definition which tries to navigate between

Nestorianism which divides the two natures of Christ within one person and Monophysitism

which emphasises the two natures being indivisible within one person.[32] However, in walking

this tightrope between Nestorianism and Monophysitism, Elim's concept of Scripture being

'the inspired word of God' seems to naturally lean more towards Cyril's Monophysitism with

the human and divine natures being indivisible within the text; rather than the divine aspect

being somehow layered on top of the human element after the text has been written,[33] or the

human authors simply functioning as mechanical typewriters in divine hands. In fact, it could

even be suggested that Elim's historical overemphasis on *either* the human *or* divine aspects

of Scripture has resembled the Nestorian 'heresy.'

This kind of indivisible relationship between the human and the divine in Scripture also has

implications for how the text should be interpreted and what it 'can(not) mean.' In other

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[31] The *Elim Lay Preachers' Handbook* also makes the comparison between the Incarnation and the inspiration of Scripture; Bradley *et al*, *Elim Lay Preachers' Handbook*, 6.

[32] The 451 Chalcedonian definition reads that Christ is 'to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in *one Person* and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons...'; quoted in Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Leicester: IVP, 1999), 244. For a historical analysis of Chalcedon see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 222-228.

[33] In light of the incarnation analogy it appears that Nicholas Wolterstorff's theory of Scripture being the Word of God through 'appropriation' seems to imply a more of a Nestorian approach, namely the human and divine nature of Scripture are distinct to the point of (almost) possessing two separate 'natures' (i.e. human and divine). In fact, the idea of 'appropriation' could even be seen as a version of Adoptionism where the human text is adopted to become the divine text. This not only has implications for how Wolterstorff perceives Scripture as the Word of God, but also how he interprets it as such; see Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, 222.

words, if one is to truly appreciate the dialectical relation in the text it is meaningless to talk about what the text 'means' without focusing on both aspects. This also means that a strong dichotomy between the human element (e.g. what it meant for the human author) and divine element (e.g. what it means for the divine author) in the interpretive process should be guarded against. I appreciate that this is easier said than done. Nevertheless, I will propose two *interpretive dialectical relations* that might provide some guidance for Elim's Pentecostal hermeneutics *à la* Chalcedon.

Historical and Dynamic Sense

The first dialectical relation is between the text's *historical sense* and the *dynamic sense*.[34] Craig Keener states that 'the incarnation would show us that history and historical particularity matter.'[35] In other words, if the incarnation is anything to go by then *historical sense* of the biblical text would appear to be central for appropriately understanding it. Keener identifies three basic interpretive principles for doing due diligence to the text's historicity:

- 'Read a passage in light of its immediate context;'

- 'Read a passage for its function as part of the larger book to which it belongs;'

- 'Read a passage in light of the cultural context that its language, assumptions and often allusions take for granted.'[36]

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[34] My notion of 'historical sense' is very similar to Craig Keener's 'designed sense' which he defines as 'the sense projected by the ideal author or at least the ancient cultural sense;' Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 99.
[35] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 99.
[36] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 117.

It seems that in taking the 'human nature' of the text seriously, these are reasonable steps to *begin* discerning the 'meaning' of the text. However, while having one ear tuned to the *historical sense* that is grounded in the text's humanity, the other ear should be concurrently tuned to the *dynamic sense* grounded in the text's divinity. That is, as well as appreciating the human historical discourse present in the text, the Pentecostal hermeneut should simultaneously appreciate the divine discourse directed at the present reader. To put it in Pentecostal parlance, what is the Spirit saying to the present reader through the text which is written by the human author? This implies that the reader should not just have a historical appreciation of the text, but a prayerful and pneumatically oriented disposition towards it.

I acknowledge that the similarities between my so-called *historical sense* and *dynamic sense* are similar to Fee's and Stuart's concepts of 'exegesis' and 'hermeneutics.' However, I also believe that there are two important differences. First, my concept of *historical sense* places *greater* emphasis on the need for the hermeneut to approach the historical sense of the text, as well as the dynamic sense, in a 'spiritually' sensitive way.[37] The reason being, that if the text is truly divine and human then it would appear that one cannot fully appreciate even its historical meaning without some revelatory insight and/or reliance on divine illumination. This is a potentially controversial claim, because it implies that the 'natural' person cannot have the same insight of the biblical historical text as the 'spiritual' person. However, if the Bible is genuinely believed to be divine revelation, then Paul's argument that divine revelation can only truly be comprehended by those to whom the Spirit reveals it and who approach the text with spiritual sensitivity should probably also apply to the Bible (1

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[37] Although in fairness to Fee and Stuart this is not completely absent from their concept of 'exegesis.'

Corinthians 2:1-16).[38] Thus, if Elim allows the biblical concept of revelation to inform its view about the Bible as divine revelation then this view should not be considered unreasonable.[39]

The second difference is that I claim that the *dynamic sense* of the text can mean to the reader what the human authors did not intend it to mean. With respect to seeing the biblical text as divine discourse, Wolterstorff helpfully identifies the difference between what *was* God saying historically to the Scripture's first audience, and 'what *is* God saying to us today by way of confronting us with this passage of Scripture?'[40] Wolterstorff expands this idea by pointing out that in fact 'a single illocutionary act may have more than one addressee' and 'one may address one's remark to a number of people.'[41] Furthermore, he maintains that this one remark can mean different things to different people. The example used by Wolterstorff is of a mother remarking at dinner that there are only two days to Christmas. For the children this might mean that 'don't lose hope' as Christmas is now just 'around the corner,' whereas for the husband it might mean 'hurry up' and 'get the Christmas shopping done.'[42] Westphal further clarifies Wolterstorff's example by distinguishing between the mother knowing that the father 'will overhear the conversation from the one in which he does so without her knowing.'[43] In the first instance 'she intends both speech acts,' whereas in the second she only

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[38] See Frestadius, 'The Spirit and Wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2:1-13,' 52-70.

[39] Indeed, Elim's P.S. Brewster wrote: 'In so many ways the Bible is a closed book and cannot be fully understood through human or by the carnal mind... The only key to attainment in knowledge of the Scripture is the power of the Holy Spirit; it is certainly not through general academic training, important as this can be. The student who is not in right relationship with God and man cannot hope to make progress in the study of the Word of God;' P. S. Brewster, 'The Seven-Fold Work of the Holy Spirit,' in *Pentecostal Doctrine*, 10.

[40] Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, 216.

[41] Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, 55.

[42] Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, 55.

[43] Westphal, 'Spirit and Prejudice,' 26.

intends 'the speech act of comfort' to the children.'[44] Westphal surmises that when it comes to Scripture, God can be seen to be in the first position of knowing the multiple audiences who will hear the 'speech act' communicated through the text, whereas the human author is in the second position of not knowing the multiple audiences hearing the 'speech act.'[45] Therefore, it appears that the *dynamic sense* of the text can 'mean' to the readers what was never intended by the human author (*pace* Fee and Stuart), although not what was unintended by the divine author and articulated by the human author.

In sum, the first dialectical relation suggests that the 'meaning' of the text is grounded in its human *historical sense*. However, this historical sense can only be truly understood not just through historical interpretive methods but through spiritual discernment. Moreover, it only becomes 'meaningful' when the reader or community of readers also 'hear' the divine *dynamic sense* in the text. To put it simply, the historical sense without the dynamic sense is *senseless*, and the dynamic sense without the historical sense is *non-sense*.

Canonical Plurality and Unity

If the first dialectical relation focused more on the human and divine 'sense' or 'meaning' of individual biblical texts, the second dialectical tension emanates from the human and divine natures intermingling in the biblical canon. Elim, like most Pentecostal movements, believe that the (Protestant) canon with its 66 books in its entirety is the Word of God. As seen in

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[44] Westphal, 'Spirit and Prejudice,' 26.
[45] Westphal, 'Spirit and Prejudice,' 26.

Elim's early hermeneutic this is why the Bible was generally read as one book without necessarily distinguishing between the different human authors or their contexts, because the Bible was fundamentally seen to have been written by one author, namely, God. However, as Elim's hermeneutical approach developed the humanity and diversity of the canon was increasingly acknowledged. Indeed, the second dialectical relation that should inform Elim's hermeneutics should appreciate this tension of *canonical unity* that emanates from the Bible's divine author and it *canonical plurality* which is founded in its humanity.

This suggests that Elim should read the Bible both as one book with a unified message and as many books with particular messages. To explain this tension, Robert Wall and John Christopher Thomas have both helpfully conceptualised the canon through the metaphor of a (gospel) 'choir.'[46] In other words, the biblical canon can be viewed as a choir of many human members who sing a song in harmony under the inspiration and direction of its divine conductor. This, however, does not mean that all members of the choir are singing the same notes, at the same time, or even the same songs.[47] Nevertheless, they are all in the same choir and performing within the same set of songs which all have been arranged by the divine conductor. So, the 'canon' as a human 'choir' under the divine conductor explains both the 'plurality' and 'unity' found in the Bible.

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[46] Robert W. Wall, 'Reading New Testament in Canonical Context,' in *Hearing the new Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 381; Thomas, 'What is the Spirit Saying to the Church,' 128.

[47] Richard Swinburne refers to the Bible as 'a symphony written and conducted by a genius, but played by an orchestra of wilful amateurs;' Richard Swinburne, *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 278.

The canonical plurality and unity has two important implications. First, it provides grounds for distinct theological emphases within different Christian theological traditions and denominations.[48] Secondly, and more importantly for hermeneutics, it provides certain freedom for the Spirit lead community to discern which biblical text might be of particular importance in a given context. For example, Jacqueline Grey makes the valid point that the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 chose Amos 9:11-12 but they could have easily chosen another Old Testament text that would have provided a different perspective on what should be demanded of the Gentile Christians.[49]

This does raise the question of 'discernment'; that is, how does one discern which texts should or should not be applied to a particular context? In line with the Acts 15 model, the discernment process should be done by a believing and Spirit filled community (or Council of Elders and Apostles), as well as in the light of pneumatic experiences of the Spirit. Furthermore, with respect to Elim's rationality of biblical *pragmatism*, discerning the specific divine voice in the canon should not only be influenced by 'experientialism' but also by 'experimentalism.' It is the living, moving, acting and experimenting Pentecostal community 'in dialogue with the bi-partite biblical canon' that truly allows the Word of God to shape its faith and conduct.[50]

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[48] Ernst Käsemann noted that the NT canon did not 'ground the unity of the church' but 'the diversity of denominations;' Thomas Söding, *Eisenheit der Heiligen Schrift? Zur Theologie des biblischen Kanons* (Freiburg: Herder, 2005), 69. I am indebted to Martin Clay for directing me to this source.
[49] Grey, 'When the Spirit Trumps Tradition,' 152.
[50] Martin Clay, 'From 'Unity' to 'Dialogue' in the *Theology of the New Testament*: A Methodological and Hermeneutical Proposal' (PhD Dissertation, University of Bangor, 2012), 329. Clark Pinnock identifies 'fruitfulness' as an important criterion for a Pentecostal/charismatic biblical interpretation; Clark H. Pinnock, 'The Work of the Spirit in the Interpretation of Holy Scripture from the Perspective of a Charismatic Biblical Theologian,' in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 244.

8.3. Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the biblicist aspect of Elim's rationality. Throughout its existence Elim has insisted that its beliefs need to be grounded on the Bible because the Bible is believed to be the 'word of God' and so the authority in matters of faith and conduct. This assumption is logically consistent with Elim's concept of *Pentecostal theological realism* where God is seen as ultimate truth (read: reality) and as the agent who has communicated and continues to communicate the truth about Himself and the world through the human authors in the biblical text.

However, to talk about the Bible's authority within Elim cannot be done apart from discussing biblical hermeneutics. Consequently, I have outlined Elim's historical approach to biblical hermeneutics by suggesting that while the early hermeneutic was characterised by a simplistic 'Bible Reading Method' (see Archer) that emphasised the divine author often at the expense of the human author, the latter 'Evangelical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic' (see Oliverio) has been in danger of focusing on the human author at the expense of the divine author.

In light of these one dimensional approaches, my suggestion for Elim's future biblical hermeneutics has been twofold. First, I have proposed that Elim should explicitly adopt the Acts 15 model that allows the Elim community informed by its pneumatic experience to discern the meaning of the biblical text(s) for its faith and conduct (see Thomas). Indeed, it

seems that this model has already been implicitly practised by Elim during its two epistemological crises.

Second, I have argued that Elim should fully appreciate the dialectical relation in text emanating from its divine *and* human nature, as well as its canonical unity *and* diversity. The divine and human nature of the text implies that the meaning of the text is grounded in the historical sense of the human authors but nevertheless only becomes meaningful when the divine sense is incorporated. This is an important development from Fee's distinction between 'exegesis' (Hirsch's 'meaning') and 'hermeneutics' (Hirsch's 'significance'), even if at first appearance it may seem little more than a subtle difference. That is, the historical human sense of the biblical text without the dynamic divine sense is *senseless*, and the divine dynamic sense without the historical human sense is *non-sense*.

Coupled with the dialectical relation arising from the divine and human nature of the text, I have also noted that the canonical unity and diversity of the Bible provides its own further hermeneutical tension. In other words, Elim should maintain that the Bible has a unified overarching *message* but simultaneously acknowledge that it also has particular *messages*. This means that although all of Scripture is inspired by God some passages may be 'more inspired' than others for certain situations. This is not a license for modern day Marcionism where less palatable parts of the Bible can simply be eliminated, but it is a call for Elim's careful communal discernment in the Spirit of particular texts in the context of the underlying canonical message.

An important aspect for discerning the right biblical interpretation for the community is the pragmatism inherent within Elim's rationality. Moreover, it is this pragmatism that provides epistemic justification for Elim's belief regarding the authority of the Bible. Hence, in the last chapter of the thesis I will explicitly develop Elim's pragmatism.

CHAPTER 9 – *PRAGMATIC* JUSTIFICATION: EXPERIENTIAL AWARENESS AND PRAGMATIC SIGNS OF THE FOURSQUARE GOSPEL

In the third part of the thesis I have thus far argued that Elim's rationality of *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism* should be underlined by a *Pentecostal* realist correspondence theory of truth (chapter 7), and I have noted that the *Bible* as a primary source of theological knowledge for Elim should be interpreted by a community of believers who appreciate simultaneously the Bible's divine and human nature (chapter 8). Informed by these two chapters, the final chapter of the thesis focuses on the *pragmatic* side of Elim's rationality, with particular emphasis on epistemic justification. In other words, I have sketched an 'Elim' concept of truth and proposed that the Bible should be the primary source of theological knowledge for the movement, so the question now becomes: how will Elim know whether its biblical beliefs are in fact 'true' or have justification/warrant?

In chapter four I stated that Elim's early pragmatism was characterised by *experientialism* and *experimentalism*; that is, human (spiritual) experiences are central in forming and justifying Elim's Pentecostal beliefs, and these beliefs are further corroborated and tested in in light of experimental practices. I also discussed how Elim's experiential experimentalism shares significant similarities with the American Pragmatism of Charles Sander Peirce and William James, and how this rationality was not just present during the birth of Elim but was also visible during its two major epistemological crises (see chapters 5-6).

My aim is now to further develop Elim's pragmatic concepts of *experientialism* and *experimentalism*, and I will do so in dialogue with the Christian philosopher William Alston. In doing this I will (1) outline Alston's 'Theory of Appearing;' (2) propose how phenomenologically many Pentecostal experiences can be seen as either direct or indirect awareness of God; (3) suggest that despite some differences, the analogy between sense and mystical perception is adequate; and (4) argue how Elim's explicit *pragmatic experimentalism* helps to overcome the main challenge directed at Alston's theory, namely, the objection from religious pluralism. In the discussion below the terms 'religious experience,' 'spiritual experience' and 'mystical experience' are used synonymously.[1]

9.1. Pentecostal Experience and Alston's 'Theory of Appearing'

George Jeffreys aptly summarised Elim's experientialism and the role of experience in justifying theological beliefs when he claimed that '*He that hath an experience is not at the mercy of him that hath an argument.*'[2] This emphasis on 'experience' is not unique to Elim as a Pentecostal movement. Indeed, it has become somewhat of a truism within Pentecostal theology to point out the centrality of 'experience' for Pentecostals.[3] However, despite the

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[1] It is not uncommon for philosophers of religion to distinguish between spiritual, religious and mystical experiences; see Gellman, 'Mysticism and Religious Experience,' 138-141; Wesley J. Wildman, *Religious and Spiritual Experiences* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 77-82.

[2] Jeffreys, *Healing Rays*, 56.

[3] See Mathew S. Clark and Henry I. Lederle, *What is Distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?* (Koedoespoort: UNISA, 1989), 17, 40; Donald Gelpi, 'The Theological Challenge of Charismatic Spirituality,' *Pneuma* 14, no. 2 (Fall 1992): 188; Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 14; Joel Shuman, 'Towards a Cultural-Linguistic Account of the Pentecostal Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit,' *Pneuma* 19, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 211; Peter Althouse, 'Toward a Theological Understanding of The Pentecostal Appeal to Experience,' *JES* 38, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 399; Lewis, 'Towards a Pentecostal Epistemology,' 95; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Toward a Pneumatological Theology*, ed. Amos Yong (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2002), 6; Macchia, 'Christian Experience and Authority in the World;' Tony Richie, 'Awe-Full Encounters: A Pentecostal Conversation with C. S. Lewis Concerning Spiritual Experience,' *JPT* 14, no. 1 (2005): 100; Keith Warrington, 'Experience: The *sine qua non* of Pentecostalism,' in *The Role of Experience in Christian Life and Thought - Pentecostal Insights: Society for Pentecostal Studies - 36 Annual Meeting*. Cleveland, TN: Society for Pentecostal Studies, 2007, 335; Terry L.

maturing theological and philosophical discussion on the concept of 'Pentecostal experience,' Pentecostal interaction with the work of the Christian philosopher William Alston on the topic has been minimal.[4] For example, key Pentecostal contributors on the topic, such as, James Smith, William Oliverio, Peter Neumann and Daniel Castelo do not refer to Alston in their major works on experience/epistemology,[5] and Amos Yong does so only twice in his influential *Spirit-Word-Community* but not explicitly in relation to religious experience.[6] This is a surprising omission, not least as Alston's work on the topic of religious experience epistemically justifying Christian belief(s) is commonly considered as the most articulate to date.[7] In the light of this, I will seek to develop Elim's pragmatic epistemology in relation to Alston's important work. This will not only help in constructing a more robust theological epistemology for Elim, but will also bring the primary Christian philosopher on religious experience into dialogue with the 'experiential' Pentecostal movement.

Cross, 'The Divine-Human Encounter: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Experience,' *Pneuma* 31, no. 1 (2009): 6; Neuman, *Pentecostal Experience*, 5; Eriksen, 'The Epistemology of Imagination and Religious Experience,' 48.

[4] See William P. Alston, 'Christian Experience and Christian Belief,' in *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, ed. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2009), 103-134; Alston, *Perceiving* God. William P. Alston, 'Religious Experience Justifies Religious Belief,' in *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Michael L. Peterson and Raymond J. VanArragon (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 135-145.

[5] See the indexes of Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*; Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition*; Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*; Castelo, *Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition*.

[6] Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 97, 167.

[7] Matthew C. Bagger, *Religious Experience, Justification, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8; Wildman, *Religious and Spiritual Experiences*, 157; Thomas D. Senor, 'The Experiential Grounding of Religious Belief,' in *The Oxford Handbook of The Epistemology of Theology*, 64.

Alston's 'Theory of Appearing'

In his magnum opus on religious experience, *Perceiving God* (1991), Alston's central

argument is that in the same way as objects seem to directly 'appear' to individuals through

sense experience, God can 'appear' to individuals undergoing religious experiences and that

this kind of 'putative direct awareness of God can provide justification for certain kinds of

beliefs about God.'[8] To ground his 'parity thesis' between 'sense perception' and 'mystical

perception,' Alston utilises what he calls the Theory of Appearing to explain both types of

'perception.'[9] According to Alston's Theory of Appearing,

> for S to perceive X is just for X to be the entity that is appearing to S as so-and-so; and
> on externalist theories, to perceive X, in undergoing experience, E, is for X to figure in
> certain way in the causal chain leading up to E, and/or for E to lead to beliefs, or
> tendencies to beliefs, about X.[10]

As seen from this definition, Alston's Theory of Appearing is effectively a form of 'direct

realism' as it assumes that experience can provide 'direct awareness of an object that is

presented to consciousness, usually an external physical object.'[11] However, although Alston

adopts a direct realist position – a position which has been unfashionable after the so-called

linguistic turn in philosophy – he does not do so uncritically. Rather, he acknowledges that (1)

it is possible than an object may appear to the subject when there actually is no real object

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[8] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 9.

[9] Alston is well aware how articulating an account of sense perception 'is a notoriously controversial topic;' Alston, *Perceiving God*, 9. Consequently, after completing *Perceiving God*, he wrote a monograph on sense perception; William P. Alston, *The Reliability of Sense Perception* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[10] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 58. Alston's account is very similar to Richard Swinburne's 'Principle of Credulity.' According to Swinburne 'it is a principle of rationality that (in the absence of special considerations), if it seems (epistemically) to a subject that x is present (and has some characteristic), then probably x is present (and has that characteristic); what one seems to perceive is probably so. And similarly I suggest that (in the absence of special considerations) apparent memory is to be trusted;' Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 303. Alston acknowledges the similarity between his and Swinburne's theories; Alston, 'Religious Experience Justifies Religious Belief,' 138.

[11] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 55.

(e.g. hallucination),[12] and (2) 'that a person's conceptual scheme and beliefs can affect the way in which an object presents itself to him.'[13] Nevertheless, Alston still insists that in normal circumstances if an object appears to a person, the person is *prima facie* justified in believing that a real object has in fact appeared; and that even if the appearing experience is influenced by the subject's background beliefs, this does not mean that the belief formed from the experience simply mimics information previously known by the subject about the object that has been experienced.[14]

So, why does Alston adopt his Theory of Appearing and its concomitant direct realism? It seems that Alston's primary reason for accepting the Theory of Appearing is that for him 'it is the only alternative to complete scepticism about experience.'[15] Indeed, Alston has convincingly argued that it is very difficult (if not impossible) to establish the reliability of sense perception without some kind of 'epistemic circularity,' namely, the assumption that sense perception is in fact reliable.[16] However, for Alston such epistemic circularity should not result in scepticism regarding sense perception, because he believes that the doxastic practices that rely on the senses for formulating beliefs about the external world have proved effective in understanding and making sense of the world, which for Alston suggests that it is reasonable to adopt the Theory of Appearing or a similar kind of theory with respect to sense

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[12] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 56.

[13] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 38.

[14] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 38-39. Wildman argues that Alston fails to appropriately acknowledge the true implications of these two qualifications for his Theory of Appearing and thus Wildman offers his own 'ecological-semiotic theory of dynamic engagement' as a way forward; Wildman, *Religious and Spiritual Experiences*, 162-166. However, as I will argue below, in light of Elim's Pentecostal metaphysics and concept of truth, there are no obvious reasons to reject Alston's Theory of Appearing, even if Wildman has a point in that Alston's theory would probably benefit from a greater appreciation of the interpretive and semiotic nature of all experiences.

[15] Alston, 'Religious Experience Justifies Religious Belief,' 138.

[16] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 102-145; Alston, *The Reliability of Sense Perception*.

perception.[17] If such an epistemic disposition is adopted *vis-à-vis* doxastic practices on sense perception, Alston argues that a similar approach should be employed for doxastic practices on mystical perception due to the similarities between sense and mystical perception.[18]

However, although Alston maintains the basic reliability of both sense and mystical perception, he is careful to clarify that beliefs formed by these experiences are only *prima facie* justified or have 'initial credibility,' since they can be challenged by belief 'overriders.'[19] In other words, he is not advocating for a naïve fideistic position where religious experiences are simply immune from all criticism. On the contrary, Alston believes that there can be two kinds of overriders: 'rebutters' and 'underminers.' 'Rebutters' refers to things that render the appearing of an object improbable; and 'underriders' to factors that question the efficacy of the belief forming process in its current circumstances.[20] To illustrate the difference, Alston uses an example of seeing an elephant in his garden.

> My belief that there is an elephant there would be justified unless there are strong reasons for thinking that there is no elephant in the area (rebutter) or that my vision is not working properly (underminer).[21]

Therefore, Alston's Theory of Appearing is in many ways aligned with the so-called 'Jamesian Epistemic Justification,' as opposed to 'Cliffordian Epistemic Justification.' That is, he adopts the more latitudinarian epistemic approach where 'one is justified in engaging in

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[17] Alston is utilising here a type of a pragmatic logic; that is, judge a practice on its 'fruits.' See Alston, *Perceiving God*, 149.
[18] Critics of this approach commonly try to demonstrate the difference between sense and mystical perception; Evan Fales, 'Do Mystics See God?,' in *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy of Religion*, 146; Philipse, *God in the Age of Science?*, 321-324.
[19] Alston, 'Religious Experience Justifies Religious Belief,' 138.
[20] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 191.
[21] Alston, 'Religious Experience Justified Religious Belief,' 138.

a practice provided one does not have sufficient reasons for regarding it as unreliable'

(James), rather than the more sceptical perspective where 'one is obliged to refrain from

engaging in a practice unless one has adequate reasons for supposing it to be reliable'

(Clifford).[22] To put it simply, beliefs stemming from one's experience are 'innocent until

proven guilty,' rather than 'guilty until proven innocent,' but nonetheless they can be proven

guilty.

Pentecostal Experience

Alston's direct realism and Theory of Appearing seems to have a natural affinity with Elim's

implicit epistemological convictions, not least due to Elim's theological realism and the

Scottish Common Sense influences on Elim's rationality.[23] However, based on Elim's

concept of truth and theological assumptions (chapter 7), Elim should probably also qualify

Alston's Theory of Appearing in two ways. First, as has already been pointed out in chapter

seven, following from Elim's Pentecostal doctrines of *imago dei,* sin and eschatology, Elim's

theological correspondence theory of truth should be seen as 'correlation' rather than

'congruence' (see Amos Yong). This means that Alston's 'direct realism' should really be

seen as '*critical* direct realism,' with a greater emphasis on the perspectival and semiotic

nature of human engagement with God and His world.[24] Second, any Reidian reliabilist or

Jamesian 'innocent until proven guilty' type epistemological assumptions should be

accompanied with a strong dose of fallibilism, as for Elim humans are fallen beings living in

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[22] Alston, 'Christian Experience and Christian Belief,' 116.

[23] Alston himself follows the basic intuition of the Scottish Common Sense philosophical tradition. In his own words: 'we will follow the lead of Thomas Reid in taking all our established doxastic practices to be acceptable as such, as innocent until proven guilty;' Alston, *Perceiving God*, 153.

[24] Wildman's main criticism of Alston is that his theory of appearing is overly simplistic in not appreciating the semiotic and interpretive nature of all religious experiences; Wildman, *Religious and Spiritual Experiences*, 164.

the not yet fully realised eschaton and thus limited in their ability to experience and perceive God. So, epistemological speaking one might be 'innocent until proven guilty' but only by a small margin. Furthermore, in some cases due to human sin the balance of probability regarding epistemic 'guilt' might actually be against the experiencer. Nevertheless, due to the revelation found in Christ and the epistemic agency of the Spirit, for Elim a genuine experience of God, or in Alston's terms of God 'appearing' to the experiencer, should be seen as a real theological possibility. That is, Elim and other Pentecostals will insist that despite human limitations, it is possible to experience and thus become 'aware' of the real God in Christ through the Spirit, which is altogether a different experience to simply reflecting on the inner workings of one's human and sinful cultural linguistic framework.[25] How this Pentecostal experience can be conceived as a real 'awareness of God' will be explored next.

9.2. Pentecostal Experience as Direct and Indirect Awareness of God

Alston acknowledges that religious experience can be defined in a 'wide sense' which refers to any experiences connected 'with one's religious life, including a sense of guilt or release, joys, longings, a sense of gratitude, etc.,'[26] or in a more 'narrow sense' with an emphasis on experience of God or what Alston calls '*perception* of God.'[27] Focusing on this narrower

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[25] Lewis, 'Towards a Pentecostal Epistemology', 100; Macchia, 'Christian Experience and Authority in the World.'
[26] Alston, 'Religious Experience Justifies Religious Belief,' 135-136.
[27] Alston, 'Religious Experience Justifies Religious Belief,' 136.

sense, Alston refers to six 'paradigm cases' of religious experience from which he highlights three key characteristics.[28]

Experiential Awareness

First, in the phenomenological accounts of religious experience referred to by Alston, people 'report an *experiential* awareness of God.'[29] This causes Alston to conclude that the religious experiences in question cannot be easily reduced to 'subjective feelings or sensations to which is superadded an *explanation* according to which they are due to God, the Holy Spirit, or some other agent recognized by the theology of the subject's tradition.'[30] To the contrary, there seems to be a genuine mystical perception of something not dissimilar from sense perception.

Now without a doubt many religious experiences of Elim Pentecostals fall within Alston's 'wide sense' and hence are effectively more common human experiences 'to which is superadded an *explanation*' in line with a Pentecostal worldview. However, there also appear to be religious experiences within Elim that 'report an *experiential* awareness of God' that is different from God simply becoming an 'explanation' of a broader human experience. For example, experiences of conversion, baptism in the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of

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[28] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 12-14. Interestingly one of them is identified by the experiencer as 'baptism of the Holy Ghost,' although the account is taken from William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) and there is no mention of external signs following the event.
[29] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 14.
[30] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 16.

spiritual gifts often reflect (even if not always) this more direct 'experiential' awareness of God.[31]

Direct and Indirect Awareness

Following from the first characteristic, Alston points out that secondly 'the awareness is *direct*.'[32] In other words, the awareness of God is '*directly presented* or *immediately present* to the subject.'[33] Alston helpfully explores different levels and categories of immediacy *vis-à-vis* one's experience.[34] Nevertheless, his central point is that in 'direct awareness' or 'direct perception' one does not perceive something by inferring it from something else, but rather the object perceived directly presents itself to the perceiver without an *explicit* intermediate. Alston acknowledges that there are probably a number of *implicit* intermediaries between the object and one's direct awareness of it (e.g. different parts of the brain/mind processing the experience), but the experiencer does not 'perceive any of this' and thus the experience can still be understood as direct.[35]

Indeed, the concept of non-mediated and direct awareness of God is part of Elim's spirituality. In fact, it is not hard to argue that a key reason why the early Elim pioneers argued against 'ritualism' was because it was seen as an obstacle and an unnecessary system

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[31] See Jeffreys, *Pentecostal Rays*; P. S. Brewster, *The Spreading Flame of Pentecost* (London: Elim Publishing House, 1970); George Canty, *The Practice of Pentecost: Recognising, receiving and using the gifts of the Spirit* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1987); Colin Dye, *Living in the Presence: The Holy Spirit's Agenda for You* (Eastbourne: Kingsway Publications, 1996).
[32] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 14.
[33] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 21.
[34] For example, he identifies: (1) 'absolute immediacy,' (2) 'mediated immediacy' and (3) 'mediate perception;' Alston, *Perceiving God*, 21.
[35] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 21.

of mediation between the believer and their direct experience of God in Christ through the Spirit (see 4.1.3.). To put it differently, Elim saw the sacramentalism of Roman Catholicism and Anglo-Catholicism as superfluous and misleading, because God could be experienced directly. The Elim minister and theologian Mathew Clark summarises the immediate Pentecostal experientialism well when he writes that

> to be Pentecostal is to have experienced the power of God in Jesus... Precisely because it is Christ who is encountered, Pentecostals feel they are free from the dangers of subjectivism [my italics].[36]

This 'direct' encounter of God/Christ that is different from humans simply reflecting on their subjective sense of God in a spiritual experience is also emphasised in Elim's concept of the spiritual gifts, with the insistence on the gifts being supernatural and objective manifestations of God.[37] For example, referring to 'words of wisdom' and 'words of knowledge' (1 Cor. 12:8), the Elim pioneer W. G. Hathaway writes that through these gifts

> we get an understanding of the Divine mind. In them we get a manifestation which appeals to our intellect, our understanding. The word of wisdom and the world of knowledge give us an understanding of His wisdom and mind...[38]

Hathaway's description speaks of direct revelation of God being imparted to the believer through a religious experience; that is, the experiencer is purportedly given direct access to 'the Divine mind' which will help them form religious beliefs accordingly.

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[36] Clark and Lederle, *What is Distinctive About Pentecostal Theology?*, 43-45. However, it should be noted that at time of writing Clark was a member of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa.
[37] W. G. Hathaway, *Spiritual Gifts in the Church* (London: Elim Publishing, 1933), 12-13; W. R. Jones, 'The Nine Gifts of the Holy Spirit,' in *Pentecostal Doctrine*, ed. P. S. Brewster (1976), 47; Canty, *The Practice of Pentecost*, 97.
[38] Hathaway, *Spiritual Gifts in the Church*, 15.

This concept of '*direct perception*' of God helps to conceptualise important aspects of Elim's experientialism. Moreover, it provides philosophical grounding for why these types of experiences can potentially offer experiential warrant for Elim's theological beliefs. Just like direct sense perception provides *prima facie* justification for beliefs about the natural world, in the same way direct mystical perception can provide prima facie justification about the spiritual world. Nevertheless, it seems that although some of Elim's Pentecostal experiences can be understood as '*direct perception*' of God, a number of such experiences are better conceived as '*indirect perception*' of God.

So, what is meant by 'indirect perception' of God? As well as highlighting various reports of people having directly perceived God, Alston also identifies that others witness to 'experiencing God in the beauties of nature, of hearing God's voice in the Bible or in sermons or in the dictates of conscience,' etc.[39] Interestingly, Alston notes that historically he has been sceptical that such 'indirect *mystical* perception' occurs, but rather has believed that these kinds of experiences are better seen as examples of 'indirect perceptual recognition,' which for Alston is 'taking something to manifest, indicate, or be the effect of, the divine presence or activity.'[40] In other words, he has thought that 'indirect perceptual recognition' is not analogous to *perception* since the appearing is not immediate but inferred from something else that is perceived. However, in *Perceiving God* Alston rejects this conclusion by surmising that if he assumes that God can be directly presented to 'one's awareness, *why shouldn't something that is phenomenologically just like that happen by way of one's direct*

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[39] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 25.
[40] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 28.

awareness of something in creation?'[41] In sum, Alston cannot think of any reason why God could not be 'indirectly perceived,' not just 'indirectly recognised,' through mediums such as the heavens above, the moral law within, the reading and preaching of the Bible, music and so on.[42]

Alston's notion of 'indirect perception' is helpful in describing the experience of many Pentecostals, including those within Elim. That is, although 'direct perception' of God appears to characterise some Pentecostal experiences, many of the so-called divine encounters seem to be more aligned with 'indirect perception.' For example, Elim's Keith Warrington notes how the Pentecostal practices of prayer, worship and preaching in a congregational context are meant to function as platforms for divine encounters.[43] Daniel Albrecht states along similar lines that through Pentecostal liturgy, comprising music, proclamation and communal practice of spiritual gifts, the aim of the worshipping community is 'to construct a sphere in which together a congregation most likely will *encounter* their God.'[44] Moreover, Frank Macchia has argued that even the Pentecostal idea of 'tongues as a sign' should be understood in a sacramental manner where God's presence and action is mediated through this gift (in)directly.[45] These examples demonstrate that experiences of God are very much at the heart of Pentecostalism, but they also point out that these God encounters are often experienced through another medium, such as, bible reading, corporate prayer, musical

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[41] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 28.

[42] Robert Audi refers to this type of religious experience as 'theistic perception' with a 'naturalistic *base*, as opposed to the case of *pure* mystical experience in which theistic perception is taken to be as it were free-standing;' Robert Audi, *Rationality and Religious Commitment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 114.

[43] Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 202-203, 214-215, 219.

[44] Daniel Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 149; cf. Jean-Daniel Plüss, 'Religious Experience in Worship: A Pentecostal Perspective,' *PS* 2, no. 1 (2003): no page numbers.

[45] Frank Macchia, 'Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience,' *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 68; cf. Mark Cartledge, Interpreting Charismatic Experience: Hypnosis, Altered States of Consciousness and the Holy Spirit?,' *JPT* 6, no. 13 (1998): 132.

worship, and speaking in tongues. Indeed, Peter Neumann in his detailed discussion on 'Pentecostal experience' concludes that

> A maturing Pentecostal theology... needs to acknowledge the ways in which experience of God is mediated, while simultaneously upholding the belief in the immediacy (or directness) of encounter with God.[46]

The idea of 'indirect perception' seems to provide the philosophical concept for appreciating this kind of 'mediated immediacy,' where on the one hand what is experienced of God is mediated through something else, but through this mediation a genuine *perception of God* can take place that is different from 'indirect perceptual recognition,' where one makes a conscious inference about God from a physical object that has been perceived. This of course does not mean that Pentecostals do not also have 'indirect perceptual recognitions' of God, but it does mean that much of Pentecostal and Elim experientialism is purportedly 'indirect perception' of God and so seems to have similarities to sense perception.

Awareness of God

Thirdly and finally, Alston does not only see the paradigmatic cases of religious experience consisting of some kind of '(in)direct awareness' of a greater power, but this 'awareness is reported *of God*.'[47] Alston categorise the perceptions of God as either being (1) 'what God is experienced as *being*' or (2) 'what God is experienced as *doing*.'[48] Regarding God's *being*, it seems that Elim's experience of God is fundamentally Christological, even if there is a strong pneumatological element. In the words of Mathew Clark: 'It is Christ who lies at the heart of

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[46] Neuman, *Pentecostal Experience*, 161.
[47] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 14.
[48] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 43.

the Pentecostal experience, although the power by which he is known is that of the Spirit.'[49] And when it comes to God's *doing*, this seems to include divine activities such as convicting sin, providing guidance, offering reassurance, empowering for witness, bringing new revelation, and healing supernaturally.[50]

Summary

To summarise the most salient points with respect to Elim's Pentecostal experience of God in light of Alston's philosophical categories. Elim's *religious experientialism* can be seen to consist of three types of divine encounters: (1) *general experiences of God in the world* which are effectively common human experiences, but as they are experienced and interpreted through a Pentecostal lens, they carry spiritual significance for the experiencer (this has not been developed above); (2) *indirect perceptions of God* which can be seen as genuine awareness of God but this awareness is mediated through something else (e.g. nature, bible, tongues and musical worship); (3) *direct perceptions of God* which are characterised by God being perceived directly without any obvious mediation. All three types of experiences arguably provide some experiential justification for Elim's theological beliefs and for the experiential viability of the Elim argument. However, it is categories two and three that seem to provide 'fresh' theological data, as well as greater epistemic justification by their virtue of being more analogous to sense perception. Indeed, the third type of experience is most similar to sense perception and therefore probably the most reliable source of theological knowledge and *prima facie* justification for Elim's Pentecostal beliefs.

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[49] Clark and Lederle, *What is Distinctive About Pentecostal Theology?*, 44; cf. Warrington, 'Experience: The *sine qua non* of Pentecostalism,' 338.
[50] See P. S. Brewster, 'The Seven-Fold Work of the Holy Spirit,' 9-24; Jones, 'The Nine Gifts of the Holy Spirit,' 48; Dye, *Living in the Presence*, 83, 85-86.

9.3. (Dis)analogy between Sense and Mystical Perception

I have suggested that Alston's Theory of Appearing and the various categories of religious experience are useful in conceptualising Elim's Pentecostal experientialism. However, as has been noted above, Alston's theory assumes there to be sufficient parity between sense and mystical perception, but there seem be some obvious differences between the two types of experience. In fact, at least five common objections regarding the analogy between sense and mystical perception can be identified:[51]

1. Sense perception is universal, whereas religious perception is not.

2. Sense perception is constant, whereas religious perceptions come and go.

3. Sense perception perceives actual objects, whereas religious perception usually perceives God in something else.

4. Sense perception provides detailed information, whereas religious perceptions are vague.

5. Sense perception deals with physical objects, whereas religious perceptions supposedly perceive a God who is nonphysical and spiritual.

Space does not permit a detailed discussion of each objection but I will offer brief comments on each. The fact that religious perception is not universal (Objection 1) or constant (Objection 2) is not surprising within Elim's theological framework. After all it is believed that sin mars human ability to perceive God and the current eschatological dispensation means

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[51] See Caroline Frank Davis, *The Evidential Force of Religious Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 76; Nancey Murphy, *Anglo-American Postmodernity: Philosophical Perspective on Science, Religion, and Ethics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 156; Alston, 'Does Religious Experience Justify Religious Belief,' 139; Fales, 'Do Mystics See God?,' 145-158; Gellman, 'Mysticism and Religious Experience,' 155-157; Audi, *Rationality and Religious Commitment*, 117-125; Philipse, *God in the Age of Science*, 322-323; Jeff Astley, 'Beyond Science and Nature? Reflections on Scientific Reductionism and Mental and Religious Experience,' *JSRE* 1, no. 1 (2015): 41.

that God's presence in the world is not yet fully realised. However, the fact that the perception of God is neither universal nor constant does not make it dissimilar to certain types of sense perception. For example, Robert Audi notes that 'in complicated matters such as aesthetic perception in music and painting... what is directly heard or seen nevertheless cannot be seen or heard without both practice and sensitivity.'[52] Alston echoes this when he writes:

> Why suppose that what happens only rarely cannot have cognitive value? We wouldn't dream of applying this principle to scientific or philosophical insight. That comes only rarely and to few people, but it is not denigrated for that reason.[53]

Moreover, within a Pentecostal movement like Elim, the central assumption is that although the perception of God may not be universal or constant at all times, it is nevertheless available for all those who genuinely seek it. In the words of W. G. Hathaway, 'Pentecost may still become the *personal experience* of every believing child of God.'[54] The possibility for genuine seekers of God to experience divine reality is an important Pentecostal emphasis and it implies that in theory it is possible to cross-check many of the perceptions of God, because these perceptions are not restricted to few mystical experts but the Spirit of God is believed to have been poured out on 'all [believing] flesh' (Acts 2:17).[55]

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[52] Audi, *Rationality and Religious Commitment*, 122.
[53] Alston, 'Does Religious Experience Justify Religious Belief,' 140.
[54] Hathaway, *Spiritual Gifts in the Church*, 3.
[55] This does mean that arguments about the hiddenness of God by the likes of John Schellenberg are particularly challenging for Pentecostals; J. L. Schellenberg, *Divine Hiddenness and Human Reason* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006). For a Christian response see Paul K. Moser, *The Elusive God: Reorienting Religious Epistemology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Paul K. Moser, *The Evidence for God: Religious Knowledge Reexamined* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Objection three is true to some extent, particularly in relation to *general experiences of God* and *indirect perceptions of God*. However, the objection cannot be applied to *direct perceptions of God*. Furthermore, even in physical perceiving we often perceive realities through something else. For example, I can perceive my three year old son being happy (a supposedly physical state in his brain/mind) through perceiving the smile on his face, and hence perceive something (i.e. cognitive/mental state of happiness) in perceiving something else (i.e. smile). Therefore, it appears that even in some instances of physical perceiving we perceive things through other physical mediators, and so spiritual (indirect) perceiving is not necessarily so different from certain forms of physical (indirect) perception.

The idea of experiencing God through created things is also a natural expectation within a Pentecostal worldview. As argued above, Elim with most other Pentecostals maintain that God is the creator and ground of being and that creation is thus contingent on God's existence and providential presence. Indeed, as part of this doctrinal framework Pentecostals are known to view the world as being 'enchanted,' where God, as well as other spiritual beings, can be experienced in the things that have been made.[56] This might not be full panentheism, but neither is it far from it.

In terms of objection four, it does seem to be the case that sense perception typically provides greater detail than mystical perception. That said, many of the purported Pentecostal experiences of prophecy, words of knowledge, and words of wisdom do

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[56] See Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 43; Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, 39-43.

also claim to provide fairly detailed information.[57] Nevertheless, even if many

Pentecostal experiences do not provide equivalent detail to sense perception, 'we

cannot sensibly hold that less information is no information at all.'[58]

Objection five rightly notes the disanalogy between sense and religious perception.

After all, the Christian God is understood to be a spiritual being (see Jn. 4:24) and it is

also not wholly clear what human faculty perceives God in the religious experience.

Nevertheless, the whole point of an analogy is to show similarity between the two

entities not equivalence between them, and in light of the discussion above it seems

that there is sufficient similarity between God and physical objects appearing to the

perceiver to indicate that the two types of experiencing are 'similar in an *appropriate*

respect, not merely in any arbitrary respect.'[59] To put it differently, the analogy seems

to hold with respect to how the 'objects' appear to the perceiver, even if 'what' appears

are very different entities (i.e. spiritual and/or physical realities).[60] Therefore, it seems

that the analogy between sense and religious perception cannot be easily dismissed.

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[57] For example, when discussing the Pentecostal understanding of the words of wisdom and knowledge, Lancaster refers to the biblical examples of Acts 5:3 and 9:11 which both provide very detailed information; Lancaster, *The Spirit-Filled Church*, 82.

[58] Alston, 'Does Religious Experience Justify Religious Belief,' 140.

[59] Yujin Nagasawa, *The Existence of God: A Philosophical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2011), 78. Nagasawa makes this point in relation to teleological argument(s) for the existence of God.

[60] For further discussion on the objection from God's 'non-dimensionality' see Jerome Gellman, *Mystical Experience of God: A Philosophical Inquiry* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 39-52.

9.4. Pragmatic Justification

Even if there is sufficient parity between sense and mystical perception, which I believe there is, at best the (in)direct appearing of God through religious experiences only provides *prima facie* epistemic justification. That is, beliefs based on or informed by religious experiences only have warrant in the absence of what Alston calls belief 'overriders' (see above).[61] For Elim there seem to be three main challenges or 'overriders' for such beliefs. First, in light of Elim's doctrine of (fallen) humanity (see chapter 7), the human ability to form accurate theological beliefs is significantly limited and always fallible. Such human perspectivism and sinfulness can be categorised in Alston's terms as a potential belief 'underminer,' as these doctrines undermine the cognitive ability of humans to form appropriate beliefs based on their experience of God. Second, as has been argued in chapters three and four, British Pentecostalism and Elim were birthed in the context of increasing religious pluralism. The fact of competing religious traditions arguing that their religious beliefs are also experientially justified can be seen as a belief 'rebutter' by providing contradictory evidence to Elim's own experiential claims.[62] Third, following from the previous point, one predominant type of competing (non-)religious tradition has been exclusive naturalism, which has sought to explain all religious experiences naturalistically, and

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[61] Alvin Plantinga's belief 'defeaters' are very similar to Alston's 'overriders;' Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 359-366.

[62] Religious pluralism is commonly identified as the main challenge for Alston's theory; Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, 27; Baker, *Tayloring Reformed Epistemology*, 49-50; Wildman, *Religious and Spiritual Experiences*, 164-165; Senor, 'The Experiential Grounding of Religious Belief,' 76-77.

thus attempts to be a belief 'underminer' in explaining away the involvement of any super or supranatural agency.[63]

Elim's implicit *experimentalism* seems to provide the necessary further justification in the light of the potential 'overriders,' at least in theory, to supplement Elim's experiential beliefs. This is the explicitly pragmatic, rather than just empirical, characteristic of Elim's rationality. In other words, if Elim's empirical experientialism looks at 'what produced the belief,' Elim's pragmatic experimentalism looks at 'what the belief produces.' The emphasis of the latter is on the 'effects' and 'results' produced by the belief, which has been identified as the basic tenet of Peirce's and James' philosophical pragmatism (see 4.3.3.). Interestingly, Alston aware of the challenges provided by certain 'overriders' for experientially based Christian beliefs, particularly religious pluralism, has argued for the need of some kind of further pragmatic justification.[64] But, as pointed out by Wesley Wildman, Alston's pragmatism remains 'underdeveloped,'[65] and therefore Elim's pragmatism may provide a way forward.

So, my aim is now to articulate Elim's doxastic practice of pragmatism as a proposal to help Elim's experiential beliefs move from initial to more established justification. I will do so by first focusing on the internal criteria used by Elim to discern 'true'

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[63] For example, like Nietzsche, Herman Philipse categorises Paul's religious experience on the road to Damascus as an 'epileptic attack;' Philipse, *God in the Age of Science?*, 331; cf. Davies, *The Evidential Force of Religious Experience*, 3; Fales, 'Do Mystics See God?,' 154-155.
[64] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 304; William P. Alston, 'The Epistemological Challenge of Religious Pluralism: Responses and Discussion,' in *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, ed. John Hick, 46-48.
[65] Wildman, *Religious and Spiritual Experiences*, 160.

religious experiences. Although this internal criteria has a strong pragmatic emphasis,

it also uses biblical and doctrinal criteria to 'judge' religious experiences and thus it

can be seen as a combination of coherentism and pragmatism. Second, I will evaluate

the more explicit and evidentialist pragmatism of Elim, and finally I will argue that

Elim should maintain the logic of its evidentialist pragmatism but recalibrate it with an

increased emphasis on the Pentecostal concept of 'outward *signs* following.'

9.4.1. Coherentist Pragmatism

Throughout its history Elim has adhered to the NT mandate to 'test the spirits' (1 Jn.

4:1; cf. 1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:21), not least due to the fallible and fallen ability of

humans to perceive the things of God. Elim's internal criteria for distinguishing the

authentic from the *inauthentic* can be seen to consist of three components.

First, genuine religious experiences of God within Elim need to be *consistent with the Bible*.

In the words of the Elim minister D. J. Ayling:

> The power of God must come to us by a Scriptural experience. The Bible is the only
> safe ground for any spiritual experience. Any claim to experiences that cannot be
> validated by an appeal to the Word of God must be suspect.[66]

In other words, within Elim any spiritual encounters that are incompatible with what is clearly

stated in the Bible are questionable at best. The general logic being that if God is the divine

author of Scripture, then he would not contradict Himself in revealing something which

opposes his previous revelation. However, in light of the Scripture's *dynamic sense* and

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[66] D. J. Ayling, 'A Baptism of Power,' in *Pentecostal Doctrine*, 237.

canonical plurality (see 8.2.), the hermeneutical community needs to carefully evaluate all seemingly contradictory experiences of the Spirit, because Scripture cannot be viewed as a simplistic manual for rejecting human religious experiences since the reality of God is increasingly being made manifest at the dawn of the coming King. That said, the *historical sense* and the *canonical unity* do provide some historical grounding in enabling Scripture to be the plumb line to judge Elim's contemporary spiritual encounters.

Second, Elim's religious experiences need to be *doctrinally sound*. It is no accident that from 1916 onwards Elim has had official statements of faith. These doctrinal statements seem to stem from three primary sources. First, as has been pointed out in chapter four (4.2.) Elim's doctrinal statements were to a great extent borrowed consciously or unconsciously from existing Evangelical statements of faith. Second, these doctrines seem to have reflected the collective experience of the Elim Pentecostal community. As such, the Evangelical doctrines were supplemented with doctrines reflecting the Pentecostal experience. Therefore, the doctrines are to some extent the articulated storehouse of past experiences of the Pentecostal community. Third, Elim leaders throughout its history have argued that, despite the influence of Evangelical theology and personal encounters with God, their doctrines are fundamentally biblical.[67]

However, more so than with the Bible, Elim's doctrinal statements function as guidelines of what should be expected of religious experiences. In other words, they do not have the final say on whether an experience is or is not of God. Indeed, as has been pointed out Elim's

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[67] Jeffreys, *The Foursquare Gospel – Doctrinal*, 1; Jeffreys, *The Foursquare Gospel – Supernatural*, 2.

Fundamental and Foundational Truths changed in 1922, 1928/1934 and 1993, and as I have

argued these changes seem to have been instigated by experiences (or lack of experiences), as

well as changes in biblical interpretation.

Third, Elim has always insisted that religious experiences are *known by their fruits*.[68] The

expressions of the fruit have included a purported super/supranatural enabling to fulfil the

Great Commission through witnessing to the world and building up the Church. For example,

Colin Dye writes that 'the Spirit enabled men and women to speak with a power and authority

that they did not naturally possess.'[69] And Ron Jones argues in line with 1 Corinthians 14 that

the purpose of Spirit(ual) manifestations are 'for the edifying (building up) of the Church.'[70]

These more dynamic expressions of the 'fruit' have also been supplemented with the expected

moral qualities that have been expected to accompany a true encounter with God. John

Lancaster captures this well when he writes that

> ...Christianity must prove its authenticity by the moral results it produces in its
> disciples. Christ himself laid this down as the acid test of all teaching, 'Ye, shall know
> them by their fruits (Matthew 7:16).[71]

In sum, to help Elim mitigate the potential 'overrider' for religious encounters resulting from

'fallen humanness,' the movement has used the Bible, doctrine and the 'fruit' of the

experience as benchmarks for 'testing the spirits.' Thus, *pragmatic coherentism* has been and

can be utilised for evaluating religious experiences. It is the pragmatic side that might also

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[68] Clark and Lederle note that Pentecostal experience insists 'observable results;' Clark and Lederle, *What is Distinctive About Pentecostal Theology*, 55.
[69] Dye, *Living in the Presence*, 83; Ayling, 'A Baptism of Power,' 238.
[70] W. R. Jones, 'The Nine Gifts of the Holy Spirit,' 48.
[71] John Lancaster, 'The Nine-Fold Fruit of the Spirit,' in *Pentecostal Doctrine*, 64; Siegfried S. Schatzmann, 'The Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostal Interpretation of Pauline Pneumatology,' in *Pentecostal Perspectives*, 88.

help Elim to respond to the two other main 'overriders,' namely, religious pluralism and naturalism.

9.4.2. Evidentialist Pragmatism

Just like religious experiences can be defined in a 'wide' and 'narrow sense' (see above), the same categorisation can be used with respect to religious experimentalism. I will focus primarily on the narrow sense of experimentalism, but before doing so I will touch briefly on the wide sense experimentalism, as it is not without its pragmatic significance.

Wide Experimentalism

It is difficult to strictly delineate between 'experientialism' and 'experimentalism' in the wide sense. That said, religious 'experientialism' broadly conceived can be seen to refer to general human experiences that are *interpreted* through a religious framework (see above). The ability of a religious worldview (e.g. Elim's Pentecostalism) to interpret lived experience is important, because if it fails to make sense of every day experiences it quickly becomes suspect for its experientially minded followers.[72] Broad religious 'experimentalism,' on the other hand, can be seen as the *effects* produced by the religious belief for general human experience. These effects can be also characterised as the 'fruits' referred to above by Elim's Dye, Jones and Lancaster. For example, increased boldness to stand for one's beliefs, building

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[72] This is particularly the case if there is an alternative religious or non-religious tradition that can make better sense of human experience. For example, Charles Taylor refers to alternative philosophies/religions in trying to provide the 'best account' in making sense of human experience; Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 58; cf. Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 339. Thus, the ability of religious tradition to interpret general experiences may not be able to verify the truth of the religious tradition in question, but its failure to interpret general experiences may begin to falsify it.

others up in love, compassion for the poor, transformed family life, improved work ethic, and freedom from addictive behaviour are some of the effects that Pentecostals commonly identify as resulting from their experience of God. Again, like with general religious experiences, these varied effects may not verify the truth of a religious tradition, but the inability of a religion to produce such effects quickly begin to call it into question. This concept of general experientialism is similar to William James's religious pragmatism when he writes:

> If theological ideas prove to have value for concrete life, they will be true, for pragmatism, in the sense of being good for so much. For how much more they are true, will depend entirely on their relations to other truths that also have to be acknowledged.[73]

Without delving into James' concept of 'truth,'[74] his basic point seems to be that the justification of religion is to a great extent determined by its 'value for concrete life' in comparison with the value provided by other factors and frameworks one is aware of. Indeed, in the final pages of *Perceiving God*, Alston echoes a similar sentiment when he surmises that 'the final test of the Christian scheme comes from trying it out in one's life... and seeing whether it leads to the new life of the Spirit.'[75] Therefore, it is not hard to argue that religious experimentalism in the wide sense seems to have epistemic merit in not only helping to make Elim's Pentecostalism a 'live option,' but also in giving pragmatic justification to live one's life in line with the Full Gospel.

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[73] James, *Pragmatism and Other Writings*, 36.
[74] For helpful corrective essay on common (mis)interpretations of James' concept of truth see Hilary Putnam, 'James's Theory of Truth,' in *Pragmatism as a Way of Life: The Lasting Legacy of William James and John Dewey*, ed. David MacArthur (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017), 167-187.
[75] Alston, *Perceiving God*, 304.

Narrow Experimentalism

This 'wide sense' experimentalism or pragmatism found within Elim, however, is not Elim's only type of pragmatism. As has been argued in chapter four (see 4.3.3.), Elim's early pragmatism appears to have had significant similarities to C. S. Peirce's more scientific and *narrow experimentalism*. For example, it seems that Elim's doctrines regarding divine healing and tongues as initial evidence for baptism in the Holy Spirit were both revised on the basis of this pragmatic logic. That is, (1) a hypotheses regarding the nature of divine healing and spirit baptism were articulated based on spiritual experience and reading of the Scriptures; (2) these hypotheses were then lived out and 'tested' in practice; and (3) the hypotheses were then revised based on the results of the 'tested' experience. In sum, historically Elim's rationality seems to have been one of *evidentialist pragmatism*.

Despite this historical precedence, Daniel Castelo has recently argued that Pentecostal epistemology should move away from this type of 'evidentialist logic,' because for him this is a 'modern thought-paradigm' and thus antithetical to Pentecostal spirituality.[76] Castelo expands that (American) classical Pentecostalism has uncritically taken on board this logic from Charles Fox Parham who insisted that tongues were the 'Bible *evidence*' of Spirit baptism. Castelo writes that

> doing so has put this branch of Pentecostalism at odds with other Pentecostal constituencies across the globe, one for whom initial-evidence logic is *not* compelling or mandated.[77]

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[76] Castelo, *Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition*, 131-132.
[77] Castelo, *Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition*, 139.

Indeed, Castelo concludes that the 'initial-evidence logic' should *not* be retained within Pentecostal epistemology, but instead Pentecostalism should be seen as a mystical tradition of the Church catholic.[78]

Although Castelo rightly warns against the obsession that some Pentecostals may have had regarding the doctrine of 'initial *evidence*,' he seems to too quickly jettison a central aspect of the Anglo-American Pentecostal rationality. In other words, what he believes to be a borrowed 'evidential logic' from Evangelicalism actually appears to be a lynchpin of the Pentecostal rationality, at least as far as Elim is concerned. In effect Castelo's rejection of the 'initial-evidence logic' seems to be problematic for three reasons with respect to Anglo-American Pentecostalism.[79]

First, as I have argued in chapter three (see 3.1.4.), British classical Pentecostalism – and the same could probably be said of American classical Pentecostalism – is itself a modern religious movement. Despite the rhetoric of some early Pentecostal pioneers which suggested that early Pentecostals simply returned to a pre-modern and first century Christianity of the apostles, historically speaking Anglo-American Pentecostalism emerged within modernity and thus only really makes sense as a modern movement. This does not mean that Pentecostals were not critical of positivist aspects of early twentieth century modernity, but it does mean that their own spiritual alternative was itself also a child of modernity. To put it simply, classical Pentecostalism was not anti-modern *per se* but it was *modernity plus*;

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[78] Castelo, *Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition*, 158.
[79] Castelo acknowledges that the Pentecostalism he knows the best are 'the Mexican, Latino, and Latin American varieties,' but in his work he primarily explores 'the Anglo-American forms;' Castelo, *Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition*, xvii.

namely, modernity enchanted with the super/supra-natural reality of God. Therefore, the modernistic evidentialist rationality of Anglo-American Pentecostalism should not be seen as peripheral but central to Pentecostal epistemology.

Second, it is a mistake to assume that those classical Pentecostal movements that rejected tongues as initial evidence also rejected the concept of 'external evidence' for Baptism in the Spirit. For example, Elim abandoned the doctrine of 'tongues as initial evidence,' but still insisted that a genuine baptism of the Holy Spirit is accompanied by external signs. At the birth of the Elim argument 'divine healings' were presented as the main 'sign' to justify that the Spirit of God was at work within the movement (see 4.3.3.), and throughout its history other 'signs' have also been emphasised (see above). So, the 'initial-evidence logic' was very much maintained, even if 'tongues' as the first sign was not adopted. In fact, ironically for Elim the pragmatic evidentialism seems to have been the reason why *tongues* as initial evidence was itself rejected; that is, the *evidence* suggested that some were baptised in the Spirit without necessarily speaking in tongues.[80]

Third, by rejecting the evidentialist pragmatic logic Castelo removes an important epistemological resource that helps Elim and other Pentecostal movements to respond to potential belief 'overriders.' To put it differently, without evidentialist experimentalism Elim and other forms of Pentecostal experientialism are left particularly vulnerable against the

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[80] This same logic was used by other European Pentecostal pioneers such as Pastor Polman of Holland and Pastor Paul of Germany in rejecting tongues as *the* sign of Spirit baptism; Alexander Boddy, ed., 'The Place of Tongues in the Pentecostal Movement,' 177, 182.

objection from religious pluralism. Thus, it is not only historically but also philosophically problematic to do away with this evidentialist logic of Pentecostalism.

Having said all of that, Elim's evidential experimentalism has historically been characterised by elements of triumphalism which is unwarranted in light of Elim's wider Pentecostal theology. In other words, at the heart of Elim's Foursquare Gospel is the *person* of Christ, and if the personhood of Christ is taken seriously within the Full Gospel structure then it would be misleading to try to demonstrate its truth in the same way as one were to demonstrate the truth of a non-personal scientific theory within the natural realm. Moreover, the eschatological (*under*) *realised realism* of Elim (see 7.1.4.) implies that although aspects of the reality of Christ's truth can be experienced and grasped in the present dispensation, this reality is not yet fully realised and therefore any pragmatic verification will inevitably be partial in the present age.

Consequently, within this Christological and eschatological framework it is not surprising that Elim has had to qualify, for example, its statements regarding divine healing from the initial boldness of healing being guaranteed in the atonement (1916/1922),[81] to applying it for only those who 'walk in obedience' (1928/1934),[82] before replacing this altogether with the more humble assertion that the Church is 'to fulfil a ministry of healing and deliverance to the spiritual and physical needs of mankind' (1993).[83] To put it differently, it is unsurprising that the evidence regarding divine healing did not support Elim's earlier triumphalism which

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[81] Jeffreys, *Elim Christ Church: What We Believe*, 5; Jeffreys, *Elim Constitution* (1922), 6.
[82] Jeffreys *et al, Elim Constitution* (1928), 6; Jeffreys, *Deed Poll* (1934), 3.
[83] Elim 1993 Conference Reports, 62.

assumed that the person of Christ was somehow under divine obligation to heal everyone ('who walked in obedience') in the current age, and hence Elim's doctrine of healing needed to be modified accordingly.

Nevertheless, despite not seeing the 'results' and 'effects' anticipated in some of the earlier doctrinal statements, Elim has still maintained the pragmatic logic and the assumption that external evidence does support the truth of the Foursquare Gospel. Hence, in the remainder of this section I will propose that Elim's *pragmatic experimentalism* should be developed from 'hard' (naïve?) *pragmatic evidentialism* to a more nuanced *signs-based pragmatism*.

9.4.3. Signs-Based Pragmatism

My articulation of Elim's *signs-based pragmatism* follows the common epistemic principle of allowing the order of things (ontology) to determine how things are known (epistemology).[84] As I have argued throughout this thesis, the assumed 'order of things' (i.e. the hard core) of the Elim argument is the Christological Foursquare Gospel, and this presupposed 'ontology' can be seen to have two important characteristics for further developing Elim's pragmatic epistemology: (1) at the centre of what one seeks to know is a personal God revealed in Christ Jesus; (2) this revealed God in Christ is not a passive God of deism but an active reality who purportedly manifests Himself pneumatically in the world as Saviour, Healer, Baptiser in the Spirit and soon coming King. So with respect to these two theological facets, my aim is now to spell out their implications for Elim's pragmatism of signs.

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[84] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094b 13-27; McGrath, *The Science of God*, 107; Moser, *The Evidence for God*, 37.

'I-Thou' Knowledge

The first aspect of Elim's Christological Foursquare Gospel is that what is supposedly known and/or sought to be known is a divine *person* (i.e. God revealed in Christ through the Spirit). If the divine person of Christ is central to the Elim movement, which I believe it is, then in Martin Buber terminology one should avoid the category mistake of confusing 'I-Thou' knowledge with 'I-It' knowledge.[85] The difference being that 'I-Thou' knowledge is characterised by relationality and mutual involvement, whereas 'I-It' knowledge is impersonal with the subject seeking control over the object of enquiry. The 'I-Thou' is commonly exemplified in (meaningful) human relationships, whereas the 'I-It' is often reflected in human dealings with nature (e.g. natural sciences).[86] It seems that like in mutual human relationships the Christ of the Full Gospel needs to be known primarily in the 'I-Thou' dynamic, at least if the personal nature of the divine Christ is taken seriously and the category mistake of treating Christ as a mere object is to be avoided.[87]

For Elim's pragmatic epistemology the 'I-Thou' dynamic has three implications. First, knowing Christ in a personal relationship means that one can only truly know Him if Christ reveals Himself (see Lk. 10:21-22; Jn. 2:24). Indeed, this is the case with all genuine personal relationships; that is, the knowledge of another person requires that the person sought to be known makes themselves known. In light of this, knowledge of Christ can never be simply a matter of human achievement or effort, and therefore the pragmatic 'effects' and 'results' of

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[85] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*. Translated by Ronald Gregor Smith (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).
[86] Buber, *I and Thou*, Part 1.
[87] Paul Moser makes a similar point about the Christian God of love; Moser, *The Elusive God*, 72.

the Foursquare Gospel cannot be guaranteed to the seeker by simply following particular

methodological steps, unless one is willing to compromise the divine sovereignty of Christ.[88]

Second, personal knowledge of Christ does *also* entail human 'effort' or perhaps better stated:

human involvement, faith and trust. As with personal knowledge between two humans, the

divine human relational knowing does not only require Christ revealing himself but the

human individual likewise investing something of themselves within the epistemological

quest. In biblical language this personal investment is commonly referred to as 'faith' (*pistis*),

without which 'it is impossible to please him [God]' (Heb. 11:6). A full discussion on a

Pentecostal concept 'faith' is beyond our focus, but following general Protestant theology it

can be stated that 'faith' is not *merely* propositional knowledge (*notitia*) or public confession

(*assensus*) but fundamentally consists of 'trust' (*fiducia*).[89] Trust, however, by its very nature

carries with it an element of risk. For example, in an intimate human relationship there has to

be an element of trust between the two parties for the relationship to develop, and whenever

someone places trust in another person they take a risk since there is a real possibility that the

trust will be misplaced or indeed will be misused by the other. Nevertheless, the risk is the

price humans pay for being able to have a genuine relationship, and it is not hard to argue that

this risk is also necessary in the human-divine relationship.[90] Thus, the possibility of *spectator*

pragmatic evidentialism, where the person in search of Christ tries to remain detached from

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[88] Buber makes a similar distinction by contrasting 'magic' with 'prayer' to a personal God; Buber, *I and Thou*, 58; cf. C. S. Lewis, 'The Efficacy of Prayer,' in *Fern-Seed and Elephants and Other Essay on Christianity by C. S. Lewis*, ed. Walter Hooper (Glasgow: Collins, 1975), 96-103.

[89] See Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (London: SCM, 1949), chapters 2-4; Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 307-309; Swinburne, *Faith and Reason*, 142. It is also misleading to assume that chronologically *notitia* necessarily comes before *fiducia*. In fact, Barth discusses 'Faith as Trust' (chapter 2) before exploring 'Faith as Knowledge' (chapter 3) and 'Faith as Confession' (chapter 4).

[90] Although it should be noted that in the classical Pentecostal tradition God in Christ is considered to be perfectly trustworthy, even if His ways are considered to be different from those of humans (Isa. 55:8-9).

the personal implications of coming in contact with Christ's Full Gospel, is questionable at best.[91] This seems to be particularly the case when the purpose of the 'I-You' relationship is brought to the forefront.

Third, and following from the second point, the purpose of the 'I-You' relationship in a Christological framework seems to be love, namely, God demonstrating his love towards humans in the life, death and resurrection of Christ with the aim of (some) humans responding in love and obedience (see Jn. 3:16; 14:23; Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:19-20).[92] This means that the purpose of theological knowledge is not knowledge as such, but in the words of Paul Moser 'for humans to enter into fellowship with God via human repentance and obedience.'[93] In other words, for Pentecostals as for many other Christians the knowledge of God is to be transformative in nature, and without such transformation the knowledge itself becomes meaningless and possibly even dangerous (see 1 Cor. 8:1; Jam. 2:19). This suggests that unless the theological epistemologist is rightly disposed towards the Christ of the Full Gospel, it is more than likely that Christ may not be revealed to the seeker, because the fundamental purpose of the Full Gospel is not to increase one's theological knowledge but to call one to participate in its transforming reality.

To summarise, the 'I-Thou' aspect of the Christological Foursquare Gospel means that the pragmatic verification of Elim's argument may not have universal appeal, but may only have

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[91] I have adapted my concept of 'spectator pragmatic evidentialism' from Moser's notion of 'spectator evidence;' Moser, *The Elusive God*, 53.
[92] My aim is not to get into the discussion about divine election. Within Elim there are representatives of both Arminian and Calvinist positions.
[93] Moser, *The Elusive God*, 53. Cf. Abraham, *Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation*, 188.

significance for those who have 'eyes to see' and 'ears to hear' (see Mk. 8:18). This conclusion is further substantiated by Elim's under-realised eschatology, where the complete effects of Christ and the Full Gospel are not yet fully realised and thus any fully fledged scientifically based empirical pragmatism could at best only point to aspects of the Foursquare Gospel truth.

Full Gospel Signs

Having said all of that, the above should not lead to a complete *deconstruction* of Elim's Pentecostal evidentialist pragmatism but rather for its *reconstruction*. In other words, although the *Christological* 'I-Thou' aspect of the Elim argument mitigates against simplistic pragmatic evidentialism, Elim's *Foursquare* conviction that Christ is the active Saviour, Healer, Baptiser in the Spirit and soon coming King calls for maintaining some form of pragmatic justification. That is, the Elim tradition has assumed throughout its history that the activity of Christ has real effects and results in the world, and that Christ's presence in the power of the Spirit is indeed accompanied 'with signs following.'[94] Therefore, what is needed is not a complete rejection of Elim's evidentialist pragmatism but a more nuanced religious pragmatism, namely, *signs based pragmatism*.

Phillip Wiebe, following the philosopher Stephen Braude, proposes that with respect to experimentalism we should distinguish between (1) 'experimental evidence' of the (natural) sciences, (2) 'semi-experimental evidence' which includes 'accounts of lived experience' and 'consists of claims that cannot be readily obtained at will, but are sufficiently numerous to be

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[94] Elim 1993 Conference Reports, 61.

worthy of being included in serious theorizing;' and (3) 'anecdotal evidence' which 'consists of claims – often one-off claims – that are insufficiently numerous to be rendered plausible, and consequently may not be included in theorizing about the world.'[95] When it comes to Elim's signs based pragmatism, in light of the personal 'I-Thou' aspect of the Foursquare Gospel it would be theologically and philosophically inappropriate to assume that 'experimental evidence' of the natural sciences could be mustered to justify the truth of the Elim argument. However, in relation to the claim that the activity of Christ is accompanied 'with signs following,' it would also be inconsistent with the Elim argument to maintain that only 'anecdotal evidence' is available to justify the truth of the Foursquare Gospel. Consequently, there seem to be good reasons to adopt the middle position of 'semi-experimental evidence.'

Wiebe expands by explaining that the semi-experimental approach treats religious beliefs as 'theoretical entities,' and thus although the entity itself may be strictly speaking non-physical (e.g. God), the effects of the entity can still be empirically investigated and analysed.[96] Indeed, Elim's Pentecostal pragmatic logic seems to be naturally aligned with this kind of an approach. For example, as discussed in chapter four (see 4.4.3.), the Elim pioneers tried to justify the truth of the Foursquare Gospel by documenting purported healings as empirical evidence,[97] and by doing so were trailblazers for those who have used biomedical and social

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[95] Phillip H. Wiebe, 'Religious Experience, Cognitive Science, and the Future of Religion,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science*, ed. Philip Clayton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 513-514.
[96] Wiebe, 'Religious Experience...,' 506-519.
[97] See Boulton, *George Jeffreys* (1999); Darragh, *In Defence of His Word*.

scientific methods to analyse Pentecostal/Charismatic phenomena, even if they lacked the

methodological robustness of their successors.[98]

However, even when the results of Elim's Foursquare Gospel can be supposedly empirically

and pragmatically observed and evaluated, Candy Gunther Brown points out that even the

more objective medical records regarding healing, for example, are not self-explanatory but

'require human interpretation.'[99] Consequently, Amos Yong with good reason concludes that

empirical evidence for the 'eschatological transformation of all things as signs of the

kingdom... are empirically discernible as divine action only in faith.'[100] Nevertheless, the

effects of the Full Gospel should still provide 'pragmatic signs' even if they require 'the eyes

of faith.'

As 'pragmatic signs' the Full Gospel phenomena should in the words of Blaise Pascal provide

'enough light for those who desire only to see, and enough darkness for those of contrary

disposition.'[101] That is, there should be sufficient accessibility for genuine seekers to perceive

the evidence for the truth of the Foursquare Gospel, since the purpose of the 'I-Thou'

knowing of Christ appears to be for humans to enter a loving and transformative relationship

with Christ. However, since the purpose of believing in Christ is not to simply have more

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[98] E.g. David C. Lewis, 'Signs and Wonders in Sheffield: A Social Anthropologist's Analysis of Words of Knowledge, Manifestations of the Spirit, and the Effectiveness of Divine Healing' (Appendix D), in *Power Healing*, ed. John Wimber with Kevin Springer (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986), 252-273; Kathryn Kuhlman, *I Believe in Miracles: Streams of Healing from the Heart of a Woman of Faith*. Revised and Updated (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1992); Benny Hinn, *Lord I Need a Miracle* (Milton Keynes: Word Publishing, 1993); Margaret Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2003); Candy Gunther Brown, *Testing Prayer: Science and Healing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).
[99] Brown, *Testing Prayer*, 153.
[100] Yong, *The Spirit of Creation*, 100.
[101] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*. Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 50 (XI).

spectator knowledge about God but to be in a loving relationship with the triune God revealed in Christ Jesus, it seems appropriate for this evidence not to be overwhelming so that those who do not want to have such a personal relationship with Christ are not forced or coerced into it, as well as for Christ to maintain His divine freedom in both revealing and hiding Himself. Stephen Evans has referred to these two aspects of Pascal's dictum as the 'Wide Accessibility Principle' and an 'Easy Resistibility Principle' of Christian signs.[102]

Indeed, the 'revealing' and 'hidden' nature of 'pragmatic signs' seems to be in line with the NT concept of revelation. For example, in the *incarnation* some witnessed in Christ the fullness of God (Jn. 1:14, 18), while others perceived Christ to be simply a deluded human being (Jn. 7:5); on the *cross* the centurion acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God (Mk. 15:39), while others mocked what they believed to be a failed religious and political leader (Mk. 15:29-31); and at the *resurrection* the disciples saw the risen Christ (1 Cor. 15:3-8), while the Jewish leaders sceptically claimed that Christ's body had been stolen by His disciple (Mt. 28:11-15). This same motif of simultaneously 'revealing' and 'hiding' is also present in Jesus' use of parables (Mk. 4:1-12, 33-34), and in Jesus' refusal to give an explicit sign to the Pharisees on demand, despite performing many signs during His ministry (Lk. 11:29-32).

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[102] C. Stephen Evans, *Natural Signs and Knowledge of God: A New Look at Theistic Arguments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), ixx. Although Evans refers to signs in nature, these two principles can also be applied to experimental and pragmatic signs.

Summary

In sum, my proposal of Elim's *signs-based pragmatism* which stems from the Christological Foursquare Gospel is a recalibration of Elim's Pentecostal evidentialist pragmatism. In other words, it maintains an empirical and pragmatic element by embracing a 'semi-experimental' approach to Pentecostal 'signs,' but does so by simultaneously appreciating the 'I-Thou' dynamic inherent within the Full Gospel. This means that the 'signs' are not self-explanatory but need to be 'spiritually discerned' (1 Cor. 2:14). That said, the purported signs cannot simply be interpreted to mean anything, because there is still real empirical content that guides the interpretation. Indeed, the history of Elim suggests that some interpretations can be empirically falsified (e.g. the concept that all who walk in obedience to Christ can enjoy perfect health in the current dispensation).

This *signs-based pragmatism* provides further justification for Elim's experiential beliefs and helps to rebut some of the belief 'overriders' stemming from religious pluralism and naturalistic explanations. In all fairness this pragmatism of signs does not provide the 'experimental evidence' of the natural sciences and therefore anyone expecting this level of epistemic warrant will be disappointed. However, as has been argued above, theologically speaking assuming the methodology of the natural sciences to apply to the truth of the Christological Foursquare Gospel would be inappropriate with respect to the 'I-Thou' nature of the knowledge inherent within this theoretical framework, not to mention the current not yet fully realised eschatological dispensation. Nevertheless, the 'semi-experimental evidence' regarding the Full Gospel signs should provide sufficient grounds for both an adherent of the Elim movement, as well as a genuine would-be-adherent, to embrace the truth of the

Foursquare Gospel. Thus, in this sense it would provide reasons to respond to objections from other religions and naturalistic explanations, or at least this evidence should enable Elim to compare the pragmatic 'effects' and explanatory power of the Foursquare Gospel *vis-à-vis* its alternatives.

9.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have developed the inherent *experientialism* and *experimentalism* in the Elim tradition with particular emphasis on epistemic justification. In dialogue with William Alston I have proposed that Elim's *experientialism* can be seen to consist of (1) *general experiences of God in the world* which are effectively common human experiences, but as they are experienced and interpreted through a Pentecostal lens; (2) *indirect experiences of God* which can be seen as genuine awareness of God but this awareness is mediated through something else (e.g. nature, bible, tongues and musical worship); and (3) *direct experiences of God* that are characterised by God being perceived directly without any obvious mediation. All of these religious experiences – but particularly the indirect experiences and even more so the direct experiences of God (see the analogy above with sense perception) – can provide *prima facie* warrant for the truth of the Foursquare Gospel.

However, due to potential belief 'overriders' for these experiential beliefs (e.g. religious pluralism), the epistemic warrant provided by these experiences are at best only provisional. Consequently, I have suggested that Elim's *experimentalism* (read: pragmatism) provides the necessary assistance to strengthen Elim's epistemological position. As with experientialism, Elim's experimentalism can be understood in a 'wide' (Jamesian) sense which focuses more

on the existential and practical effects caused by living in accordance with the Full Gospel, and 'narrow' (Peircean) sense with a more evidential, empirical and observational logic. I have primarily focused on this latter 'narrow' sense and in doing so have defended the evidentialist logic of Elim's Pentecostalism as central to any classical Pentecostal rationality (*pace* Castelo). That said, I have also argued that the evidentialist logic needs to be recalibrated in light of a more theologically informed Pentecostal pragmatism of 'signs.' Such pragmatism would take seriously the 'I-Thou' dynamic in the Christological Foursquare Gospel, but also appreciate the pragmatic effects expected within the Full Gospel remit.[103] Hence, with Phillip Wiebe I have stated that the evidence expected within this theoretical framework is 'semi-experimental evidence.' It provides 'enough light for those who desire only to see, and enough darkness for those of contrary disposition.'[104] Or in the words of the Psalmist it is a call to 'taste and see that the Lord is good' (Ps. 34:8). That is, real pragmatic and even empirical effects are to be expected, but not through 'testing' as spectators, but through 'tasting' as participants.

Now, what has been provided in this chapter is suggestive rather than comprehensive. Moreover, I have not tried to argue that there is epistemic warrant for the Elim position, only that according to Elim's own tradition-specific rationality this is the kind of warrant one should expect. That said, the Pentecostal pragmatism articulated in this chapter is not only a contribution to the intellectual self-understanding of the Elim movement, but also makes a

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[103] I have not explored *if* and *how* a super- or supra-natural being can interact with the natural world. These questions have simply been beyond the scope of the chapter. However, for views with which I would sympathise on these issues see Alvin Plantinga. *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), chapters 3-4; Yong, *The Spirit of Creation*, chapters 3-4.

[104] Pascal, *Pensées*, 50 (XI).

contribution to Pentecostal theology and philosophical/theological pragmatism. It also offers

the first detailed Pentecostal interaction with William Alston.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I will first provide a summary of the thesis, with particular emphasis on its contributions to the disciplines of Pentecostal, philosophical and historical theology. Second, I will identify suggestions for future research.

Summary and Contributions of the Thesis

In the introduction to the thesis I identified 'the problem' as the need for Pentecostal theological methodology to be informed by a Pentecostal rationality, or at least a rationality that is compatible with Pentecostalism(s). In an attempt to contribute towards resolving this problem – I am under no illusions that a single thesis could actually *solve* the problem – I began the discussion in Part I by analysing significant academic articulations of Pentecostal rationalities by Amos Yong, James Smith and William Oliverio, Jr. (chapter 1). Although I noted the various strengths of these epistemological constructions, I also highlighted the seeming *ahistoricism* in the methodologies of Yong and Smith and in the practice of Oliverio. The implication of this ahistoricism is that it is questionable to what extent their epistemologies are in fact 'Pentecostal,' or at least they do not reflect any particular Pentecostal tradition. As a way forward, I outlined Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of 'tradition-constituted' rationality as a method of developing a historical, narrative and tradition-specific Pentecostal rationality (chapter 2).

Part II of the thesis moved on to provide such a historically informed tradition-specific rationality. In doing so, I used Elim as an exemplar of a classical Pentecostal tradition. I began by providing the 'prologues' to the Elim tradition by focusing especially on the social, philosophical and theological context, as well as the holiness, revival and British Pentecostal roots of Elim (chapter 3). My central claims were that the Elim movement, and British Pentecostalism as a whole, needs to be increasingly understood as a modern movement; and that the British Pentecostal logic developed Keswick *romanticism* and the Welsh Revival *communal experientialism* into full-blown Pentecostal *evidentialism*. In chapter four I then narrated the birth of the Elim tradition and explored how the emerging movement argued *against* theological liberalism, fundamentalist cessationism and high church ritualism; it argued *for* the Foursquare Gospel; it argued *by* using the rationality of Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism; and it argued *within* the social embodiment of revivalistic meetings, denominational alliance and publishing/training institutions. I continued my historical exploration by narrating Elim's two major 'epistemological crises' to date; that is, the resignation of Jeffreys (chapter 5) and the arrival of the Charismatic/Restoration movements (chapter 6). These two chapters substantiated my claim that the hard core content of the Elim argument is the Foursquare Gospel and its tacit rationality is Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism. They also identified that although Elim has always structurally had a centrally governed leaning, it has also demonstrated great flexibility regarding how the Elim argument is socially and institutionally embodied.

Part III of the thesis built on the historical, theological and philosophical foundations of Part II by taking Elim's implicit rationality of Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism and developed it in line with the narrated Elim tradition. Chapter seven did so by focusing on the underlying

Pentecostal assumptions regarding the nature of truth, and then argued for a *Pentecostal theological realism* as an ontological foundation for Elim's rationality. I effectively rejected Smith's (possible) anti-realism as theologically unnecessary, and aligned Elim's rationality more closely with Yong's and Oliverio's critical/hermeneutical realism (not to mention MacIntyre's critical realism). Chapter eight then focused on the *biblical* aspect of Elim's rationality and proposed a revised biblical hermeneutic in keeping with Elim's Pentecostal doctrine of the Bible. I believe that my proposal for an experiential and community based biblical hermeneutic which seeks to discern divine meaning(s) in 'dialectical relations,' is not only a contribution to Elim's biblical hermeneutics, but also to the ongoing scholarly debate on Pentecostal hermeneutics. The final chapter of the thesis (chapter 9) developed the *pragmatic* epistemic justification within Elim's rationality. I did so by bringing Elim's Pentecostal 'experientialism' into dialogue with William Alston and proposed the possibility of Elim having *prima facie* justification for its theological beliefs based on its purported experiences of God revealed in Christ through the Spirit. Moreover, I went on to re-construct Elim's pragmatic logic by focusing on Elim's historical doxastic practices of coherentist and evidentialist pragmatism. However, although I argued that such pragmatic logic should not be abandoned (*pace* Daniel Castelo), I sought to re-calibrate it as *semi-experimentalism* (see Phillip Wiebe); that is, I argued for *signs based pragmatism* that appreciates both the personal nature and effects oriented Christological Foursquare Gospel.

In doing the above, I believe the thesis has made three major contributions to knowledge. First, it has provided a MacIntyrian tradition-specific *Pentecostal* rationality and thus offered a new methodological approach in the search for a Pentecostal epistemology. Second, it has presented the first substantial intellectual history of Elim and therefore has not only

contributed to Elim's self-understanding but also to Pentecostal history of ideas. Third, in arguing that Elim's rationality is *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism*, as well as developing a theory of truth, biblical hermeneutics and epistemic justification in line with this rationality, the thesis has made its own contribution to Pentecostal philosophical theology.

So returning to the initial problem of the thesis – having a Pentecostal theological methodology based on a Pentecostal rationality – I would like to make two further observations. First, it seems that methodologically it is insufficient for Pentecostal philosophical theologians to talk about Pentecostal rationality without firmly rooting it in the history and practice of Pentecostal communities.[1] Ludwig Wittgenstein's 'don't think, but look!' is apposite advice for Pentecostal philosophical theologians,[2] and MacIntyre's insights employed in this thesis may provide some of the necessary tools for analysing other Pentecostal traditions and rationalities. Second, based on the historical 'looking' at a particular Pentecostal tradition (i.e. Elim) and early British Pentecostalism, it appears that the underlying logic of classical Pentecostalism is indeed Pentecostally informed and biblically focused religious *pragmatism*. Therefore, despite criticising the ahistorical elements of Yong's, Smith's and Oliverio's Pentecostal rationalities, as well as questioning to what extent they are in fact Pentecostal, the *pragmatist* elements within all of their epistemologies follows a deep and justified Pentecostal intuition. In sum, if Elim and early British Pentecostalism is anything to go by, Pentecostalism is indeed a *biblically* and *pragmatically* focused movement, and this should be reflected in the *how* and *what* of its future theologising.

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[1] I appreciate that my focus has primarily been historical rather than exploring contemporary practice. In fact, I will suggest below that such empirical research into the current rationality of Elim ministers and members would be a welcome addition to this thesis.
[2] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 36.

Further Tasks

In terms of future task, I think there are particularly three aspects that would merit further exploration regarding the 'Elim argument.' The first relates to the reasonableness of the contemporary Elim tradition as a 'progressive argument' according to its own standards; the second to Elim's strength as a tradition *vis-à-vis* its main religious and non-religious competitors; and the third to the effectiveness of Elim's current structures and institutions in embodying its argument effectively. I will articulate these three issues as questions.

1. *Is the Elim tradition a coherent argument according to its own rationality?*

In chapters four, five and six I have tried to demonstrate how the Foursquare Gospel of Jesus as Saviour, Healer, Baptiser in the Holy Spirit and coming King should be viewed in Lakatosian terms as the *hard core* of the Elim argument. In other words, if Elim is seen as a type of a '[semi-]Scientific Research Programme,' then the Foursquare Gospel provides its essential doctrinal core, and its Foundational Truths are the *auxiliary hypotheses* which interpret the Foursquare Gospel and function as the protective belt against *modus tollens* arguments directed at the hard core.

Furthermore, in line with MacIntyre's concept of 'tradition-specific rationality' I have tried to show (see particularly chapter 4) how Elim's rationality of *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism* stems from the movement's essential core of the Foursquare Gospel with its auxiliary

hypotheses. However, in accordance with MacIntyre, I have also argued that Elim's Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism has not just been 'tradition-constituted' but has also been 'tradition-constitutive.' That is, as well as being shaped by the Elim tradition, Elim's rationality has also shaped its tradition from its inception (chapter 4) to the present day through its two epistemological crises (chapters 5 & 6). Consequently, the relationship between tradition and rationality has been interdependent and mutually informing.

In light of these two claims – (1) the *Foursquare Gospel* is Elim's hard core, and (2) the Foursquare Gospel with its auxiliary hypotheses has both constituted and been constituted by Elim's rationality of *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism* – the question arises to what extent is Elim today coherent as an argument *vis-à-vis* its own hard core and rationality? To give two examples: firstly, is the current doctrine of Jesus as healer pragmatically evidenced within Elim to provide the necessary 'semi-experimental evidence' to justify this as a hard core doctrine? Secondly, is the current doctrinal articulation and expectation of Jesus as coming King so vague that pragmatically it makes no difference to the Elim movement? If the answer to the first question is that there is no sufficient semi-experimental evidence to warrant Jesus as healer, and/or if the current doctrinal articulation of Jesus as coming King makes no practical difference to Elim members and ministers, then it could be argued that the Elim tradition has become incoherent according to its own rationality and that its hard core has lost its potency.

These questions need further investigation for Elim to remain a coherent and progressive tradition according to its own standards. Therefore, further empirical research into the current

state of Elim, as well as subsequent theological analysis, is essential. Regarding the 'semi-experimental evidence' relating to Jesus as Healer, the empirically and theologically informed methodology of Candy Gunther Brown could be utilised in studying healing within Elim.[3] Brown's theologically sensitive empirical approach would fit well with Elim's pragmatic rationality; that is, if Jesus is the Healer as Elim believes, then according to Elim's own rationality the effects of this belief should be observable in a semi-experimental manner. With respect to the eschatological beliefs of Elim members and ministers, contemporary quantitative and qualitative studies similar to those that have been carried out by William Kay and Mark Cartledge among British Pentecostals could be undertaken.[4] This quantitative/qualitative research would demonstrate whether Elim still embodies the fourth pillar of its hard core. If Elim ministers and members no longer see Jesus as coming King as a central doctrine, then in MacIntyrian terms it could be argued that the Elim tradition has been transformed effectively into another tradition by losing this core belief.

2. *Is the Elim tradition intellectually more progressive than its main 'competing' religious and non-religious traditions?*

According to MacIntyre traditions are not only justified or defeated in relation to their own rationality and core content, but also in dialogue with the main 'competing' traditions. This means that for Elim to be a fully rational and warranted tradition in its current expression, its main contemporary religious and non-religious competitors should be identified and then brought into dialogue with Elim. To do so in a comprehensive manner would be a significant piece of work, since this would not only imply updating my narration of Elim with

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[3] Brown, *Testing Prayer: Science and Healing*.
[4] William K. Kay, *Pentecostals in Britain* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000); Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*.

contemporary empirical data (see above), but also in providing a historical narration of Elim's main competitors along MacIntyrian lines. Nevertheless, this might become a philosophical necessity, if Elim seeks broader dialectical justification for its argument in the public sphere. In a British (non-)religious context this would probably mean bringing Elim into dialogue with 'live options' such as secular humanism, Buddhism, Islam, Roman Catholicism, 'Liberal' Christianity, and other forms of Charismatic Christianity (e.g. Charismatic Anglicanism).

3. *Is the current embodiment of Elim fit for purpose vis-à-vis the movement's core beliefs and rationality?*

In chapter four I identified the initial embodiment of the Elim argument, and in chapters five and six I noted how Elim has been relatively flexible regarding its structures if it has had good reasons for revising them in accordance with its rationality. In light of this, further research could be done in evaluating Elim's existing structures *vis-à-vis* the *Foursquare Gospel* and *Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism*. In other words, are the current Elim institutions, constitution, governance structures and ecclesiological frameworks best suited for embodying the Elim argument in the context of the twenty-first century? The Elim movement under its current General Superintendent is effectively exploring these questions,[5] but this assessment would be further enhanced through academic study into Elim's social epistemic systems.[6]

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[5] Chris Cartwright, '20/20 Vision: The challenge to step into more focused outreach, mission and expansion,' (January 2017), accessed February 21, 2018, https://www.elim.org.uk/Articles/510713/Respond_to_the.aspx.
[6] See Goldman, 'A Guide to Social Epistemology,' 18-20.

That said, these three further tasks should not be seen as undermining my thesis; to the contrary, they flow out of my argument that Elim's essential core is the Foursquare Gospel and its rationality is Pentecostal Biblical Pragmatism. In other words, the possibility of doing the further tasks relies on the central arguments of this thesis. Therefore, despite the tasks that lie ahead, the work for now is done.

APPENDIX 1: ELIM'S CHRONOLOGY[1]

1915   The Elim Evangelistic Band is formed by George Jeffreys and six others in January in Monaghan, Ireland. The first Elim church, Elim Christ Church, is established in August in Belfast with Jeffreys as its pastor.

1916   Elim's first doctrinal statement, *Elim Christ Church: What We Believe*, is produced by George Jeffreys in January 1916.

1918   The Elim Pentecostal Alliance is formed in June 1918, consisting of the Elim Evangelistic Band, local churches and Elim missions. This effectively makes Elim a denomination.

1919   The first *Elim Evangel* is published in December 1919 and becomes the official organ for promulgating the movement's Pentecostal message. Elim also sends its first overseas missionary, Dollie Phillips.

1921   Elim expands from Ireland to mainland Britain and establishes churches in Wales and England. George Jeffreys begins to travel increasingly in Britain holding evangelistic campaigns.

1922   Elim produces the *Constitution of the Elim Pentecostal Alliance* which includes a 'Statement of Fundamental Truths,' and moves its administration from Belfast to Clapham, London.

1924   The Elim Publishing House and Elim Crusaders (Elim's youth movement) are established.

1925   The Elim Bible College (now Regents Theological College) begins to train people for ministry.

1926   Elim holds its first Easter Convention at Royal Albert Hall, an event which becomes a highlight in the movement's calendar for years.

1927   The Elim Church Incorporated is formed with a view of allowing local churches to be part of Elim without being Direct Government churches.

1929   Elim changes its name from Elim Pentecostal Alliance to Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance.

1934   The Deed Poll cements Elim's constitution and doctrinal statement, and makes the Executive Council the governing body of the movement.

1939   George Jeffreys resigns from Elim for the first time in December 1939.

1940   After having been reinstated as Elim's spiritual leader, George Jeffreys resigns from Elim for the second and final time in November 1940.

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[1] The sources used for the chronology include the Elim Archives; Archives of the General Superintendent; Desmond Cartwright, *The Great Evangelists*; Hathaway, 'The Elim Pentecostal Church,' 1-39; Chris Cartwright, *Defining Moments*; No author, 'Historic Timeline of Elim,' accessed 16 March, 2018, https://www.elim.org.uk/Articles/410266/Historic_Timeline.aspx.

1942	The Deed Poll is altered through the Deed of Variation to make the Elim Conference, consisting of ministers and lay representatives, the governing body of the movement.
1944-1945	An Evangelistic Committee is formed and P. S. Brewster emerges as Elim's national evangelist.
1961	Elim holds a special Prayer Conference in Birmingham in light of the changing attitudes towards morality and religion in Britain.
1964	Elim joins the Evangelical Alliance.
1965	The Elim Bible College moves to Capel, Surrey.
1968	The Elim Headquarters moves to Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.
1970-1976	The Doctrine of the Church Committee is set up by the Executive Council, following a Conference decision in 1970, to evaluate Elim's ecclesiology.
1978	In June thirteen Elim missionaries (including five children) are murdered in Vumba, Zimbabwe.
1981	The first Southport Conference is held in response to the rise of the Restoration movement in Britain.
1984	The second Southport Conference is held with a view of recalibrating Elim.
1987	The Elim Bible College moves to Nantwich, Cheshire.
1989	*Elim Evangel* is rebranded as *Direction Magazine*.
1993-1994	Revisions to Elim's Fundamental Truths are approved by the Elim Conference.
2000s	A number of Elim departments are rebranded and relaunched.
2009	The Elim Headquarters and Regents Theological College (formerly Elim Bible College) move to Malvern, Worcestershire.

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